



# City of **SANDWICH, ILLINOIS**

City Hall Annex · 128 East Railroad Street

## **Committee-of-the-Whole Council Meeting**

*December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021 @ 7:00 PM*

## MINUTES

Mayor Latham called the meeting to order at 7:12 PM. Roll call was taken:

**Present:** Mayor Latham, City Clerk Ii; Aldermen Fritsch, Holcomb, Johnson, Killey, Kreinbrink, Littlebrant, Robinson & Whitecotton

Quorum established.

**Also Present:** City Attorney Harrill, Chief Bianchi & City Treasurer Dell

Absent: EMA Director Ciciora & City Official Steffens

### Mayor Latham:

1. Ordinance 2021-18 entitled "Ordinance Abating the Tax Heretofore Levied for 2021 to Pay the Debt Service on a Portion of \$5,600,000 General Obligation Waterworks Refunding Bonds (Alternate Revenue Source) of the City of Sandwich, DeKalb and Kendall Counties, IL" presented for first reading. Rather than use levied tax money, the City will continue to make annual payments via budgetary line item #300.0000.95.5900 "Debt Retirement". The Ordinance will be placed on next week's agenda for passage.
2. Ordinance 2021-19 entitled "Ordinance Abating the Tax Heretofore Levied for 2021 to Pay the Debt Service on a Portion (not to exceed) of \$3,500,000 General Obligation Bonds (Alternative Revenue Source) of the City of Sandwich, DeKalb and Kendall Counties, IL" presented for first reading. The abatement is for the bonds on the public safety building, and the City would not be levying for the debt service. Mayor Latham expressed concern that if the City abates too many taxes, the City risks lowering fund balances and operating cash. A third bond will be added in the future for the waste water plant, and raises the question if the City will have enough funds to abate the taxes. The Mayor further explained that taxes could be abated alternating years by ordinance or resolution.
3. Proposal for Workers Compensation Renewal Insurance Premium: The annual premium will increase by \$9,249.00 over the current premium to \$173,391.00. The Council will approve authorization for the Mayor to sign the renewal documentation next week.

**Foster, Buick, Conklin & Lundgren Law Group:** Attorney Harrill announced that she will be leaving the Foster & Buick law firm. Her last council meeting will be Monday, December 13<sup>th</sup>.

**City Clerk Li** distributed the proposed holiday and meetings schedules for 2022. She reminded the Council that meeting times can be adjusted prior to approval at the next meeting.

Clerk Li also recognized the passing of Sandwich icon Larry Phillips who was a long-time owner of Grandpa's Pumpkins and community leader. Mr. Phillips died on November 29<sup>th</sup> at the age of 92.

**City Treasurer Dell** thanked Brian Voelkel for assisting Shabbona set up a program used by Sandwich (related to the fire department). This helped them with OSHA visits, developing safety policies, harassment training, etc. Treasurer Dell said it is always welcomed to receive positive feedback on City employees regarding public service.

City Auditor, Bill Newkirk (Newkirk & Associates) presented the annual audit ending April 30, 2021. Funds were explained including weaknesses within the city hall office realm. It is not unusual to have a check and balance challenge with a small staff but Council needs to be made aware of the issue.

**City Department Reports:**

EMA Director Ciciora: Absent

Chief Bianchi: No report

Engineering: Randy Newkirk from HLR (Hampton, Lenzini & Renwick) was present to provide an update and timeline on outstanding projects. Referencing the Latham Street project, an agreement with IDOT will require authorization for the Mayor to sign. Estimated total construction costs is \$3,079,765.50. Utility relocation will be during the winter months of 2021, and project letting by IDOT will be on January 21, 2022. Projected construction will begin in March / April, 2022.

The estimated cost on the Main Street project (between Center to Second Streets) has an estimated cost of \$1,225,000.00. There is an estimated \$150,000.00 cost for contaminated soil disposal resulting from a leaking underground tank at the Shell located on Main Street. Several aldermen questioned why the property owner would not be held responsible for EPA issues. Improvements for the project include new sidewalks, new curb and gutter, new lighting, and new hot-mix asphalt pavement.

US Route 34 traffic signals project will use \$165,000.00 of MFT (Motor Fuel Tax) funds. Improvements include new traffic signals and equipment throughout the City and traffic signal interconnect. This project will be part of the overall Route 34 improvements scheduled for 2022.

Other projects include the HMA (hot-mix asphalt) that includes a portion of Countyline Road. The City has entered into an intergovernmental agreement with Somonauk. Estimated cost of MFT funds is \$275,000.00. The PCC project (plain cement concrete) for various areas of the City will also utilize estimated MFT funds totaling \$280,000.00. The Pratt Road bridge project funding is estimated at \$1,700,000.00. The City will be responsible for 20% of the cost. Engineering will start in 2022 with the construction goal in 2024. This would be a total bridge replacement.

**Aldermen Reports:**

Alderman Fritsch would like a discussion at the December 20<sup>th</sup> COW meeting on the pro's and con's of hiring a city manager. He also expressed concern on the possible underground gas leak at the Shell station on Main Street.

Alderman Holcomb stated that he would like to see a first reading of the proposed golf cart / side-by-side ordinance at next week's meeting.

Alderwoman Killey raised significant concerns on the City's computers and requested an update on the problems. City computers had viruses that led to spoofing a week ago. Mayor Latham has requested Reliable Computer Service to provide a timeline of events and what steps are being taken to remedy the problem.

Alderwoman Killey thanked the City Hall staff noting the stress they work under on a regular basis and now compounded with computer issues. She added the office is understaffed but is very responsible, trustworthy and doing a tremendous job under pressure. City Clerk Li thanked Alderwoman Killey for her kind words.

Alderman Kreinbrink gave an update on the Budget Committee meeting of November 29<sup>th</sup> noting a point of discussion was how to utilize ARPA (America Rescue Plan Act) funds. Suggestions included IT and cyber security, flooding, sewer backups, sidewalks and some downtown assistance by conducting upgrades for ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance and facade beautification. Another suggestion was to assist in expanding businesses or bring new businesses into town. Fund balances were also discussed leaning toward a 50% fund balance allowing for unexpected emergencies. Upon reviewing the October financials, it was noted that revenues were higher than anticipated and expenditures were less. The next budget meeting is tentatively scheduled for December 15<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 PM.

Alderman Kreinbrink also thanked the ladies in the office noting it is often difficult dealing with indignant residents.

**Announcements:** The Finance Committee Meeting will meet immediately following the Committee-of-the-Whole Meeting on December 6, 2021.

Mayor Latham announced that December 6<sup>th</sup> was the last day to submit for surplus property of Lot 2 of Fairwind Crossing. Any submittals will be brought before the Council next week for consideration.

The leaf program has been extended one week and will conclude on Friday, December 10<sup>th</sup>.

Mayor Latham will be meeting with Chairman Scott Gryder (Kendall County Board) regarding the water park property. Progress is being made on mitigating back taxes on the property.

**Audience Comments:** WSPY correspondent Jim Wyman asked questions pertaining to the leaf pickup extension, the new tax levy, the audit presentation, and matters related to the Gletty Road cleanup.

**Adjournment:** There being no further business to come before the Council, **motion made by Alderman Robinson and seconded by Alderman Holcomb to adjourn the Committee-of-the-Whole council meeting at 8:31 PM. Motion carried unanimously on voice vote.**

/s/ Denise Li – City Clerk