

Mayor Diana Merdian called the Sterling City Council to order at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, September 2, 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, Deputy Fire Chief Scott Melton, Superintendent of Public Works Brad Schrader, Superintendent of Building and Zoning Amanda Schmidt, and City Clerk Teri Sathoff were also present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

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. Petition from PADS to hold a Bucket Brigade on September 6, 2025.
- D. Petition from Newman Central Catholic High School to have a Homecoming Parade on September 12, 2025.
- E. Petition from Sterling High School to have a Homecoming Parade on October 3, 2025.
- F. Petition from Knights of Columbus #662 to hold a Bucket Brigade on September 27, 2025.
- G. Proclamation Declaring September as Hispanic Heritage Month.
- H. Proclamation Declaring September as Attendance Awareness Month.
- I. Proclamation for Chamber of Commerce Week 2025.
- J. Proclamation celebrating the 75th Anniversary of Historic Midway Drive-In.
- K. Pay Request #11 To Gorman and Company in the amount of \$23,305.55.

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

Alderperson Przysucha made a motion to **Approve the Mayor's Reappointment of Robert Allen to the Fire and Police Commission**; Seconded by Alderperson Elston. Voting: Ayes – Alderperson Elston, Strabala-Bright, Johnson, Baker, Przysucha, and Wise. Nays – None.

Chief David Northcutt introduced Deputy Chief Scott Melton. Melton recently retired from Wahl Clipper after 40 years. In addition to his corporate career, he has dedicated 32 years of his life to emergency services with the Erie Fire Protection District. Deputy Chief Melton was given the oath of office and was pinned by his wife, Sheri. Chief Northcutt thanked Deputy Chief Melton's family for supporting him in his future career at the Sterling Fire Department.

Chief Alex Chavira introduced the two newest officers, Austin Burger and Nicholas Wheatley. Both officers attended the Sauk Valley Community College Police Academy. Chief Chavira praised

the officers for choosing the profession of police officer, and he thanked their families for supporting these officers. Officers Austin J. Burger and Nicholas W. Wheatley were given the oath of office.

Aldersperson Elston made a motion to approve **Ordinance 2025-09-30 Amending the Zoning Map to Reclassify Property Located at 1813 Locust from Community Business to Community Business with Special Use**; Seconded by Aldersperson Wise. Voting: Ayes – Aldersperson Elston, Strabala-Bright, Johnson, Baker, Przysucha, and Wise. Nays – None.

Aldersperson Strabala-Bright made a motion to approve **Change Order #6 for Sterling Riverfront Park Phase 1 to Sjostrom and Sons in the amount of \$19,899.75**; Seconded by Aldersperson Elston. Voting: Ayes – Aldersperson Elston, Strabala-Bright, Johnson, Baker, Przysucha, and Wise. Nays – None.

Staff Reports

Chief David Northcutt reported that they have not received news on the appeal to their grant. Two candidates are going through the hiring process. Training continues and remains a priority for the Department. An open house will be held on October 12th for Fire Prevention Week.

Chief Alex Chavira reported that one new officer started the academy on Sunday, and the two newest officers started the Field Training Program. Testing was done in August, and a hiring list was established. The background checks have started for the January academy. Officer Zach Muntean has returned from active military duty. He will participate in a condensed Field Training Program. The programming for the automatic locks on the doors is still being worked on. There is a new display case in the lobby that holds historical items from the police department. Chavira invited everyone to take a moment to look at it.

Chavira reminded everyone of the upcoming events.

- Citizens Police Academy September 9, 2025.
- Stock the Squad October 24, 2025.
- Trunk or Treat October 28, 2025.

Superintendent of Building and Zoning Amanda Schmidt reported that work continues on the grant money for renovation and demolition. Matt Reglin is developing a master list for the rental inspection program. He has had a lot of office time working on getting everything ready to go.

City Clerk Sathoff reported there was a liquor commission meeting, and there will be some ordinance changes on the next agenda for approval. There will be a Riverfront meeting on Wednesday, September 3, 2025, at 1:00 pm. The Movie in the park will be Beetlejuice, and it will be on September 26th at Grandon.

City Manager Shumard reported the bidding process for the Lawrence Brothers abatement will open up on September 15th and will close on October 3rd; the bid will be awarded in October.

Council Reports

Aldersperson Baker reminded everyone of the Taste of Fiesta on September 13, 2025.

Aldersperson Elston asked Superintendent of Building and Zoning, Amanda Schmidt, to go over the ordinance for allowing chickens. Schmidt advised that the chickens must be contained in a coop that is set at least 25 feet off all property lines. You are allowed four chickens and no roosters. You are required to register annually with the City Clerk's office. If someone does not follow the ordinance, please contact the Clerk's office or the Building Department.

Aldersperson Elston asked about abandoned properties that do not get mowed or have trees that are down. Schmidt stated the lawn can be no longer than eight inches. Once lawns reach that length, the property owner is sent a letter, and if it is not taken care of, the City will have it mowed, the owner will be issued a citation, and they will be required to pay the mowing fees. Trees that are not a hazard, the City will not clean them up. If the tree is a hazard and the homeowner does not comply with removal, the City will remove it and place a lien on the property.

Aldersperson Przysucha stated he attended the Ramos Golf Outing, which was very well run, and it was a great time. He thanked the Sterling Firefighters for the work put into the outing.

Aldersperson Wise asked if there was something that could be done about dilapidated properties, could they be declared dangerous? Schmidt advised that the building department is currently doing this; they have several properties in court with attorney Zollinger. Unfortunately, there is a process that must be followed, and it does take time.

Mayor Merdian reiterated that there is a riverfront meeting on Wednesday, September 3, 2025, at 1:00 pm. Reminder that IML is coming up, if anyone has questions about the conference or the per diems, they can contact the City Clerk or the Finance Director

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Teri Sathoff

City Clerk