

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Led by Mayor Voorhis

**OPEN MEETING**

Roll Call taken by Mayor Thomas Voorhis

Mark Stewart PRESENT, Ben Lord PRESENT, Richard Icenhower PRESENT, Dennis Roe PRESENT, Sherry Veach PRESENT, Kelly Petty ABSENT

Call to order at: 6:30 p.m.

**APPROVE AGENDA.** Motion by Veach to approve agenda. Second Roe Stewart AYE, Lord AYE, Icenhower AYE, Roe AYE, Veach AYE

**PUBLIC FORUM**

Roger Miller, 270 E. Willow – I would like to speak about my letter I received. I'm sure a lot of other people in town received them. I have 4 tires with wheels inflated holding up my daughter's basketball goal which is a nuisance. I tried to call and speak to someone about this which I did not receive a call back. I'm assuming that the grass and yard debris doesn't apply to me on this. Why are we focusing on this in our town?

Lord – I'll go first on this. Sir, this is the first that I've seen the letter. I've heard the scuttle obviously. Do you mind to read the letter? I don't know what it says.

Miller – You guys can pass it around if you want.

Lord – If you want to read it out loud, I know I for one haven't...

Miller – “This letter is to inform you that the City of Fair Grove has an ordinance against high grass and rubbish. It has been brought to the cities attention that you may be in violation of this ordinance specifically tires in driveway”. I have four tires with wheels with air in them, holding up my daughter's basketball goal. “The city would greatly appreciate your attention to this matter” and then it goes on to read the article.

Lord – You mean holding it up so the wind doesn't blow it over?

Miller – Yep. So my question is, I've been here 19 years, same house, a few different basketball goals, same wheels and tires holding them up. I'm just wondering what's happening in our town where this is our priority?

Lord – Go for it Chief.

Chief Howell – Truck parts are also labeled on there, along with tires.

Miller – I read it word for word.

Chief Howell – Okay. That’s part of it. It’s right in front of your house. We are trying to address the issues.

Miller – I assume that our town is so crime ridden that you don’t have the time to call people back.

Chief Howell – I did not get your notice.

Miller – So my tires are the issue, is that correct?

Chief Howell – My office doors open all the time. Every time I post something you can come in and talk to me, sir.

Miller – Just as long as it ain’t a phone call though.

Chief Howell – No, I’ll return a phone call if I get it.

Miller – Thank you.

Lord – Thank you.

Mayor – Nobody else?

Brady Dickens, 27 W. Draper – I did not receive a letter but I’m worked up about all of this. I haven’t seen the letter, this is the first I’ve heard one. But I have neighbors that probably could be considered in violation of this ordinance, I mean I could be considered in violation of this ordinance. I’m not sure why we’re focusing on this. I don’t understand it. I’ve been in Fair Grove going all the way back to, well Gary Butler was running the police department when I was first here. And we’ve never had these issues. I understand that it’s an ordinance and certainly the police chief is entitled to enforce any ordinances on the books. I understand that. But I guess that we don’t understand, I don’t understand, why? Why are we focusing on this? I was led to believe that whenever we brought in a police chief that it would be community policing focus and I’m not sure that’s the spirit of this. We’ve got people all upset. We’ve got people who’ve had the same situation for 19 years holding up his kid’s basketball goal, now he’s getting a ticket? He’ll get a fine and if he doesn’t pay that fine, what happens? Well, it’s a tax lien. It’s a lien on his house. That’s a serious, very, very serious situation. I’m not sure why we’re doing this. And if there’s specific complaints I’d like to think that some of our neighbors would come to us with those complaints like I have. I’ve got some folks directly across the street from me, I know a lot of folks know who those folks are, I won’t name them specifically but I wish they would clean up their yard. It would be great. But every time I’ve had an issue with him, I went and addressed it with him directly and to me that’s what community is. I feel like that’s the way it should be handled. I don’t feel like we should be putting letters in peoples mailboxes, taping them to their doors, sending out fines, threatening liens on their houses over a nuisance. Over trash, over tires in their driveway. I mean its private property. I feel like how we use it is up to us as citizens. That’s me, that’s just my personal opinion. I’m real big on private property. I’m real big on private rights and since I’ve lived here in Fair Grove, it’s been the same situation. Maybe things

have changed, I'm not sure. But if someone can help me out, make me understand why this is the focus all of the sudden. Why are we focusing on how high someone's grass is instead of focusing on wheels getting stolen from Icenhower's shop, from the body shop. Why aren't we focusing on these things? I genuinely don't understand so if someone could give me an opinion, maybe some input. I'd appreciate it.

Icenhower – Well I guess my question would be, this is an ordinance of the city, it was not passed by this counsel, it's been on the books since 1999, it's a direct copy of the Greene County Planning and Zoning. Are we just supposed to enforce part of the ordinances and not worry about the rest of them? That would be my question. This is an ordinance. I'm not a Facebook person but people get on Facebook and make all kinds of accusations and some of them is true but a lot of them they don't even know what they're talking about. But my question is are we just gonna enforce part of the ordinances or are we gonna enforce an ordinance whenever we have a complaint? This has been addressed before. A previous chief done the same thing the only difference was he didn't put it on Facebook. He went out and took care of it. I can sympathize to an extent but I still say, if it's an ordinance, we have to enforce the ordinance. An ordinance is a law.

Brady Dickens – Tommy, can I speak again?

Mayor – Yes, make it quick, sir!

Dickens – Richard, I agree with you. It's the law and law enforcement is entitled to enforce any laws, there's no question about that. I don't think anybody is questioning that. I understand the council and this council isn't the one that passed the ordinance so you're inherited someone else's situation. But I'm a big believer in enforcing the spirit of the law rather than the letter of the law. Come on guys, we're in Fair Grove, Missouri. Are we really worried about someone's camper parked in the backyard, a tire in the driveway. Is that what we are using our resources on? Can they? Absolutely they can do that. That's the way the law is written. But is that how we want to be policing our neighborhoods? Is that the spirit we want to be enforcing? I would suggest, I don't think so. Maybe other people disagree with me. Maybe people on this council, maybe people in this room disagree with me. But in my opinion, we should be enforcing the spirit of the law. The spirit of the law is meant for a true nuisance, right. We've got some vacant property across from the school with grass this high. We've got houses that are run down, decks falling off of them, rats going into the neighbors house. I feel like that's the purpose of the law. I don't feel like it's to have a problem with someone's tires in their driveway. And maybe I'm wrong.

Miller – I've got photos if you guys want to see them.

Dickens – And that's what I'm trying to say Richard. I agree with you, I do. They're entitled to enforce it, the police chief is entitled to enforce it, that's his job. But I don't think that's the spirit of the law and maybe I'm wrong but I would encourage the council to review that and maybe makes changes they see necessary. Thank you.

Chief Howell – Tommy, can I talk?

Mayor – Yes, please.

Chief Howell – First of all, nobodies getting a ticket. Those letters were letters. I came out to hand deliver them so I could talk to each and every citizen to discuss their situation with them. I have gotten resources for people who needed resources. I've reached out to people, I've talked to people. It's not about a ticket, it's not about someone getting a lien on their property. It's about helping this community clean itself up. That's all it's about. I'm not looking to give anybody a ticket, I'm not looking to put a lien on anybody's house. I tried to go out and hand deliver those letters so I could talk to each and every one of you and find out what was going on. Sorry I didn't get your phone call returned to you. I'll figure out what happened. The letter of the law is the letter of the law. Which murder don't you wanna charge? From the medial thing, to the big thing. There are former law enforcement officers that will tell you the broken window theory. Some of you may or may not know it. Hopefully law enforcement officers know it. If you overlook the smaller things, larger things happen. So if you let your community go, go to Springfield. That's what happens when you let your community go. Is that what you want or do you want a town that's respectable. That everybody can come to and enjoy.

Miller – Well I've been here 18 years and I've never had to call the police.

Chief Howell – It takes one time.

Dickens – Chief, I understand the broken window theory. I've got my bachelor's in criminal justice, I have master credits in criminal justice. I served in a law enforcement capacity for over 5 years. I understand the broken window theory. I do and that's a legitimate theory. It is a theory and there are other theories out there. But I would also encourage you to kind of take a review and understand the chemistry of the community and how we've been doing things. Maybe there's a better way. I respect you going door to door and handing those out. Tremendously, genuinely. You could have put them in a mailer, you could have taped them to someone's door and you would have been within your rights to do that. So I think a lot can be said that you went and visited with people individually but it's just not well received right now, or maybe ever. It just seems like we're focusing on the wrong issues here. I don't think I'm alone in that.

Chief Howell – What issues would you like me to address?

Dickens – Well, how about some of the property crimes that happened down at the auto shop?

Chief Howell – We've had one property crime and I have no suspects.

Dickens – How about the sex offender out at the park?

Chief Howell – We arrested him.

Dickens – That's fantastic. How about my box trailer that was stolen 2 years ago?

Chief Howell – I wasn't here two years ago.



Dickens – Yeah, I understand and I'm not putting that on you or anything. I'm saying that as a community, these are the issues. People aren't worried generally about how tall the grass is or rubbish. Honestly, it's a little insulting to us and I don't think we want it.

Chief Howell – Okay. Maybe in 6 months we'll have a full staff. When those officers are stopping cars and writing tickets, are you going to be in here complaining about that next because there's an ordinance about speeding.

Mayor – Okay. We're going to go ahead and move this along, Chief, if you don't mind, sir. Anybody else like to speak in open forum?

Becki Carr/ Becki Sells, - I would like to say something. I think that ordinance from my perception was open to, I guess open to the Chief's discernment because I got a letter about a camper on a concrete pad and my neighbor catty-corner from me was told to her face that their camper on the gravel was the problem. Which is it? The camper on the gravel or the camper on the concrete pad? Two different things and I think that's part of the issue. The inconsistency. Yes! Almost everybody whose gotten a letter has talked to each other. Interesting that only 20 people in this community received letters and yet, if you drive through Fair Grove as some of us who've gotten letters have, you can find violations all over this town. And if that's the priority, you should've been out there yesterday and today handing out letters. Just saying. So I guess, my issue will be taken care of 100% but I agree. We were without a police force for 6 months...

Miller – Didn't even notice.

Carr/Sells – 6 months and is this what we want to focus on. This ordinance, you know, this little ordinance, this little ordinance and this little ordinance. None of us with any sort of law enforcement background understand the broken window theory, but with that said, this community over those 6, 8 months has had a lot of damage and we need to heal as a community. Not be where we are right here today with more citizens standing up here upset. It's just a snowball, it's just continuing. We need to heal, we need to come together and that's not happening.

Roderick Icenhower – You got time for one more?

Mayor – Yes, sir!

Roderick Icenhower, 220 W. Delania – I for one want to say thank you to Chief Howell. We've heard a lot of complaints over the last year about not having a police force, we wanted a transparent police force and you can't get any more transparent than Chief Howell. I don't care where you stand on it ying or yang, it's a law. It's his job to uphold the law. Is some of it petty, maybe. Can it be addressed in an ordinance change or something, yes, but that's not where we're at. Instead of going on Facebook and tearing the city down and getting a bunch of people riled up, why don't we come up here and work as a community. I think he has went above and beyond going out in the community and asking these businesses for help for the people that can't help themselves. I really appreciate that. There have been a ton of volunteers generated. I don't know how else we can heal ourselves. I want to commend this group too for doing what you've done

and being the council that's brought this on. We as a community need to decide what it is we want. We've spent the last 6 or 7 months saying that we need a police force, we had all of this raging crime and everything else, and then we get a police chief and a police force in here and all of the sudden it's a big deal that we have somebody out enforcing the law. I do believe in community policing and I think he's went above and beyond explaining himself in his Facebook post that he's not wanting to write tickets, he not wanting to put tax liens. This has generated interest in the community by volunteers rolling in.

Tim Cooke, 209 S. Meadowlark – I'm gonna feed off of Roderick just a little bit. These individual issues I know nothing about them. Honestly not my business to know about them. What I can tell you is, the Chief mentioned that Karla Lampe had donated services to help with some of this. I watched two people come in today from that list that thanked Karla for doing that and this is something they've wanted to do for a while, they have the opportunity. I had a neighbor 3 houses down from me asking what I knew about it. She's an older gal and I was explaining to her, you know, what I knew of the ordinance, what they were looking for and she expressed to me I got stuff down here I'd like to get done but I just don't have the means, my children live out of state. We talked and we worked out a plan. I've been helping her get some stuff done. Two houses down from her, I got a call yesterday about a hornets nest I can't get down. So and so told me I should call you. I was more than happy to go do it. We all know anything that goes on Facebook is going to be a nightmare in this town. It is just what it is. Is that the best means? It reaches the most people but you see how Facebook can turn things around. What I am seeing is neighbors reaching out to other neighbors discussing, asking for help, where can I turn. I've got 4 yards in this town that I'm set to mow because they've asked me what does this mean and what can I do? I think it was Roderick, it may have been Becki, but taking care of each other as a community, that's what we need to be focusing on. That's what's happening, even if everyone don't see it. This is bringing neighbors together, putting resources together, how can we help, what can we help you do. So, with all due respect to individual situations, I think that this is a great thing that the chief is doing and it is bringing people together. Like I said, is Facebook the answer, I don't know. What other answers do we have? And I've heard different opinions about this. But when you put it on Facebook, it's available to the whole community and the whole community talks about it and talks to each other. Things can get done in a positive way. I commend Chief Howell for what he's doing. I think you're going to see the continuance of people getting back to asking people to help each other because that's what the community needs.

Ben McMains, 322 E. Caddo – I was one that received a letter as well. I came up here and I talked to Chief Howell. I explained my issues with it. One is a lawn mower that I have sitting outside under the tree that I use to mow my yard that he hadn't seen moved in a while so he came to my house and was met by my very pissed off wife so she called me up and I came down here that day and we talked. We hashed it out. I appreciate his transparency. What I think some of the issue is how it comes across on social media. It comes across very harsh like if you don't do it we will, like the barking dogs, we will take the dogs, we will do this, we will cite you a ticket. We know he don't want to cite us tickets. It's a small town but I think that's how it's coming across. It's coming across rough on social media. I'm a very big proponent for transparency and I like it. Ike, you were in violation of this ordinance for years and nobody got you for it until recently. Your vehicle in the back of your yard was sitting there forever. So we're

all, to part, I guess in violation of some of these laws. But if you go through every city ordinance we have, I don't think there's a person sitting in this room that wouldn't be in violation of some city ordinance. That's really all I have to say. I think it's just the way it's coming across. I think it's the way your rubbing people, you came in running when maybe you should have come in walking just because of the bad blood that we've had recently. It's not to blame you for it. So, that's my two cents.

Mayor – Anybody else?

Alessia Alsup, 480 S. Woodsman St. – I just have one question. Does this ordinance apply to residents and businesses or just residents?

Chief Howell – It applies to all...

Alsup – any nuisance, regardless of who owns it? Okay, thank you!

Mayor – Thank you guys for coming up here speaking. I'm gonna say one thing here real fast. Chief Howell's put together a committee, his door's open to come talk to him about that. He's made that public on Facebook. Chief Roy Howell has been doing an amazing job. I'll sit here and I'll say that. He's reached out to the community for community policing involvement with setting up a committee. You guys are more than welcome to come up here and speak to him. He's here through the week. I can tell you personally his door is always open. So, these changes that we speak about, let's work together as a community.

Miller – What's the times of this open door policy?

Mayor – You're always welcome to come up here during city hall hours, sir. I believe they are 8 to 4:30.

Miller – 8-4:30. Thank you!

### **Old Business**

#### **DISCUSS MOWING LIBRARY TRACT**

Roe – Yes. Just a little history on that. The city owned 1.34 acres and it was sold to the library, Greene County Library Board District and that sale was completed end of December. With that said, we had a mowing contract with Yard Art to mow City Hall and that lot. We failed to cancel that contract on the mowing. So it's been mowed and we've been paying some bills that we should not have been paying. So, number one, we need a motion to cancel that contract with Yard Art for mowing the 1.34 acre property that the Library District now owns.

Motion by Roe to cancel contract with Yard-Art for mowing the 1.34 acre library tract. Seconded by Veach

Stewart AYE, Lord AYE, Icenhower, AYE, Veach AYE

The second part of that. The money has been spent. We shouldn't have spent it so Anna, I think you've got some recommendations.

Attorney – Yes. I discussed this with James and I think that the best place to start would be to contact the library, let them know what happened, see if they will reimburse you and let them know that they need to start maintenance on that tract themselves. If that's not working out, let us know and we will figure it out from there.

### **New Business**

#### **DISCUSS AND/OR APPROVE MAYOR SUBMITTED COMMITTEE LIST**

Motion by Roe to approve the Mayor submitted committee list for 2024-2025. Seconded by Veach

Stewart AYE, Lord AYE, Icenhower AYE, Roe AYE, Veach AYE

#### **DISCUSS AND/OR APPROVE WRITE OFF OF SEWER BILL FOR PROPERTY OWNER #1**

Roe – Sara, I should have talked to you about this beforehand. When they moved out of town, did they receive their deposit?

Davis – They didn't have a deposit left after the bills.

Roe – So that's why we have this small amount due?

Davis – Yes.

Roe – So just for everyone else to know, the situation where a family, a person has moved out of town, they didn't pay their last water/sewer bill. They've been contacted a number of times...

Davis – Since January.

Roe – Since January, no response and the bill is \$64.33. If we get an attorney involved, it's going to cost more than that, so the logical thing to do is to write off the bill in my mind.

Veach – That's how we've handled it in the past. Because it's not cost effective to go any other route.

Roe – This is kind of unusual. A lot of times we'll have a sewer adjustment because of a water leak and they pay the water but they don't want to pay the sewer charge so we make an adjustment for that but this is not a very common occurrence because a deposit would cover this situation.

Motion by Veach to write off sewer bill for Property Owner #1 in the amount of \$64.33.

Seconded by Roe

Stewart AYE, Lord AYE, Icenhower AYE, Roe AYE, Veach AYE

**DISCUSS AND/OR APPROVE NATIONAL NIGHT OUT (Lord, Stewart)**

Chief Howell – Thank you Mr. Lord and Mr. Stewart for allowing me to talk on this. National Night Out was established in 1984 in the United States. It was done in Pennsylvania. It started out that people would turn on porch lights and stuff like that. It has grown over the years to thousands, if not millions of communities doing this. As far as I know, this community has never taken part in it. Most people don't even know what it is. National Night Out is where people would turn on their porch lights and start to get together about fighting crime in their community. Taking a stance on the crime that happens in their community. This August 6<sup>th</sup> is National Night Out. I'd like to ask the Board for approval to hold National Night Out out at the city park. We'll get with the parks directors and try to set that up. It will be small this year. I would like to see it grow into something that the community as a whole can come out, everybody partake to get to know the law enforcement officers, come talk to us, get to know us, get to know the community and show the vehicles off to the kids and partake in events. I plan on getting the grill out, maybe get in my Reno 9-1-1 shorts, just joking and grilling some hotdogs and stuff for the kids. I would like the Aldermen to approve us holding a National Night Out if possible.

Stewart – Is there any cost associated with this?

Chief Howell – I will suck most of it up myself this year.

Roderick Icenhower – I know the fire department in Springfield also participates in it. We had three different apparatus come out and get involved in that too.

Chief Howell – My goal is to get the fire department to come out as well.

Veach – So they can man the fire?

Chief Howell – So they can save the foundation, yes.

Lord – It sounds like a great idea to me. What do you need from the Board? The go ahead?

Chief Howell – Yes.

Mayor – Are we in agreement? It's not going to cost the city nothing.

Roe – Do you have an approximate time period?

Chief Howell – It will go from about 6 to 8pm.

Icenhower – I don't think we need to have a motion I think we just need a consensus of the Board.

Veach – I don't see a problem with it.

Icenhower – I think we need a consensus, I don't think we need a motion.

Attorney – It's not anything the city is taking an action on, so.

Mayor – I think you have the go ahead from us, Chief.

Chief Howell – Thank you.

**DISCUSS AND/OR APPROVE SHOP WITH A COP BANK ACCOUNT (Lord, Stewart)**

Chief Howell – Another thing I don't believe this community has ever done is Shop with a Cop. Again, I am very community-oriented policing kind of guy. I know some people probably don't think that, but I am. Shop with a Cop is an event where hopefully we can get some donations between now and December. We'll get with the school, get with the counselors to try to find those children in the community. We'll take those donations, where I came from, we did \$50 - \$100 a kid. We did \$50 needs and \$50 wants. So they could go get \$50 worth of clothing items, stuff like that and they've got \$50 of wants they can go pick their toys. And it's not just any certain age, it goes from kindergarten all the way up to high school and stuff like that. So, I would like to get a bank account. The Police Advisory Committee that I'm starting here July 25<sup>th</sup> we're gonna have a civilian and an officer dedicated to overlook that bank account. So it will be the public's eyes and our eyes on that account so there will be no fraudulent spending or anything like that out of that account. So what I'm looking for is approval to get that account going. I've already had some donation offers, the problem is I don't have nowhere to put it. I need to get with the Board and make sure you guys approve that we can have this account for the police department to start working on these issues.

Icenhower – I don't know if it can be a city account. It would need to be a separate account. That's a legal issue here.

Attorney – I did talk about with Holly and James today and I think Jennifer, who's dealt with situations like that before was how, she's one of the partners. There is a way to do it, there would be certain safeguards put in place to prevent any accidental intermingling with the city funds, make sure it stays separate. There is a way to do it.

Icenhower – Oh yeah, there is a way to do it but I don't know if it would actually go through the city. I mean, I don't know. Because I can see an issue here. If the city's involved, I know we would have a problem.

Stewart – I know Springfield does this Shop with a Cop thing. I can find out how they get funding for it.

Miller – I was on a park board for a few years and instead of doing at the park, you can run it through the park.

Attorney – James was going to get more information on it tomorrow so I can have a more definitive answer.

Icenhower – I'm all for it, I'm not opposed to it at all.

Chief Howell – My last departure we had its own account. The city had its own bank account separate that the Police Citizens Advisory Committee set and then the police department rep oversaw the account and a civilian oversaw the account.

Attorney – I think there has to be certain safeguards but I can have more details tomorrow.

Icenhower – Like I said, I don't have a problem with it, I'm all for it but I don't want to get the city in trouble. I can get in enough trouble on my own.

Chief Howell – I understand. I totally do. That's why I said there's gonna be a civilian and a law enforcement officer that way it's intermingled.

Roe – Let me ask Mark a questions because we talked about this earlier. How are is it to get a non-profit?

Stewart – The 501C3? It's not hard at all. I did two of them last year. It's not hard though.

Roe – That would be totally separate from the city if we did that.

Stewart – When I did it, I did it through the union side of things so we are totally separate from the city. I guess the police department could do something along those lines.

Chief Howell – That's why I'm trying to get just approval to intermingle with this committee and have that possibly set up through that. So there will probably be donations for Shop with a Cop. I know a lot of people donate to the National Night Out. Other events that we will try to hold. We used to have a diaper raising fund for single moms, we used to do all kinds of things. So those donations would come in and we would earmark them for Shop with a Cop. I know one organization here in town has already offered some money, they wanted to go with Shop with a Cop so that money would be earmarked, they would received a receipt and the ledger would be kept on where the money goes. Like I said, it would be watched by civilians and us.

Icenhower – If it's listed as a non-profit then that's tax deductible for the contributor.

Stewart – Where would you do the shopping at, I'm just curious? Would you take them to Springfield?

Chief Howell – Nope. I'd rather take them to another small town. The other small town that we have that's closest to us that has a Wal-Mart, I would like to do it here but we don't have the means for some of the things that the kids are probably going to be looking for, so I'd probably take them over to Marshfield. I would get with Marshfield over there and arrange a date and maybe see if Wal-Mart, most Wal-Mart's are pretty generous so I would not be surprised if they donated some money to us too.

McMains – Marshfield does one as well.

Chief Howell – Yes, they do. Webster County and Marshfield does one too.



McMains – So you could probably piggyback off of theirs and do it the same day.

Chief Howell – I would like to do it a different day.

McMains – I know, but the reason I say that is they shut down several isles.

Chief Howell – Wal-Mart may not like that, but...the thing is, Ben you might have done it, Mark you've probably done it. I would spend \$300 or \$400 out of my own pocket because the kids would get excited and we would just take the cart out of there. And that's what builds the community.

Mayor – I think this Board is in consensus about that as long as we can figure out a way that it's not going to hurt the city and she said she will get more information such as going with a non-profit organization setting up through your committee. I think we're all supportive, right?

Roe – Absolutely.

### **Mayor Report**

### **Adjournment**

Motion by Veach to Adjourn at 7:10 p.m. Seconded by Roe  
Stewart AYE, Lord AYE, Icenhower AYE, Roe AYE, Veach AYE

  
Sara Davis, City Clerk