

CITY OF SIGOURNEY, IOWA
MINUTES OF REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2021

The Sigourney City Council met in regular session in the Council Chambers at City Hall on Wednesday, February 17, 2021 with Mayor Glandon presiding and the following Council members answering roll call: Schröder, Bender, Conrad, McLaughlin, Schultz and Morlan. Others present were: Christie Iosbaker, Sigourney News Review; Larry Alderson; Don Northup, Public Works Director I; Richard Fortney, Police Officer; and Angie Alderson, City Clerk.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. Council member Morlan moved, seconded by Council member McLaughlin, to approve the tentative agenda. Upon the roll being called, the following voted Ayes: Schröder, Bender, Conrad, McLaughlin, Schultz and Morlan. Nays: None. Motion approved.

Council member Conrad moved, seconded by Council member Bender, to approve the following items on the consent agenda: Minutes for the regular Council meeting on February 3, 2021; Council accounts payable claims in the amount of \$25,497.88; City Clerk's Financials for January 2021; payroll expenses, miscellaneous expenses, ACH and monthly transfers for January 2021; Tax Exemption Application for Jason and Traci Hewitt at 307 South Jefferson Street, Sigourney, Iowa (Resolution No. 2021-02-13) contingent upon Traci Hewitt signing the application; Tax Exemption Application for DGOGSigourneyia120519 LLC at 704 East Jackson Street, Sigourney, Iowa (Resolution No. 2021-02-14); Liquor License Application for DOLGENCORP, LLC (DBA: Dollar General Store 2244) at 315 North Main Street, Sigourney, Iowa for Change of Ownership; Liquor License Application for DOLGENDORP, LLC (DBA: Dollar General Store 2244) at 315 North Main Street, Sigourney, Iowa for Class B Wine Permit, Class C Beer Permit (BC) and Sunday Sales; Rich Fortney attending Patrol Officer Response to Street Drugs Seminar from March 1-4, 2021 at No Cost to the City; Community Betterment Project; credit card report and the time and place for the March 3, 2021 regular Council meeting will be 6:00 p.m. at City Hall. Upon the roll being called, the following voted Ayes: Schröder, Bender, Conrad, McLaughlin, Schultz and Morlan. Nays: None. Motion approved.

Additional City Business: City Clerk Alderson reviewed the change of reducing members of the Planning and Zoning Commission from seven to five. This will have to be done to the Zoning Ordinance as well. Council member McLaughlin moved, seconded by Council member Conrad, to approve the first reading to the Sigourney Code of Ordinances – Title II Policy and Administration – Chapter 3 Powers and Duties of Municipal Officers – 2-3-12: Duties of the Planning and Zoning Commission. Upon the roll being called, the following voted Ayes: Schröder, Bender, Conrad, McLaughlin, Schultz and Morlan. Nays: None. Motion approved.

City Clerk Alderson reviewed the information for an Upper-Story Housing grant. There must be an Environmental Review done as part of the application process, so this is an upfront cost. Area 15 Regional Planning Commission has sent a contract and they would do the environmental review for \$2,500.00. Should the City receive the grant, Area 15 would do the administrative work for \$5,000.00. City Clerk Alderson reminded the Council that there must be an architect on board as well. The estimated cost for this work is \$7,500.00 and must be done as part of the grant application. This is like the Façade grant. The City had approximately \$12,000.00 to \$15,000.00 in upfront costs. There would be a City application process to review and then the City would have to pick which applicant to move forward with.

Council member Schultz moved, seconded by Council member Conrad, to approve pursuing an Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) Grant Application for the Upper-Story Housing (USH) Program. Upon the roll being called, the following voted Ayes: Schröder, Bender, Conrad, McLaughlin, Schultz and Morlan. Nays: None. Motion approved.

Council member Conrad asked if the upfront costs could be used as some of the costs the City is contributing toward the grant. Council member Conrad moved, seconded by Council member Schultz, to approve a Contract for Grant Application Assistance to the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) for Upper-Story Housing (USH) Program with Area 15 Regional Planning Commission. Upon the roll being called, the following voted Ayes: Schröder, Bender, Conrad, McLaughlin, Schultz and Morlan. Nays: None. Motion approved.

Council member McLaughlin stated that on February 5th Governor Reynolds relaxed the restrictions that had been put in place due to COVID 19. City Halls are opened all around and businesses are open. We have processes in place and positivity rates have gone down. She understands that the Council has always been split. Council member McLaughlin petitioned and collected signatures from all wards. There are 48 signatures. She feels

citizens want the office open. One person stated that they do not have a checking account and they had to put cash in the drop box. Normally she would have come in and gotten a receipt. City Clerk Alderson stated that anyone that pays cash is sent a receipt, so they know their money was received and properly applied. Council member McLaughlin stated that is an inconvenience. She talked about going to a meeting at the Library and she had her hands full and then found out she had to call to be let in. That was an inconvenience, and she does not feel that is necessary when things are in place such as hand sanitizer. There are people that do not go out because they are feeling ill. There will come a time when you have to open back up and you cannot let fear dictate you. The petition states “we the undersigned hereby petition the Mayor and City Council of Sigourney to reopen City Hall. We are residents or business owners paying property taxes, water and sewer in Sigourney, Iowa. We as residents and property owners in Sigourney are requesting to exercise our right to conduct business within the City Hall without having to make an appointment. We understand that a pandemic has been in effect since March 2020 and as responsible adults we take precautions to protect ourselves and City employees when conducting business within the City Hall.” Council member McLaughlin stated that she tries to do due diligence and she hopes everyone can appreciate that.

Council member Schultz responded that he could see that Council member McLaughlin has made an effort. He stated that he does not share Council member McLaughlin’s enthusiasm for this project, nor does he respect the Governor’s decision in this matter. He feels this is premature. He also stated that he has seen people sign things that is put under their nose to sign. He feels that Council member McLaughlin made an effort to collect signatures and that is commendable. He is not sure that everyone understands the procedure involved in closing City Hall in the first place. This is not something the Council is going to vote on. Council member Schultz explained that this was a Mayor’s Proclamation that put this in place and the Mayor had the authority to do that. Council member McLaughlin asked at what point does the Council say they would like it open. Council member Schultz stated he too understands that the Council is split, but there will not be a vote taken. Council member Schultz asked Council member McLaughlin if someone had complained to her. She responded that she has received complaints. Council member Schultz stated that he has not received one complaint on this matter. He asked if anyone else had received any complaints. Council member McLaughlin stated she does not understand why City Hall is still closed. Council member Schultz thinks the reality is that this pandemic is not over. Yes, the numbers are better today than they were. Council member McLaughlin stated that the businesses around the square are open and City Hall’s around us are open. Council member Schultz stated that about half are. Council member McLaughlin asked why we keep our doors closed and that is what she does not understand. Council member Schultz stated that it is for safety. Council member McLaughlin stated that the precautions are in place – we have plexiglass, hand sanitizer, the restrooms and meeting rooms are not open. We get a handful of customers in City Hall that want to do business and we tell them no they must call and make an appointment. It is not like we have a plethora of people coming in all the time. We get maybe a handful a day. Yet we keep our doors closed to them. Council member McLaughlin stated she does not feel we are being fair to the people. Council member Schultz stated that he feels we are being fair as they can conduct the business that they need to. Council member McLaughlin stated that people must call to make an appointment. Do you have to call the retail businesses to go in and pick something up? Council member Schultz stated that most businesses are going to do whatever they can to stay open because they are for profit. They have had a hard time and the City is not trying to turn a profit. The services are for the public and they are still able to conduct their business. Council member Schultz stated he has not received any complaints and asked the other Council members if they had received complaints. Council member Morlan stated he has been asked why it is still closed, but not really any complaints. Council member Schultz stated he is not sure the public has an issue with it. He acknowledged the petition Council member McLaughlin had presented but asked if she had gone door to door to get signatures and she replied that she did talk with people about it. Council member Schultz again commended Council member McLaughlin’s effort, but reminded everyone that this is not up for a vote and it may not be out there for a vote. He understands that Council member McLaughlin has expressed her opinion about the matter, and he is willing to have a conversation regarding the matter. It has been talked about a lot of times and he feels that the time will come to open up City Hall, but he does not think it should be at the first chance the number change. Council member McLaughlin stated that she thinks the Council has been told we are going to wait until this happens, going to wait until after the first of the year, etc. Council member Schultz stated that this lasted a lot longer than anyone expected it to. Council member McLaughlin stated that she thinks it is past time. Council member Morlan stated that he supported Council member McLaughlin’s view to open again. Council member Schröder stated that he too respects what Council member McLaughlin has done regarding putting forth the effort and her sincere belief and intentions for public benefit, but he agrees with what Council member Schultz has said. His opinion is that the Governor has treated this more lightly than she should have. She should have done a number of things sooner and more significantly than she has. She had received criticism at the state and national level for backing off on the mask mandate just when the variants are coming in. He does not want this to be a hostile disagreement. He feels they

should respect each other's opinions without getting angry or upset about it. Council member Bender asked if the Mayor had any indication when he thinks City Hall would be open. Mayor Glandon stated he is staying out of it as he spoke his piece. Council member Bender stated that the Mayor is the one to shut City Hall, so he does not understand why he is staying out of it. Mayor Glandon stated he has called the Iowa League of Cities and was told to do this under 372.14. Over fifty percent of the City Halls in the state of Iowa are locked down just for the simple fact that if it gets into City Hall who is going to do the work. If a retail store locks their doors, you can go somewhere else to get what you need. At City Hall there is business that must be done daily. Mayor Glandon has been watching the numbers as well. Council member Schultz stated that he is not so much concerned about himself, as Mayor Pro-tem he has talked with Mayor Glandon and does back him. Council member McLaughlin asked what would happen if someone fell and breaks a leg what will we do then, who is going to run City Hall then? Council member Conrad stated that he is still working from home and is prohibited from meeting with his clients by his boss. After Governor Reynolds did the proclamation, he understands the CDC doctor said that was clearly jumping the gun and she said that is the time to double down on being careful and cautious. Council member Conrad also stated that he too appreciates Council member McLaughlin's opinion, but he is not going to change his based on any of the numbers that are currently available. Council member Schultz used his personal story as an example as to how not everyone is always careful. Council member McLaughlin stated that at some point City Hall should be opened back up and Council member Schultz agreed with her. Mayor Glandon stated that some day City Hall will be opened, but he is looking at different things and he has consulted with Council member Schultz a lot over the last few months. It is not something that he has done by himself and he still converses with the Iowa League of Cities. He is looking at a lot of things. The statistics are all over the place and he has had quite a few people tell him they are sure they had it but did not get tested. Number games can be played all day long. Council member McLaughlin stated that she feels it is odd because the staff members are not restricted from going anywhere, so they could get it from anywhere. And yet the public cannot come into City Hall for fear that they might contract COVID when the employees could get it anywhere in the community or anywhere at conferences or restaurants visited. It makes no sense when the employees are not restricted. Council member Schröder stated that the point is it is not going to happen here. It may happen somewhere else, but not here. We are not going to transmit it here and hopefully not get it here. The point is that this is a place where it is not going to be transmitted to the public or from the public. It may happen elsewhere and if it does it will happen elsewhere, but the point is we do not want it to happen here. Council member Schröder reiterated that he does respect Council member McLaughlin's opinion and the work that she has done, but they do not agree on it.

There was no report for Sigourney Area Development Corporation (SADC).

Public Safety: Council member Bender inquired the letter the Council received regarding the police department. He asked the Mayor if they had been answered. Mayor Glandon stated that he had a very long conversation and that at this point he cannot say anything more.

City Clerk: City Clerk Alderson stated she put the wrong date on the public hearing for the budget and she will have to run this again and use the date of March 17, 2021 as the date to hold the public hearing. She also asked the Council to not be shocked by the numbers in the paper. With all the projects going on and not knowing when they are going to happen, a lot of items are budgeted in both Fiscal Year 2021 and Fiscal Year 2022, but they will only happen once.

Public Input: Council member McLaughlin asked if there would be another closed session regarding the letter received by the City. Council member Bender stated he has not heard anything bad about the situation regarding the County not doing their job.

The meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 6:30 p.m.

Douglas L. Glandon, Mayor

ATTEST: _____
Angela K. Alderson, City Clerk