

**Regular City Council Meeting
City Hall, Cherokee, Iowa
February 25, 2014 – 7:00 P.M.**

A regular meeting was called to order on this date by Mayor Murphy. Present: Council members Johnson, Brown, Miller, Pingel, Peck, Administrator Eikmeier, Clerk-Treasurer Taylor. Absent: City Attorney Miller.

The council reviewed a recently completed water/sewer rate study done by Iowa Rural Water Association. The study confirmed that the water fund is in good financial shape, however, the sewer fund needs significant attention. The study recommends increases for both water and sewer. Current rates (last increase): Water-Base \$5.00 (2007); commodity charge \$2.00/100 cu. ft. (1998). Sewer-Base \$8.00 (2010); commodity charge \$3.75/100 cu. ft. (2010). As recommended in the study, the largest adjustment would be in the first year, with smaller increases over the next 4 years. The council reviewed 3 possible options, the first option uses the recommendations from the study; the second option spreads the larger increase over the first 2 years with smaller increases the following 3 years; and the third option evenly spreads the increase over 5 years. Council member Brown recommended following the rate study recommendation, which indicates that even with the rate increases as proposed, water rates fall into the excellent affordability category and sewer rates would be considered good. With the sewer fund showing a negative cash flow and larger projects needed in the near future, he feels implementing the rates as recommended is the most responsible way to go. By spreading the rate increases more evenly over the 5-year period, revenues would be less than required for operations. A motion by Brown, seconded by Miller, recommended using the rate study proposal for water and sewer rate increases. Motion carried.

On a motion by Brown, seconded by Peck, the council approved the first presentation of an ordinance increasing water and sewer rates as follows. Roll call was: AYES: All. NAYS: None.

WATER RATES

Effective Dates		Rates
April 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014	Base Charge	\$5.12
	Commodity Charge (per 100 cu. ft.)	\$2.18
January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015	Base Charge	\$5.26
	Commodity Charge (per 100 cu. ft.)	\$2.25
January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016	Base Charge	\$5.40
	Commodity Charge (per 100 cu. ft.)	\$2.33
January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017	Base Charge	\$5.60
	Commodity Charge (per 100 cu. ft.)	\$2.40
January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018	Base Charge	\$5.80
	Commodity Charge (per 100 cu. ft.)	\$2.48

SEWER RATES

Effective Dates		Rates
April 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014	Base Charge	\$9.02
	Commodity Charge (per 100 cu. ft.)	\$4.44
January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015	Base Charge	\$9.17
	Commodity Charge (per 100 cu. ft.)	\$4.59
January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016	Base Charge	\$9.32
	Commodity Charge (per 100 cu. ft.)	\$4.74
January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017	Base Charge	\$9.45
	Commodity Charge (per 100 cu. ft.)	\$4.89
January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018	Base Charge	\$9.64
	Commodity Charge (per 100 cu. ft.)	\$5.03

A motion by Brown, seconded by Pingel, unanimously approved the following under “Consent Business”.

City council minutes of February 10th, 11th and 18th.

Renewal of Class “C” liquor license – Jobies Pastime Lounge.

Mark Reinders, Franchise Manager for Mid American Energy, was present along with local employees Mark George and Pam Dunn. Mid American’s franchise with the City expires in October 2014. Mr. Reinders briefly explained the renewal process with the council. The franchise allows for Mid American’s use of city right-of-way to install and maintain its electrical lines and equipment. Part of the process also requires the renewal of the franchise fees paid to the city. Prior to adopting a new franchise, a public hearing will be required. The renewal process will continue to move forward.

The council reviewed the following bids for the asphalt and concrete paving of the Rock Island Recreation Trail. Concrete will be used connecting the existing trail on the west side of Hwy. 59 and will proceed under the highway to a point east of the underpass. Asphalt will be used on the remaining portion of the trail. Concrete bids were: Tom Mummert & Son Construction-\$12,852; Ahlrich Concrete, Inc.-\$13,440; Benson Construction-\$13,717.44; M & T Construction-\$22,770. Asphalt bids were: Barkley Asphalt-\$27,120; Blacktop Service Co.-\$29,500. Administrator Eikmeier reported that the bids came in significantly under the estimate, so additional work may be done on the CN railroad trail. A motion by Miller, seconded by Pingel, accepted the low bids from Tom Mummert & Son Construction for \$12,852 and Barkley Asphalt for \$27,120. Motion carried.

The council reviewed revised job descriptions for the Park Director and Recreation Director positions. The descriptions more clearly define the responsibilities of these positions and, should future conflicts occur, will determine whose duty a particular task may be. A motion by Peck, seconded by Johnson, unanimously approved the job descriptions for the Park Director and Recreation Director as presented.

Duane Mummert, Park Supt., presented his quarterly report to the council. Projects completed since the first of the year include repairing frozen water lines, running temporary electric service to the water pit at Spring Lake Park, sheetrock/mudding/painting at the new maintenance building, installing shelving in the new building, trimming trees, moving snow, and servicing equipment. Upcoming projects include completing the new open shelter, Rock Island trail, Wescott restroom and shelter upgrades, concrete approaches on the CN railroad trail, prairie grass burn, and tree planting.

Administrator Eikmeier reported that the water line to the school’s bus barn was repaired last weekend. This line serves what were originally three individual customers – the high school, bus barn, and armory. This is now a single customer, the Cherokee Comm. School district. The Administrator proposed to Supt. John Chalstrom a 50/50 cost share for this repair. Dr. Chalstrom, however, recommended turning this over to their respective attorneys to determine who should pay the costs. Administrator Eikmeier doesn’t feel either entity should spend money on legal fees. He will propose that the City pay 100% of the cost of the repair, but give the school notice that from here on, the line will be considered the schools’ service line and they will be responsible for installing a shut off and maintaining the line in the future.

The council was reminded of the informational flood buy-out meeting on Wed., Feb. 26 at 5:30 at the Community Center. Because there is limited funding, the priorities will first be houses south of E. Main St.; second, houses vacated as a result of 2013 flooding; and third, the houses

most immediately abutting Railroad Creek. Funds will only take care of about 25% of the homes impacted by Railroad Creek flooding. The application deadline for funding is May 15. Commercial property is not involved.

There are currently 3 residences with frozen water lines. Several others have been thawed. The frost is 4' to 5' deep and will take some time to go out. People who have to run water to keep lines from freezing have asked whether they will get a break on their water bills. The Administrator will take a look at options.

Mason Timmerman was in attendance. As part of a public speaking class he is taking at W.I.T., he is required to attend a small group meeting. His grandpa, Gary Chase, recommended he attend a city council meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

News media – Nikki Thunder, KCHE.

Mark Murphy – Mayor

ATTEST:

Debra Taylor
City Clerk-Treasurer