

Mayor Diana Merdian called the Sterling City Council to order at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, December 1, 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, 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, and City Clerk Teri Sathoff were also present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

### **Public Comment**

There was no public Comment.

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

1. Approval of Minutes.
2. Approval of bills and payroll.

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

### **Presentation**

Michael Stumpf with Place Dynamics presented a housing study created by his company for the City. The current housing stock in Sterling is comprised mostly of single-family homes, with an increasing number of single-family attached and multi-family structures. The older housing stock has an increased need for maintenance, and half of the current homes were built between 1950 and 1979.

Recommendations from Mr. Stumpf included developing objectives and policies for widening awareness of funding opportunities available to homeowners and owners of rental properties for upkeep and rehabilitation. Supporting diversification of housing types to allow for a wide array of options for all current and future Sterling residents. Supporting the infill and redevelopment practices to encourage housing development within existing city limits and particularly in strategic areas to help diversify the community's housing supply. Continue to move forward with encouraging mixed-use development with a range of residential options in the Downtown area and along the Rock River. To develop objectives and policies for the establishment of pre-annexation agreements when new housing development occurs directly adjacent to the municipal boundary.

At 7:23 p.m., Mayor Merdian opened the Public Hearing pursuant to the requirements of Sections 10 and 20 of the Bond Issuance Notification Act of the State of Illinois, as amended, on the plans to issue Taxable General Obligation Bonds (Alternate Revenue Source), in the amount not to exceed \$41,950,000. There were no questions or comments. At 7:28 p.m., Mayor Merdian closed the Public Hearing.

Alderson Elston made a motion to **authorize the City Manager to enter into an Agreement with Solar on Earth, Inc. for an Illinois Community Solar Subscription**; Seconded by Alderson Strabala-Bright. Voting: Ayes – Alderson Elston, Baker, Strabala-Bright, Johnson, Przysucha, and Wise. Nays – None.

Alderson Strabala-Bright made a motion to **approve the Purchase and Installation of a "Sterling" monument for the Route 40 and Science Ridge roundabout**; Seconded by Alderson Wise. Voting: Ayes – Alderson Elston, Baker, Strabala-Bright, Johnson, Przysucha, and Wise. Nays – None.

Alderson Elston made a motion to **Waive the Bid Process for the Purchase of Playground Equipment for Platt Park**; Seconded by Alderson Przysucha. Voting: Ayes – Alderson Elston, Baker, Strabala-Bright, Johnson, Przysucha, and Wise. Nays – None.

Alderson Przysucha made a motion to **Purchase Playground Equipment from NuToys Leisure Products in the Amount of \$100,741**; Seconded by Alderson Baker. Voting: Ayes – Alderson Elston, Baker, Strabala-Bright, Johnson, Przysucha, and Wise. Nays – None.

Alderson Wise made a motion to **authorize the Mayor to enter into a Construction Agreement with the Illinois Department of Transportation for Illinois Route 2 from Route 40 to 19th Avenue**; Seconded by Alderson Elston. Voting: Ayes – Alderson Elston, Baker, Strabala-Bright, Johnson, Przysucha, and Wise. Nays – None.

Alderson Baker made a motion to **Ordinance No 2025-12-42 Amending Chapter 18 Article XI by Exempting Single Family Dwellings Occupied by a Member of the Owner's Immediate Family from the Residential Rental Property Registration Requirements**; Seconded by Alderson Strabala-Bright. Voting: Ayes – Alderson Elston, Baker, Strabala-Bright, Johnson, Przysucha, and Wise. Nays – None.

## Staff Reports

Superintendent of Public Works, Brad Schrader, reported they were able to get all of the mowing and street sweeping wrapped up before the snowfall. They have been winterizing their equipment, installing Christmas decorations, and Light Street has been put back together.

Superintendent of Wastewater, Cory Bradshaw, reported they have been working on some sewer issues and back-ups on the residents' side of the lines. They have completed dye testing for two residents, and they continue to winterize their equipment.

Chief David Northcutt thanked Matt Reglin and Amanda Schmidt for all of the work they have done on the residential rental inspection program. The month of November was busy with calls. Engine 3 has been renumbered to Engine 5. Logan Griswold was sworn in as a paid-on-call firefighter. A new firefighter will be starting on December 9<sup>th</sup>; he will be sworn in at the next council meeting. The kettle clash was a success, and the firefighters won this year's competition.

Chief Pat Bartel reported the Salvation Army was the ultimate winner of the kettle clash, as over \$2,000 was raised. The Fire Police Commission met, and all three candidates will be hired if they pass the power test on December 10<sup>th</sup>. The academy will be in January. The shifts wrote several snow route tickets over the weekend and continued today. The officers knocked on doors, asking people to move cars so the streets could be cleared curb to curb. Tickets were issued as a last resort. Education was done on the odd/even parking. Thursday, the 4<sup>th</sup>, the Chief, two Deputy Chiefs, and the Police Chaplains will be singing at the Big Red Church for Sights and Sounds.

City Clerk Sathoff reminded everyone that City employees will be volunteering at 7 East 3rd Street for the Sights and Sounds event. She reported that there are currently 18 entries in the "Sleigh What" decorating contest. Clerk Sathoff noted that the current agenda software is not meeting the City's needs and is not user-friendly. Her department has been exploring alternatives and has selected CivicPlus, the same company that hosts the City's mobile app and website. Training on the new agenda software is underway, with the first official use planned for the January meeting.

Attorney Zollinger reported that the Governor has signed a bill providing relief from FOIA requests generated by automated bots. He also noted that Senate Bill 25 is currently awaiting the Governor's signature; if enacted, it would prohibit municipalities from regulating solar projects. Attorney Zollinger encouraged everyone to contact the Governor's office to request that the bill be amended or vetoed. He further reported that the Secretary of State has approved the use of mobile identification.

City Manager Shumard reported that now that the Federal Government is open, he has received the proposed agreement for the Safe Streets for All grant. He also stated that he is hoping to receive clearance from the EPA to remediate the asbestos at Lawrence. He advised that he will be attending the ILCMA Conference on Thursday and Friday.

### **Council Reports**

Aldersperson Baker thanked Public Works for their snow removal efforts during the snowstorm. She thanked Superintendent Schmidt and the Code Enforcement Department for cleaning up a property not only in her ward, but also properties across the City.

Aldersperson Johnson thanked Public Works for a great job of clearing the streets during the recent snowstorm.

Aldersperson Strabala-Bright also thanked Public Works for a great job of clearing the streets and the City staff who had to work outside in the weather.

Aldersperson Elston also thanked Public Works for a great job of clearing the streets. She asked how it worked out with IDOT clearing more of Lincolnway. Schrader stated it worked out well; the staff was able to focus on the downtown area and the other snow routes. Elston thanked Superintendent Schmidt and the rest of the Building Department for their work on the rental inspection program. She is excited to see this come to fruition. She reminded everyone about Sights and Sounds, the Council will be handing out cider in front of the theater.

Aldersperson Przysucha also thanked Public Works for a great job of clearing the streets. He thanked the Police Department for assisting with serving breakfast to veterans at the Senior Center. He received a report of graffiti at the riverfront. Chief Bartel stated they are reviewing the video, and Public Works has cleaned it up. Przysucha has asked that the City consider a donation to the Impact Program, and consider this while going through the budget process.

Aldersperson Wise also thanked Public Works for a great job of clearing the streets and City Clerk Sathoff for serving the community during the Sights and Sounds.

Mayor Merdian asked Sathoff about the Utility Assistance Program. Sathoff stated she would get information on the program sent out. Mayor Merdian thanked the Superintendent of Public Works for all their hard work over the weekend, as well as for the Christmas lights on the bridge and all the decorations throughout the City. Creative Wolfe Designs is a local artist she created the deer in the parks. They are one of a kind and will not be duplicated for anyone other than the

City. The Riverfront Commission meeting has been cancelled. Information on the next meeting date will be sent out. Mayor Merdian thanked City Clerk Sathoff for all of the work she has done for community involvement

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Teri Sathoff

City Clerk