

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
BOARD OF ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF CUBA, MISSOURI
TUESDAY – APRIL 1, 2025 – 6:00 P.M.
CUBA CITY HALL COUNCIL ROOM

Mayor Kevin Copling called the meeting to order. Aldermen present: Joyce Hartzell, Debbie Martin, Dave Honea, Tony Hutson, Harold Halbert, and Jeff Bouse. Police Chief present: Doug Shelton. City Attorney present: Emily Guffey.

Motion by Halbert, seconded by Bouse, to approve the agenda. Vote: All ayes.

Citizens participation:

Doug Lasley presented the council his thanks for the preliminary plan approval of the McBride Homes subdivision as he could not be present and some research of the most effective ways to attract and grow retail businesses in our community. Presentation notes are attached.

Pitts Lesesne asked the council if it was possible to get the parks and recreation committee together to discuss the playground and the location of where it will be installed. Hutson stated that the next park and recreation committee meeting is Tuesday, April 8, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. and encouraged him to attend. Dan Eidson, park and recreation committee member, stated that he was going to ask for an update on the engineered plans but also stated that the equipment won't be installed until the plans are approved. Lesesne asked about the ADA requirements and where the ADA bathrooms would be. Eidson stated that the plans will determine those issues. Lesesne stated that there was an engineer for the project but it was not determined where the equipment is going and who or what is being paid for. Eidson stated that they are still trying to figure out what they are working with at this time and in the early stages of planning. Lesesne stated that the City of Cuba paid for the services and asked if they gave a drop dead date or just for them to do the plans. Hutson stated that there is a preliminary plan for the playground but will still get with the parks and recreation for the other locations available. Lesesne asked if the playground equipment is projected to go where the holes are being drilled. Hutson stated that is the better spot for the equipment. Lesesne asked the cost for developing the park. Bouse stated they won't know the cost until the engineered plan is received. Eidson stated that the installation of the playground equipment will happen once the plans are council approved and Huston agreed. Eidson invited Lesesne to the parks and recreation meeting on April 8, 2025.

Motion by Hutson, seconded by Honea, to approve the regular meeting minutes from March 18, 2025. Vote: All ayes.

Motion by Halbert, seconded by Hartzell, to approve the executive session meeting minutes of March 18, 2025. Vote: All ayes.

Motion by Bouse, seconded by Halbert, to approve the bills to be paid. Vote: All ayes.

Parking on Green Street: Mayor Copling stated that he looked at the area and doesn't have a good solution, possibly two hour parking on both sides. Bouse asked how that would be enforced. There was discussion by many about the parking and how not parking on one side of the street caused this may issues. Derrick Sutton thinks that allowing the parking on both sides of the street again will solve issues with the parking. Evelia Navarro agreed. There was discusson of the parking there that also involves all the post office workers. PC Shelton stated that his recommendation of the parking situation has not changed. Sutton and Navarro both stated that the no parking is hurting their business. **Motion by Bouse, seconded by Halbert, to remove the no parking on Green Street. Roll call vote: Bouse-yes, Halbert-yes, Hutson-yes, Honea-yes, Martin-yes, Hartzell-yes.**

EOC bids: There was one bid received for the EOC Director position. Gregory Hubbell. Mayor Copling stated that he does have background experience running the warming shelter and he wants to help the citizens. Martin asked what other background services he has and if there were any emergency background services. Hubbell stated that no, but he is willing to do whatever necessary to help as it is a stressful demanding position. Mayor Copling stated that Hubbell is willing to get emergency management and FEMA certified. Bouse stated that he can direct Hubbell to someone that can help with the certification. **Motion by Bouse, seconded by Hartzell, to approve the bid of Greg Hubbell for the EOC Director position. Roll call vote: Hartzell-yes, Martin-abstain, Honea-abstain, Hutson-yes, Halbert-yes, Bouse-yes.**

Natural gas committee recommendations: Honea stated that they had several meetings and held interviews for the technician/laborer position. Matt Pigg, the current supervisor, requested to drop down to the technician/laborer position. Honea stated that one candidate they interviewed they felt was good for the position and would like to hire, move Pigg, and then look for a supervisor. Hutson stated that the natural gas department is struggling and changes need to be made. Hutson proposed a plan of bringing Jim Happel back as a short term subcontractor to help train and be on-call. Hutson stated that he also spoke with David Minardi and he is willing to help with being on-call so there would at least be a three person rotation. Mayor Copling asked if the other internal candidate was interviewed for the technician/laborer position as the policy states to do so. Mayor Copling stated that was not done and recommends to table the discussion. Hutson asked what the city is going to be done for the one man on call at all times. There was discussion of what could be done but Mayor Copling wants to follow policy and table. Honea stated that it seems no matter what he offers he gets worked against. Mayor Copling just wants to follow policy and have a plan in place. Hutson stated he does have a plan in place but does still have to talk with Jennifer Basham. There was discussion of the severity of the situation of not enough trained on the department and that something needs to be done soon.

Minardi stated that the city can't pay everyone equal and that is why they are in the current mess and that they were close to having it fixed but then they upped the starting pay in the middle of a budget and now can't afford to move everyone else closing the pay gap just enough that the last two natural gas employees moved back down to other positions as the pay difference wasn't that much. Minardi felt that slapped all other employees in the face and felt this proved the point that all can't be paid the same as different jobs have different responsibilities. Minardi asked why the council felt all needed to

be paid equal. Minardi stated that he is volunteering to go on-call to help out but it all needs to be reviewed.

Mayor Copling stated that there needs to be a special meeting to allow an interview of the internal applicant and then make a decision. The discussion was tabled.

Police Chief report: PC Shelton agreed that all can't be paid equal as the police department almost lost some employees due to the pay.

PC Shelton stated that Arya Paul submitted her resignation. **Motion by Bouse, seconded by Hartzell, to accept the resignation. Vote: All ayes.**

PC Shelton stated that there is an advertisement to hire for the other resignation and asked if both positions could be hired at the next meeting. **Motion by Bouse, seconded by Hartzell, to hire for both positions at the next council meeting. Vote: All ayes.**

Motion by Bouse, seconded by Halbert, to have the first reading of Bill No. 2168 by caption only.

Vote: All ayes. Guffey read Bill No. 2168 – An ordinance amending Article X, Division 3, Section 24-250 of Chapter 24 of the Cuba city code relating to utility rates charged for natural gas utility services furnished to residential, commercial and industrial consumers by the City of Cuba, Missouri, pursuant to recommendations made by the natural gas committee of the Board of Aldermen. **Motion by Halbert, seconded by Bouse, to approve the first reading of Bill No. 2168. Roll call vote: Hartzell-yes, Martin-yes, Honea-yes, Hutson-yes, Halbert-yes, Bouse-yes. Motion by Hutson, seconded by Honea, to have the second reading of Bill No. 2168. Vote: All ayes.** Guffey read Bill No. 2168 a second time. **Motion by Hutson, seconded by Hartzell, to approve the second reading of Bill No. 2168. Roll call vote: Bouse-yes, Halbert-yes, Hutson-yes, Honea-yes, Martin-yes, Bouse-yes.** Mayor Copling declared that Bill No. 2168 becomes General Ordinance 1238 on this 1st day of April 2025.

Motion by Bouse, seconded by Honea, to have the first reading of Bill No. 2169 by caption only. Vote: All ayes. Guffey read Bill No. 2169 – An ordinance authorizing the Mayor of the City of Cuba, Missouri, on behalf of said city, to enter into an agreement with Flynn Drilling Company, Inc. for a water supply pumping equipment inspection agreement. **Motion by Halbert, seconded by Hartzell, to approve the first reading of Bill No. 2169. Roll call vote: Hartzell-yes, Martin-yes, Honea-yes, Hutson-yes, Halbert-yes, Bouse-yes. Motion by Bouse, seconded by Hartzell, to have the second reading of Bill No. 2169. Vote: All ayes.** Guffey read Bill No. 2169 a second time. **Motion by Halbert, seconded by Bouse, to approve the second reading of Bill No. 2169. Roll call vote: Bouse-yes, Halbert-yes, Hutson-yes, Honea-yes, Martin-yes, Hartzell-yes.** Mayor Copling declared that Bill No. 2169 becomes Special Ordinance 932 on this 1st day of April 2025.

Hutson thanked Minardi for helping out the natural gas department as it is much appreciated.

Hutson asked about the house on Washington street and if the council voted to have it demolished. Mayor Copling stated that it wasn't budgeted for.

Bouse asked Pigg how long he worked in the natural gas department. Pigg stated 9 years. Bouse stated that when Happel retired, he was kept on to help train Pigg and asked if they could do the paperwork when Happel left. Minardi stated they could figure it out. Pigg stated it isn't just for training but to have someone else to help that knows what to do. Bouse stated that if Happel is brought back then they all need to know the paperwork and how to run the gas department.

Bouse stated that the Missouri Conservation Department is trying to get rid of Bradford Pear Trees and Hood Park has a bunch of them so the city needs to look at swapping them out.

Bouse stated that the Mapleshade Park could use some attention, the bathrooms aren't open, and that the lighting isn't good. Montgomery stated that bathrooms were opened that day and will pass along the message regarding the lighting.

Mayor Copling stated that the natural gas situation is important but has to be fair and follow the ordinances.

Motion by Bouse, seconded by Halbert, to go into executive session – closed to the public pursuant RSMO 610.021 – Section 2) Real estate. Roll call vote: Hartzell-yes, Martin-yes, Honea-yes, Hutson-yes, Halbert-yes, Bouse-yes.

Motion by Honea, seconded by Bouse, to go back into regular open session. Roll call vote: Bouse-yes, Halbert-yes, Hutson-yes, Honea-yes, Martin-yes, Hartzell-yes.

Guffey stated that the Board of Aldermen met in closed executive session to discuss real estate and there were no final actions taken.

Motion by Halbert, seconded by Hartzell, to adjourn. Vote: All ayes.

Lainie Garbo, City Clerk

April 1, 2025

Good evening,

I am here tonight as the president of the Cuba Development Group. While I was unable to attend the council meeting where you approved the preliminary plans for the new McBride subdivision, I wanted to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude for your decision.

As I've shared in the past, my research indicates that the most effective way to attract and grow retail businesses in our community is through the combination of creating "rooftops and jobs." This new subdivision will bring an influx of new homes, significantly improving our community's growth potential. Currently, our industrial sector employs over 1,000 individuals, with a growing demand for additional workers. These two critical factors—"rooftops and jobs"—will bolster our chances of attracting retailers seeking expansion opportunities. In fact, I have already been in contact with two retailers who have expressed interest directly because of the promise this new development holds. While this progress will take time, your approval has undoubtedly enhanced our prospects for success. Once again, thank you for your forward-thinking approach.

At this stage, it's crucial to allow the private sector to excel in its role. I encourage the city to focus on supporting the development of these "rooftops," including the necessary work and investments by our public works department to facilitate the growth. Conversely, I urge you to avoid speculative real estate investments on behalf of the city for the purpose of retail development. This responsibility is best left to private investors and entrepreneurs. Economic development experts, including representatives from the Missouri Department of Economic Development, consistently emphasize that retail development is most successful when led by private-sector professionals. These economic development experts have been unable to provide me examples of municipal governments independently succeeding in such ventures. Patience is key here—capitalism has a proven track record in our country, and I believe it can deliver results for our community as well.

Lastly, in my capacity with the Cuba Development Group, I am always available to collaborate with you, whether as a group, in committee settings, or on an individual basis. The mayor and I have had several interesting discussions, and I would welcome the opportunity to engage with more of you. As we navigate economic development together, I humbly request that you include me in those discussions.

Thank you.