

Mayor Diana Merdian called the Sterling City Council to order at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, September 15, 2025. Roll call. Present: Alderperson Retha Elston, Aida Baker, Allen Przysucha, and Jim Wise. Absent: Joe Strabala-Bright and Josh Johnson.

City Manager Scott Shumard, City Attorney Tim Zollinger, Police Chief Alex Chavira, Deputy Police Chief E. Pat Bartel, Fire Chief David Northcutt, Superintendent of Public Works Brad Schrader, Finance Director Cindy Von Holten, Superintendent of Building and Zoning Amanda Schmidt (Zoom), 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. POW-MIA Proclamation 2025.

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

Alderperson Elston made a motion to **Approve Resolution 2025-09-28 Recognizing Chief Alex Chavira's Retirement**; Seconded by Alderperson Wise. Voting: Ayes – Alderperson Elston, Baker, Przysucha, and Wise. Mayor Merdian requested her vote be recorded as an Aye as well. Nays – None.

City Manager Shumard thanked Chavira not only for being a leader in the Police Department but for the entire City Staff. Shumard stated that Chavira has been a steadfast source of advice and a sounding board. The leadership team for the City is united in appreciating his contributions to the City.

Chief Chavira said he was filled with a sense of gratitude, pride, and humility. The past 29 years with the City of Sterling have shaped him into the person he is today. Chavira thanked the citizens of Sterling, the City Council, the staff, colleagues and coworkers, the City Manager, and his fellow department heads. Chavira stated he values the friendships he has built. Being the Chief has been an honor of a lifetime.

Chief Chavira introduced Deputy Chief E. Pat Bartel. Deputy Chief Bartel is being promoted to the rank of Chief. Chavira congratulated Bartel on the promotion. Bartel has been with the City of Sterling for 31 years. He is a dedicated servant, and he has a commitment to community

engagement and operational excellence. Chavira said he is confident in Chief Bartel's ability to lead the department forward.

Deputy Chief Bartel thanked City Manager Shumard, the City Council, and Mayor Meridian. Bartel thanked Chief Chavira for his guidance and friendship. Bartel thanked his family for their love and support. The department will continue to serve the community, and it will continue to work to build trust and transparency. Bartel will continue to focus on modern policing and supporting the officers in developing their careers. The Sterling Police Department is made up of hard-working and dedicated individuals, and they will continue to earn respect through professionalism and integrity.

Aldersperson Baker made a motion to approve **Waiving the Bid Process for the Replacement of Six Garage Doors at Station One**; Seconded by Aldersperson Przysucha. Voting: Ayes – Aldersperson Elston, Baker, Przysucha, Wise, and Mayor Meridian. Nays – None.

Aldersperson Wise made a motion to approve **The Purchase of Six Garage Doors at Station One from Raynor for \$71,600**; Seconded by Aldersperson Przysucha. Voting: Ayes – Aldersperson Elston, Baker, Przysucha, and Wise. Nays – None.

Aldersperson Elston made a motion to approve **Ordinance 2025-09-31 Amending Chapter 6 Article II Section 41 to Increase the Number of Liquor Licenses for Fire Coop LLC DBA Artisan Oven**; Seconded by Aldersperson Wise. Voting: Ayes – Aldersperson Elston, Baker, Przysucha, and Wise. Nays – None.

Aldersperson Przysucha made a motion to approve **The Remediation Reimbursement Agreement with Stanley Black and Decker for Environmental Remediation at the Former National Property**; Seconded by Aldersperson Elston. City Manager Shumard advised that the former National complex on Wallace Street is currently enrolled in the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) Site Remediation Program and has undergone several investigations and remedial actions from 2005 to 2022. As part of the negotiated transfer of the property from Stanley Black and Decker (SBD) in November 2013, SBD agreed to remediate the buildings that were intended to remain based on the 2011 Riverfront Concept Plans. Most of this work is complete. The remaining work requested by the IEPA is for clarification and evaluation. Once complete, the site will receive a no further remediation letter. The buildings that were planned for demolition were not investigated and remediated.

With the updated Riverfront plans and the need to retain buildings originally slated for demolition to qualify for funding sources like historic tax credits, the remaining buildings need to undergo the same assessment and remediation work.

Earlier this year, the City, Gorman & Associates, Stanley-Black & Decker, and WSP met to discuss the remaining buildings. This includes the properties north of the railroad, the 2 combined older buildings directly on the corner of Wallace and Route 40, and the small galvanizer building at the west end of the complex. WSP provided SBD with a proposal to continue the work. SBD then provided the City with a reimbursement agreement to offset the additional costs. Gorman and City staff have reviewed the agreement and plan and agree that it should move forward to assist in the redevelopment potential of the site.

Voting: Ayes – Alderperson Elston, Baker, Przysucha, and Wise. Nays – None.

Alderperson Wise made a motion to approve **Resolution 2025-09-26 Rock River Tax Increment Financing Extension**; Seconded by Alderperson Elston. This resolution supports an extension of the completion date for the City's Rock River Redevelopment Project Area Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District from December 31, 2026, to December 31, 2038. The extension would allow additional time to complete redevelopment objectives, continue public improvements, encourage private investment, and strengthen the City's economic and tax base.

The City is working with the other taxing jurisdictions within the TIF to get similar resolutions approved. The City will then look to get enabling legislation authorized in October when the State Legislature convenes.

Voting: Ayes – Alderperson Elston, Baker, Przysucha, and Wise. Nays – None.

### **Staff Reports**

Superintendent of Public Works, Brad Schrader, reported that the poles on West 5<sup>th</sup> Street have been moved by Com-Ed, and work should continue soon. There were 184 applications for the one open position, and it has been narrowed down to 3. The long street lines have been painted; the City pays the County time and material to do this. 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue have been repaved by Martin and Company. Schrader congratulated Chief Chavira on his retirement.

Finance Director Cindy Von Holten reported that the auditor should be at the next Council meeting to discuss the results of the audit. Finance will be completing year-end reports that are due in October. Von Holten congratulated Chief Chavira on his retirement.

Chief David Northcutt congratulated Chief Chavira on his retirement. He is excited to work with Chief Bartel; the transition will be seamless. Northcutt reported that Sterling, Rock Falls, and Dixon will attend a train-the-trainer series for a nationwide training session called Calm the Chaos. This is a great training opportunity for the area departments. The School inspections were completed for the year. Deputy Chief Melton is becoming acclimated to the department

and doing well. The kindergarten fire safety program has started, and the staff is doing a great job with it. There will be an open house at the Fire Department on October 12<sup>th</sup>, there will be several vendors, a helicopter, and the State Fire Marshall's Office. The two new candidates are undergoing background checks.

Chief Alex Chavira reported that the doors have been programmed and are working. Staff have been given key fobs to operate the doors after hours. Background investigations continue for the fire and police candidates. The next academy is scheduled for January.

Chavira reminded everyone of the upcoming events.

- The Fiesta parade will be this Saturday, and every officer not on night shift will be on duty for the parade.
- The Citizens Police Academy scheduled for September 9<sup>th</sup> was postponed due to low enrollment.
- Stock the Squad October 24, 2025.
- Trunk or Treat October 28, 2025.

Chavira thanked Chief David Northcutt for the ride in the firetruck and for allowing him to go up in the tower.

Building and Zoning Superintendent Amanda Schmidt reported that Matt Reglin continues to develop a list of properties for the rental inspection program. Schmidt congratulated Chavira on his retirement and wished success to Chief Bartel.

City Clerk Sathoff reported that The Movie in the park will be Beetlejuice, and it will be on September 26<sup>th</sup> at Grandon. Sathoff reminded everyone that the Sterling portion of the parade route has changed, and the new route has been posted on social media. Sathoff and Schrader will be working on a video of the new riverfront park to post on social media. Sathoff congratulated Chief Chavira on his retirement, and she thanked him for his wisdom, leadership, and kindness to her. She stated she is excited to see what Chief Bartel has in store for the department, and she knows he will do great.

Attorney Zollinger reported that he is currently working on a nuisance property with the building department. This property is the worst they have seen in their careers. The property is tied up in the court system. There will be a hearing on the property this Friday. These situations are not easy for Schmidt and her team to deal with. These are real people living in terrible conditions.

Zollinger discussed the intergovernmental agreement with Whiteside County. Periodically, the City will receive a call about a nuisance property that appears to be in the City but is actually in the County. The State's Attorney and Zollinger discussed the possibility of creating an agreement to allow the City to pursue nuisance properties in the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the City. The County Administrator agreed to the agreement. This will be on the next agenda for formal approval.

The Liquor Commission met on September 3, 2025, to discuss a request from a business to adjust the hours of operation for special events for liquor license holders. Sathoff advised that the Commission made the following recommendations.

- Last Call would be at 2:15 am, patrons out of the business at 3:00 am, and Staff out at 4:00 am.
- A limit of no more than 1 extended hour permit per month, with a max of 12 per year.
- \$100 per permit application.
- Any alcohol citation would result in a 1-year suspension of all extended-hour permits.
- Applications must be submitted 30 days in advance.
- Pertains to indoor events only, no outdoor events.

Aldersperson Przysucha asked if any of the other liquor license holders have been asked about their desire to have this option available. Sathoff advised that she will check with a few of the license holders to gauge their opinions.

City Manager Shumard reported that the housing study has been delayed; he received it late in the day on Friday. He will review it and report on it. ComEd advised that they will not be able to move the poles on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. We do not have a status on the project. The Engineer will be working through this and reporting back on the next steps. Shumard congratulated Chief Chavira on his retirement. He stated he learned a lot from him and thanked him for his friendship.

### **Council Reports**

Aldersperson Baker stated she was looking forward to attending the IML conference. She congratulated Chief Chavira on his retirement.

Aldersperson Elston reminded everyone about Hops on the Rocks on October 11<sup>th</sup>. She stated she was contacted by Mary Martin from the YWCA regarding the parking at the YWCA. City Clerk Sathoff advised that the first row of parking belongs to the City of Sterling, and the other rows are owned by Sterling Federal and leased by the City. One row is leased back to the bank for

employee parking. The agreement was made in 2002 with Sterling Federal Bank. The first row is three hour, and YWCA parking, the second row is three-hour parking, the fourth row is Sterling Federal employee parking, and the rest of the lot is three-hour parking. We can look at changing some of the three-hour parking permits. Sathoff stated she was planning on discussing the parking lots with the police department at the staff meeting.

Elston thanked Chief Chavira for his 29 years of service to the City and community. She thanked him for always taking time out of his day for her.

Aldersperson Przysucha thanked Chief Chavira for his assistance with the questions he had. He will be missed.

Przysucha asked about the property at 1900 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue; the occupant stated she had been evicted due to condemnation by the City. Schmidt advised that the property has not been condemned, and resources are available through her department. Przysucha asked about the house on Avenue I. Schmidt advised that the occupant has moved out and the owner will be cleaning up the property.

Aldersperson Wise stated that O'Brien did a great job on the street by Prophet Park.

Mayor Merdian reminded everyone about the CGH leadership retreat on October 2<sup>nd</sup>. The debrief for the Build Grant will be on October 3<sup>rd</sup>. IML will be the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup>. Reminder of the parade on Saturday.

Mayor Merdian thanked Chief Chavira for his leadership and dedication to the City of Sterling. She stated he treats everyone with kindness and respect, and that speaks volumes. He will be missed.

The meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Teri Sathoff

City Clerk