

Special City Council Meeting
Official Proceedings
City of Virden, IL
Virden City Council Chambers
Thursday April 25, 2024

Special City Council Meeting was called to order by Mayor George Murphy at 6:30pm.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call:

- **The following Council Members were present:** Calloway, Mottershaw, Mitchell, Bertolino, Cunningham (arrived at 6:33pm) and Boster (left at 7:41pm)
- **Absent:** Neighbors
- **Also, present were:** Mayor George Murphy, Bookkeeper and Deputy Treasurer Barry Liss, and Public Works Director Gary Etter
- **Guest:** Jessica Selhime, Dave Hobson (left at 7pm), and Bruce Lair (left at 7pm)

1. Contract with Virden Sanitary District

Mottershaw pointed out in the FOIA request that he said the Virden Sanitary will pay 1/3 of the cost and it was a blatant lie. Murphy talked about the expense report Rutherford asked for. Dave said to make it clear the board didn't authorize their attorney to request that or either that information. They were surprised as much as the city was when they got it. Dave talked about getting 3 different costs. He wants to know what has changed to have this special meeting. Murphy says to see if anyone is willing to sign a contract. Dave says they aren't going to sign a contract at those numbers. Didn't they ask for a 30 day or 3-month extension? Dave says they aren't paying a dime more than what they are until the accounting is corrected. He says we aren't billing correctly, and they have the paperwork to show it. They are talking about the city being billed 10 million, but only selling 4.5 million. He says we aren't getting the correct numbers so how can we bill correctly. Boster says you are getting billed for what we are billing our customers for. That is what the bill is off of. It's not off of how much money we get, or we have to pay out of water. They aren't going to pay more for a billing, that's not right. Where is all this water? Bertolino says we are looking for it. Discussion went back and forth on the water loss. Discussion ensued on the cost of billing and the city having to have all of that to do our billing anyway. Dave came to negotiate, but he says the city isn't interested in negotiating. Murphy says if its negotiating we will start at \$7,100 which is 47.8% and work our way down from there. Dave says they are out of there. Cunningham says its our obligation to the citizens of this community and the responsibility of both parties to come to an agreement. The idea of non-negotiable is not right or fair to charge the customers double. We need to come to an agreement

because its only going to hurt the community. Boster says once the contract is out that is it. They will not be getting paid. They were given the proper notice. For 10 years, you've only been charged \$1,800. It costs us a lot more than that. Boster says to drop it and let's go. Dave says they are done. Arguing ensued on both sides. VSD letter was brought up that was sent out to the citizens which was said it was a low blow. Dave said they put facts in there. There were false things in there. Dave wanted to know what was false. That the city was going to raise the rates Mottershaw gave examples of businesses offering a service and has a set price for that service. He wanted to let VSD know that the cost doesn't really factor in it. How do you determine the billing if cost isn't a factor? How did you come up with the \$3,000? It is a fair price with all the increases everyone has had to endure. Murphy read from the VSD letter about the city increasing the water rate. Dave said that's what you did, didn't you? We have only raised rates when Otter Lake has raised theirs to pass on the cost. We have only once done an operations raise and it was 2¢. (Sanitary Left)

Mottershaw says he guesses this will be the last month we bill for them. Cunningham says hold on a minute, the billings not right, the waters not right, somethings wrong, we are asking them to pay more which she's not saying they shouldn't. They put in an offer. Why can't we accept it until this water situation is figured out? The contract is to perform a billing function. Murphy wants to know what on this list isn't a billing function. Discussion went back and forth on what to offer in the contract and what goes into billing. It was asked do we send the bills out in May with sewer on them and collect it in May. Yes, since its April's billing. Cunningham suggested \$1,800 for 30 days. Murphy says maybe extend 3 months and maybe we will have the meters figured out. Calloway said communication is key, but if they don't want to pay more, then its done. If you can't reach an agreement, you can't reach an agreement. Cunningham says \$1,800 for 30 days, then negotiate for \$2,400 for the next couple years until water loss is figured out. Murphy said he would talk to Kim and let him know if he could get council approval for a 3-month extension at \$2,400. Mottershaw suggests \$2,500 at 3 months agree to contract or don't. Everyone agrees with the \$2,400 for 3 months, but Cunningham doesn't agree with the take it or leave it after the extension is over.

Executive Session:

1. Approval of Executive Session meeting minutes (5ILCS 120/2 (c) (21))

Adjournment:

Motion made by Mottershaw seconded by Murphy to adjourn at 8:28pm.

Motion passed with all in favor. **Ayes:** Mitchell, Mottershaw, Cunningham, Calloway, and Bertolino; **Nayes:** None; **Absent:** Boster and Neighbors

Meeting adjourned at 8:28pm

Karen Burgess

Deputy City Clerk

Date Minutes Approved: