

Mayor Diana Merdian called the Sterling City Council to order at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, August 4, 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, Superintendent of Building and Zoning Amanda Schmidt, Superintendent of Wastewater Cory Bradshaw, and City Clerk Teri Sathoff were also present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Comment

Dick Card, 2007 16th Avenue, Sterling, addressed the Council about the condition of the sidewalks around Sterling. Sidewalks have been excavated and not properly replaced. Locations of damaged sidewalks include 16th Avenue, the 1500 block of 19th Street, and the 1300 block of 20th Street.

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

Approval of Minutes.

Approval of Bills and Payroll.

Pay Request #7 to Hoerr Construction in the amount of \$586,747.62 for Sanitary Sewer System Rehab

Seconded by Alderperson Strabala-Bright. Alderperson Elston requested clarification on tree loans as well as the sump pump program. City Manager Shumard explained the process for both. Voting: Ayes – Alderperson Elston, Strabala-Bright, Baker, Johnson, Przysucha, and Wise. Nays – None.

Presentations

Jaime Boze with Boy Scout Troop 305 is working toward Eagle Scout. Jaime plans to restore the Gazebo at Grandon Civic Center and add more seating. The Eagle project will start in September and should only take a few weeks to complete. The project will entail painting wood before the project begins, cutting wood on site, adding 2-3 more seat benches on the outside of the current seating area, adding and replacing some fascia boards where they are starting to break apart, and restoring metal brackets/hooks for planters. It was the consensus of the Council to approve the project. The Council expressed appreciation to Boze for helping to preserve and improve the community space in Sterling.

Darrin Mangler, with The Spark Theater for the Performing Arts, presented plans for the new theater project at 301 1st Avenue. He shared his extensive acting background and outlined the theater's vision to host plays, bands, vaudeville acts, and dinner theater. The stage has been extended by 12 feet to accommodate larger performances.

Aldersperson Johnson asked what the City could do to help ensure the project's success. Mr. Mangler expressed the importance of maintaining a strong working relationship and helping promote the property. The Council thanked Mr. Mangler and the McGowan family for their dedication to the community and wished them success.

Colby Snyder with JBC Investments LLC gave a background on himself and his experience with businesses. Snyder introduced his team, Chief Financial Officer John Moore and Chief Engineering Officer Bret Bryant.

Mr. Snyder stated JBC Investments would like to develop National Buildings 9 and 10 at Locust Street and 2nd Street into an indoor family fun center. Phase I of the center would have food courts, a brewery, a winery, and 20,000 square feet of games. The property would include indoor parking. Phase II would include a bowling alley, mini golf, indoor electric go-karts, etc.

JBC is requesting that the City transfer ownership of the property to enable immediate redevelopment. The projected opening date would be within 24 months of the transfer.

The Council thanked Mr. Snyder for his presentation and looks forward to the development.

Aldersperson Wise made a motion to **waive permit fees, less sewer connection fee for a total of \$9,876.00, to build three (3) separate modular duplex units on the vacant land previously owned by the City on West 7th Street; PIN #11-21-333-006/007/008 (200 block of West 7th Street)**; Seconded by Aldersperson Johnson. Superintendent of Building and Zoning Schmidt advised that there is no policy in place for waiving permit fees. She fears this will set a precedent for future developments. Attorney Zollinger recommended developing a policy before waiving fees. Voting: Ayes – Aldersperson Elston, Strabala-Bright, Johnson, Baker, and Wise. Nays – Przysucha.

Aldersperson Strabala-Bright made a motion to approve **Pay Request Number 3 to Martin and Company in the Amount of \$44,799.68 for the Reconstruction of Various Streets**; Seconded by Aldersperson Wise. Voting: Ayes – Aldersperson Elston, Strabala-Bright, Johnson, Baker, Przysucha, and Wise. Nays – None.

Item 8C, The Joint Agreement between the City of Sterling and IDOT for patching, milling, and resurfacing on IL Route 2 (4th Street) from 19th Ave to IL 40 was removed from the agenda. City Manager Shumard advised that he would like to see some changes to the agreement before approval.

Staff Reports

Superintendent of Public Works Brad Schrader reported that the construction on West 5th Street is currently on hold, waiting for ComEd to move utility poles. The inside lane on Lynn Blvd at 6th Avenue will be closed to repair a collapsed basin. Helm started Light Street Alley, and there was a downspout connected to a sanitary sewer. After dye testing, it was discovered that 2 mains run under the buildings. Currently working with Helm to make these accessible.

Superintendent of Wastewater Cory Bradshaw reported that the property for the new wastewater treatment plant was purchased. Maintenance has been done on the skimmers and clarifiers.

Superintendent of Building and Zoning Schmidt reported that they have a couple of properties that are ready to be transferred to SIDC. The attorney has 2 more properties he is working on.

Chief David Northcutt noted the department will participate in National Night Out. They took part in Hot Dog Day, selling out quickly. Two firefighters have completed apparatus engineer training, and crews participated in a joint technical water rescue training in Oregon. An appeal has been sent to the State Fire Marshal's Office for the station remodel grant. Engine 2 has returned and will receive new tires before being put back into service. Tower 4's aerial inspection revealed several items to address. The Rural Fire Board is purchasing a hydraulic lift for the fold-a-tank. Both a firefighter candidate and the Deputy Chief candidate declined their employment offers.

Chief Alex Chavira reported that two new officers will graduate on August 21. Another officer, starting August 20, will enter the academy on September 1. New security cameras and doors are fully operational. The department thanks all who supported Hot Dog Day and will host National Night Out at Grandon on Tuesday. The Citizens Police Academy will run from September 9 through October 21.

Chief Chavira formally announced his retirement, effective September 20, 2025, after 29 years of service. He expressed gratitude to the Council, staff, and community, noting the department's

growth in accountability, professionalism, and community service. He stated the transition has been carefully planned since 2021, with a succession plan recommending promotion from within.

City Clerk Teri Sathoff thanked Chief Chavira for his service. She stated the City of Sterling has been fortunate to have him, and he is the best Chief she has worked with.

Sathoff reminded everyone about the riverfront meeting scheduled for Tuesday at 1:00 pm in the Community Room. Sathoff advised that she attended the Mayor's Innovation Project in New Mexico in place of the Mayor.

City Attorney Zollinger confirmed the closing on the wastewater treatment plant property and is working with Building & Zoning on nuisance code updates and improved enforcement measures.

Aldersperson Baker thanked the developers for their presentations. She is excited to see the progress. Baker thanked Chief Chavira for his service to the community.

Aldersperson Johnson thanked Chief Chavira for his service to the community and stated it has been a pleasure working with him; he wished him well.

Aldersperson Strabala-Bright thanked the developers and Chief Chavira. Strabala-Bright stated we have the best police department in the region, and he credited Chavira for this.

Aldersperson Strabala-Bright thanked Mr. Card for attending the meeting and bringing the concerns about the sidewalk conditions to the City. Superintendent of Public Works Brad Schrader stated that we have been having issues with utility companies repairing their curb cuts.

Aldersperson Elston thanked the developers for attending. Reminded everyone this Wednesday is the last Municipal Band Concert, and the last Pop Up Market will be August 14th. Elston thanked Schmidt and Chief Chavira for helping her with troubled properties. She thanked Chief Chavira for his service and dedication to the City of Sterling. He will be missed.

Aldersperson Przysucha thanked Chief Chavira for his assistance and wished him well in his retirement.

Przysucha thanked Superintendent of Public Works Brad Schrader for the quick response to the alley behind Waters Court.

Aldersperson Wise thanked Chief Chavira, stating it was an honor to serve him. He wished him well in his retirement.

Aldersperson Wise asked about the possibility of waiving the residency requirements for the emergency service personnel. City Manager Shumard stated the concern is with the call back for resources.

Mayor Merdian expressed reluctance to accept Chavira's retirement, praising his leadership and commitment to the City, its officers, and their families. She voiced excitement over the wastewater plant purchase and thanked all who participated in Hot Dog Day. The CGH retreat will be held in October an agenda will be posted if there is a quorum.

The meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Teri Sathoff

City Clerk