

Mayor Katherine McCullough opened the City Council work session at 6:12pm. In attendance: Mayor McCullough, Council Members Dana Dominguez, Omar Martinez, Diane Beranek, Cara McFerren, and later Jose Zacarias. Also in attendance: City Manager Haugland, City Clerk Geertz, City Attorney Jamie Bosten, and Police Chief Werling.

City Council Work Session: No Action will be taken during the work session.

- A. Pursuant to Iowa Code Section 21.5 (1)(c), The Council would like to go into closed session to discuss strategy with counsel in matters that are presently in litigation or where litigation is imminent where its disclosure would be likely to prejudice or disadvantage the position of the government body in that litigation.

Motion to open closed session: McFerren/Dominguez Roll Call: Zacarias, Dominguez, McFerren, Martinez, and Beranek approved 5-0.

Motion to close: Zacarias/Martinez Roll Call: Zacarias, Dominguez, McFerren, Martinez, and Beranek.

- B. Pursuant to Iowa Code Section Iowa Code 21.5 (i) to Evaluate the Professional Competency of the Fire Chief Whose Appointment, Hiring, Performance, and Discharge is Being Considered.

Motion to table item B closed session due to time limit until February 1, 2022:

Martinez/Dominguez Roll Call: Martinez, McFerren, and Dominguez (absent from meeting during vote Beranek and Zacarias) approved 3-0.

Regular City Council meeting was called to order by Mayor Katie McCullough by roll call. Council Members present: Zacarias, Dominguez, McFerren, Martinez, and Beranek. Also in attendance: City Manager Haugland, City Clerk Geertz, Police Chief Werling, Communication Director Lane and Members of the West Liberty Volunteer Fire Department.

Meetings will be recorded

City Council approved the 01/18/2022 agenda: McFerren/Beranek 5-0

City Council Member McFerren motion to table Mayoral appointment of West Liberty Fire Chief Kirt Sickels until February 1 meeting agenda: McFerren/Beranek 4-1

This did include additional conversation with City Council Members and West Liberty Volunteer Fire Department members. Assistant Chief Tom (Dog) expressed he had reached out to Council to discuss. He expressed Chief Sickels is upset and has stated he would quit. Assistant Chief Sickels expressed if Chief Sickels quits this would create a domino effect of volunteers. Assist Chief Tom (Dog) believes the Chief is a good leader and expressed there is work to be done with the city administration. Council Member Zacarias added comments of concern of the situation, as for his vote of no he believes there is work needed to clarify the misunderstanding of the Fire Department is not an individual from the City. Zacarias communicated the financial funding and insurance coverage identifies the Fire Department is part of the City. Zacarias communicated he believes there is room for the mediation, and he reached out to West Liberty Rural Board Member Brand for discussion, but no reply. Retired

West Liberty Fire Member, Larry Miller addressed his support for Chief Sickels, but was upset by Jose Zacarias comments to the paper. Council Member Beranek added additional comments as there are two sides, leadership and accountability asked of Chief Sickels, but was not seen. Dominguez stated she received a report from the Chief about his performance, Beranek stated the performance evaluation was directed by Council not to be filed. Dominguez stated this should have been reviewed by Council. Dominguez stated this is a communication breakdown, as she stated the Chief has not received the information. Assist Fire Chief asked for a list of the items. McFerren asked if the Chief could or has reached out to the City Administration. City Clerk communicated there has been email communication between both. For more information on the conversation please see video located on the city's website.

City Council approved the Consent Agenda: McFerren/Beranek 5-0

Regular Council Meeting Minutes for January 04, 2022

City Council approved Mayor Katie McCullough proposed Proclamation presented by School Choice Week in WEST LIBERTY during January 23 – 29, 2022: McFerren/Dominguez 5-0

**City Council amended and approved** Vendor Voucher Claims List #1 in the amount of \$ 508,229.85: McFerren/Beranek 5-0

Discussion: McFerren asked on Jeff's Market, this was a claim for the West Liberty Fire Department training/meals. McFerren also inquired on the Domain Expenditure, and it was removed as the amount of \$238.00 to reduce the claims in the amendment. Council Member Dominguez inquired on the RPGI expense; City Manager stated this is for the purchase of wholesale electric for the City of West Liberty as we do not produce our own power for daily operations.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS AND/OR CORRESPONDENCE** This is the time set aside for comments from the public on topics of City Business other than those listed on the agenda. No action may be taken. Please state your name, address for the record, and keep your comments to no more than 2 minutes.

Mayor McCullough provided a statement prior to allowing public participants to take the floor. Please see the video of the meeting for full statement provided, Mayor asked for respect, control of emotions and no outburst would be acceptable.

Mindy Sickels Sterbenz provided a public statement as a member of the Volunteer Fire Department in support of the reconsideration of the appointment of the Chief Sickels. Mindy's entire statement can viewed on the video located on the city's website.

Council Member McFerren added she had received an email from Vanessa Espinosa with regards to the public sidewalk ordinance and quadrant she was concerned with. City Manager stated staff did follow up, and he is currently working on some conversations to look for ways to assist with clearing the sidewalks. Council Member Beranek received the same correspondence and added a few of her own. City Clerk communicated that Beranek's additional sidewalks had been recognized and noted.

OLD BUSINESS:

- A. City Council approved to file and received the 2022-2023 City of West Liberty Strategic Planning Goal Setting Report: Beranek/McFerren 5-0 Council Member McFerren asked if the outline of goals can be presented in a poster format to be displayed for City Council. City Clerk Geertz replied this can be established.
- B. City Council approved to table the with the West Liberty Volunteer Fire Department until February 1, 2022, to allow appropriate time with discussion with the City Attorney: Beranek/McFerren 5-0
- C. City Council approved Mayoral Committee Appointments for City Council Committees with the exception of the committee appointment of Ambulance and Public Safety Committee to allow the Mayor to have time to consider Jose Zacarias, Omar Martinez, and Dana Dominguez as only two can serve on the committee: Beranek/Zacarias 5-0  
Committees:  
Building/Grounds/Sidewalks: Beranek/McFerren  
Emergency 911 Board: Martinez  
Employee Policy and Grievance: McFerren/Zacarias  
Utility Committee: Beranek/McFerren  
Finance/Ordinance: McFerren/Zacarias  
Muscatine County Assessors Board: Mayor McCullough  
Muscatine Radio Users: Police Chief Werling  
Park/Rec Board: Martinez  
Library Board: Dominguez  
Mayor Pro Tem: Dominguez
- D. City Council approved an extension of the existing Ambulance 28E Agreement due to expire on February 1, 2022. Council Member Beranek motion to extend the extension by 180 days with a second by Zacarias: 5-0 correspondence of the extension will be prepared by legal and communicated.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- A. We Lead Director, Ken Brooks presented the West Liberty Economic Development Grant on behalf of Kasey Bell private business proposal located at the Dutton Complex. This will be a private business located on the Dutton Complex grounds with a future lease agreement prior to the development. City Council approved the Economic Development Grant in the amount of \$25,000 matching funds for the said project: Beranek/Zacarias 5-0
- B. City Clerk Geertz presented a memo to identify a change in City Hall Administration operational hours to the public and staff schedules. City Council approved the City Hall Administration Public Access Hours as 8:00am until 5:00pm, Monday through Friday. All service will be available in person except for reconnection or disconnection due to the utility operations hours end of day is at 3:30pm: McFerren/Dominguez 5-0

Engineer Leo Foley of Veenstra and Kimm provided communication have continued on the Maxson/Rainbow options. We have reached out to have a few discussions about the sidewalks with the residents along the street. The Well #2 project has been delayed yet again

due to weather. Hopefully, we see this completed by March. I will have a follow up to Council on February 1<sup>st</sup> meeting for the Maxson/Rainbow project.

City Staff Minutes was presented with no additional comments. Council Member Beranek added she had inquired on the delivery of the second portion of the columbaria. City Clerk Geertz stated there was more discussion to be had with Heath, Reinhardt and contractor on the placement of the columbarium in order not to cause potential damage or shifting.

City Council adjourned the meeting at 8:45pm: Beranek/McFerren 5-0

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Katie McCullough, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Lee Geertz, City Clerk