

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

City Manager Scott Shumard, City Attorney Tim Zollinger, Police Chief E. Pat Bartel, Deputy Police Chief Shane Bland, Fire Chief David Northcutt, 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.

Public Comment:

Charlin Nolan, 506 Ash Avenue: Ms. Nolan addressed the Council in regards to a lot that she gardens in the Steelton Subdivision. Ms. Nolan stated she owns Sterling Gardens and grows produce for the farmers' market. Her neighbor has allowed her to park her trailer on their property in the grass. She did not know there were rules against parking her trailer on the grass. Her neighbor was notified by code enforcement that the trailer and "junk" would have to be removed. Ms. Nolan stated that she does have property outside the City limits to park the trailer, but it is not protected. Ms. Nolan wants to park her trailers on a driveway on a lot that she gardens on, but the code does not allow it. Nolan stated she does know that exceptions cannot be made for her.

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. Trick or Treat Hours.
- D. Proclamation Declaring October 5th – 11th as Fire Prevention Week.
- E. Proclamation Declaring October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month 5th – 11th as Fire Prevention Week.
- F. Petition for Road Closure: Avenue B between West 5th Street and West 6th Street from 1 pm to 5 pm on Sunday, October 12, 2025.

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

Mayor Merdian presented the proclamations to the YWCA and the Fire Department.

Chief Bartel introduced Deputy Chief Shane Bland. Bland was promoted to the position of Deputy Chief of Operations on October 1, 2025. Bland has been with the department since 2008. In

2022, he was promoted to the rank of sergeant. He has served as DOIC, FTO, firearms instructor, firearms range supervisor, a controlled tactics instructor, a member of the Twin City SWAT team, including SWAT team leader, and is currently the SWAT team commander. He is also a taser instructor and certifier. Deputy Chief Bland was pinned with his badge by his wife, Kayla.

Aldersperson Wise made a motion to **approve Ordinance 2025-10-33, Amending Chapter 6, Article I, Creating an Extended Hours Permit for Liquor License Holders for Special Events and Extending New Year's Eve Hours**; Seconded by Aldersperson Przysucha.

After a lengthy discussion between staff and Council, it was recommended that the times in the extended hours permit be modified to 2:00 am last call, 3:00 am all patrons out of the licensed premise, and 4:00 am all employees out of the licensed premise.

Aldersperson Strabala-Bright made a motion to **amend the motion for Ordinance 2025-10-33, Amending Chapter 6, Article I, Creating an Extended Hours Permit for Liquor License Holders for Special Events and Extending New Year's Eve Hours to last call at 2:00 am, patrons out by 3:00 am, and employees out by 4:00 am**; Seconded by Aldersperson Johnson. Voting: Ayes – Aldersperson Elston, Baker, Johnson, Strabala-Bright, Przysucha, and Wise. Nays – None.

Aldersperson Strabala-Bright made a motion to **approve Ordinance 2025-10-33, Amending Chapter 6, Article I, Creating an Extended Hours Permit for Liquor License Holders for Special Events and Extending New Year's Eve Hours to last call at 2:00 am, patrons out by 3:00 am, and employees out by 4:00 am**; Seconded by Aldersperson Johnson. Voting: Ayes – Aldersperson Elston, Baker, Johnson, Strabala-Bright, Przysucha, and Wise. Nays – None.

Aldersperson Strabala-Bright made a motion to **approve Pay Request #6 (Final) to Nicam Construction in the amount of \$70,218.05**; Seconded by Aldersperson Johnson. Voting: Ayes – Aldersperson Elston, Baker, Johnson, Strabala-Bright, Przysucha, and Wise. Nays – None.

Aldersperson Przysucha made a motion to **approve Pay Request Number 4 to Martin and Company in the Amount of \$41,496.91**; Seconded by Aldersperson Wise. Voting: Ayes – Aldersperson Elston, Baker, Johnson, Strabala-Bright, Przysucha, and Wise. Nays – None.

Aldersperson Elston made a motion to **Waive the Bid Process for Paving at Fire Station Two**; Seconded by Aldersperson Baker. Voting: Ayes – Aldersperson Elston, Baker, Johnson, Strabala-Bright, Przysucha, and Wise. Nays – None.

Aldersperson Przysucha made a motion to **accept the low quote from Helm in the amount of \$26,690 for Paving at Fire Station Two**; Seconded by Aldersperson Elston. Voting: Ayes – Aldersperson Elston, Baker, Johnson, Strabala-Bright, Przysucha, and Wise. Nays – None.

Aldersperson Strabala-Bright made a motion to **Approve the Intergovernmental Agreement Between the City of Sterling and Whiteside County to Address Nuisance Properties in the Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction of the City**; Seconded by Aldersperson Wise. Voting: Ayes – Aldersperson Elston, Baker, Johnson, Strabala-Bright, Przysucha, and Wise. Nays – None.

Aldersperson Johnson made a motion to **Approve Ordinance 2025-10-34 Designating an Area as a River Edge Redevelopment Zone in the City of Sterling, IL**; Seconded by Aldersperson Elston. Voting: Ayes – Aldersperson Elston, Baker, Johnson, Strabala-Bright, Przysucha, and Wise. Mayor Meridian requested her vote be recorded as an Aye as well. Nays – None.

Staff Reports

Superintendent of Public Works, Brad Schrader, reported that they have received the dump truck chassis, it is in Dixon to be outfitted. It will not be ready for delivery until December 2026. ComEd approved an upgrade to light fixtures in the National Building, in the area occupied by the Police Department. The light fixtures will be upgraded to LEDs. The curb and gutter have been completed on West 5th Street; Martin will be rocking and paving it. The drain in front of Shell on East Lincolnway was repaired. This is part of the maintenance agreement with IDOT. Crews assisted Code Enforcement with cleaning up a property. A new employee started last week.

Superintendent of Wastewater, Cory Bradshaw, reported that an employee attended school and took the operator exam; the results have not been received yet. Wet wells are being cleaned in the lift stations, and they continue with normal maintenance and upkeep.

Building and Zoning Superintendent Amanda Schmidt reported that rental inspector Reglin has the list of rentals complete, and he will be moving on to the next step of letters being sent out and education materials being sent out. Public Works assisted with cleaning a property and the demolition of a garage on Greenridge. The neighbors were very thankful.

Chief David Northcutt reported that the “Calm the Chaos” training was successful. Six of the members attended the train-the-trainer session, so they can teach the rest of the staff. There has been a lot of training conducted this month. Captain Avelar will be certified at the technician

level for technical rescue. It was a busy month for calls. Whiteside County put out a burn ban notice for the County. Tower 4 is out of service; it will return this week.

Chief Northcutt reminded everyone of the block party that is scheduled for the 12th. There are several vendors that will be in attendance, and there will be live demonstrations.

Chief Bartel reported that they are adjusting to the new administration. Bartel thanked Chief Chavira again for all of the prep work he had done to prepare the department for his retirement. Bartel asked the Council to please let him know if they have questions or concerns.

Chief Bartel reminded everyone of Stock the Squad on Friday, October 24th, from 8 am to noon in the south lot. This event is put on by Detective Sergeant Maggie Ellmaker and the detective division. The proceeds will benefit Rock River Hospice. Trunk or Treat will be on Tuesday, October 28th, from 4 pm to 6 pm. Even though this is a PD event, everyone in the City jumps in and helps.

Bartel asked the Fire Police Commission to promote a new sergeant to fill the vacancy left by the promotion of Deputy Chief Bland.

City Clerk Sathoff thanked everyone who participated in the movies in the park. She thanked the City employees who volunteered their time off to make sure events like this are available to the public. Sathoff advised that there has been a total of twenty people who have volunteered for the events that have been held so far this year. Of the twenty volunteers, fourteen are employees. We have logged a total of 252 volunteer hours for those four events. Events like this cannot be done without the dedication of our employees.

Sathoff stated that she and Brad Schrader made a video for the riverfront park. There have been 61,000 views on the video so far. The video shows some transparency to the project and also shows off the equipment better than photos could.

Attorney Zollinger reported that the law has changed, and the fire department may be able to recoup some money on lift assists. Chief Northcutt has been very proactive on this project; there will be an ordinance forthcoming.

City Manager Shumard stated that curb and gutter and sidewalks will be done on Light Street this week, with paving done the following week. The prep work for the binder will be done on 2nd Street, and the binder surface will be done next week, so we will have a hard surface for the

winter. ComEd will have to do engineering and environmental work to move the poles. We have a \$4.9 million grant awarded to us from IDOT for West LeFevre, which will include a 10-foot path.

Council Reports

Aldersperson Baker stated she learned a lot and met a lot of people at the IML conference. She was thankful for the opportunity to attend. Baker thanked Kori Elton for finding great shirts for the Council.

Aldersperson Johnson stated he enjoyed the IML conference and was thankful for the opportunity to attend. Johnson stated that the Mayor reads the ordinance, and the Council repeats it when the motion is made and there is no reason for the redundancy. Attorney Zollinger confirmed that there is no need to repeat the entire ordinance title; the ordinance number would be enough. Johnson suggested that the Council no longer do this to keep the meetings briefer.

Johnson asked about the possibility of creating a committee to look at the parking permits. Johnson stated he has received a multitude of complaints about the permit parking and how it is enforced. Johnson would like to form a committee to look at each of the permits that are required and whether it is serving a purpose. Attorney Zollinger advised that the Mayor would have to form a committee. Johnson stated that we need to minimize the number of permits. Johnson stated he would like to chair the committee since the majority of the parking is in his ward.

Aldersperson Strabala-Bright stated he was thankful for the opportunity to attend IML. It is very helpful, and it solidifies that Sterling is doing a lot of things right.

Strabala-Bright asked if there was an update on the pedestrian safety study. City Manager Shumard advised that he has not received anything back on the study as of yet.

Strabala-Bright thanked the Council for engaging in the conversation about the extended hour ordinance.

Aldersperson Elston thanked Public Works for driving her and the Mayor during the Fiesta Parade. Elston asked who the public should call for illegal burning. Chief Northcutt advised that if it is an emergency to call 911; if it is not an emergency, please call the non-emergency police department phone number. Elston inquired about where to take batteries for recycling. Superintendent of Building and Zoning Amanda Schmidt advised that the building department recycle the batteries.

Elston thanked everyone who volunteered for the movies in the park. There was a nice crowd considering all of the competition that was in the area. She reminded everyone about the Hops on the Rocks this weekend.

Aldersperson Przysucha thanked Public Works; the resident on Dillon Ave appreciated the work done on Dillon Avenue and the alley.

Przysucha appreciated the opportunity to attend IML. It was a great experience.

Przysucha asked about the progress on the YWCA parking issue since it was discussed at the last meeting. City Clerk Sathoff stated that Deputy Chief Potthoff spoke to the YWCA about the parking situation, which boils down to them wanting free parking.

Aldersperson Johnson stated that there is more to the issue than free parking; they have clients who are there for assistance, and they are required to move their cars every three hours. This needs to be addressed in a committee meeting. Sathoff stated that the YWCA was offered additional permit parking and was offered permits for the clients. They were given several options by Deputy Chief Potthoff, and they were not open to any of them. They would like to have free parking.

Aldersperson Wise agreed with Aldersperson Strabala-Bright; he felt the discussion on the extended hour ordinance was great. He thanked the staff for their input, which is valued.

Mayor Merdian congratulated Aldersperson Wise on his engagement. She thanked Public Works for driving in the parade and everyone who assisted with the parade. Mayor Merdian thanked the employees for volunteering for movies in the park. It was a lot of fun. She reminded everyone that Saturday will be Halloweentown and Hops on the Rocks. The Council will have a booth for trunk or treat. City Manager Shumard and her sat in on the debrief for the Build grant.

The meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Teri Sathoff

City Clerk