



City Council

City Council Chambers ♦ 524 West Stephenson Street ♦ Freeport, IL 61032

MINUTES SPECIAL MEETING Monday, March 23, 2015

CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting of the Freeport, Illinois, City Council was called to order in council chambers by Mayor James L. Gitz with a quorum being present at 6:00 p.m. on March 23, 2015.

ROLL CALL

Present on roll call: Mayor Gitz and council members Tom Klemm, Shawn Boldt, Jennie DeVine, Dennis Endress, Sally Brashaw, Michael Koester, and Andrew Crutchfield (7). Alderperson Ronnie Bush was absent. Also absent was Corporation Counsel Sarah Griffin.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Alderperson Koester.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Upon the agenda for this special meeting being duly posted according to the Open Meeting Act and noticed to the agenda notice listing (media notification), Alderperson Crutchfield moved for its approval, seconded by Alderperson Koester. Motion prevailed by voice vote without dissent.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – AGENDA ITEMS

Signed on the sheet for public comments were:

- Randall Skeens, 10-16 N, Chicago, Freeport, Illinois, spoke as owner of This Is It Eatery in downtown Freeport and in regard to the Sidewalk Ordinance. He stated that over the last year he has witnessed an increase in tourism traffic in the downtown. He is hoping this will be further strengthened by the addition of the expanded Jane Addams Trail coming into the downtown. He would like to be able to serve a glass of wine or a beer to patrons utilizing his tables in the Sidewalk Café. He stated currently the way the ordinance is written he cannot serve alcohol outside. He recommends consideration for allowing this as a way to attract other businesses and stores to the downtown. He noted many other municipalities allow this including Chicago, Monroe, and Naperville and it would be nice to be able to allow it in Freeport.

PRESENTATIONS - Update on RFQ (Request for Qualification) Process for Design/Build of Former Carnegie Library Building (314 West Stephenson Street)

City Engineer Shaun Gallagher provided a written memorandum regarding the Carnegie Library Renovation Process. It included a timeline for processes:

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December 15th, 2014

Council approved Resolution No. 2014-84 which provided for the following, “Section 1. That it hereby authorizes the City Administration and staff to negotiate a design/build contract, with the intention of repurposing 314 W. Stephenson Street to be utilized as a City Hall. Such contract shall require the separate approval of the City Council and the negotiations shall include separate bidding for subcontracts and the exploration of energy efficiency options.”

February 24th, 2015

Published RFQ (Request for Qualifications) to Illinois Municipal Website, the Journal Standard and the Rockford Register Star with the following timetable:

- Optional Site Meeting – 3/2/2015
- RFQ questions due – 3/6/2015
- SOQ submittals due – 3/12/2015
- Approval of Design-Build Team – 3/23/2015
- Start of Design-Build Services – 4/13/2015
- Completion of Interior Demolition and Asbestos Removal – 5/1/2015
- Approval of Design Documents – 7/6/2015
- Start of Construction Stage – 7/7/2015
- Completion of Construction Stage – 4/29/2016
- Completion of Interior/ Exterior painting & furniture – 5/13/2016
- Completion of Design-Build Services/Punch List Items – 5/27/2016

March 12th, 2015

Received six “Statements of Qualifications” from teams in the Northwest region of Illinois

March 18th, 2015

Project Management Team will begin reviewing SOQs (Statement of Qualifications) to determine the best candidate for the project, as indicated in the RFQ: The City Engineer, Shaun Gallagher, will be the project manager and serve as liaison to the Mayor and City Council for the duration of the project. The City will also provide a Project Management Team of staff members that will collaborate on the primary decision-making required to undertake this restoration. The team shall include the City Engineer, the Building Inspector, the Fire Chief, the Finance Director, and a Council Member, which will make recommendations to the Mayor. This body will also review all SOQs that are received by responding Design-Build Teams and make a recommendation to the City Council for approval.

March 24th, 2015

Project Management Team performs a team review of the SOQs submitted and verifies references among the top candidates, completing the decision matrix outlined in the RFQ.

April 20th, 2015

Bring Council Design-Build contract for approval along with completed decision matrix.

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City Engineer Gallagher presented the above stated timeline and reviewed for council that 15 to 20 groups toured the former Carnegie library and, of those groups, six submitted Statement of Qualification. He stated he would be the project manager and serve as liaison to the Mayor and City Council for the duration of the project. The City will also provide a Project Management Team of staff members that will collaborate on the primary decision-making required to undertake this restoration. The team will include the City Engineer, the Building Inspector, the Fire Chief, the Finance Director, and a Council Member (naming Alderperson Tom Klemm) which will make recommendations to the Mayor. This body will also review all SOQs that are received by responding Design-Build Teams and make a recommendation to the City Council for approval. He explained that the Project Management Team will begin as early as tomorrow by reviewing SOQs (Statement of Qualifications) to determine the best candidate for the project, as indicated in the RFQ. City Engineer Gallagher stated the goal is to bring to council the Design-Build contract for approval along with completed decision matrix by April 20, 2015.

Alderperson Koester voiced his concern for the timeline that it provided a date for the decision (April 20) and depending on the April 7th election, there could be new members of council that would not have a say in the decision. He recommended holding off until the new council is seated. City Engineer stated that this timeline is based on the project scope laid out in the Request for Qualifications and it can be council's decision to layover the decision. City Engineer Gallagher also pointed out that he provided the matrix for selection of the Design-Build Services which includes weighting in the areas of Historic Preservation and Green Building Design.

Alderperson Crutchfield stated he has no issue with continuing on without waiting for the council seating. He stated his concern is that he feels there should be a member of the community on the project team. City Engineer Gallagher stated within the Request for Qualification schedule, he required one full charrette of a public meeting so our public will be part of the process. The public input would be part of the design process along with communication of price for bare minimum, midpoint, and maximum estimates. Alderperson Crutchfield asked what would be the next step for council would it be to approve a design build firm. City Engineer Gallagher stated it would be to approve the design build firm and he envisions the Project Management Team to provide a selection in one of two ways and then explained different ways it could be presented.

Alderperson Koester stated that he does not feel that the City Council made a formal decision to act on the Library Building. He stated he feels that the council has been pushed in that direction and he has concerns.

Alderperson Boldt stated his concern is that we can't make a decision until we have facts. He would like to see more set dollar figures and a plan. He asked at what point in the process a drop dead "yes or no" answer would be needed. City Engineer Gallagher stated the Project Management Team could bring a contract with all the bells and whistles or most likely it would be a contract divided up on a couple of stages. First you can have the preliminary concept and a design charrette. Then you would have estimates for the engineering and the construction. If the council was brought a full contract for a concept that you do not choose, then it would throw everything off, so most likely we will have a tiered system. This would give them an allowance for them to do the work. You would still be able to adjust the final

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contract. The council would be able to stop the process. This way they would be able to bring the council something to approve whether it was full project or in phases. If you want to stop the process you would be able knowing the dollar value. Alderperson Boldt asked at what point in time council will be asked for dollars in order to proceed. City Engineer Gallagher stated he would like to have a contract in the end showing a dollar value that is from the actual contractor doing the work and to be able to see the technical proposal. He explained the design building concept, RFQ's and how the negotiation process could happen.

Alderperson Koester asked to clarify the stage when this will be costing us money. City Engineer Gallagher stated until April 20, there is no money spent. He stated the City may want to move into the phase of asbestos abatement in order to move this along. He stated the design build cannot proceed without this abatement. He stated this can be part of the design building plans or it can be part of a separate sub-contract. He estimated the asbestos abatement to cost \$60,000, if the council chooses to proceed with it.

Alderperson Koester asked about intentions for financing. Mayor Gitz stated when we are going out for bond refunding, this amount could be added to the bond. He then noted an amount will be added in for stabilization of the other building.

Alderperson Koester stated we need to know a number as to the cost of a renovation and then we need to know how this will be paid before a final decision can be made. Mayor Gitz stated he is in agreement with Alderperson Koester.

Alderperson Crutchfield noted there was a resolution approved by this council back in December to move forward with the Request for Qualification for a design build team on this building. It is not a definite this is what we are doing but it was a definite saying this is the direction that we want to go. He stated he is confident this is the route we want to take and that decision was made to go into the Carnegie building.

Alderperson Klemm stated he feels somewhat different from that. He stated he is interested in seeing the numbers before he makes a decision. He voiced his two concerns as being how exactly the building would be modified to assure it is handicap accessible and whether the square footage of the building is adequate for the space needs of the City. On another note, he stated some excellent firms came forward with from the Request for Qualification. He also remembers seeing that the City Hall survey showed that 60% of participants recommend renting. He stated so in his mind this is not a done deal.

Alderperson Crutchfield spoke about addressing the handicap accessibility of the building and what are the options. City Engineer Gallagher stated he has had discussions with RAMP. He explained that he envisions the building will require a three stop elevator and there will probably be a rear entrance to the building. He explained the entrance/exit will be similar to this building, requiring the handicap access as you enter from the rear of the building and with steps leading to the front entrance to keep the historic feature. He stated there are a couple of ways that the design-build team could go with it, with an option of using utilizing a ramp on the eastside of the building or in the rear where the ADA ramp is currently located.

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Aldersperson Crutchfield stated that in terms of the concern about square footage and the space needs study, he would comment that the City has maintained its population of 25,000 for the last eight years since his moving here and it is probably been over twenty years since it went up. He stated he has no serious concerns about the size of the building and, if the City were to grow, there would be some room for additional staff members.

Discussion was held as the square footage and the space needs study conducted last year. City Engineer provided that in our rent we lease and are provided by the landlord common areas totaling 11,500 square feet and in his estimates the Carnegie Library building could accommodate 16,500 square feet. Aldersperson Klemm spoke about the mechanical room and the square footage. He stated he does not want to see money put into a building that would be too small and we may have to consider accommodation of the 911 system with the county so there are lots of things to consider and discuss further. Mayor Gitz spoke about the space needs study and when it was conducted the report allowed for the department heads estimate of future needs and an extrapolation of additional staff.

Aldersperson Crutchfield voiced his concern of this process being halted because it has been an ongoing process for the last three years and he would hate to see something happen held up waiting for an election.

Mayor Gitz stated he has concerns that the rental cost for this building may be going up and he would not want to see this process halted. He stated one of the reasons this rent will go up is because the building is being occupied by more tenants as compared to when we first rented the office space so the landlord very well may increase the rent. He feels it may be a trade-off for the budget as compared to the cost to pay for future bond indebtedness. He stated we have been asked to either pay for common area next to council chambers or give it up; so it will be no longer available for City use.

ORDINANCES - FIRST READING

1st READING OF ORDINANCE #2015-20:

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 806 – ALCOHOLIC LIQUOR SALES SECTION 806.03 (CLASSIFICATION OF LICENSES) CLASS V LICENSING AND LIMITATION (VIDEO GAMING) OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF FREEPORT

Mayor Gitz stated that Corporation Counsel Griffin provided a memorandum with the ordinance. The memorandum provided the following; “During our change in the liquor code to limit the number of liquor license establishments at which video gaming licenses could be held, we attempted to create a situation which would grandfather in those already holding such a license or who well along in the process. Unfortunately, the State Gaming Board cancelled its February meeting due the change in downstate Administration. As such, we wound up with two liquor license holders who had their paperwork in with the State on time, but missed the City deadline. This minor amendment allows for those licenses caught in the loop, to be grandfathered in along with the others.”

Mayor Gitz reviewed the ordinance and noted the most important provision can be found in Section 803.03, Classification of Licenses, under subsection 6) which requires anyone with all the appropriate application paperwork on file with the City or with the State of Illinois Gaming Board on March 2, 2015.

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He stated we consider this to be a housekeeping ordinance and we also consider it to be fairly important. The Liquor Commission made a recommendation to the council to limit liquor license with gaming devices with the understanding that everybody who had an application in at that time would be processed and given a license, no one would be left out in the cold simply because their paperwork wasn't finished at that time. Now at the same time that they were before the gaming board to get licensed for the machines, the gaming board said we aren't going to meet because of a change in administration. He stated while the two licensees were getting their paperwork submitted to the City Clerk, they were waiting for paperwork be completed by the Illinois Gaming Board, so they were caught in the switches. He stated the problem is that they could wait for one, but is there is no license that we know that will be surrendered in the near future. He noted Munzy's was subtracted from that number to begin with. He stated in one case you have a facility that has been built specifically with this in mind and they can't receive a license because they are caught in this red tape and the other one is a restaurant that also had an understanding as to what was going to happen and has their application on file with the gaming board. This is an intention to honor all of those that were in the process at the time to receive a license for video gaming and to close the door until a time when someone vacates their license. He stated this is somewhat time sensitive and so if the council so chooses we would ask to suspend the rules.

The subsection 6) to Section 803.03, Classification of Licenses as presented provided the following:

(6) Any Class A, A-R, P, or W Liquor License holder currently holding, a valid license pursuant to Section 844.02 shall have a V License added to their current liquor license and shall be counted toward the total number of V licenses allowed under subsection (2) above. In addition, anyone in the process of obtaining an A, A-R, P, or W liquor license or holding a valid A, A-R, P, or W liquor license and in the process of obtaining a valid license pursuant to Section 844.02, and has all appropriate application paperwork on file with the City or with the State of Illinois Gaming Board on March 2, 2015 ~~the effective date of this ordinance~~, and that actually obtains both licenses by September 2, 2015 ~~within six (6) months of the date of the passage of this ordinance~~, shall be counted toward the total number of V licenses allowed under subsection (2) above, once they meet the requisites hereunder.

Aldersperson Brashaw asked if this is a onetime situation for the two businesses and after that there will be no more licenses with that classification available. Mayor Gitz stated yes.

Aldersperson Klemm moved for approval of the ordinance, seconded by Aldersperson Brashaw.

Aldersperson Koester requested why there would be a need to suspend the rules for passage this evening and whether they could wait another month. Mayor Gitz stated it is a question of one of convenience because these licenses have waited for a month and it would not get back to you until the first meeting in April so the question is if you are comfortable with it do we proceed in it or do you have questions. He stated it does not affect the staff but if you agree that these are businesses caught in the switches, the question is how soon you would like to move on it.

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Aldersperson Crutchfield asked what the disadvantage would be to lay it over to the next meeting. Mayor Gitz stated those two applicants have been waiting for some resolution since the first week of March would need to wait several more weeks.

Aldersperson Klemm moved for suspension of the rules for immediate consideration, seconded by Aldersperson Endress. Mayor Gitz stated the motion to suspend the rules is non-debatable and requires an extraordinary majority for passage. The motion for suspension of the rules prevailed by a roll call vote of;
Yeas: Klemm, Boldt, DeVine, Endress, Brashaw and Crutchfield (6)
Nays: Koester (1)

Mayor Gitz stated the motion passes because the extraordinary majority was obtained and it needed six votes to prevail. He asked if there were further questions on Ordinance 2015-20 as presented.

Aldersperson Boldt commented that he will need to abstain from voting on the passage of the ordinance for financial consideration due to his employment.

Upon no further discussion, Mayor Gitz asked for a roll call vote for passage of the ordinance. The motion prevailed by a roll call vote of;
Yeas: Klemm, DeVine, Endress, Brashaw, Koester, and Crutchfield (6)
Abstain: Boldt (1)
Nays: none
Ordinance #2015-20 passed.

1st READING OF ORDINANCE #2015-21:

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 1026 – SIDEWALKS, SECTION 1026.17 (SALES; MERCHANDISE DISPLAYS; CAFES), REGARDING SIDEWALK CAFÉS OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF FREEPORT

Provided in the council packet was a memorandum written by Corporation Counsel Sarah Griffin. It provided the following; "This winter we had a problem with a number of Sidewalk Café permit holders not removing all of their tables, etc., thus causing a problem with snow removal. During our heaviest snowfall, the police department had to actually ask for the situation to be abated by the property owner or face removal by the City. Clearly, the intent of allowing items to be placed on the sidewalk for a Sidewalk Café is to allow for actual use of the property as an extension to the restaurant. To avoid the storage of items on the sidewalk during the winter months when they are not in use, we have drafted the attached ordinance limiting the Sidewalk Café permit dates to May 1 through November 1. After that time all items must be removed from the sidewalk. The ordinance also tightens up liability by requiring the permit to name the City as an additional insured."

Mayor Gitz stated this ordinance is presented as a housekeeping ordinance for sidewalk cafes and this ordinance does not address what Mr. Skeens was talking about in terms of liquor sales. That particular issue will be addressed with FDDF at a later date. He stated currently there is no termination date on a Sidewalk Café License and that caused issues this winter. He stated that the urgency is that it is renewal

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time for this license and staff would like to get their paperwork in order for the May 1 processing date for the renewals.

Public Works Director Tom Dole presented the ordinance by stating that this winter we had issues this winter with the snow removal process with items getting in the way of equipment in an effort to clear the sidewalks of the snow. He stated what we provided with this ordinance is to place an end time on the Sidewalk Cafes and a deadline of November 1 was added to have all items removed so the sidewalks can be cleared of snow. He stated it also states that no fixture can be permanently attached to the sidewalk and it requires compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Director Dole stated the ordinance requires that the City of Freeport is named as an additional insured on the insurance in case there is any liability issue. He stated the big item for him is so they can provide for snow removal without damaging any of the flower pots and items on the sidewalks.

City Engineer Gallagher stated this ordinance outlines the importance of keeping these in compliance with ADA requirements and he explained issues last year with ADA Compliance and the opinion of the Attorney General's Office for the State of Illinois.

Aldersperson Crutchfield stated he understands the date of November as the ending date and asked if there was a date not before that they can put things out. City Engineer Gallagher stated the May 1 date still applies and with this change it will be May 1 to November 1.

Aldersperson Koester asked about displaying the license by the register. He stated with the number of licenses that a restaurant has to display would it be sufficient to keep it on file and allow to be shown upon request. City Engineer Gallagher stated from an inspection standpoint they are trying to be more pro-active so having proof of the license is an advantage to us so it is evident they have a license on file.

Aldersperson Brashaw asked if Mr. Skeens was interested in applying for a license to sell alcoholic beverages outside whether he would need to do this through the Liquor Commission. Mayor Gitz stated that he would. He stated our code requires secure premises so that it is not likely for people who are off premises to easily have a drink handed to them or other things that can take place. Mayor Gitz provided a couple examples of issues and noted FDDF will be discussing these items further to improvement sidewalks and these ideas need to be carefully vetted by the Police and Fire Chief.

Chief Barkalow stated there are certain requirements that must be met for a beer garden and before changes are made it would need to be carefully thought out for all circumstances, instead of one establishment because there have been issues in the past with beer gardens. Fire Chief Miller stated that his department was involved with an issue last year where they wanted outdoor beverages and also some cooking and they ran into issues with exit discharge, egress, occupancy loads and it has presented some unique issues and challenges.

Aldersperson Klemm stated all that sounds good but we are talking about having a drink out on the patio. He stated we are talking about eight people at each of the establishments sitting around having a glass of

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wine and he asked to have conversations open to bring this to current times because they do it all the time in downtown Chicago. He asked to keep an open mind to move forward with changing it in the future.

Aldersperson Crutchfield moved for approval of the ordinance, seconded by Aldersperson Brashaw. Mayor Gitz asked if there is motion for suspension of the rules for immediate consideration.

Aldersperson Crutchfield moved for suspension of the rules for immediate consideration, seconded by Aldersperson Brashaw. The motion for suspension of the rules failed by a roll call vote of;
Yeas: Klemm, Boldt, Endress, Brashaw and Crutchfield (5)
Nays: DeVine and Koester (2)

Mayor Gitz stated the chair determines that it does not have the votes necessary for immediate consideration so the ordinance is automatically laid over to the next meeting and we will see Ordinance #2015-21 on the next council agenda.

1st READING OF ORDINANCE #2015-22:

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 242 – FIRE DEPARTMENT, SECTION 242.46 (CHARGES FOR AMBULANCE SERVICE) OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF FREEPORT

Fire Chief Scott Miller presented the above stated ordinance. He provided a memorandum in the council packet explaining the following in regard to this ordinance to increase the charge for ambulance service:

“Recently, the Medicare rate for ambulance service/transport increased a modest 1.5% for calendar year 2015. Our rates by ordinance reflect 105% of the Medicare rate.

“Reviewing this longstanding rate formula, I was compelled to conduct research to identify “usual and customary” rates for municipal ambulance service.

“Our fee structure is broken down into levels of service. These current rates for 2015 (105% of Medicare) are reflected as follows:

City of Freeport Rates:

- Basic Life Support
 - Resident rate: \$359.08
 - Non-Resident rate: \$459.08
- Advanced Life Support I (IV therapy and cardiac monitor)
 - Resident rate: \$426.40
 - Non-Resident rate: \$526.40
- Advanced Life Support II (severe medical condition or trauma)
 - Resident rate: \$617.17
 - Non-Resident rate: \$717.17

“Annually, a **regional** study is conducted by the City of Naperville to ascertain the fees charged by various municipalities for ambulance service. A summary of the results are as follows:

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- “Number of responding agencies: 118
- Number of agencies charging a resident user fee: 109 (92%)
 - Number of agencies charging a non-resident user fee: 110 (92%)
 - Average fees charged:

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|---------------------------|-------|----------|---------|----------|------------------|
| <u>Resident Fees:</u> | BLS - | \$576.46 | ALS-1 - | \$743.13 | ALS-2- \$900.16 |
| <u>Non-Resident Fees:</u> | BLS - | \$750.64 | ALS-1 - | \$980.46 | ALS-2- \$1135.45 |
 - Number of agencies assessing a mileage fee: 106 (90%)
 - Number of agencies that have updated fees since the last survey: 32 (27%)
 - Number of agencies using a private billing service: 100 (85%)

“A **list of communities** that utilize our present Billing Service was obtained. The disparity is similar based on 163 communities contracted for service.

- Average fees charged:

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------|----------|---------|----------|------------------|
| <u>Resident Fees:</u> | BLS - | \$605.78 | ALS-1 - | \$754.83 | ALS-2- \$884.93 |
| <u>Non-Resident Fees:</u> | BLS - | \$760.00 | ALS-1 - | \$926.02 | ALS-2- \$1059.70 |

Local Rate Study:

- Average fees charged:

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|---------------------------|-------|----------|---------|----------|------------------|
| <u>Resident Fees:</u> | BLS - | \$570.38 | ALS-1 - | \$666.13 | ALS-2- \$783.13 |
| <u>Non-Resident Fees:</u> | BLS - | \$882.05 | ALS-1 - | \$988.80 | ALS-2- \$1139.53 |

“Collection Rates and Revenue Sources

Four areas of revenue sources were examined for ambulance billing. They are as follows:

- Medicare – 2014 collection rate for Freeport 84%
- Medicaid – 2014 collection rate for Freeport 74%
- Insurance – 2014 collection rate for Freeport 84.5%
- Private pay/no insurance – 2014 collection rate for Freeport 7.2%

“Medicare and Medicaid pay a fixed rate regardless of the amount billed. Insurance coverage varies, but typically will pay “reasonable and customary” fees. Uninsured individuals, their collections have been poor. Increased fees will have no impact on the residents that can’t or won’t pay.”

Proposed Changes for 2015 Rates:

“Data obtained shows the City of Freeport ambulance fee rates are substantially below the “reasonable and customary” rates. Three independent studies showed that the ambulance billing rates for the City of Freeport could be increased \$300 per call for resident rates and \$400 per call for non-resident rates. This would place the City of Freeport within the average rate scale as indicated in the above studies. It is

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anticipated that the poor collection rates for Freeport uninsured individuals will continue. Taking a resident to collections would net 10% or less of the amount billed. The ambulance billing company would continue to invoice residents three times, then would turn the account over to the City for consideration (either write off or send to collections). Bills submitted to Medicare and Medicaid are paid by their adopted rate schedule, a local rate increase would not impact the amount collected by these two government entities. Private insurance claims are our highest percentage of paid invoices (84.5%). The proposed rate increases fall in the range of reasonable and customary fees.

“Our past year revenues were \$627,723.20.

“The anticipated annual revenue reflecting the rate increases is \$100,000. If the ordinance amendment is approved, the new rates could be implemented immediately or delayed until a specified date by the City Council.

Fire Chief Miller reviewed the above stated memo and he stated our current model of rates is based off the Medicare rates. In January, Medicare came out with an increase of what they will pay and that was a modest 1.5% and that translated into a \$5.51 increase for our basic life support resident rate. He looked at three different independent studies relative to ambulance billing. He identified that we are substantially far below the usual and customary rates for our ambulance service. Looking at the data that was produced, he indicates in the memo our proposed increase for our service. He reviewed the three categories for rates including basic life support, advanced life support (ALS I) including IV therapy and cardiac monitor, and advanced life support II (ALS II) including severe medical condition or trauma. After reviewing the study of over 200 municipalities, Chief Miller recommends the City of Freeport could be increased \$300 per call for resident rates and \$400 per call for non-resident rates. This would place the City within the average rate scale as indicated in the studies for 2014. At this time he is not proposing to go beyond 2014 rates. Chief Miller reviewed the current rates for the council:

Current Ambulance Service Rates:

Basic Life Support

Resident rate: \$359.08

Non-Resident rate: \$459.08

Advanced Life Support I (IV therapy and cardiac monitor)

Resident rate: \$426.40

Non-Resident rate: \$526.40

Advanced Life Support II (severe medical condition or trauma)

Resident rate: \$617.17

Non-Resident rate: \$717.17

Proposed Ambulance Service Rates:

Basic Life Support (BLS) Rates:

Residents: \$659.08, transport + \$11.02 per mile

Non-residents: \$859.08 transport + \$11.02 per mile

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Advanced Life Support I (ALS) Rates:

ALS I Resident: \$726.40, transport + \$11.02 per mile

ALS I Non-Resident: \$926.40, transport + \$11.02 per mile

Advanced Life Support II (ALS II) Rates:

ALS II Resident: \$917.17, transport + \$11.02 per mile

ALS II Non-Resident: \$1117.17, transport + \$11.02 per mile

Chief Miller stated there are four sources that the city receives payment for these services and those are insurance companies (that recognize usual and customary rates), Medicare, Medicaid (with the two government entities paying on an adopted rate scale and paying a flat amount), and then an individual who has no insurance would be a self-pay situation. He reviewed for council the collection rates provided in the memorandum.

Aldersperson Brashaw asked about how much an insurance company will pay and if the rates went up by \$400 for a non-resident. Chief Miller stated they would pay, they look at our proposed rates and they would pay that amount because there are examples of municipalities charging \$1,700, \$2,100, \$2,550, \$1990 and several at \$1,800 per call. Chief Miller stated the maximum amount that he is proposing for an ALS II is \$1,117.00, so looking at the outliers we are half of what they are charge.

Aldersperson Koester stated he has reviewed this with Chief Miller and noted that a small percentage of these rates would go into the general fund. Mayor Gitz noted most of the ambulance service fees goes into the Capital Improvement Fund. Mayor Gitz asked when the last time these rates were increased. Chief Miller stated that the ordinance which takes the 105% of the Medicare rate went into effect in 2008. Since 2008 we have been keeping them at the amount recognized by Medicare, so they have increased by about \$5.00 per year.

Discussion was held on the amount insurance companies will pay and the collection rates provided in the memorandum.

Aldersperson Koester moved for approval of Ordinance #2015-22 as presented, seconded by Aldersperson Klemm. Mayor Gitz stated per council rules, Ordinance #2015-22 is automatically laid over to the next meeting.

OTHER

Reports of Department Heads

City Engineer

City Engineer Gallagher reported he will be sending out a request for bids for weed spraying and mowing bids. He noted this year, he will present two different contracts but hopes to blend the bid package and he expects responses to be ready by the second meeting in April to have them ready for May 1, 2015 season to start.

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Alderperson Crutchfield asked about township community service and painting. He asked if a person or two could be utilized for mowing. Mayor Gitz stated they can be utilized but probably not for mowing on private property so it would be more downtown weeds or things where they would not need to be supervised.

Finance Department

Finance Director Cynthia Haggard had no report this evening.

Public Works

Public Works Director Tom Dole had no further report.

Fire

Fire Chief Miler reported on a house fire at the 600 block of Douglas Street. He stated it was confined to the outside of the house although a family of six and a dog were displaced for a short time and assisted by the Red Cross. He stated there were no injury reports. Chief Miller was asked about the dog rescued from the house fire a couple of weeks ago and he reported it has been discharged by the veterinarian.

Police

Chief of Police Todd Barkalow provided an update on the canine unit for the Police Department. Chief Barkalow stated the canine unit purchased a Belgium Malinois and his name will be "Otto". Officer Matt Anderson will be the handler and he has been an officer since 2011. They are attending the Illinois Police K9 Academy and are in week five with a scheduled graduation date of May 1. Chief Barkalow provided a brief overview of his training status, estimated expenses, and donations to date. He estimated a yearly cost of \$54,595 for the canine unit, with an initial cost for equipment/supplies to be \$55,798. To date, the fundraising efforts have netted \$29,454. Chief Barkalow stated he was appreciative of community support provided to aid the efforts of the Police Department in bringing back a canine unit for the area. This week the unit begins training on criminal apprehension and handler protection.

Alderperson Koester stated he attended a Life Saver Conference and will forward information on a bullet proof vest for the canine.

Water and Sewer

City Engineer Gallagher provided an update on pot-hole patching and stated it has been confirmed that the hot mix plant will open the first week in May to mid-May and, in the meantime, crews will be filling with cold patch.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Authorization for Grant Application to Freeport Community Foundation

Mayor Gitz provided a written memorandum which included a copy of a grant application submitted to the Community Foundation on March 20, 2015. He stated it is traditional for the Council to approve a grant application as well as to approve a grant when it is received from an outside funding source. The memo provided the following:

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“The grant application seeks to create a neighborhood clearinghouse for minor neighborhood improvements such as: clean up, painting, minor carpentry work, simple roof repairs, and other improvements that would benefit Freeport neighborhoods. The grant application includes a part-time coordinator and a budget for basic materials. The initial budget is \$20,000. The request is for \$10,000 to be matched by \$10,000 from the City, or other organizations. This would be used to fund a coordinator/intern to run the project and to supplement donations of materials needed to launch the project.

“The City has many volunteer organizations which address various issues ranging from clean up to minor repairs. However there is no central clearinghouse for identifying prospective resources and matching them to an identified need. Some organizations like Crossroads and Madmen do clean-up projects. Still other civic groups will occasionally do minor repair and painting.

“This grant seeks to create a clearinghouse of all community organizations and resources to match resources with need. In addition, the City is oriented towards demolitions, code enforcement, and nuisance citations. We also apply for community development grants for major rehabilitation of housing. However, the City lacks a program to assist single family homeowners who “fall between the cracks” of existing programs and grants. In addition, some level of home maintenance for seniors, the disabled, and the working poor who do not qualify for other programs might mitigate some housing maintenance problems before they become bigger issues.

“This program is not aimed at major housing rehabilitation issues or rental property repairs.”

Aldersperson Klemm provided information on work performed as community service by organizations such as “Mad Men” or church groups. He provided his support of this grant application as an effort to increase and expand resources on projects.

Aldersperson Endress made a motion for council to support the “Freeport Working Together” grant application submitted to the Freeport Community Foundation. This motion was seconded by Aldersperson Koester. The motion prevailed by a roll call vote of:

Yeas: Klemm, Boldt, DeVine, Endress, Brashaw, Koester, and Crutchfield (7)

Nays: none

OTHER

COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Council members were provided an opportunity to discuss matters of public concern or to make announcements for their wards. Members of the council encouraged residents to vote April 7, 2015 for both the aldermanic and school board elections.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AGENDA OR NON-AGENDA ITEMS

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Brian Borger, 1827 W. Canyon Drive, Freeport, Illinois, spoke as president of the Freeport Downtown Development Foundation and provided a summary of ideas FDDF is working on to put together plans to embrace the trails, boat launch and to strengthen tourism in the downtown. They are working on having the downtown more inviting for commerce purposes and shortly they will be ready to unveil those plans. He spoke about the events sponsored by FDDF including Music on Chicago and Brew Fest and the seriousness of creating liability and issues where alcohol is involve and its impact on the City, merchants, and FDDF. He asked council to keep an open mind on upcoming plans.

Andrew Chesney, 960 Woodside Terrace, Freeport, Illinois spoke regarding the April 7th aldermanic election and actions that could be made prior new council members taking office. His concern is about moving forward on a decision for a design build of the former Carnegie Library building before the swearing in ceremony on May 4th. He stated it would be a disservice to the citizens of Freeport if council acted on a \$2.0 million project and a decision where City Hall could be located. This would be disrespectful to the incoming aldermen, especially during a lame duck time period.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

s/ Meg Zuravel

Meg Zuravel
City Clerk