

Smith Center City Council Meeting Minutes

January 27, 2021

I. Call to Order

Mayor Bryce Wiehl called to order the regular meeting of the city council at 6pm on January 27, 2021.

II. Attendance

Council members Adam Rentschler, Don Wick, Tracy Kingsbury, Chris Cole, and Shawn Phelps.

Others: Tabitha Owen, Nick Rhodes, Eric and Hope Padilla, Diane Peterson, Brady Peterson Kim Phelps, Linda and David Edell, Terri Jones, Rick Hileman, Jamie Marshall, Kenneth Jones, Brad Howland, Brandon Hrabe, Janie Lanus, Deb Janzen, and Jill Conaway.

III. Consent Agenda

Motion by Rentschler, seconded by Wick, to approve the minutes from January 11, 2021 and the payment vouchers. Motion carried.

IV. Public Comment

- a) Brady Peterson, Chamber of Commerce, shared the 2020 expenses, 2021 budget and anticipated expenses, activities, and membership. Motion by Wick, seconded by Rentschler, to allot the Chamber of Commerce \$9,000 for the 2021 fiscal year; and thanked the Chamber members for their continued positive work in the community. Motion carried.

V. Superintendent Reports

- a) Economic Development -After an application review, a motion was made by Phelps, seconded by Rentschler, to approve a \$3,000 Storefront Grant to Brandon Hrabe at 102 N Main Street. Motion carried.
- b) Padilla addressed the council regarding the ongoing situation with Councilman Phelps and ultimately announced her resignation effective this week, Friday January 29th. A motion was made by Cole, seconded by Kingsbury, to accept Padilla's resignation. Motion carried. Phelps stated he would offer his rebuttal to the statement at the next meeting.
- c) Chairman Rhodes, advisory board member Peterson and former board members Hrabe and Howland spoke with the council on the current economic environment, views on the direction of the department, the director position, importance of council support to the department and community businesses.
- d) Kingsbury commended the city crew on snow removal.
- e) Conaway presented 2020 financial information on various city funds showing a decrease in revenues as well as savings seen in the decrease of expenditures in many funds compared to the prior year. It was also reported that the street sweeper has sold.

VI. Council Reports

- a) Rentschler-Departments Airport/Streets/Transit
Departments are all doing well. Transit reports an extremely busy schedule with a need for additional drivers, especially if KDOT approves an additional service van.
- b) Cole-Departments Fire/Police
Reported on repairs on the 2007 Charger.
- c) Wick-Departments Parks/Pool
Expressed appreciation for the economic development advisory board. In summary, Wick stated that even though decisions on economic development ultimately come to the city council for approval, he appreciates the time and work in making the recommendations that are brought to the council and hopes that discussion does not come across as a hinderance to their efforts.
- d) Phelps-Departments Golf/Rec Commission
Zoning-Phelps submitted a zoning violation complaint. As the mayor was the subject, Mayor Wiehl made a statement that he does not believe he is in violation of the zoning ordinance and considering current legal matters, excused himself from the meeting, asking President Rentschler to lead the meeting from this point forward. The complaint was read and discussed at great length. Discussion and clarifications on points of the zoning ordinance, abandoned vehicle ordinance, and nuisance ordinances commenced. On the complaint, Mayor Wiehl will be asked to address the issue with the Zoning Board, applying with that board for an exception if needed. The difficulty faced in enforcing some ordinances, and/or sections of ordinances was explained. Discussion continued as some issues that the city faces may hold a higher priority than others. Limited staff, community size and supply/demand were all noted as limitations in enforcement as well as need. The members stressed their desire for the community to look nice however there can be situations that do not have a clear remedy. Attorney Owen mentioned that in some cases a property owner may not have the financial means to remedy the issue and/or paying multiple fines that in the end do not alleviate the problem. As this method does not always work, maybe it's time that interested parties could form a volunteer group to help those in need.

Hileman stated that some properties in the commercial districts may not have businesses in them however they are kept up and look nice. Some members of the council agreed, and in their opinion, there are other more pressing items unless the properties are an eyesore, safety issue, or other equivalent issue. Jones explained the lengthy process members of the Planning Commission endured in writing the current zoning ordinance years ago. Often, administration alerts a property owner of a possible violation via letter and it is rectified.

Hileman discussed abandoned vehicles and how the city may be able to assist property owners in their disposal, if desired. Wick agreed and asked if the information can be shared with the public. Ultimately, Attorney Owen stated that she will review ordinances and state statutes and report back.

VII. Adjournment

Motion by Wick, seconded by Cole, to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:10pm.