

December 22, 2020
Springfield, Missouri

The City Council met in special session December 22, 2020 in the Council Chambers at Historic City Hall. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Ken McClure.

Roll Call

Present. Andrew Lear*, Abe McGull, Matthew Simpson, Mike Schilling, Phyllis Ferguson*, Jan Fisk*, Craig Hosmer, Richard Ollis, and Ken McClure. Absent. None.

*Members attending via videoconference.

Mayor McClure noted both the City Manager Report and Public Health Director Report would be conducted after Emergency Bills.

The following bills appeared on the agenda under Second Reading Bills.

**Collective
Bargaining
Agreement with
Fire Fighters
Local 152**

Sponsor: McGull. Council Bill 2020-303.

A special ordinance approving a Collective Bargaining Agreement by and between the City and Southern Missouri Professional Fire Fighters Local 152, the Bargaining Unit of the Springfield Fire Department; and authorizing the City Manager, or his designee, to execute and deliver the Collective Bargaining Agreement on behalf of the City to the Bargaining Unit.

Mayor McClure noted first reading was held at the December 14, 2020 City Council meeting.

Councilman Simpson expressed his support for the proposed and for the other second reading bills being considered. He thanked City staff for their support in compiling the proposed bills relating to the collective bargaining agreements and salary increases for City employees, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Council Bill 2020-303. Special Ordinance 27446 was approved by the following vote: Ayes: McGull, Simpson, Schilling, Ferguson, Fisk, Hosmer, Ollis, Lear, and McClure. Nays: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

**1st Amendment
to the Collective
Bargaining
Agreement with
International
Brotherhood of
Electrical
Workers, Local
753**

Sponsor: Fisk. Council Bill 2020-304.

A special ordinance approving the First Amendment to the Collective Bargaining Agreement by and between the City and the Bargaining Unit of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local No. 753 affiliated with the AFL-CIO; and authorizing the City Manager, or his designee, to execute and deliver the First Amendment on behalf of the City to the Bargaining Unit.

Mayor McClure noted first reading was held at the December 14, 2020 City Council meeting.

Council Bill 2020-304. Special Ordinance 27447 was approved by the following vote: Ayes: Simpson, Schilling, Ferguson, Fisk, Hosmer, Ollis, Lear, McGull, and McClure. Nays: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

3rd Amendment to the Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 22

Sponsor: Schilling. Council Bill 2020-305.

A special ordinance approving the Third Amendment to the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the City and the Springfield Police Officers' Association, Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 22; and authorizing the City Manager, or his designee, to execute and deliver the Third Amendment on behalf of the City to the Bargaining Unit.

Mayor McClure noted first reading was held at the December 14, 2020 City Council meeting.

Council Bill 2020-305. Special Ordinance 27448 was approved by the following vote: Ayes: Schilling, Ferguson, Fisk, Hosmer, Ollis, Lear, McGull, Simpson, and McClure. Nays: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

Salary Ordinance

Sponsor: Ferguson. Council Bill 2020-306.

A general ordinance amending the Springfield City Code, Chapter 2, Article III, Division 1, Section 2.92, known as the 'Salary Ordinance,' relating to salary grades for various job titles within the City service as contained in the Professional, Administrative and Technical Schedules by making provision for eight new job titles; providing pay adjustments for employees on the Professional, Administrative and Technical Schedules and Crafts, Trades and Labor Non-Union Schedule and for certain non-union salary grades in the Fire Protection and Law Enforcement Schedules; and amending the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 budget of the City.

Mayor McClure noted first reading was held at the December 14, 2020 City Council meeting.

Council Bill 2020-306. General Ordinance 6629 was approved by the following vote: Ayes: Ferguson, Fisk, Hosmer, Ollis, Lear, McGull, Simpson, Schilling, and McClure. Nays: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

Mayor McClure thanked Jason Gage, Darla Morrison, and City staff involved in drafting and executing the various collective bargaining agreements and salary increases for City employees during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The following bill appeared on the agenda under Emergency Bills.

Forgive Economic Development Business Assistance Loans pursuant to Special Ordinance 27336

Sponsor: Simpson. Council Bill 2020-309.

A special ordinance authorizing the City Manager, or his designee, to forgive Economic Development Business Assistance loans made pursuant to Special Ordinance 27336 and funded through the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security Act emergency funding; and directing the City Manager to provide any remaining funds allocated by Special Ordinance 27336 for Economic Development Business Assistance as grants instead of as forgivable loans; and declaring an emergency pursuant to City Charter Section 2.12. (Staff recommend approval.)

Brendan Griesemer, Planning and Development Assistant Director, provided an overview of the proposed. Mr. Griesemer noted the proposed would make this program consistent with the recently approved program approved by City Council on December 14, 2020 that established the Round 3 of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) – CV Business Assistance funds as grants. He further noted the proposed would not require any

payback from businesses that have received these forgivable loans and would convert them to grants upon passage of the proposed.

There were no questions or comments from the City Council.

An opportunity was given for citizens to express their views. There being no speakers, the public hearing was declared closed.

Council Bill 2020-309. Special Ordinance 27449 was approved by the following vote: Ayes: Fisk, Hosmer, Ollis, Lear, McGull, Simpson, Schilling, Ferguson, and McClure. Nays: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

City Manager Report

Jason Gage, City Manager, updated the City Council pertaining to the City and Springfield Police responding on Friday, December 18, 2020 to a makeshift homeless camp on private property located on East Kearney. He noted some information has been provided to the City Council for their review. He noted there are administrative protocols in place regarding the handling of homeless camps. He noted the protocols were established in 2014, and the City, Springfield Police, and the Community Partnership of the Ozarks' One Door, continue to work together to assist individuals who must be notified they need to move from a location. He reiterated this protocol was carried out this past Friday, December 18, 2020, on East Kearney due to the City receiving a complaint about homeless campers trespassing on private property.

Mr. Gage discussed there is some misinformation being circulated on social media about the response that occurred this past Friday. He noted there is a flyer entitled "Where Do They Go?" circulating that depicts an officer displacing homeless, which is not a Springfield Police officer in the photo.

Mr. Gage noted Springfield Police did not remove any homeless belongings on Friday, December 18, 2020, but did provide information at the tents where no one was present, so when individuals return to their tent, they would know how to receive assistance from One Door for vacating the private premise on East Kearney. Mr. Gage further noted individuals are provided approximately 24-hours to vacate a premise after notification has been received.

Mr. Gage expressed the City nor Springfield Police is not conducting homeless camp sweeps in the City, but the City does respond to complaint requests received from citizens.

Mr. Gage commended the Springfield Police for their response on Friday, December 18, 2020 on East Kearney.

Mr. Gage referenced the past letter from the local NAACP's Economic Justice Task Force about tent and tarp areas possibly being located for the homeless in the community, which the City has responded to. He discussed there are some locations providing shelter assistance to the homeless during the cold weather months. Mr. Gage expressed his belief these warming shelters have not yet received capacity. He noted a couple of additional warming shelters have also been approved and will be providing services to the homeless soon.

Mr. Gage noted the City is a partner with One Door and the Ozarks Alliance to End Homelessness and is committed to helping and supporting local organizations and agencies who are dedicated to helping the homeless. He further noted he does not feel the City should provide social service to individuals, because this is not the City's role.

Councilman McGull asked for clarification whether the City helps provide any financial assistance to the entities or organizations dedicated to helping assist the homeless in the community. Mr. Gage discussed the City helps provide grant opportunities through the City's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program to local entities and organizations via an application process to possibly receive funding for their programs, such as serving homeless individuals. He noted the City is also a partner with One Door and the Ozarks Alliance to End Homelessness.

Councilman McGull asked for clarification whether a report for accountability is provided to the City from these organization about the number of individuals being served. Mr. Gage noted the City does receive information from the various entities and organizations that receives CDBG monies.

Councilman Schilling asked for clarification whether the Ozark Empire Fairgrounds could be utilized as a shelter facility for the homeless during the cold weather months. Mr. Gage noted the Ozarks Empire Fairgrounds is leased out, so it would be at their discretion whether to have this property considered as a homeless shelter facility for the cold weather months. He further noted there are some indoor event activities held at the Ozarks Empire Fairgrounds during the cold weather months but does not believe all the building structures are being utilized at this time.

Councilman Simpson asked for clarification regarding the number of individuals utilizing hotel and motel rooms and are hotel and motel rooms still being difficult to find to help serve the homeless population. Mr. Gage expressed his belief approximately 130 homeless individuals are being served with hotel and motel accommodations at this time. He added hotel and motel room availability is still difficult to acquire to help shelter the homeless, which are at a significantly discounted rate.

Mr. Gage noted having the volunteer staff available to help assist with sheltering services at the homeless warming shelters is also difficult during this time due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Councilman Simpson asked for clarification whether there are any options available to help bridge-the-gap until further CARES Act monies can be made available to help with servicing the homeless population. Mr. Gage discussed the City does have options available, such as the City's budget contingency fund, so if immediate and emergency funding is needed to help with sheltering the homeless due to capacity issues at the warming shelters, these funds could be utilized if needed.

Councilman Ollis asked for clarification whether there are a couple of additional warming shelters available to help the homeless population, which will help increase capacity soon. Mr. Gage noted a temporary campground area, which has been approved, will also help provide temporary housing assistance with small trailers for the homeless during the cold weather months.

Councilman Ollis asked for clarification whether the City has a "camping ban." Mr. Gage discussed the City, like other jurisdictions, has restrictions on where individuals can camp, such as zoning for campgrounds, with some exceptions, such as kids camping in their backyard for the night. The City does have a Zoning Ordinance, which outlines the zoning for property uses within the city.

Councilman Ollis asked for clarification whether the City continues to support entities and organizations who help assist the homeless in the community. Mr. Gage answered affirmatively and reiterated the City does have a CDBG program and has also received CARES Act funding to help assist with various issues, such as addressing homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic. He noted the demand for social services programs in the community, such as for homeless assistance, seems to be increasing every year.

Councilman Lear expressed his support for the City providing immediate and emergency funding to help provide services, such as staffing assistance at the warming shelters, to the homeless population until additional CARES Act funding can be made available to the City. He noted since warming shelters are available to the homeless, he does not believe tents or tarps should be utilized during the cold weather as a possible solution for housing the homeless due to the other indoor alternatives at this time.

Councilman Hosmer asked for clarification whether an annual census of the homeless population is conducted in the community. Mr. Gage discussed CPO has a lot of useful information available on their website, particularly regarding the issue of homelessness within the community. Councilman Simpson expressed his belief an annual census is conducted regarding the homeless population on one day each January.

Councilman Hosmer expressed his belief the Police Department and Fire Department personnel deal with many homeless issues on a regular basis, while they should be doing policing within the community as opposed to social service duties, which they should not be regularly addressing. He noted a social work position may be needed in the Police Department to help with assisting with social services resources for individuals, such as the homeless population, so police officers can police the community for public safety.

Paul Williams, Police Chief, discussed the Police Department is the “defacto” agency that responds to issues 24-hours a day 7 days a week. He noted the Police tries to connect individuals with various services, such as for mental health and substance abuse issues, when needed. Chief Williams further noted a police officer deals with other issues not related to law enforcement probably approximately 75-80%.

Chief Williams discussed a working group has been formed with various organizations to help discuss the “co-responder model,” which generally involves law enforcement and clinicians working together in response to calls for service involving individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis, for appropriate alternatives to arrest as well as additional options to respond to non-criminal calls for service. He noted this will not be an easy task for a possible solution.

Councilman Hosmer asked for clarification regarding the amount of time police respond to with other issues, such as handling individuals with mental health related issues. Chief Williams noted nationally, a police officer handles other issues, such as mental and substance abuse issues not associated with policing, approximately 75-80% of their time.

Mayor McClure asked Chief Williams to address the Behavioral Crisis Center - Rapid Access Unit. Chief Williams noted Burrell Behavioral Health instituted a 24 hour a day, 7 days a week Behavioral Crisis Center – Rapid Access Unit, which started in June 2020. He noted this unit is a walk-in crisis access point for individuals in need of immediate psychiatric care, medication-assisted treatment for opioid use, psychiatric assessment, initial assessment

eligibility determination, brief therapy, peer support services, 23-hour observation, referral to appropriate follow-up treatment, and more. Chief Williams expressed his belief this unit has helped reduce the number of individuals going to the local hospital emergency units by 30-35%. He commended and thanked Burrell Behavioral Health and local leaders who were instrumental in creating the Rapid Access Unit.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferguson asked for clarification whether any of the local commercial campgrounds have been contacted to inquire if they would consider helping provide shelter housing as an option for the homeless if needed. Mr. Gage noted he is not aware of any local commercial campground areas being considered as an option for sheltering the homeless.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferguson asked for clarification whether the option of implementing a database has been considered. She noted it could provide quick access for providers, utilizing real-time information regarding available capacity at shelters. Chief Williams noted, currently, police officers rely on dispatch, who has the various numbers of service providers, to check the availability for services. He further noted this could be an option to consider if the various providers would be interested in participating. He expressed his belief Community Partnership of the Ozarks is currently compiling a database of information regarding the various homeless providers at this time. Mayor Pro Tem Ferguson expressed her opinion a database that shows information, such as available rooms at shelters for intake admission at a quick glance would be beneficial for dispatch and providers.

Councilman Simpson commended Chief Williams, Springfield Police, and Burrell Behavioral Health for their efforts regarding the Behavioral Crisis Center - Rapid Access Unit, as well as the recent recognition from the Southwest Missouri National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) to the Springfield Police Department with their Community Partner of the Year award.

Mayor McClure expressed his belief the state should implement the Rapid Access Unit model to help with the issue of mental health across the state.

Councilman Lear asked for clarification if there is a set temperature required by the City to approve shelters for operating during the cold weather. Mr. Gage noted there is no specific cold temperature by the City for the various approved warming shelters to open for the homeless, but he believes most are opening a warming shelter when the temperature is 32 degrees or below. He further noted due to COVID-19 there are more restrictive capacity restrictions that must be implemented for the warming shelters and some warming shelters are having difficulty finding volunteers for staffing. Councilman Lear expressed his opinion the City is not equipped for handling social services issues, and there are other organizations the City works with, such as CPO, who are skilled with implementing services to the homeless.

Mayor McClure asked City staff to continue working with the various organizations regarding sheltering the homeless during the cold weather, and keep the City Council updated. Mr. Gage answered affirmatively and noted he would provide additional information to the City Council in the future.

**Public Health
Director Report**

Clay Goddard, Springfield/Greene County Health Director, gave a COVID-19 update. Mr. Goddard discussed two COVID-19 vaccines, Pfizer and Moderna, have been approved and have been received in limited quantities locally for immunizing some local healthcare workers at Mercy and Cox Healthcare.

Mr. Goddard noted approximately 431 individuals have committed to the Finish Strong pledge at this time. He asked everyone to please consider taking the Finish Strong pledge and be vigilant with handwashing, social distancing, wearing a mask or face covering, and to get the COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes available.

Mr. Goddard noted the Health Department has posted information on their website about how to navigate the upcoming Christmas holiday safely to minimize the spread of COVID-19.

Mr. Goddard discussed on Friday, the local hospitals have approximately 194 positive COVID-19 cases, and today, there are approximately 206 positive cases with 51 of those in Intensive Care and 34 on ventilators. He noted out of the 206 individuals, 96 of those are Greene County residents. Mr. Goddard further noted there have been 94 COVID-19 related deaths during the month of December at this time.

Mr. Goddard noted the Health Department is expecting the number of COVID-19 positive cases to increase with the upcoming Christmas holiday.

Councilman Simpson asked for clarification whether the current vaccinations would protect against known mutations of COVID-19. Mr. Goddard noted there have been a few other mutations of COVID-19 found world-wide but believes the vaccines will still help immunize individuals. He further noted scientists are keeping a watchful eye, and if the local Health Department receives additional information, they will pass it along.

Mayor McClure thanked Mr. Gage and Mr. Goddard for today's updates and wished everyone a Happy Holiday season.

Closed Session

Councilman Simpson moved City Council hold a closed meeting to discuss legal actions, causes of action or litigation involving a public governmental body and any confidential or privileged communications between a public governmental body or its representatives and its attorneys pursuant to Section 610.021(1), RSMo.; and this meeting, record, and vote shall be closed, and the City Council shall stand adjourned at the end of the closed session.

Councilman McGull seconded the motion, and it was approved by the following vote: Ayes: Hosmer, Ollis, Lear, McGull, Simpson, Ferguson, Fisk, and McClure. Nays: None. Absent: Schilling*. Abstain: None.

Clerk's Note: *Councilman Schilling left at approximately 1:03 p.m.

Prepared by
Anita Baker

Anita J. Cotter, CMC/MRCC
City Clerk