

Aurora City Council Meeting Minutes
MARC Building
822 W Mt. Vernon Blvd.
Mt. Vernon, Missouri
Tuesday, September 1, 2020 - 6 P.M.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Ferguson called the meeting to order for the Aurora City Council Members at 6:00 p.m. Roll call was taken. Mayor Ferguson, Chairman Pro Tem Lewis, and Councilwoman Oplinger were present. A quorum was present. Councilwoman Pettit arrived at 6:05 p.m.

2. NEW BUSINESS

2.I. Discussion Of 911 Services

Chairman for Lawrence County Emergency Services Board (LCESB) Mike Palmer addressed Council with his thoughts on what he thought the two main issues are. The first being whether or not tax dollars should be shared with the City of Aurora and the second being whether or not the City of Aurora will be coming under the umbrella of the Lawrence County Emergency Services Board for 911 Services. Mr. Palmer stated that it was the opinion of the board and their attorney that due to the language of the ballot there is a legal issue on whether or not they can reimburse the City of Aurora for 911 services to the community. Mr. Palmer asked City Attorney Ken Reynolds what his thoughts were on the legality of the reimbursement. Mr. Reynolds stated that he had not researched it but his opinion was that if the Board's job is to provide 911 services to the whole county than they have an obligation to do so. The purpose of the tax dollars is for 911 services. The Board is providing tax dollars to Monett, who is a third party, why not Aurora.

At this time there was discussion between Mike Palmer and City Manager Jon Holmes about informal conversations where it was stated that the City of Aurora was not interested in giving over its 911 services to the Lawrence County Emergency Services Board until a central location was established in Lawrence County. City Manager Holmes stated that he would not have made a decision like that without the approval of the Council and that he did not receive a written offer to take to Council for discussion and vote. City Manager Holmes expressed his concerns about whether Mr. Palmer was authorized to extend an offer to Aurora without the consent of Monett.

Discussion was held on the reimbursement of funds to the City of Aurora for 911 services. Councilwoman Pettit asked the Board if they would entertain a lower reimbursement amount. No direct answer was given.

There was discussion between Mr. Palmer and Ken Reynolds about contracts the Board has with other communities. Mr. Palmer stated there were no contracts. Mr. Reynolds asked how did agree to terms with no contract and Mr. Palmer replied with there was no need for contracts. Councilwoman Pettit asked Mr. Palmer if the Board had provided 911 services to the patrons of the City of Aurora.

Mr. Palmer stated that the City of Aurora had been given the opportunity...at this time Councilwoman Pettit interrupted Mr. Palmer stating that is not what she asked. Mr. Palmer then stated that she knew the answer to that question. Councilwoman Pettit then stated that it was her opinion that since the Board had been collecting taxes from the citizens of Aurora yet not providing the service that those tax dollars were collected for, the Board should reimburse Aurora. Dave Hubert stated that the Board and the City of Aurora should have been working together from the very start and that is was his opinion that the Board did not owe Aurora anything.

There was discussion regarding Chief Witthuhn being a liaison to the City of Aurora as he was on the board at that time. Mr. Brian Cook stated that as a liaison he knew what was going on should have informed the Council and City Manager therefore he did not believe that the Board owed Aurora anything.

There was discussion between City Manager Holmes and Dave Hubert regarding Mr. Holmes' concerns and the reasons behind those concerns.

At this time Chief Witthuhn came forward stating that he was told to be neutral not to be the liaison. He also stated that the original board agreed that Aurora deserved reimbursement.

Mayor Ferguson asked if the LCESB would be interested in reimbursement by call. No direct answer was given. Dave Hubert asked if Aurora wanted to come under the umbrella of the LCESB. Mayor Ferguson stated that he believed they did and asked City Manager Holmes, based on the way the agenda reads, can a motion be made. City Manager Holmes conferred with City Attorney Reynolds and then stated yes. Mayor Ferguson made a motion for the City of Aurora to come under the umbrella of the Lawrence County Emergency Services Board effective January 1, 2021. There was no second. Councilwoman Oplinger stated that it was her opinion that the meeting needed to be adjourned. There was more discussion regarding reimbursement and what numbers to base the reimbursement on. Members of the LCESB stated that they wanted numbers they could rely on as they have to justify where every dollar goes. City Attorney Ken Reynolds suggested getting a CPA to figure out the numbers. Aurora would pick one, the LCESB would pick one and then those two CPA's would pick one. There was more discussion on call volume, how much it costs to run 911 services, and the percentage Aurora is of Lawrence County. Councilwoman Oplinger stated that Aurora is not like any other city as we have probation, parole, etc...

City Manager Holmes stated that he would like one more chance to work with Mr. Palmer. He believes that they are both professionals and can work something out. If they are unable to reach a decision then each of the entities could move forward with getting a CPA.

It was agreed that City Manager Jon Holmes and Chairman of the LCESB Mike Palmer would meet and discuss the numbers to base reimbursement off of. Mr. Palmer would then take those numbers to his Board at their next meeting. City Manager Holmes would also take that information to the City Council at their next

meeting.

3. ADJOURNMENT


Mayor Ferguson made a motion to adjourn at 7:55 p.m. Chairman Pro Tem Lewis seconded the motion. Motion passed with the following members voting aye:

AYES: Ferguson, Oplinger, Lewis, Pettit

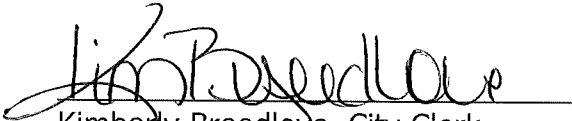
NAYES: 0

ABSENT: McWade

APPROVED:


Doyle Ferguson, Mayor

ATTEST:


Kimberly Breedlove, City Clerk