



**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF THE
CITY OF NEOGA
HELD IN THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, MUNICIPAL BUILDING
533 CHESTNUT AVENUE, NEOGA, IL
JANUARY 22, 2024**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Helm. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Those present were Commissioners Williams, Schabbing, Letizia (arrived at 7:04 pm), and Mayor Helm. Others present were City Clerk Brenda Evans, City Treasurer Diana Foor, Police Chief Andy Schabbing, Public Works Superintendent Shawn Durbin, Colton Davis, Joe Meinhart, and Ken Meinhart.

MINUTES

After reviewing the regular session minutes from January 8, 2024, Commissioner Williams made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schabbing. Ayes, Commissioner Williams, Schabbing, and Mayor Helm. Nays, none. Commissioner Letizia arrived after the vote was taken. Motion carried. 3-0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were heard.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS, MAYOR HELM

TGM

Ken Meinhart updated the council on the latest plans from WATCO Railroad. According to Meinhart, WATCO will be moving approximately twenty (20) fully loaded train cars at a time and staging them on the Canadian National Railroad. They will then move more cars from the north of Neoga back into the TGM rail spur. While TGM is loading the second set of cars, WATCO will again move the loaded cars out to CN and repeat. Meinhart feels that this will allow the railroad crossings on 5th, 6th, and 7th Street to stay open except for a short time while the cars are being brought into the spur. Meinhart said that this plan will take care of most of the citizens' concerns. Mayor Helm said that he liked the plan that WATCO has. Commissioner Williams and Commissioner Letizia said that they do not like that this is only a verbal plan and is not in writing. Meinhart said that even if the train cars block the 5th and 6th Street crossings for a brief period, 7th Street should be open. After discussion, Commissioner Schabbing made a motion to have an ordinance created to grant the conditional use permit for the rail spur to Total Grain Management. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion. Ayes, Commissioner Schabbing, Letizia, Williams, and Mayor Helm. Nays, none. Motion carried. 4-0.

REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

PAGE -2-

JANUARY 22, 2024

TGM TIF APPLICATION

Mayor Helm told the Council that they need to give guidance to City Clerk Evans on the TGM TIF application. Mayor Helm reminded them that currently the city has three (3) TIF application requests totaling over 1.3 million dollars, and additional applications could be coming soon. Commissioner Williams said that he would rather not vote on the TIF applications until there was a full council present. Joe Meinhart said that they have been waiting for a while to get this approved, and now the goal post has been moved after the last meeting. Commissioner Letizia said that his commitment was to the citizens of Neoga not TGM. Letizia also said that he will not vote to have TIF funds for TGM to purchase farm ground. Letizia said he feels that \$587,100 to purchase the farm ground should be on TGM not the City of Neoga. Joe Meinhart explained that the application allows for that as an allowable expense, and that is why it is included in the application. Mayor Helm asked the Council what needed to be done to move this project forward. Commissioner Letizia again said he would not vote to give TIF money to TGM for the purchase of the property. City Clerk Evans asked the Council if they would be interested in giving a portion of the allowable expenses. Commissioner Schabbing said that she has been looking at giving a percentage of the requested amount. Schabbing shared with the council some numbers that she put together for TIF requests from TGM, Neoga Fire Department, and Workman Real Estate. Commissioner Williams said he agreed with Letizia regarding funding the property purchase, but he would approve the driveway demo and rehab with concrete because it would keep trucks from using 4th Street. Commissioner Letizia said he would agree to that. Commissioner Letizia also asked City Clerk Evans who wrote the summary from the Council meeting on Jan. 8, 2024. Evans said that she received it from Joe Meinhart. At this time, Commissioner Letizia turned to Mr. Joe Meinhart and expressed his deep disappointment that he would ever write something so disrespectful, and he wanted everyone to know how disappointed he was. Letizia also said that it was very hard for him to not say something to a TGM board member when he was at his house the night before. Mr. Joe Meinhart said that he did not mean it to be disrespectful and apologized for it. Mr. Meinhart proceeded to say that TGM employs thirty-two employees in Cumberland County and pays over \$100,000 in taxes alone. After a very lengthy discussion, Commissioner Williams made a motion to have a contract drawn up to pay a lump sum not to exceed \$400,000 for the ingress and egress of the entrance on Rt. #45 after IDOT and CN have signed off on the project. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schabbing. Ayes, Commissioner Williams, Schabbing, Letizia, and Mayor Helm. Nays, none. Motion carried. 4-0.

RESOLUTION 01-01-24 A Resolution Authorizing Execution of an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Neoga Fire Protection District for a Redevelopment Project in the City of Neoga Tax Increment Area.

After reviewing the presented resolution, Commissioner Williams made a motion to change the agreed amount from \$32,034 to \$10,678 due to a percentage of project. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schabbing. Ayes, Commissioner Williams, Schabbing, Letizia, and Mayor Helm. Nays, none. Motion carried. 4-0.

REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

PAGE -3-

JANUARY 22, 2024

MEL WORKMAN TIF APPLICATION

City Clerk Evans asked the Council to review the TIF application from Workman Real Estate Inc., (Mel Workman). Evans reminded the Council that at the previous meeting, the Council agreed to have a contract drawn up with Workman in the amount of \$275,741; however, Evans said that she received a couple of phone calls from the commissioners requesting that the council talk about it again to clarify some items. After reviewing the application, Commissioner Letizia said that he feels comfortable having a contract made with Mr. Workman for the \$275,741 because Workman is investing over \$1.2 million of his own money. Commissioner Letizia proceeded to make a motion to have a contract written giving Mr. Workman \$275,741. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Williams. Ayes, Commissioner Letizia, Williams, Schabbing, and Mayor Helm. Nays, none. Motion carried. 4-0.

SPECIAL EVENT LIQUOR LICENSE FOR NEOGA DAYS COMMITTEE

City Clerk Evans informed the Council that the Neoga Days Committee is requesting a special event liquor license for a fundraiser. After little discussion, Commissioner Schabbing made a motion to approve the license. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion. Ayes, Commissioner Schabbing, Letizia, Williams, and Mayor Helm. Nays, none. Motion carried. 4-0.

CIVIC PLUS 2024 INVOICE

City Clerk Evans explained the Civic Plus invoice was for the city's social media account to be backed up and stored off site. This invoice has increased this year, but currently Evans has not been able to find another company to do the same service. Commissioner Williams understood the need for keeping the backup records because it covered the City's Facebook, Police Department, and Neoga K9 social media accounts. Commissioner Williams made a motion to approve the invoice in the amount of \$4,188. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schabbing. Ayes, Commissioner Williams, Schabbing, Letizia, and Mayor Helm. Nays, none. Motion carried. 4-0.

ORDINANCE 1085-01-24 An Ordinance Authorizing the Purchase of a Temporary Construction Easement for Sidewalk and Utility Purposes (Romack Development, Inc., - 432 E. 6th)

After reviewing the ordinance, Commissioner Letizia made a motion to accept the proposed ordinance. Commissioner Schabbing seconded the motion. Ayes, Commissioner Letizia, Williams, Schabbing, and Mayor Helm. Nays, none. Motion carried. 4-0.

FINANCE, COMMISSIONER SCHABRING

MONTHLY BILLS

After reviewing the bill list, Commissioner Schabbing made a motion to pay the monthly bills as presented in the amount of \$64,003.02. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Letizia. Ayes, Commissioner Schabbing, Letizia, Williams, and Mayor Helm. Nays, none. Motion carried. 4-0.

REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

PAGE -4-

JANUARY 22, 2024

PUBLIC PROPERTY, COMMISSIONER LETIZIA

CORE DISTINCTION GROUP INVOICE #1467

City Clerk Evans said that the Hotel Feasibility study has been completed, and invoice #1467 is the final payment for the study. Evans said the study looks favorable for a 45+ room hotel. Commissioner Letizia made the motion to pay the invoice of \$7,500. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion. Ayes, Commissioner Letizia, Williams, Schabbing, and Mayor Helm. Nays, none. Motion carried. 4-0.

BAKER PEST CONTRACT ANNUAL SERVICE AGREEMENT

The annual contract with Baker Pest Control was reviewed for each building. After little discussion, Commissioner Letizia made the motion to approve the agreement in the amount of \$3,420. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Williams. Ayes, Commissioner Letizia, Williams, Schabbing, and Mayor Helm. Nays, none. Motion carried. 4-0.

POLICE DEPARTMENT REMODEL

Chief Schabbing discussed with the Council the idea of remodeling the police department. Schabbing explained that the building has many issues with security and space. Schabbing introduced an engineer, Colton Davis with Utz & Associates Architects, who said their company has designed a number of police departments in the area. Davis said that a rough estimate would be around \$400,000 to remodel the entire building, depending on the design. Davis said they would bill monthly but would not be able to start until summer. It was the consensus of the Council to discuss where the funds would come from before planning.

STREETS AND ALLEYS, COMMISSIONER EDWARDS

ITEP INVOICE #29603 FROM M & G

After reviewing the invoice, Commissioner Letizia made a motion to pay the invoice in the amount of \$2,151.78. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schabbing. Ayes, Commissioner Letizia, Williams, Schabbing, and Mayor Helm. Nays, none. Motion carried. 4-0.

HEALTH AND SAFETY, COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS

Commissioner Williams told the Council that he has been approached by residents asking what the city would do if we received a bus of migrants in Neoga. Williams said that the city should look at resources to handle this type of situation. Williams also presented to the Council a resolution passed by the Effingham County Board regarding migrants left in Effingham County. After reviewing their

REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

PAGE -5-

JANUARY 22, 2024

resolution, it was the consensus of the Council to have a resolution created like Effingham County passed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No comments were heard.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Williams made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:10 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Letizia. Ayes, Commissioner Williams, Letizia, Schabbing, and Mayor Helm. Nays, none. Motion carried. 4-0.

Brenda Evans, City Clerk