

OCTOBER 9, 2006
CITY OF MARENGO
COUNCIL MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

At 7:05 p.m., Mayor Lockhart called to order the October 9, 2006, Marengo City Council meeting. He then led the "Pledge of Allegiance".

ROLL CALL

Mayor Lockhart, Alderman Jennings, Alderman Shelton, Alderman Otis, Alderman Trainor, Alderman Genot and Alderman Secor were present for roll call. Alderman Spear and Alderman Signore were absent.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No one addressed the members.

NEW BUSINESS

Alderman Genot asked to have item f, Discussion of Development and Annexation Fees, removed from the agenda as he felt due to the importance of this item, it should be discussed at a Committee of the Whole meeting. The other members agreed and decided to have this meeting, Monday, October 30, at 6:00 p.m.

Administrator Hartman advised on October 24, Grand Pointe Homes will just be having their public hearing. The members will not be voting on anything.

APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 25, 2006, CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

Alderman Otis made a motion to approve the Sept. 25, 2006, Council minutes. It was seconded by Alderman Secor. Voting aye were Aldermen: Shelton, Trainor, Genot, Jennings, Otis and Secor. Motion passed.

LIST OF BILLS

Alderman Genot made and Alderman Jennings seconded a motion to approve the October, 2006, List of Bills, as presented. Alderman Otis had a question regarding a reimbursable bill for Marengo Auto Body & Glass that Chief Kottke answered.

The motion passed with an aye voice vote from Alderman: Jennings, Otis, Secor, Shelton, Trainor, and Genot.

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RILEY SCHOOD DISTRICT 18 PRESENTATION

Dr. Ronald Rood, Brian Cash, Finance Chairperson and Donna Wardzala, Vice President of the Board of Education for Riley School District #18 were in attendance to inform those present of their November 7 tax referendum.

They have not had a tax rate increase in eighteen years and have the lowest tax rate in McHenry County. Due to this, they are in debt over \$1,000,000 and have been on the State's Financial Watch list for the last several years.

They are asking for an additional forty-three cent tax increase which if approved, will still be the second lowest tax rate in McHenry County at \$2.29. If this referendum is defeated as the last several have been, the State could take over and raise the tax rate to the maximum of \$3.50 per \$100 of Equalized Assessed Value.

The Board has a balanced budget this year but in order to do so, they had to eliminate several teaching positions which they can't continue to do every year. The Board feels this time around they really have the involvement of the parents who are going door to door. Their main focus right now is going to governing bodies like the Council to get the correct information out to the public.

SPECIAL EVENTS SIGN PLACEMENT APPROVAL

The Marengo Society for Historic Preservation has requested to erect four special event signs for the upcoming appearance of the Washington D.C. Air Force Band that will be coming to Marengo on October 20.

Alderman Genot suggested in the future, the Building Commissioner could make this decision with the consent of the City Administrator. Building Commissioner Shull advised the current code stipulates any special event must be approved by the members. His suggestion could be done but then the code will have to be changed.

Commissioner Shull recommended as a matter of practice, to leave the code as is as this way the members would be aware of an event and where the signs would be placed.

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It was the consensus of the members that it was nice to be aware of what is going on and a change in the code could be made if deemed appropriate.

Alderman Shelton made and Alderman Trainor seconded a motion to allow the placement of the special event signs as requested providing the placement of such temporary signs do not hinder the view of the vehicular traffic. The motion passed with an aye voice vote from Alderman: Shelton, Trainor, Genot, Secor, and Jennings. Alderman Otis abstained.

RATIFICATION OF ELECTRICITY SUPPLY CONTRACT

Administrator Hartman stated he received an e mail on Thursday recommending we shouldn't participate in the scheduled auction being held the next day because of some of the events coming down with the Madigan lawsuit in connection with the ComEd rate increase.

At it turned out, the auction on Friday from NIEMC didn't happen. They delayed it until tomorrow, Oct. 10th. Based on the events from today's Electric Supply Utility Committee meeting and a confirmation he is still waiting for, he felt we would be in a position tomorrow to entertain a contract if deemed favorable for the City.

His intention/recommendation would be to make a decision when the bid results come in to see what the best savings would be for the City and move forward with a contract.

The feeling and confirmation he wants to get is that the commercial rate will probably get pulled out due to the Madigan issue and will specifically address residential rates. If that is the case, we must take advantage of the window and current market as it is going up. No one knows where it will be in November.

We could wait for the outcome of the ComEd/Madigan issue if the members so desired. Administrator Hartman asked the members which direction they wanted him to take as either direction they go, there is going to be a risk involved. He felt now would be the time to take advantage of the option.

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Most of the other communities in NIEMC are anticipating to participate in tomorrow's auction.

Treasurer Hall agreed with Administrator Hartman and stated ComEd has dropped their bond status down two levels just on the idea that something may happen. This would put them at junk status.

It was the consensus of the members to go along with the authorization previously given to Administrator Hartman to move forward with an agreement that was in the best interest of the City. The agreement will be ratified by them on Oct. 23rd.

OLD BUSINESS

ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF THE INDIAN TRAILS VEHICULAR CONTROL CONTRACT

Ted Seyfarth of Indian Trails has requested this item be removed from the agenda.

HEALTH INSURANCE RENEWAL

Alderman Shelton distributed a renewal financial analysis. He, Administrator Hartman and Mike Kozenmzak of Invision Benefits met with City employees to discuss the renewal options for their health insurance and to explain how the HRA program worked. He felt it was a productive meeting and throughout the meeting, felt everyone was working toward a solution. It wasn't an adversarial situation. The employees gave consent to move forward with the HRA idea.

Information was supplied to the employees last Friday on the HRA and what it would entail for them and basically asked for a vote of consent or not. The information was to be turned in by today. Twenty seven people had responded with twenty six indicating they were willing to move forward with the HRA if things continued to look as they thought it would.

He explained the concept they were looking at. It has been narrowed down to two considerations. One is to go with an HRA program; the other is to stay where we are at.

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He explained what the City will be liable for, how the employees will pay more for their prescriptions and how the feeling is that the HRA is as close as we could come without a non issue change in coverage.

The cost to the City for the HRA program will result in a savings to the City and to the employee with dependent coverage. From an informal survey taken by Deputy Treasurer Snelten and in talking to Mike of Invision, Alderman Shelton felt we would be at the 40% level for reimbursement which means we could anticipate a savings of 7% with the HRA. He thought there would be savings down the line and the mood is that the City needed to make some kind of change. Down the road, if we find this is not working the way we would like it to, we can basically go back to where we are at per Mike from Invision.

After going over the summary/analysis, Alderman Shelton asked the members if they would like to proceed. He stated there is a risk involved if all the employees would be reimbursed. Although the likelihood of this is slim, it still exists.

Alderman Secor stated if the vast number of employees were in favor, so was he as he felt the risk wasn't that large and was it was worth the gamble. He also thanked Alderman Shelton for the time he put into this.

Alderman Genot felt Alderman Shelton put a lot of work into this and with the information provided, he had a better understanding of the issue. He stated it looked like this would save the City money as well as the employees.

Alderman Trainor agreed if the majority of the people he met with were satisfied with it, she was as well as she trusted his judgment as an insurance agent.

Alderman Otis and Alderman Jennings were in agreement with their colleageaues.

Mayor Lockhart thanked Alderman Shelton as the Mayor knew he put a lot of time and effort into this and did a fine job. He felt this was as close to a win/win as we could possibly get and in his opinion, thought we should try it, evaluate it in a year and see what happens.

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Administrator Hartman advised if the members were in agreement, he was requesting authorization for the City Administrator to execute the contract based

on concurrence of the employees with the HRA program as outlined. If he could get that authorization tonight, we can move forward whenever we get the full feedback from the employees and have the appropriate discussions with the representatives of the union employees. Mayor Lockhart asked Chief Kottke if he was aware of any problem with the pending contract regarding this issue. Chief Kottke didn't think that it was a problem.

Alderman Trainor made a motion to authorize Administrator Hartman to pursue the HRA policy or the renewal as presented based on the concurrence of the employees; seconded by Alderman Secor. Voting aye were Aldermen: Otis, Genot, Shelton, Trainor, Jennings and Secor.

MAYOR'S STATEMENTS AND REPORTS

OCTOBER 20, 2006, U. S. AIR FORCE BAND DAY PROCLAMATION

Mayor Lockhart read the above mentioned proclamation and felt we should be thankful they are coming to Marengo.

Alderman Trainor wanted to acknowledge Alderman Otis' efforts in getting this event to happen as well as a couple of family event activities at Settlers Days.

Mayor Lockhart thought Settlers Day weekend was great. There were a lot of people everywhere he went for "Saturday Night on Main Street" and felt everything went off without a hitch. He thanked the Police Dept. for their efforts and services especially downtown where there could have been problems but none occurred.

DEPARTMENT HEAD AND STAFF REPORTS

BUILDING DEPARTMENT

Commissioner Shull submitted a written report. Orally, he reported we received the new FEMA digital maps today and felt they will be quite useful. In one of the upcoming meetings, the members will be voting on approving the new map.

Alderman Genot congratulated him on becoming a Certified Floodplain Manager. It is beneficial to the City considering some of the issues we have.

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Alderman Genot was advised Commissioner Shull was waiting for additional details from our attorney regarding 427 North Taylor. Our attorney advised this will be going back to court on Nov. 6. The resident will have to explain why they haven't done what they were supposed to have done. At this point in time, the court can take whatever action is necessary in terms of fines, etc.

Commissioner Shull was asked to explain to the members how the Community Rating System is based and the savings the City will be receiving as a result of the training and information he received at the week long course he attended at the National Emergency Training Center that was offered by FEMA.

He stated the savings would come in a matter of how the City goes about maintaining our floodplains whether it be new construction, decks, etc. by adhering to the minimum requirements of the National Flood Insurance

Program; our current storm water ordinance; our storm water ditch maintenance which is crucial to storm water as it goes hand in hand; documentation of the old and new maps; public input; whether we can have literature on hand at our local library for people in the floodplain to utilize the information to understand what they can/can't do; what we have at our offices for our assistants to see and use; anything regarding floodplain open spaces for new developments and how we administer that sensitive area. We are judged on the criteria level on how well we administer all of this. The better we do, the better the cost savings to the City and the homeowners with flood insurance policies.

Mayor Lockhart stated this was put to the test this afternoon as they had a meeting with a resident with many floodplain issues and questions. So Commissioner Shull was put to the test. City Hall frequently gets these issues and questions, so, it was nice to have Commissioner Shull's expertise on this. Mayor Lockhart congratulated him on his accomplishments as well.

PUBLIC WORKS

A written report was submitted by the Street Dept., WWTP and Water Dept.

Supt. Craney advised the MFT work, weather permitting, will be done this week. There is a meeting scheduled for tomorrow morning with ComEd regarding the tree trimming to be done in the City. A few things (pressure switch) have been
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changed at the water tower in the hope this will help alleviate the "brown" water problems as we are trying every thing possible to eliminate the problem. He is still in touch with 644 East Grant about the sewer. He was able to get in touch with the son who is going to be coming out and going over this to hopefully get this taken care of for Attorney Filler. He talked to Kim Meyers of Zion Lutheran Church get the easement issue settled. He has talked to several communities about the pedestrian crosswalk signs and hopes to have this accomplished soon. Alderman Otis asked if he could have the information available for the transportation ad hoc committee's meeting this Saturday. He stated he would do his best and felt he should be able to do so. Alderman Otis commented she told the workers when she went uptown Sunday morning at 7:00 a.m., it was as though "Saturday Night on Main Street" hadn't occurred due to the great job they did. She greatly appreciated all their work to accomplish this. Supt. Craney stated the crew does a great job and thought they would do about anything for the City. They started at 3:00 a.m. and stayed until the barricades were picked up at about 5:00 p.m. Sunday.

A comment was made on the Water Dept. report. It was hoped the members, when looking at developments with lift stations involved, take note the report indicates all the lift stations are checked out every morning. So, more lift stations means more time to check them out.

Alderman Genot commented on the letter the City received from a resident on Dietz complimenting the crew on the professional job they did on the street repair. Supt. Craney advised he has been looking for a small paver for a while

now to help the crew out so it doesn't all have to be done by hand. We used to have a paver but due to the age of it, it was retired.

Alderman Shelton complimented Supt. Craney's crew. He added in watching them pick up the barricades, etc., they seemed to be having a good time doing so and thought it was neat.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

A written report was submitted by Chief Kottke. He advised he met with the Fire & Police Commission. Once again, we have failed to get a candidate in the academy this month. We are in the bottom half of the eligibility list already. He is

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going to meet with the Chairman of the Commission tomorrow and give him three more back round checks to hopefully push thru and target a January PTI class.

He is also having a meeting tomorrow with Dr. Bertrand to discuss the problem with staffing and discuss the school resource officer position that we have.

In reference to Settlers Days, he was happy to report the PD had no incidents Saturday night except kids throwing marbles from a ride which was addressed. They weren't throwing them at anybody. It was just a game to them but the parents will be coming in to address the issue.

The PD responded to sixty nine calls over the weekend. The officers were run ragged but the department got thru it. Chief Kottke was extremely proud how his department handled everything. Friday night there was a large presence of gangs from our and surrounding communities. The Gang Task Force was here. Chief Kottke was very thankful to Skinner's ride operators as they were very helpful to the officers. He is going to send a letter out to Skinner's thanking them for their help and the Gang Task Force officers who were here Friday and Saturday night.

Chief Kottke was asked if events like Settlers Days were times when gangs usually like to make their presence known. He stated it was as they flash their colors and do what they can to mark their turf. From feedback received, he didn't think there

was any tattooing in town. He wanted to make sure there was a large presence of

the gang officers in town to let the gangs know we were not going to tolerate them. He wanted to make sure there was presence in the taverns and had the cooperation from the bar owners.

ENGINEERING

A written report was submitted by Baxter & Woodman. There were no questions for Mr. Gavle.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Written reports were submitted. Treasurer Hall stated he had looked into monthly water & sewer bills as discussed at the last meeting. He stated on a \$200.00 quarterly bill, the City would receive about thirty cents per month additional interest revenue. With a \$400 bill, we would be looking at about fifty-nine cents.

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From this, we would have to subject postage, supplies, gas, labor, etc. So, if they wanted him, he could look further into this issue. He felt if we had a cash flow issue, we might then take a look at this. However, from what he is seeing, we do not have a cash flow issue. So, if they were just doing this for the interest, there is not a huge savings but if we were looking at this because we need the income, then he felt this was something they might take a look at.

It was commented it was nice to see we received over \$16,000 from the Clerk of Circuit Court this month rather than the usual \$10,000. Chief Kottke felt there was a switch in the tickets being issued.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR

A written report was submitted; there were no questions for the Administrator.

Alderman Otis wanted to know with all the rain we have been getting, has there been an improvement with the WWTP inflow since the smoke test was done on West Street resulting in capping of the sewer. Supt. Craney stated there has been an improvement and as noted in the Water Dept. report, they are smoke testing other areas to try and catch a few other things.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Our attorney stated he did not have a written report. However, he gave the members some material he picked up at the Illinois Municipal League Conference. Some of the material was from his firm as he did a presentation. There were others that he happened to go to that he thought might be of interest to them. Some were on budgeting, some on legislative updates and some on litigation updates. He felt the things that were pretty significant were the issues regarding the Open Meetings Act as it seemed to be the "hot" topic for discussion. If they had any questions, they were to ask him. He will give Building Commissioner Shull this information as well.

Alderman Otis stated she felt the pamphlets the members received from various engineering firms, legal firms, etc. were very helpful/interesting and hoped the other members were reading them.

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Lorence Brown, 170 Seneca Trail, asked what the signs were for on West Rt. 20. Mayor Lockhart advised him we are in the process of hopefully expanding our western boundary for commercial and industrial purposes, not residential on the north side but south of the railroad tracks; not all but some of the parcels. He felt the members were in agreement that we need to start looking at our commercial and industrial base to off set the tax on the citizens of Marengo. At

this moment, we don't have anyone in particular to go there but at the same time, when they come to town, they don't want to wait eighteen months to get a piece of property annexed. They want their decisions made today and felt this would be a win-win for the City of Marengo. He also thought it would be good for the school districts as it would not be bringing in 500 students but would be bringing in additional tax dollars.

Dr. Bertrand, Superintendent of District 154, stated the information they received regarding the requests from the three area school districts for various fees they are requesting for future annexation agreements was also sent to the Village of Union in order to receive the same amount of money from Marengo and Union as this is not currently the case.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Lockhart asked for a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:23 p.m. to discuss collective bargaining. Alderman Genot so moved; seconded by Alderman Otis. Motion passed with an aye voice vote from Alderman: Jennings, Shelton, Genot, Secor, Trainor and Otis.

The members returned to Open Session at 8:54 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:55 p.m., Alderman Jennings made a motion to adjourn the October 9, 2006, Marengo City Council meeting. Alderman Shelton seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous aye voice vote.

Submitted by: Diane L. Schwoch,
Acting City Clerk