

City Council Meeting Minutes

Webster City, Iowa September 4, 2008

The City Council met in a special session at the City Hall, Webster City, Iowa, at 9:00 a.m. September 4, 2008 upon call of the Mayor and the advance agenda. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Eugene C. Gray and roll being called there were present Eugene C. Gray, Mayor and the following named Council Members: Janet Adams, Melissa Borer, Mark Gillette and Jerry Kloberdanz.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

It was moved by Adams and seconded by Kloberdanz to approve the agenda.
ROLL CALL: Gillette, Gray, Kloberdanz, Adams and Borer voting aye.

PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, REQUESTS

Mayor Gray reminded Council of an invitation the Council had received to the upcoming Community and Family Resources open house in Ft. Dodge.

GENERAL AGENDA

1. The Council focused on the process creating a specific Code of Ethics and Conduct for Council members. Mayor Gray referred to various such policies in other communities in Iowa and across the country. Mayor Gray also read portions of a letter submitted from City Attorney Gary Groves, which directed and clarified certain key issues for the Council to consider as Council goes about adopting, implementing and enforcing such a policy.

Councilwoman Borer brought up a concern regarding how the Code of Conduct would be implemented after issues have already come about. Mayor Gray believed that it could work similar to a dress code in school after an incident, which often proves successful.

Council then discussed the idea of going on a retreat to resolve issues related to much of the conflict among Council members.

Ed Sadler cited the Brandon Hayes issue as an example of when a Code of Conduct and Ethics would be necessary.

Councilwoman Borer suggested all Boards and Commissions as well as City Staff be included in such a policy.

The Council also discussed how Conflict of Interest procedures would be outlined in the policy. Issues such as intimidation, presence in the room and the purpose and relevance of abstaining from voting in conflict of interest cases, as well as State Law requirements.

Councilwoman Borer suggested changing vote passage requirements since often Council tends to vote along 3-2 lines, which could help with a more unanimous decision being required. City Manager Ed Sadler stated that it could possibly conflict with state law.

Council then discussed the issue of living under certain Council made decisions, while not personally agreeing, yet being able to be civil about it, instead of inappropriately speaking against it once outside of the Council's presence.

Councilwoman Adams suggested that when interacting with the media, Council members can be very clear clarifying their personal viewpoint, while also acknowledging what the decision or law actually is and that is what stands in spite of their viewpoint.

Council also discussed how to handle personal correspondences from constituents to their home as compared with receiving them at City Hall. And when and how to answer questions that only the City Manager can correctly answer.

Ed Sadler expressed frustration in regards to comments made about him and to him that interfere with and harm the community, in regards to Council member interaction with the public. Councilwoman Borer stated that it was a difference in governing philosophy.

Council agreed that certain steps should be taken regarding sanctions in response to violations of the code.

The Council then came to a consensus that City Attorney Gary Groves should put together a document and come back to the council with it in the near future.

Mayor Gray wanted to remind the Council and the Public that putting this code together will be a long process and most likely wouldn't be ready until early next year.

The Council then discussed setting down dedication criteria for streets, parks, monuments, etc. Ed Sadler suggested that nominations papers be filed and lists could then be compiled when the community believes a member of the community deserves to have something named in their honor. Other criteria such as timeframes and who will decide, were also discussed.

OTHER ITEMS

City Manager Ed Sadler reminded everyone that new water softener replacement parts would be delivered soon and that Siemens will install them at the Water Plant.

Sadler also reminded everyone that a new T.V. camera system will be installed in the chambers the week of September 8th.

Sadler also reminded everyone that the trail will open September 27th.

It was moved by Adams and seconded by Gillette that Council adjourn.
ROLL CALL: Gray, Kloberdanz, Adams, Borer and Gillette voting aye.

Council stood adjourned at 10:38 a.m.