

Local News



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Puxico City Council Meeting - Broadband Discussed, Fire Chief Appointed

JUNE 23RD 2023 BY DEE LOFLIN

Puxico City Council Meeting - Broadband Discussed, Fire Chief Appointed

Puxico City Council Meeting - June 22, 2023 - 6 p.m.

Meeting opened with a call to order, roll call, invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

Present were Patti McLean, Alderwoman, Travis Stafford, Alderman, Peter Coutavas, Alderman, Candy Williams, Alderwoman, and Mayor Rick McLean.

Mr. Coutavas announced that he found out about a program to help low income people pay for their internet. He will get more information.

Agenda was approved and accepted with the modification to address the additional guests who have attended the meeting.

Motion made to approve the May 18, 2023 minutes by Alderman Peter Coutavas, seconded by Alderman Travis Stafford. Motion passed.

Motion made to approve the Special Meeting held on June 1, 2023 by Alderman Coutavas, seconded by Alderwoman Candy Williams. Motion passed.

Motion to approve the payment of bills made by Alderman Coutavas, seconded by Alderman Stafford. Motion passed.

Henson Trash - Trash Service Contract

The new contract \$13.80 plus .50 is total charged to customers in the city of Puxico for trash service. It is a 5 year contract with a \$1.00 increase each year.

City Wide Clean-up provides for two receptacles for each household. This would be the same for the next five years. There are several free receptacles that the city receives for free.

Motion to accept the 5-year contract with Henson Trash made by Alderman Coutavas, seconded by Alderwoman McLean.

Loyd Rice - GoSEMO Fiber/ Internet

He was in attendance to update the Council on the continuing project on the fiber installation in the Puxico city limits area. Rice presented a map of the layout of the fiber and how it will be covered throughout the city streets. Around August they hope to have a presence in Puxico to help people sign-up for internet. They will also have a booth at Homecoming. Internet is coming to Puxico!

Jim Grebing, Bootheel Regional Planning Commission Director

Grebing explained that a bill sent to the city of Puxico included engineering and administration fees to the tune of around \$114,000 was what the city owed for accepting the CDGB grant for broadband.

“Tiffany is out of the office, but she has been working on this,” stated Grebing. “I believe but am not sure that is about the “preliminary” vs the “actual work done. I will have to check on this.

The total amount of the grant was for \$748,000 and the city was going to contribute another \$75,000; however due to the fact the city would own the fiber for five years and the work to be done had to be at prevailing wages (\$60-\$70 per hour) they are discussing not accepting the work. The city also did not receive any bids during the bid process. The city would have to scale back the project as well as try to get an internet provider to bid. GoSEMO Fiber has opted to come into the city without any additional resources such as the CDGB grant. It is likely the city will not utilize the grant and just let GoSEMO continue their project with out grant monies.

The question now is since the city is a member of the Planning Commission and pays yearly dues how much are they going to owe Bootheel Regional Planning for their administration fees.

Grebing stated that bill came to \$37,000, but he is not sure if that is the total with the grant in place or not.

The Planning Commissioner’s role is to procure engineering services for a grant. They bid this out and Conexon entered into a contract with the Bootheel Regional to perform work once the grant was accepted. They only did a preliminary report.

Bootheel did extend \$9,600 to the city of Puxico during the process and if they choose not to accept the grant that will be paid back to Bootheel Regional Planning Commission.

There will have to be a formal close-out on the grant if the city so chooses not to accept the terms of the grant. With no one bidding on the broadband installation it seems reasonable that the grant is not going to take place.

Grebing offered another option to reduce the scope of the project and then go after another bid; however due to prevailing wages the bids would come in so high that there would not be enough grant money to cover the expenses. This is what happened at the County level with Ozark Medical group who bid on the rural Puxico area. They were \$900,000 over what grant monies were available.

“I could say for sure that there is not any additional money available to build the initial project,” commented Grebing. “However there is BEAD (Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program) money possibly available in the 4th quarter of 2024 and could be distributed in 2025 to help with broadband projects.”

“We are still having discussion with the County on scoping the project back,” stated Grebing.

However during a recent Commission meeting, according to the Stoddard County Presiding Commissioner Greg Mathis, “The County isn’t interested in being an owner of the fiber for five years and also bidding out to a lease purchase agreement to an internet service provider.”

I will get a letter about the close-out on the CDGB Grant is de-obligated,”

“I will need to have a vote on the resolution from the city council indicating that you are not interested in the grant at this time due to the fact of pre-vailing wages and owning the fiber for five years. I will also get a letter about the close-out on the CDGB grant as a de-obligation,” Grebing stated.

Jean & Company - Review/Approve FY2023

Motion to approve the FY2023 made by Alderman Coutavas and seconded by Alderman Stafford. All voted yes and motion passed.

Jean & Company - Amended Budget & FY2024 Budget

Motion to accept the Amended Budget and FY2024 Budget made by Alderman Coutavas and seconded by Alderwoman McLean. All voted yes and motion passed.

Department and Board Reports

A. Maintenance

1. Basketball goal has been ordered for Houck park.

B. Police

1. City is seeking a reserve officer. Alderman Stafford made a motion to accept the applicant and seconded by Alderman Coutavas. All voted yes and motion passed.

2. Had one dog in the pound that had to be on hold and observed due to the fact it bit a child and was not vaccinated for rabies.

3. One animal theft reported

4. 9 times out to Mingo Residential

5. Crown Vic had some repairs

6. Put new tires on the Explorer

C. Animal Control

1. Have three dogs in the pound currently

2. One dog had bit a child so they are keeping in quarantine.

There was a question about the cat population in town. The city of Puxico is not set up to maintain a building to take in cats.

D. Fire

1. Tanker truck has a crack in it and needs a new pump. Cost would be \$1,000 plus freight.

Motion to repair the tanker truck made by Alderman Stafford and seconded by Alderman Coutavas. All voted yes and motion passed.

2. Had one fire call and four medical calls since last meeting.

3. It was asked if John 3:16 people could come in and perform volunteer work on the fire station.

Motion to allow John 3:16 people to help with work on the fire station made by Alderman Stafford and seconded by Alderwoman Williams. All voted yes and motion passed.

4. Application received to add a volunteer fireman.

Motion to accept the applicant as a volunteer fireman made by Alderman Coutavas and seconded by Alderwoman McLean.

5. Motion made by Alderman Stafford and seconded by Alderwoman Williams to appoint Larry Doublin at permanent Fire Chief.

E. Library - Elevator Repair

The quote on the repair of the elevator of the library decreased because they are coordinating the travel with having another repair in the area. Also they have the hydraulic fuel already purchased in storage. Table the elevator decision until the next meeting. Alice Patrick will check on the warranty and more details of the contract.

F. Historical Museum

The museum are wanting to purchase a computer. The cost is over \$300 so they need city council to approve the purchase. The request was approved to purchase a desktop computer.

CDGB Grant for Fiber Optic Grant

Tabled until the next meeting. Alice Patrick will contact CDGB for further information on the fees associated with the grant. Also waiting for Jim Grebing to produce the correct bill as well as a letter to de-obligate the city from the grant.

New Business

Repair of Community Room Ceiling/Roof Quotes

Sheetrock issues is buckling and splitting. To fix it correctly would be to in support boards the full length of the conference room. Table it for the moment and look at it again in the early fall.

Motion to adjourn at 8:33 made by Alderman Coutavas and seconded by Alderman Stafford.

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