

Mayor Diana Merdian called the Sterling City Council to order at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, October 20, 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, Deputy Police Chief Shane Bland, Fire Chief David Northcutt, Superintendent of Public Works Brad Schrader, Superintendent of Building and Zoning Amanda Schmidt, Finance Director Cindy Von Holten, Superintendent of Wastewater Cory Bradshaw (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.

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

Joel Hopkins from Hopkins and Associates presented the audit and stated the City is in strong financial shape. There were no deficiencies or weaknesses. Mr. Hopkins thanked Von Holten and the Finance staff for assisting with everything they needed for the audit; they made it a smooth process.

Bob Vail, the Senior Vice President at Bernardi Securities, addressed the Council on behalf of CGH Medical Center. CGH is requesting permission to issue a bond through the City. CGH would use the bond proceeds for capital projects. Typically, hospitals cannot receive as low rates on bonds as municipalities. CGH's savings would be largely diminished by the higher borrowing rates if it had to borrow on its own. The City issued a similar bond in 2020 on behalf of CGH. Just as then, the bond comes with the backing of the City, meaning the bond is ultimately the City's responsibility should CGH become unable to pay due to unforeseen circumstances.

Mr. Vail provided information on the current market conditions, how the bonds will be structured, the list of capital projects, and the timing of the bonds.

Alderperson Wise made a motion **to accept the audited financial statements and place them on file**; Seconded by Alderperson Strabala-Bright. Voting: Ayes – Alderperson Elston, Strabala-Bright, Baker, Przysucha, and Wise. Nays – None.

Alderperson Strabala-Bright made a motion to **Approve Pay Request #6 to Sjostrom & Sons in the Amount of \$486,013.57 for the Riverfront Park Improvements - Phase I**; Seconded by

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

Aldersperson Johnson made a motion to **approve Pay Request #12 to Gorman and Company in the amount of \$164,415.00**; Seconded by Aldersperson Baker. Voting: Ayes – Aldersperson Elston, Baker, Johnson, Strabala-Bright, Przysucha, and Wise. Nays – None.

Aldersperson Elston made a motion to **approve Pay Request Number 1 to Helm in the amount of \$329,140.82 for Light Street Construction**; Seconded by Aldersperson Strabala-Bright. Voting: Ayes – Aldersperson Elston, Baker, Johnson, Strabala-Bright, Przysucha, and Wise. Nays – None.

Aldersperson Przysucha made a motion to **approve Pay Request Number 1 to O'Brien Civil Works in the amount of \$161,085.17 for East 7th Street Construction**; 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 2025-10-35 Approving an Easement for Sanitary Sewer System at West 2nd Street and Locust Street, the Former National Manufacturing Building**; Seconded by Aldersperson Elston. Voting: Ayes – Aldersperson Elston, Baker, Johnson, Strabala-Bright, Przysucha, and Wise. Nays – None.

Staff Reports

Superintendent of Public Works, Brad Schrader, reported that they have been adjusting manhole covers around town. A manhole and joint were repaired on East Lincolnway in front of the Shell station. They have taken delivery of tables for the riverfront.

Building and Zoning Superintendent Amanda Schmidt reported that Matt Reglin has been working hard on the rental inspection program. The communities they have talked to have had their programs in place for quite a while; they do not have a resource for anyone who has built the program from the ground up, and it is a massive undertaking. An informational open house is being planned for December 3rd. Yard waste pick up will go through the last full week in November.

Finance director Cindy Von Holten reported that she and the HR Manager, Christina Rodriguez, attended training on an HR portal. The check stubs will no longer be mailed out.

Chief David Northcutt reported that Wednesday will be Forest's last day, and there will be a lunch at the department for him. Deputy Chief Melton started a training program manager's class. A new firefighter will be starting on the 28th of October. The department received the AFG grant for exhaust mitigation. On Wednesday, there will be a Zoom meeting with Dick Durbin's office about the congressional spending on new radios. Minor repairs have been done to tower 4, and it is back in service. Chief thanked Angelica for the block party, which went well for the first year.

Deputy Chief Bland reminded everyone of Stock the Squad on Friday, October 24th, from 8 am to noon in the south lot and Trunk or Treat will be on Tuesday, October 28th, from 4 pm to 6 pm.

Superintendent of Wastewater, Cory Bradshaw, reported that they cored out the ground around the fuel tank, and a pad was poured. Fall clean-up has started.

City Clerk Sathoff reminded everyone of the employee banquet on Friday, October 24th.

City Manager Shumard reported that the binder is down on 2nd Street, and they are working on the concrete. It is still uncertain if the paving will be completed. He received a proposal on the pedestrian study. The bids for the EPA clean-up were received, and there was only 1 bid for \$1.9 million. All EPA grant work has been put on hold due to the government shutdown. The hospital is holding its ribbon-cutting from 4 pm – 6 pm on October 28th.

Council Reports

Aldersperson Baker thanked Finance for working on the paperless paychecks. She is looking forward to the employee recognition dinner.

Aldersperson Elston thanked Public Works for assistance with a sidewalk issue. Elston thanked the Building Department for assistance with chickens. Halloweentown appeared to be a success.

Aldersperson Przysucha thanked the Fire Department for a successful block party. He asked Public Works for an update on the 19th Avenue project. Schrader did not have a projected completion date; he will look into it and advise.

Mayor Merdian reported that she attended the Pathway Playground at Sauk. The TIF extension is in Senate Bill 642, which should be on the agenda for next week, along with the River Edge sunset. The Haunted Train walk will be Saturday, the 25th. Parking may be difficult due to the 2nd Street construction. There will be a spot for the Council at the police Department's Trunk or Treat event.

The Mayor and City Manager met with the new representative from Illinois American Water. The Whiteside County E-Zone meeting was held last week.

Mayor Merdian stated that City Clerk Sathoff provided a memo for the parking sub-committee; she is working with the Mayor's Innovation Project on this. More information will be forthcoming.

Mayor Merdian advised that she would like to have a study session on the next agenda for Council salaries. The last time the salaries were addressed was in 1998.

The meeting adjourned at 7:44 p.m.
Teri Sathoff

City Clerk