

September 1, 2016

The Common Council met as the Water Utility Board at 7:00 pm on the above date in the Meeting Room at City Hall Annex with Mayor Curtis presiding and members Pharr, Williams, Hoehn, Johnson, and Higgins attending. Others attending were Attorney Higgins; Supt. Gray; Chief Alldredge; Chief Dixon; Comm. Dieterle; ACO Youngblood; Nancy Sexton; Ken and Paula Rudibaugh; Ron and Ginger Greenfield; Lea Schaum; Lorelei Barnes; Ernie Lurker; Joy Alldredge; and Jamie Grabert – Mount Vernon Democrat.

Mayor Curtis called the meeting to order by stating members were emailed copies of the minutes of their previous meeting and by asking if there were any corrections or additions. He added if not, he entertains a motion to waive their reading and to approve the minutes as presented.

Board member Higgins moved the reading of the minutes be waived and they be approved as presented. Seconded by Board member Williams.

Mayor Curtis asked if there was any discussion ?

There was none.

Mayor Curtis stated all those in favor of the motion should signify in the affirmative; and following the vote, he reported the motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Curtis requested action on the claims presented.

Board member Williams moved the claims presented be allowed for payment. Seconded by Board member Johnson.

Mayor Curtis asked if there was any discussion ?

There was none.

Mayor Curtis stated all those in favor of the motion should signify in the affirmative; and following the vote, he reported the motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Curtis stated they will now hear the report of the Water Superintendent.

Supt. Gray stated the main replacement on 10th Street is progressing slowly. The line has been charged up to Canal and it is sterilizing. After that, they will flush the line and folks will begin to be tied on to the new main.

Water Chairwoman Johnson stated she has no report.

Mayor Curtis asked if there were any questions ?

There were none.

Mayor Curtis asked if the Clerk-Treasurer had any Communications for the Board ?

Clerk-Treasurer Sitzman replied she has nothing at this time.

Mayor Curtis asked if there were any Legals for consideration ?

There were none.

Mayor Curtis asked if anyone in the Audience wished to address the Board ?

There was no response.

Mayor Curtis asked if there was any Old Business ?

There was none.

Mayor Curtis asked if there was any New Business ?

There was none.

Mayor Curtis stated if there was no further business, he entertains a motion to adjourn.

Board member Johnson moved the meeting be adjourned. Seconded by Board member Williams.

Mayor Curtis stated all those in favor of the motion should signify in the affirmative; and following the vote, he reported the motion carried unanimously and adjourned the meeting.

Bill Curtis, Mayor

ATTEST:

Cristi L. Sitzman
Clerk-Treasurer

The Common Council met immediately following the Water Utility Board on the above date in the Meeting Room at City Hall Annex with Mayor Curtis presiding and members Pharr, Williams, Hoehn, Johnson, and Higgins attending. Others attending were Attorney Higgins; Supt. Gray; Chief Alldredge; Chief Dixon; Comm. Dieterle; ACO Youngblood; Nancy Sexton; Ken and Paula Rudibaugh; Ron and Ginger Greenfield; Lea Schaum; Lorelei Barnes; Ernie Lurker; Kyle Haney; Laura Tinney; Mark Stevens; Joy Alldredge; and Jamie Grabert – Mount Vernon Democrat.

Mayor Curtis called the meeting to order by stating members were emailed copies of the minutes of their previous meeting and by asking if there were any corrections or additions. He added if not, he entertains a motion to waive their reading and to approve the minutes as presented.

Councilman Pharr moved the reading of the minutes be waived and they be approved as presented.

Seconded by Councilman Williams.

Mayor Curtis asked if there was any discussion ?

There was none.

Mayor Curtis stated all those in favor of the motion should signify in the affirmative; and following the vote, he reported the motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Curtis stated they will now hear the reports of the Standing Committees.

Comm. Dieterle stated he has no report.

Street & Light Chairwoman Higgins stated she has no report.

Mayor Curtis asked if there were any questions ?

There were none.

Chief Alldredge stated he has no report.

Police & Dog Chairman Pharr stated he has no report.

Mayor Curtis asked if there were any questions ?

There were none.

Chief Dixon stated he has no report.

Fire Chairman Hoehn stated he has no report.

Mayor Curtis asked if there were any questions ?

There were none.

Supt. Gray stated he has no report.

Sewer Chairman Williams stated he has no report.

Mayor Curtis asked if there were any questions ?

There were none.

Mayor Curtis asked if the Clerk-Treasurer had any Communications for the Council ?

Clerk-Treasurer Sitzman replied not at this time.

Mayor Curtis stated they are now ready for the Legal portion of the Agenda.

Attorney Higgins stated they have the final reading of the Ordinance to Amend the City of Mt. Vernon Code of Ordinances, Title VII-Traffic Code, Chapter 75-Parking Schedules-Schedule I-No Parking Zones.

Councilman Hoehn moved the ordinance pass on final reading. Seconded by Councilwoman Higgins.

Mayor Curtis asked if there were any questions ?

There were none.

Mayor Curtis requested a roll call vote.

Roll was called by the Clerk-Treasurer with Council voting as follows:

Pharr – yes; Williams – yes; Hoehn – yes;

Johnson – yes; Higgins – yes.

Mayor Curtis stated the motion carried unanimously.

Clerk-Treasurer Sitzman added it will be numbered 16-18.

Mayor Curtis stated they are ready for the Audience portion of the Agenda. Listed on the Agenda is Ernie Lurker.

Mr. Lurker stated he lives at 613 College Avenue, next to the Imagination Station, and they are having quite a bit of problems with bullying. He then read a prepared statement to the Council concerning the safety of children. He added there is bullying and vandalism going on, which is getting more violent. They have been forced to call the police several times. There is foul language, bullying, etc. He has asked the kids several times to stop and leave the area, and if they do, they return within a matter of minutes. This group of kids has a total disrespect for law enforcement, adults, etc. They taunt other kids as well as adults. He stated his son was followed by a group of seven to the kids. They followed him home and were even on the porch – they had a crowbar. He added his son has been attacked on three different occasions. These kids aren't playing. He asked how parents can be sure their kids are safe ? Eventually, someone is going to get badly hurt. This needs to stop or we, as adults, have failed these kids. He asked if these parents can be held responsible ? This is an example of poor parenting. The community needs a solution. He continued by stating he spoke with Chief Alldredge and there is a meeting scheduled September 6 with the prosecuting attorney and the juvenile department. There are currently lots of cases against this certain group of kids. They wreak havoc wherever they go. They even climbed on top of neighbor Ron Greenfield's car last weekend and jump on it like it was a trampoline.

Councilman Hoehn asked if this is happening during the day ?

Mr. Lurker replied it is happening day and night. He added he calls the police department all the time but these kids are just itching for a fight. He then stated his son got kicked by one of them today at school.

Mayor Curtis stated he is not trying to belittle the situation, but this is not just a problem here, it is happening everywhere. It isn't easy to deal with. He added he appreciates Mr. Lurker's concerns.

Councilwoman Johnson stated she has talked with some folks about this and Mr. Lurker and the group that is present tonight, getting involved, that is what the city needs.

Mr. Lurker stated he feels there needs to be more stern repercussions. The police department takes these kids home and they are right back out.

Mayor Curtis stated he feels some of these issues would be better addressed at their meeting on September 6. He added he worked with kids for 40 years and juvenile law is a different animal. It is frustrating and a very difficult area. Again, some of these concerns would be better addressed on September 6.

Lorelei Barnes approached and stated she has been watching all of this for over a year now. This is something she sees happen everyday, it is continuous, all the time. She even has seen one kid push another one out in front of semi on Hwy 62 by McDonalds. If that truck had not been able to stop, the child would have been dead. These kids get in adults faces and she is tired of it. The parents don't care what they do and something has to be done. They need to find a solution.

Laura Tinney stated her daughter lives across the street from the library and these same kids try to open her windows and doors. The vulgarity is terrible. They need to be shown the right example, attention and love. Some times that can turn a child around. They need some action – make them clean up the park that they have messed up, something. These kids are all over the streets. Also, she would like to see a 4 way STOP at 5th and College. It is a busy area.

Nancy Sexton stated it has been said tonight that juvenile law is difficult and that when they break a law it is different than when an adult breaks the law.

Attorney Higgins replied the outcome and process are different.

Ms. Sexton stated she is asking what the present consequences are ? What would be the next step after the police have been called.

Attorney Higgins asked if she is referring to the process ?

Ms. Sexton replied yes. The police have been called, the children have been identified.

Attorney Higgins replied a report is sent to the prosecutor's office. If they are a juvenile, they go to juvenile probation at the circuit court.

Ms. Sexton stated these kids understand this process.

Attorney Higgins stated she does not know that they do. The age of the offender depends on the process.

Ms. Sexton stated schools do still have detention, do they not. Detention is not against the ACLU. Could that same type of process be incorporated here. A city rule per se. Is this even the correct body to be having this discussion with ?

Attorney Higgins stated the rules are set by state statute. The City of Mount Vernon Police Department having a presence in the community, yes, this is the right body. The consequences could be anything from staying at home, up to a secure facility, in jail. Juveniles can not be housed with adult offenders. Now the jail is overcrowded. So, yes, there are consequences from home detention to other options.

Mr. Lurker asked about dropping them off at YCC in Evansville.

Mayor Curtis stated he worked at Hillcrest for 20 years. There is a strict set of rules and regulations in place. These kinds of places are only used for placement for a very short period of time. They can only be placed in secure detention for a very short period of time, and only if they have committed a really violent act with significant bodily harm. He added it is very difficult for the police department to take a juvenile there.

Mr. Lurker questioned these kids being repeat offenders.

Mayor Curtis stated he can't address that. That is a question for different folks at a different meeting.

Attorney Higgins agreed this body can not address that.

Mr. Lurker stated he hopes the meeting September 6 brings attention to this problem.

Mayor Curtis stated the Council can help but can't change that. Chief Alldredge will be in the meeting on the 6th. He then stated he feels like Mr. Lurker and this whole group are going about this in the right way. They are very sincere and have presented their concerns very well, he commends them.

Councilman Hoehn stated some of the problem is the changing atmosphere. Evansville now has shootings almost daily. He added he believes this group of kids is a spin off from the area around 9th Street that has experienced so many problems. They are getting older. He stated he fears the city isn't

going to be proactive fast enough to prevent someone from getting hurt. It is obvious the kids are getting bolder, it is escalating.

Mayor Curtis stated he takes issue with that. He doesn't feel the city isn't motivated to do something. Councilman Hoehn asked if any one of these kids is in jail ? In custody ?

Mayor Curtis replied he doesn't know that.

Attorney Higgins added there are reports on file in the prosecutor's office.

Mr. Lurker stated they turned in a report two days ago about the crowbar incident. Three different people called the police that day. It is pretty bold when they come on to your property.

Lea Schaum stated she has lived at 505 College for eight years and this bullying is getting rough. The kids are very aggressive and she can not understand why the parents are liable. The police need to arrest the parents. The main job of parents is to protect their children, and that should also be the main job of the police – protect the children. This is a small town. Never had to worry about this here before. This is a small town and now it is a concern. There are also meth issues all over town. What about the parents' butts going to jail that is what is needed here. A solution starts here and she supports Mr. Lurker and Ms. Barnes with whatever they need. If one of these kids comes after her grandchildren, Mama Bear will come out and she will bust the door down to get at those kids.

Mark Stevens stated he works with abused kids and if anyone here thinks that pulling kids out of homes like this isn't their problem, they are wrong, it is. These kids are sent to Indianapolis as there is no place in Posey County to house them. He wondered about a curfew ?

Ms. Barnes replied they have a curfew but it is not enforced.

Mr. Stevens stated CPS should also be involved. Again, kids from Posey County are sent to Indianapolis, and maybe if these issues are dealt with now, these problems wouldn't persist. The jails are overcrowded because they are dealt with as juveniles. He stated this is a personal issue for him.

Mayor Curtis added this issue permeates society. There is not quick, easy, or cheap fix. What has happened tonight is a small step. Change won't happen over night, but they should be asking what they CAN do. Start it out.

Mr. Lurker stated he knows some parents that won't take their kids to the pool because this same group hangs out there and acts the same way there. As a result of that, the city's pool is losing money.

Mayor Curtis stated they have gotten the conversation started. It may take small things – put up an extra light here or a camera there – have someone to sit in the park.

Mr. Lurker replied that he spoke with Park Supt. Harshbarger and he said they were going to put up another light or two and some more cameras. When he has called the police, they don't even get out of their car when they arrive on scene. The kids hide and as soon as the police leave the parking lot, they are right back out. They have found drugs, condoms, needles, etc at the park. The police need to get out of their cars and do a walk through. Supt. Harshbarger said they may bring back the park ranger position.

Mayor Curtis agreed that was what Supt. Harshbarger told him as well, but he could not be at the meeting tonight. He added it is difficult to do good things for these kids, very difficult. He then stated he needs to talk with Mr. Stevens again at a later time.

Kyle Haney stated he can imagine that this is the same group of kids that had been making threats to adults in the 9th and James Street area. He added he would urge the Council, as community leaders, to do something to prevent this from ever happening to begin with. These kids do not come from structured homes. Sending them to jail doesn't work. In the long run, if something doesn't change, someone is going to get hurt. Maybe Council could help establish a place for them to go that does provide a structured environment.

Mr. Lurker replied they have been kicked out of the Community Center because they act the same there as they do out on the street.

Ms. Barnes added there are also no structured programs at the Community Center.

Mr. Haney stated they need their community to be successful. People don't feel safe here. Basic needs need to be taken care of.

Mayor Curtis asked if anyone else wished to speak on this topic ?
There was no response.
Mayor Curtis stated he would like to thank everyone for all of the comments.

Mayor Curtis asked if there was any Old Business ?
There was none.

Mayor Curtis asked if there was any New Business ?
There was none.

Mayor Curtis stated they will now hear the reports of the Districts.

1st District Councilman Pharr stated he has no report.

2nd District Councilman Williams stated he would like to congratulate Councilwoman Higgins on being selected to be the Grand Marshall of the River Days Parade this year. Very fitting as it is Mount Vernon's Bicentennial and she is on the Bicentennial committee.

3rd District Councilman Hoehn stated he has no report.

4th District Councilwoman Johnson stated she has no report.

Councilwoman-at-Large Higgins stated next weekend is River Days and Mount Vernon's time to shine. The Bison will be unveiled and they will have the Bicentennial Torch Relay.

Mayor Curtis stated in reference to the LARE grant, he has drafted a letter to reduce the scope of work to hopefully bring the cost down. He added he sent seven letters and they are due back on September 14. He then stated if there was no further business, he entertains a motion to adjourn. Councilwoman Johnson moved the meeting be adjourned. Seconded by Councilman Williams.

Mayor Curtis stated all those in favor of the motion should signify in the affirmative; and following the vote, he reported the motion carried unanimously and adjourned the meeting.

Bill Curtis, Mayor

ATTEST:

Cristi L. Sitzman
Clerk-Treasurer