



**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF THE
CITY OF NEOGA
HELD IN THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, MUNICIPAL BUILDING
533 CHESTNUT AVENUE, NEOGA, IL
AUGUST 12, 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, Edwards, Letizia, and Mayor Helm. Others present were City Clerk Brenda Evans, City Treasurer Diana Foor, Superintendent Shawn Durbin, Building Inspector Jeff Morrison, Evelyn & Larry Pipes, George Warner, Neil Brandenburg, Katie Hakman, and Lauren Keck.

MINUTES

After reviewing the regular session minutes from July 22, 2024, Commissioner Letizia made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Williams. Ayes, Commissioner Letizia, Williams, Schabbing, Edwards, and Mayor Helm. Nays, none. Motion carried. 5-0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were heard

PUBLIC AFFAIRS, MAYOR HELM

EXTENSION FOR PROPERTY ON JENNINGS AVENUE

City Clerk Evans updated the council on the four (4) lots the city sold to Mr. Eric Fritts almost two (2) years ago, and Mr. Fritts has asked for a time extension for building homes on the lots. Evans said that Attorney Willenborg will be sending her additional information before the Council takes action. The council tabled the time extension to a later date.

NPP SOOEYFEST LIQUOR LICENSE

Katie Hakman and Lauren Keck told the Council that the 2024 Soeeyfest will be held on Saturday, September 28, 2024, and will be held at Neoga Jennings Park. Hakman asked the Council if they would grant NPP a special event liquor license. Commissioner Edwards made a motion to grant a special event liquor license for September 28th. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Williams. Ayes, Commissioner Edwards, Letizia, Williams, Schabbing, and Mayor Helm. Nays, none. Motion carried. 5-0.

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ORDINANCE #1092-08-2024

An Ordinance Authorizing a Variance in Accordance with Appendix B of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Neoga, in the County of Cumberland, and State of Illinois (Variance of Roof-Mounted Solar Energy System) (Neil Brandenburg)

Building Inspector Jeff Morrison explained to the council that Neil Brandenburg has requested a variance to have roof-mounted solar panels installed past the allowed setbacks. Morrison said that the zoning board recommended approving the variance. After a brief discussion, Commissioner Letizia made a motion to accept the ordinance as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Edwards. Ayes, Commissioner Letizia, Williams, Schabbing, Edwards, and Mayor Helm. Nays, none. Motion carried. 5-0.

ORDINANCE #1093-08-2024

An Ordinance Authorizing a Variance in Accordance with Appendix B of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Neoga, in the County of Cumberland, and State of Illinois (Variance of Ground-Mounted Solar Energy System) (Evelyn Pipes and Larry Pipes)

A lengthy discussion was held regarding ground mounted solar panels inside corporate limits. George Warner explained to the council that Mr. & Mrs. Pipes are requesting the ground mounted solar because they have a metal roof, and placing solar panels on a metal roof might cause damage to the roof. Warner said that the Pipes' property has a very large back yard, and the panels could be placed on the very back of the property. Mr. Warner also explained that the house is all electric, and there is not enough room for roof-mounted panels, so they are requesting ground mounted solar panels that would be 51' wide, 13' long, and 3' to 12' high. Mrs. Pipes said that they would not object to planting trees or shrubs to hide the solar panels from view, if the council required it. Commissioner Edwards told the Council that he is not in favor of ground mounted solar panels; however, Commissioner Letizia said that he didn't mind the solar panels. Commissioner Letizia made a motion to accept the ordinance as presented. The motion died for a lack of a second.

GROCERY TAX

This was tabled until additional information is received.

NEW SALES TAX

This was tabled until additional information is received.

FINANCE, COMMISSIONER SCHABRING

TREASURER'S REPORT

After reviewing the treasurer's report, Mayor Helm ordered that the treasurer's report be filed in the City Clerk's records.

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GENERAL FUND

Commissioner Schabbing told the council that she has been watching the general fund balance deplete at an alarming rate. Schabbing said her concern is the amount of money being spent at the Community Center. Schabbing said that the city has lost almost \$400,000 since it was purchased in 2018.

Commissioner Schabbing asked the Council what they should do with the building. It was decided to review the rental contracts first.

PUBLIC PROPERTY, COMMISSIONER LETIZIA

REPAIRS TO WATER TOWER LEG

Superintendent Durbin gave the council a quote from Ballinger Concrete to repair the concrete at the bottom of one leg on the water tower. Durbin said the first quote he received was higher due to the out of state company traveling to Neoga. Commissioner Letizia made a motion to approve the quote from Ballinger Concrete in the amount of \$1,800. Commissioner Edwards seconded the motion. Ayes, Commissioner Letizia, Williams, Schabbing, Edwards, and Mayor Helm. Nays, none. Motion carried. 5-0.

SEWER GRANTS

City Clerk Evans reminded the council that Engineer Beckman mentioned that the city might want to look at replacing older sewer lines soon. Beckman said that there are grants available if the city wanted to apply for them. Commissioner Letizia made a motion to apply for sewer grants to help replace sewer lines. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schabbing. Ayes, Commissioner Letizia, Williams, Schabbing, Edwards, and Mayor Helm. Nays, none. Motion carried. 5-0.

SHARED PATH INVOICES

City Clerk Evans explained to the Council there are two (2) ITEP Shared Path invoices that need to be paid. One was the amount of \$58,500 for mobilizing the construction company to Neoga, and the other was for \$200,974.90 for the work that has been completed. After a little discussion, Commissioner Letizia made a motion to approve both invoices. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Edwards. Ayes, Commissioner Letizia, Williams, Schabbing, Edwards, and Mayor Helm. Nays, none. Motion carried. 5-0.

STREETS AND ALLEYS, COMMISSIONER EDWARDS

MOWING DITCHES & / OR PURCHASE OF TRACTOR

Superintendent Durbin discussed with the council options for cleaning the drainage ditches. Durbin said he found three (3) options: 1.) purchase an 8' sickle bar for \$6,190; 2.) hire Myers Boom Mowing at a cost of \$8,250 per mowing; 3.) purchase a new tractor for under \$30,000. Superintendent Durbin had quotes for three (3) tractors he felt would work for the mowing. After discussing the pros and cons of each option, Commissioner Letizia made a motion to purchase the Ford TW25 in the amount of \$22,000, if everything worked on it. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Edwards. Ayes, Commissioner Letizia, Williams, Schabbing, Edwards, and Mayor Helm. Nays, none. Motion carried. 5-0.

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HEALTH AND SAFETY, COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS

Commissioner Williams informed the council that he is worried about Seamless Fiber leaving holes around the “flower pots” that they installed in residents’ yards. Williams would like our public work employees to make sure they have repaired these areas. Williams also had concerns about the 7th Street railroad crossing since school is starting. City Clerk Evans told the council that she spoke with the railroad last week, and they recommended that the city apply for a grant to repair the crossing. It was the consensus of the Council for them to contact the railroad, state and federal officials. City Clerk Evans said that she would forward contact numbers for the railroad as well as our state and federal elected officials to the council members so they can contact them as well.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Commissioner Williams made a motion to move into executive session at 8:22 p.m. for Personnel - Section 2 (c)(1) Employee hiring, firing, compensation, discipline and performance; as well as Sale or Lease of Real Estate- Section 2 (c)(6) – Limited to actual setting of price for sale or lease of public property. Commissioner Edwards seconded the motion. Ayes, Commissioner Williams, Schabbing, Edwards, Letizia, and Mayor Helm. Nays, none. Motion carried. 5-0.

RECONVENED AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was reconvened at 9:32 p.m. on a motion from Commissioner Edwards. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion. Those present for roll call were Commissioners Edwards, Letizia, Williams, Schabbing, and Mayor Helm.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Edwards made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:33 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Williams. Ayes, Commissioner Edwards, Letizia, Williams, Schabbing, and Mayor Helm. Nays, none. Motion carried. 5-0.

Brenda Evans, City Clerk