

Meeting Opening

Mayor Diana Merdian called the Sterling City Council to order at 6:30 PM on Monday, April 20, 2026.

Present: Alderman Retha Elston, Alderman Joe Strabala-Bright, Alderman Josh Johnson, Alderman Aida Baker, Alderman Allen Przysucha, Alderman Jim Wise.

Absent: None.

City Manager Scott Shumard, City Attorney Tim Zollinger (Zoom), 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 (Zoom), and City Clerk Teri Sathoff were also present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Communication from Visitors

Rhonda Lucas, 1311 6th Avenue, stated she received a letter from the Tree Board in reference to the tree on her property that needs to be removed. Ms. Lucas was requesting clarification on the letter and the process for applying for a tree loan. The requested information was provided.

Tom Brackemeyer, 1512 5th Avenue, discussed the issues with sidewalks that have not been installed in the City, as well as drainage issues on his street. He stated he has concerns about his sump pump running excessively and the water not draining on his street.

Consent Agenda

Alderman 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 for Street Closure for 5K Run on September 12, 2026.
- D. Resolution 2026-04-09 Road Closure for Fiesta Parade
- E. The 2025 Fire and Police Commission Report
- F. The 2025 Police Department Report
- G. Ordinance No. 2026-04-07 An Ordinance amending the budget for Fiscal Year beginning May

1, 2025.

H. Arbor Day Proclamation

I. Proclamation for National Therapy Animal Day for Millie and Mary Toth.

Seconded by Alderman Strabala-Bright. Voting: Ayes – Retha Elston, Joe Strabala-Bright, Josh Johnson, Aida Baker, Allen Przysucha, Jim Wise. Nays – None.

Mayor Merdian presented the National Therapy Animal Day proclamation to Community Service Officer Toth and Mille.

Recommended Personnel Action

Alderman Strabala-Bright made a motion to Approve the Mayor's Appointments of Personnel to Boards and Commissions; Seconded by Alderman Johnson. Voting: Ayes – Joe Strabala-Bright, Josh Johnson, Aida Baker, Allen Przysucha, Jim Wise. Nays – None. Abstained — Retha Elston.

Business Items

Alderman Elston made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 2026-04-08, adopting the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget. Seconded by Alderman Baker. The City Manager provided a brief update. The revenues exceed the expenses by \$65,000. The evidence facility has been added to the Capital Fund. There will be a balance at the end of this year of \$2.9 million and \$2.3 million next year. City Manager Shumard thanked Finance Director Von Holten for her work on the budget. Voting: Ayes – Retha Elston, Joe Strabala-Bright, Josh Johnson, Aida Baker, Allen Przysucha, Jim Wise. Nays – None.

Alderman Elston made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 2026-04-09, Amending Chapter 94, Section 34, regarding wastewater service charges and Section 35 regarding billing and collection of service charges. Seconded by Alderman Strabala-Bright. Voting: Ayes – Retha Elston, Joe Strabala-Bright, Josh Johnson, Aida Baker, Allen Przysucha, Jim Wise. Nays – None.

Alderman Baker made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 2026-04-10, an ordinance amending the Sterling City Code Section 74-14 to establish the cost of refuse collection. Seconded by Alderman Elston. Voting: Ayes – Retha Elston, Joe Strabala-Bright, Josh Johnson, Aida Baker, Allen Przysucha, Jim Wise. Nays – None.

Alderman Elston made a motion to approve writing off the uncollectible accounts for fiscal year 2025-26. Seconded by Alderman Baker. Finance Director Von Holten stated: Voting: Ayes – Retha Elston, Joe Strabala-Bright, Josh Johnson, Aida Baker, Allen Przysucha, Jim Wise. Nays – None.

Alderman Strabala-Bright made a motion to approve Ordinance 2026-04-11 Amending Pay Plan for Fiscal Year 2026-2027. Seconded by Alderman Elston. City Manager Shumard reported that this is a 3% cost of living increase, and the steps will remain the same. Voting: Ayes – Retha Elston, Joe Strabala-Bright, Josh Johnson, Aida Baker, Allen Przysucha, Jim Wise. Nays – None.

Alderman Baker made a motion to approve Ordinance 2026-04-12 Authorizing an Increase in Elected or Appointed Officials Compensation and Amending Chapter 2 Article II of the City Code to Implement the Same. Seconded by Alderman Strabala-Bright. City Manager Shumard reported that the last wage adjustment was done thirty years ago. This increase will not take effect this term; it will be for future terms. Voting: Ayes – Retha Elston, Joe Strabala-Bright, Josh Johnson, Aida Baker, Allen Przysucha. Nays – Jim Wise.

Alderman Przysucha made a motion to award the Bid for ADA Sidewalk Improvements to Bluebird Contracting in the amount of \$191,171.00; Seconded by Alderman Wise. Voting: Ayes – Retha Elston, Joe Strabala-Bright, Josh Johnson, Aida Baker, Allen Przysucha, Jim Wise. Nays – None.

Alderman Strabala-Bright made a motion to Approve Pay Request #11 to Sjostrom and Sons for \$60,077.47 for Sterling Riverfront Phase I; Seconded by Alderman Przysucha. Alderman Elston asked if there was a project manager on site. Elston stated she had concerns regarding the opening date being pushed back and items not being done promptly. Schrader stated he has a meeting scheduled with the contractor on site. Alderman Wise stated that there are issues beyond the project manager's control. Voting: Ayes – Retha Elston, Joe Strabala-Bright, Josh Johnson, Aida Baker, Allen Przysucha, Jim Wise. Nays – None.

Staff Reports

Superintendent of Public Works Brad Schrader reported that crews have been actively addressing storm cleanup and ongoing maintenance throughout the City. Efforts include clearing storm debris, refreshing downtown landscaping, and restoring an alley from blacktop to gravel.

In addition, two new in-ground trash receptacles were installed at Wallace Park. Crews have also completed street sweeping, cold patching, and shoulder work along Lynn Boulevard to improve drainage.

Finance Director Cindy VonHolten reported that our MICA renewal for property and liability insurance will be going down 10%. This is a \$86,000 decrease. This is based on the last four years of claims.

Chief Pat Bartel reported that Deputy Chief Bland and Sgt. Adamson put together a packet of information on the new rules and laws on motorized bikes for the officers. In the last two

weeks, the department has made several stops and three arrests for misuse of motorized bikes. Officer Brad Johnson created a letter and informational flyer that Unit 5 has agreed to send out an informational packet to all parents on the use of motorized bikes.

ComEd will be shutting down the power to the City building on Saturday, April 25, 2026, from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm. There will be a police Sgt. and Deputy Chief Bland at the building to assist with walk-ins.

Chief Bartel presented the 2025 report. Chief Bartel stated that the calls for service have increased. Accidents and Class A offenses were both down for the year. The report will be placed on the City website. Chief Bartel thanked Melinda Morgan for the work she put into the project. A lot of time was spent compiling statistics and photos to be used.

Chief Northcutt reported that call volume continues to go up. The department is working on a 2-year report, as one was not provided last year. The department responded to a garage fire that had several exposures. Chief Northcutt commended and thanked the Police Department and the Building Department for assisting at the scene. Training continues. There were nine applications and three candidates for the Deputy Chief position. The hiring process will be done on April 30th. Engine 2 will be taken out of service for repairs. Firefighter Simpson and his wife had a baby girl, and firefighter Hammer and his wife are expecting a baby in the near future.

City Clerk Teri Sathoff reported that the Clean and Green will be on May 8th and 9th.

City Attorney Zollinger reported that two properties will be transferred from SIDC to private ownership. There was a court proceeding in which the Code Enforcement Department was required to testify regarding the condition of three properties. The court ruled that remediation would need to be completed in ninety days. The owner of the Third Avenue property requested that the court extend the demolition deadline to September. The court denied the request; the property should be demolished in June. Zollinger reminded the Council that updates are coming from IML. Please let him know if there are any questions.

City Manager Scott Shumard reported that a public information meeting for the Griswold and Woodburn reconstruction project will be held on April 29 from 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Phase I of the project includes Griswold north of 11th Street, as well as 11th, 13th, and 15th Streets between Griswold and Woodburn. This phase has a projected completion date of October 21 and is ready to move forward once NICOR completes its portion of the work.

Phase II is scheduled for next year and will include Woodburn and Griswold between 9th and 11th Streets.

ComEd has indicated its work on 2nd Street is expected to be completed by the end of April.

Following that, other utility providers with lines on the poles, including AT&T and Comcast, will relocate their infrastructure. Once all utility work is finished, Gensini will complete the concrete work. If all proceeds as scheduled, this portion of the project is expected to be completed within approximately six weeks.

Council Reports

Aldersperson Johnson asked whether the City could implement a bulk bid process for tree removal to assist residents who are required to remove hazardous trees. City Manager Shumard advised that this is an option that could be discussed. Schrader stated that this could be difficult to implement.

Aldersperson Elston reminded everyone about Arbor Day on Friday, and trees will be planted. She thanked Chief Bartel for the year-end report, and she complimented Melinda Morgan for her work on the report. She also thanked the Fire Police Commission for its year-end report.

Aldersperson Wise thanked Chief Bartel and Amanda Schmidt for their efforts on the problem properties in the Propheter Park neighborhood.

Mayor Merdian thanked Chief Bartel for the educational materials that have been created on the motorized bikes. Mayor Merdian thanked the City staff for working hard during the last fiscal year.

Executive Session

At 7:36 pm, Alderman Wise made a motion to adjourn to executive session; seconded by Alderman Strabala-Bright. Voting: Ayes – Retha Elston, Joe Strabala-Bright, Josh Johnson, Aida Baker, Allen Przysucha, Jim Wise. Nays – None.

At 7:55 pm, Alderman Strabala-Bright made a motion to adjourn to executive session; seconded by Alderman Przysucha. Voting: Ayes – Retha Elston, Joe Strabala-Bright, Josh Johnson, Aida Baker, Allen Przysucha, Jim Wise. Nays – None.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 7:56 pm.

Teri Sathoff

City Clerk