

Mayor Diana Merdian called the Sterling City Council to order at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, July 21, 2025. Roll call. Present: Alderperson Retha Elston, Joe Strabala-Bright, Aida Baker, Josh Johnson, Allen Przysucha, and Jim Wise. Absent: None.

City Attorney Tim Zollinger, Police Chief Alex Chavira, Fire Chief David Northcutt, Superintendent of Public Works Brad Schrader, Finance Director Cindy Von Holten, and City Clerk Teri Sathoff were also present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Comment

Tom Brackemeyer, 1512 5th Avenue, Sterling - Mr. Brackemeyer addressed the Council about pedestrian safety as it relates to motorized bikes riding on the sidewalks. Mr. Brackemeyer would like this issue to be addressed, possibly through community education.

Steve Tim – Mr. Tim read a letter to the Council on behalf of the owners of Coco’s Dress Shop on Light Street. The owners were out of town on business and unable to attend the meeting. They requested in their letter that the construction be completed in phases to ensure businesses on Light Street remain accessible to the public. They expressed concerns that the temporary walkways planned for use during the project would not provide an acceptable level of quality for their customers. The letter also stated that Sterling does not have a lot of small businesses and that the City should find ways to work with them instead of tearing them down. Mr. Tim stated he is a project manager for rebuilding downtown Monmouth. He understands projects of this nature, and it could be done in phases.

John Moore of Sterling Motors – Mr. Moore introduced himself along with his business partners, Colby Snyder, and Bret Bryant. Their corporation, JBC Development, is interested in developing the National Property across from Dale Park. Mr. Moore wanted to introduce his team and let the Council know they are excited to work with the City.

Alderperson Elston made a motion to approve the following items on the **Consent Agenda**:

- A. Approval of Minutes.
- B. Approval of Bills and Payroll.
- C. Resolution 2025-07-24 Authorizing the Extended Term of the Municipal Insurance Cooperative Agency Insurance Pool and Approving the Amended Bylaws.
- D. Resolution 2025-07-25 to Close Fourth Street for National Night Out at Grandon from 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm.
- E. Petition to Close Miller Road from 510 Miller Road to 6th Avenue on Friday August 22, 2025, from 3:00 pm to 11:00 pm.

- F. Ordinance 2025-07-28 Amending the Prior Ordinance Which Adopted a Grocery Retailers' Occupation Tax and Municipal Grocery Service Occupation Tax for the City of Sterling.
- G. National Night Out Proclamation.
- H. Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church 150th Anniversary Proclamation.
- I. Petition from Rock River Hospice and Home to hold a Bucket Brigade on August 2, 2025.
- J. Petition from Toys for Tots to hold a Bucket Brigade on August 23, 2025.
- K. Request from CommUNITY VBS to utilize Grandon Civic Center on July 27, 2025, with an additional request to waive fees.

Seconded by Alderperson Strabala-Bright. Voting: Ayes – Alderperson Elston, Strabala-Bright, Baker, Johnson, Przysucha, and Wise. Nays – None.

Alderperson Strabala-Bright made a motion to approve the **Redevelopment Agreement with M5 Property Holdings, LLC for improvements to 302 1st Ave and 112 E. 3rd Street**; Seconded by Alderperson Elston. Voting: Ayes – Alderperson Elston, Strabala-Bright, Johnson, Baker, Przysucha, and Wise. Nays – None.

Alderperson Przysucha made a motion to approve **Pay Request #4 to Sjostrom & Sons in the Amount of \$435,192.45 For the Riverfront Park Improvements - Phase I**; Seconded by Alderperson Wise. Voting: Ayes – Alderperson Elston, Strabala-Bright, Johnson, Baker, Przysucha, and Wise. Nays – None.

Alderperson Elston made a motion to approve **Ordinance 2025-07-27 Amending Chapter 6 Article II Section 41 to Increase the Number of Liquor Licenses for Spark Center of Performing Arts**; Seconded by Alderperson Baker. Alderperson Elston thanked M5 for the new development. Voting: Ayes – Alderperson Elston, Strabala-Bright, Johnson, Baker, Przysucha, and Wise. Nays – None

Item 8D, the **Change Order for Phase 2 of Riverfront in an amount not to exceed \$700,000**, was removed from the agenda. The necessary additional information was not received before the meeting.

Staff Reports

Superintendent of Public Works Brad Schrader reported that Willett Hofmann had the Avenue G Bridge closed for inspection. Crews took advantage of the closure to clean up debris and trees. B and A Glass installed new windows on the north side of the Farmers Market. Sterling Commercial Roofing has started working on the National Building roof. An employee will be

moving out of State, so he gave notice. The hiring process will start soon to replace that person. Crews assisted with the clean-up process for Code Enforcement at a residence at 609 Ave C.

Chief David Northcutt reported they are in the planning process for the Garrett Ramos Memorial at Station 2. Engine 2 will be back in service in the next few weeks. Tender 2 is doing well and has been on several calls. The assessment center for hiring a Deputy Chief will be held on Tuesday. Rockford Fire Academy is holding 2 slots for the fall class, waiting on the Fire and Police Commission to finalize the process for new hires. The Fire Department has several community events planned, including Hot Dog Day, National Night Out, and an Open House in October for Fire Safety Month. Chief Northcutt also thanked M5 and Mr. McGowan for being great to work with.

Chief Alex Chavira reported that the Police Fire Commission continues to work through the hiring process for the September Police Academy. The cadets currently in the academy will graduate in August. National Night Out is Tuesday, August 5th, from 5:00 to 7:00 at Grandon. Community Service Officer Toth has done an outstanding job organizing this event. Main Squeeze and the B.L.I.N.D. carwash will be at City Hall for Hot Dog Days, August 1st. Twin Comm has been functioning smoothly since the move. The security of City Hall is still being worked on. Cameras are being installed. Sgt. Krause and Deputy Chief Potthoff are settling into their new roles.

City Clerk Teri Sathoff reminded Council members that if they want to participate in National Night Out, she has a game table that will be set up for them. Sara Young and Teri have a meeting scheduled for a website refresh. The launch for that should be in a few weeks.

City Manager Shumard addressed the public comment regarding the construction on Light Street. Work is scheduled to begin this week. Completing the project in phases is not feasible due to the installation of a new storm drainage system. Pathway accommodations have been arranged, and Public Works will install signage to direct customers to the businesses.

The real estate company for US Bank reached out to confirm that our request remains under consideration, but no new updates are available at this time.

A meeting for the Safe Streets for All Grant took place, focusing primarily on the technical aspects of the grant and agreement. No significant new information about the grant itself was provided.

Construction on Second Street is ongoing. An update meeting is scheduled for this Wednesday, and any new information will be shared afterward.

The owner of 301 West 3rd Street has expressed interest in making significant upgrades to the property, including the installation of a sprinkler system. This information has been forwarded to the TIF attorney, as the property lies within the Rock River TIF District.

We received notification that our application for the RAISE Grant was not successful; no communities in Illinois were awarded funding in this round. However, we have applied for the IDOT grant covering Griswold/Woodburn, Highland Park, and West LeFevre. We expect to hear back on this within the next month.

A riverfront meeting was held with the engineers, with utility delays currently holding up progress. The playground installation is expected to be completed this week.

The bracket for the new signage at Science Ridge and Route 40 has been approved. We are awaiting estimates for the electrical work for this sign as well as for the one at the roundabout.

Aldersperson Baker reported she a citizen had reached out to her regarding a youth who was facing homelessness. She was able to assist the youth, as there are several very good resources in our town. She said that although we are a small town, we are making strides in the right direction.

Aldersperson Johnson said that although the utility situation at the riverfront is frustrating, the park looks great. Johnson stated, regardless of the opening date, we will have the park for years to come. He reminded everyone that patience is a virtue and it will be worth the wait.

Aldersperson Strabala-Bright thanked the employees for the Chalk the Walk event. It was great to see all the kids enjoying themselves. He also thanked the developers who were in attendance. There are a lot of good things happening in Sterling.

Strabala-Bright agreed with Mr. Brackemeyer about the motorized bikes. He has received complaints from residents about the use of sidewalks and causing several near misses. Their disregard for the rules of the road is something that should be looked into.

He also stated that he has been researching vacant commercial property ordinances. He has passed the information on to City Manager Shumard.

Aldersperson Elston inquired about who to call after hours for water backing up on the streets during heavy rains. Schrader advised to continue to call the dispatch center.

Elston thanked City Clerk Sathoff and all of the employees who volunteered for Chalk the Walk.

She reminded everyone about the Municipal Band on Wednesday, the play at Sterling High School, and the Rally on the Rock on August 1st.

Aldersperson Przysucha thanked City Clerk Sathoff and all of the employees who volunteered for Chalk the Walk.

Przysucha stated he has received a lot of complaints about the motorized bikes as well. He welcomes discussions on the topic. He thanked the citizens for reaching out with their questions and concerns.

Aldersperson Wise thanked the developers who were in attendance

Mayor Merdian said the City staff always does an amazing job with the events, and Chalk the Walk was a success. She thanked all of the volunteers.

The Mayor advised that she has had a busy few weeks with a SIDC meeting, a Liquor Commission meeting, and a Mayor's roundtable with Brad Fritts. Sterling Township and the Regional Office of Education have a school supply giveaway on July 31st.

The meeting adjourned at 7:14 p.m.

Teri Sathoff

City Clerk