

Special Called Meeting of the
Board of Mayor and Council
June 27, 2006

The Board of Mayor and Council met in a special called meeting on June 27, 2006 at 6:00 p.m. for the sole purpose of discussing/acting on Ordinance #317 - the water/sewer rate bills.

Mayor Norwood called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.

Present and presiding: Mayor Gary Norwood.

Council present: Tommy Nicholson, Carol Macha, Chris LaCrosse, and Steve Allen.

Council absent: Dwayne Noe and Rick Johnson.

Others present: Chris Cherry, Bush Boyd, Vanessa Bowman, Corey Gossett, John Hadley, Surinolga Patel, Tony Young, Murry Hawkins, and Phyllis Schaeffer.

Mayor Norwood said the meeting was called on Ordinance #317 for the Council to look at and discuss any changes the Council might want to make to this ordinance. At this time he opened the floor for Council discussion.

Mr. LaCrosse said in the budget process they realized the budget is tight in the enterprise fund. A question was asked about apartments, condo's and multi-meters and how they are charged. Ashland City is different from most places as they charge a base charge for water/sewer and if it was by meter. The Council discussed as a body the fairness in that. A household whatever form it took – condo, apt., house the Council felt obligated to level the playing field. Before they increased the rates for everyone they thought they should enforce the rules on the books. This ordinance was passed in 2000. There was no targeting, no hey pick on anybody, it was treat all fairly and equitable and live with the constraints on the budget.

The Mayor said there are 2 main topics: 1. future development and 2. loss of revenue from rental property.

When Ms. Manning was here she wanted individual meters, wanting multi meters for tap fees etc., it is actually a nuisance for us and with rental property we lose. Property owners should be accountable for the loss. Either through their deposit not being returned before water bill paid or not turning water back on until the bill is paid.

Mr. Nicholson said that was a good idea and wanted clarification that Royal Oaks would be billed per unit.

Ms. Macha said Oak Manor doesn't budget until January she understands that but how can you make a difference between charitable and the older people with decreased income, some even have help on their taxes. Ms. Macha thinks everyone should be treated fairly. Why should they have to pay higher rates until it's equitable to all?

Mr. LaCrosse said Mr. Hadley (Royal Oaks) had a good point on the worth of his property and he can see delaying this.

Ms. Macha asked if you delay for 6 months are you going to delay for everyone? The Hotel/motel thinks the one across from Hill's always has 13+ cars there but the other one isn't like that.

Mr. Hawkins said the motel/hotels take a break on the number that is living there on their hotel/motel tax.

Mayor Norwood said he wants to do the fair thing but he does not like this ordinance. The Mayor would like current owners grandfathered in and new development having to pay and making owners responsible for their rental property debt.

Mr. Nicholson said we should delay to January.

Mayor Norwood said the enterprise Fund has nothing to do with the tax structure.

Mr. LaCrosse said he does not think those on fixed incomes should have to subsidize the commercial properties.

Mayor Norwood asked if a certain tract wanted to build a mall but didn't know the size of each business would it be 25 or 35 as an example. Mr. Cherry said on the Owen Place center he had them give the minimum size and that is how they based the taps that were put in.

After much discussion Ms. Macha said she likes the ordinance but doesn't have a problem with delaying it for 6 months.

Mr. Bush Boyd asked if he could address the Council, Mayor Norwood told him yes. Mr. Boyd said about 6 years ago if you recall a consultant did a study on the water rates for a generating plant when this was voted on there was an increase to the water rates his increase was not 35% it turned out to be 70%. He wanted to know if the rates were going to be raised again. Mayor replied not at this time.

After some more discussion, a motion was made by Macha, seconded by Nicholson, to amend Ordinance #317 dropping (h)(ii) and make the ordinance effective 1/1/07. Motion passed with a roll call vote of: Macha-yes, Nicholson-yes, Allen-yes, LaCrosse-yes, and Mayor-no.

A motion was made by Macha, seconded by LaCrosse, to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Gary Norwood, Mayor

Phyllis Schaeffer, City Recorder