

The meeting was called to order at 7:37 p.m. by Mayor Heron with the following roll call:

Members Present: Ald. Hoy, Ald. Voss, Ald. Gering, Ald. Moede, Ald. Smith, Ald. Pasbrig

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Mayor Heron, Kathie Wild, Deanna Boldrey, Ron Wellner, Roger Williams, Sue Smith, Sally Kahlhamer, Dena Harris, Marge Nitschke, Tom Herman, Sharon Chmiewlewski, Lourdeen Robson, Justin Graef, Wendy Metke, Shirlee Czernicki

Resolution 4332 – 2009 (Authorizing the Direct Charge of Public Fire Protection.)

Mayor Heron opened the item by asking the Clerk to read the Resolution. Motion by Ald. Smith, second by Ald. Gering for Resolution 4332 – 2009 Authorizing the Direct Charge of Public Fire Protection. Mayor Heron stated that this is not a new fee, might feel like a new fee to some. He clarified that \$79,135 is already on the water bills, and currently \$230,000 is on the tax roll. With this resolution the entire \$309,135 would be on the water bills. Residents could see an additional charge of \$7-\$9 per month on their water bill. The Mayor continued that this is a critical part of a recovery plan that is in the works. The 2007 and 2008 audit showed a \$1 million deficit in the general fund, and need \$3 million in the general fund according to the advice of Virchow Krause. Mayor Heron stated that the long term goal is to eliminate the deficit and get 15%-25% of revenues in the general fund. A lot of people will see an additional charge on their water bills. The Mayor continued that the city's financial condition is improving, and it began last year.

Mayor Heron opened the discussion to Ron Wellner. Ron noted that the utility commission is against it but they do understand and will proceed as directed. He is concerned about the phone calls that the Water Department may receive from this. Ron stated that for small customers this may be a big deal. He also stated that this is the council's decision not the utility commission's decision. Ron noted that the numbers may go up. He asked who will pay for the short rate case study. There are 333 fire hydrants right now per Ron. Ron reminded the council that the towers and mains are the size they are for fire protection. The charge is there to maintain the fire protection system.

The City Clerk reviewed the process. Ron Wellner added that the letter has to come from the Public Service Commission (PSC) not the council and that the hearing would be with the PSC. They will take public comments into account and make their decision. The PSC will then give the City the order for the rates.

Ald. Smith commented that he is in support of it because this is where the charge should be and if doing from scratch this is the fairest way to do it. Right now only the people that pay it are those that pay a property tax bill and those that pay a water bill. This will apply evenly to renters, churches, and schools that receive a water bill. Ald. Smith questioned how many residents do not get a water bill but have a hydrant. At one of his properties he has a well and septic and does not get a water bill.

Ron Wellner noted that there are not many of these properties.

Ald. Hoy asked the timeline. The Clerk answered that the PSC had previously said two months. Ron Wellner stated that the PSC is currently three months behind. Ron Wellner suggested the first of the year. Mayor Heron noted the cost and how it will be paid for. He agreed that January might be a good target, and if started in November or December, it might offset the costs of the study. Ald. Smith noted that December is the most practical. Ald. Hoy suggested asking for an earlier date. Ald. Pasbrig suggested shooting for December, with the first month designated to pay for the study. Ald. Moede agreed with December. Mayor Heron received general consensus from the group for the start date to be with the November billing starting with December.

Mayor Heron asked the question for the vote of Resolution 4332 – 2009 Authorizing the Direct Charge of Public Fire Protection. Motion carried 5-0-1, Ald. Smith Abstained due to one of his properties having a well and septic system.

ADJOURNMENT.

Motion by Ald. Pasbrig, second by Ald. Gering to adjourn at 8:19 p.m. Motion carried 6-0.

Deanna Boldrey
City Clerk