

**Special Meeting
Council Chambers**

City of Arnold, Missouri

**February 12, 2009
6:59 P. M.**

Tentative Agenda

1. Roll Call
2. Business from the Floor
3. New Business - "Review and discussion of incremental sewer billing changes and associated issues"
4. Other Business
5. Adjournment

February 10, 2009

The special meeting was called to order by Mayor Mark Powell at 6:59 p.m. Those present per roll call taken by City Clerk Diane Waller: Powell, Moritz, Crisler, Amato, Cooley, Hay, Poor, Deckman (excused), Ems (excused), Unrein, Waller, Holden, Lewis, Sweeney, Boone, Chief Shockey, Blue, Freese and Hall.

Since the meeting was called at the request of Councilmen Poor and Hay, Mayor asked them to speak.

Mr. Poor stated that he and the residents are unhappy with the new rates being charged on the sewer billings that recently were received.

Mr. Hay added he concurred with Mr. Poor, that he had voted for the fee schedule but now admits he must not have understood as he did not realize it would impact so many of the residents.

BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

Mr. Robert Patterson, 476 Nancy, expressed concern for his huge sewer bill as he had just moved in this spring and was being charged for excessive useage incurred by previous owners.

Ms Patti Dundon, 1929 St Christopher, was upset over her huge sewer bill as she has a large family and does have extremely high water usage.

Ms. Doris Borgelt, 653 Louisa, expressed her concerns regarding the way the bills were calculated and offered her own ideas.

Ms. Tammy Baumann, 121 Creekside Trail, stated she thought the rate increases of a few years ago were supposed to handle any future costs related to the sewer system.

Mr. Jim Edwards, 3338 Boca Raton, also had a bigger bill than expected and wanted some changes and an appeals process.

Councilman Phil Amato offered **a motion to dispense with the late fees for this billing cycle** and so moved. Seconded by Randy Crisler.

Discussion followed amongst the council members Poor, Hay and Moritz.

Mr. Ted Brandt, 319 June Drive, asked who was the consultant for the sewer rate study? He was then provided the information by Councilman Poor.

Ms. Candace Throm, 80 Hickory Bluff, offered her thoughts and suggestions on how the city could be billing residents.

Mr. Len Wichmer, 1361 Cheryl, expressed concerns about summer usage affecting the sewer rates.

Mayor Powell explained in detail, why the city needs a balanced budget and how the city sewer system and sewer fees have evolved. Unfortunately, for a number of years in the past, sewer rates had not been raised. Bond issues, voted on by the people, allowed the city to issue bonds and the city must be able to pay their debts. A consultant was hired to provide ideas and offered both flat and graduated rates. Council was given the opportunity to review the study and make decisions, based on the information provided.

Phil Amato added that MSD has a meter installed to provide flow calculations so the city is billed accordingly.

Attorney Sweeney explained the 1982 agreement whereby the city has financial responsibilities in regards to the MSD plant expenses.

More discussion.

Randy Crisler reminded all that this is a special meeting and there had previously been a work session scheduled for this time frame. There was a presenter patiently waiting and asked if we could finish with public comments and adjourn or recess.

Public Works Director Jeff Blue clarified that the city used the base rate of 15,000 gallons of water per quarter which could be adjusted but then the user charge would also have to be adjusted for sewer rates.

Norman Moss, 2270 Fawn, shared some history on what it was like living in the city prior to sewers and the picture he painted was not pretty. He added the city has been discussing sewer rates for a while and encouraged people to attend meetings and stay informed.

Matt Hay added if council meetings were televised, more people could be.

Eric Rosenbloom, 301 New Salem Rd., owns multi family units and other property in the city and suggested city use data from January, February and March of this year to compute the April billing.

Paul Vinson, 2118 Richardson, stated he owned property at 626 Lonedell and apparently there was a water leak there as the bill for that rental property was high. He would like to see tenants billed.

Randy Crisler reiterated we should recess and begin the work session.

Matt Unrein explained how to proceed referring to billing adjustments and assured common sense would prevail.

Jim McNamara, 1671 Trinity Circle, questioned how the car washes were being billed for sewers and Mayor advised they are charged based on their actual water usage.

Butch Cooley questioned Mr. Noll, another landlord with a big sewer bill who reportedly had a leak in his rental property, to see if he was satisfied with the way the city would adjust and handle his situation. He indicated he was.

Roll call vote on the **motion** offered earlier and moved on by Phil Amato **to dispense with late fees for this billing period only**. Seconded by Randy Crisler. Roll call vote: Moritz, yes; Crisler, yes; Amato, yes; Cooley, yes; Hay, yes; Poor, yes; Deckman (excused); Ems (excused), 6 yeas, **motion carried**.

Randy Crisler offered a **motion to recess and go into the scheduled work session** at this time. Seconded by Jerel Poor. Roll call vote: Moritz, yes; Crisler, yes; Amato, yes; Cooley, yes; Hay, yes; Poor, yes; Deckman (excused), Ems (excused), 6 yeas, **motion carried**.

Recess at 7:45 PM.

Meeting reconvened at 9:08 PM

Those present per roll call taken by City Clerk Diane Waller, Powell, Moritz, Crisler, Amato, Cooley, Hay, Poor, Deckman (excused), Ems (excused), Unrein, Waller, Holden, Lewis, Sweeney, Boone, Shockey (out of the room), Blue, Freese and Hall.

Much discussion resumed over sewer fees. The power point presentation was referred to and Deborah Lewis offered copies of the study. Mayor again reiterated the sewer fees are based on last winter's quarterly water usage.

Mr Poor apologized to Diane Waller for all the problems this has caused her office. She indicated there were other staff members helping out.

Crisler elaborated again on how the council discussed the billing options provided by staff and the consultant and then voted to bill residents by usage. It was not fair to bill a flat fee to all.

A poll was taken to have the City Administrator become the arbitrator in the appeal process. 6 yeas.

Hay still felt more action was needed.

Mayor instructed that this be looked at and bring back to council different scenarios. If this requires additional funding, City Administrator has authority to approve expenditures up to \$2000.

More discussion.

Mayor clarified tonight's council action and reiterated the council has waived the late fees for this billing cycle only but reminded all the municipal service bills are still due March 1, 2009. The late fees were waived to allow everyone the time necessary to work out special situations involving high usages, possible leaks etc, new move ins etc.

A motion to adjourn was offered by Jerel Poor. Seconded by Matt Hay. Voice vote: all yeas.

Meeting adjourned at 9:48 pm

Respectfully submitted,

City Clerk