**City of Allison Special Council Meeting**

**Monday, July 21st, 2025**

Special Meeting:

Mayor Henrichs opened the special meeting of the City of Allison City Council at 5:15 p.m. The Council members present were Bangasser, Galey, Henning, Heuer, Stirling. Also present were Chris Graser, Trent Stirling, Coby Bangasser, Mark Bangasser, Bailey Johnson, Cindi Johnson, Sara Henrichs, Deb McWhirter, Joe Conlon, Sara Henrichs, Ben Thorne, Joey Endelman, Lisa Cassman, Brett Harms, Janis Cramer, Dale & Daleth Pothast, and Wendy Dralle. Henning made a motion to approve the agenda with a second by Stirling. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Open Forum:

Council Member Karen Galey discussed that due to the July 14th meeting being disruptive, we need to be following the open meeting process according to law.  Part of this means if anyone wishes to speak, including Council members, you should raise your hand and be called upon by the mayor. She also mentioned that the City does not have policies and procedures for the council meetings and recommended that they get them; and that if residents would like to speak with the council regarding a specific topic that would need the council's action, they would need to contact City Hall no later than noon the Friday before the council meeting so it can be on the agenda for voting if necessary.

New Business:

Council member, Karen Galey, discussed nuisance abatements and the process. The definition of a nuisance per Iowa Code Chapter 657 is, “Whatever is injurious to health, indecent, or unreasonably offensive to the senses, or an obstruction to the free use of property, so as essentially to interfere unreasonably with the comfortable enjoyment of life or property.” Specific examples provided during the Nuisance Abatement conference include, “Any building or other place that becomes injurious and dangerous to the health or property of individuals or the public, dense growth of weeds or other vegetation that creates a health, safety, or fire hazard.”

During the conference, the biggest thing that was reiterated was consistency. In order to be successful with nuisance abatement, the process needs to be followed and be consistent. Another thing that was brought up is that the best way to start with nuisance abatements is to have a conversation with the owner on what is being seen as a nuisance and trying to start the process there vs sending a letter first.

When looking at Nuisance abatements with blighted properties there are 6 steps which are as follows:

1. Title Search – Check for liens/who the owners are (Council Member Galey talked with Butler County on the price to do this and it was $160.00)
2. Inspect the property – This can be done by Public Works or a 3rd party inspector.
3. Notice of violation that indicates the specific issue and violation completion date and must be mailed certified and/or placard.
4. When looking at abandoned/dilapidated properties this must be monitored for 6 months in which pictures and documentation are needed for support.
5. The title Report update must be obtained due to properties possibly changing hands during the 6-month period.
6. File the petition to the district court.

The process followed with nuisances includes sending the first notice in which the notice states what the specific issue is, with photos and what specifically needs to be done to take care of the notice. In which case they have so many days determined by the enforcer. To request a hearing, the homeowner must contact City Hall to have a hearing on their notice where an extension can be asked for and agreed on.

The second notice goes out with the hearing scheduled. Then there is a third notice that goes out. If an extension is granted for the nuisance and nothing is done, the homeowner will be charged for the city to come in and take care of the nuisance.

Since consistency is key with nuisances’ council member Galey brought up the need for a code enforcer that would be able to help follow through on the processes for the different nuisances to help the City move forward and get things done.

Dale Pothast made the comment that nuisance homes should be a priority.

Joey Endelman made a comment that the sidewalk issue could be brought up again when it comes to caring for the sidewalk. An example given was if someone must shovel their sidewalk to take care of it and their neighbors do not have a sidewalk and they do not have to care for anything then why does the maintenance need to be done since there is not a continuing sidewalk? If the sidewalk issue comes up again with this, how is it going to be handled?

The Council responded agreeing that nuisance properties should be focused on, and when it comes to sidewalks, lawn care, and shoveling, it will be addressed on a per situation basis.

Properties regarding lawn mowing and snow removal are common nuisances that come up. There are Cities who post the ordinances to their website, social media, and publish them in the paper for the season; and if they are not followed Public Works does the mowing or snow removal and charges the homeowner without sending a letter first. This is something that the council will need to discuss further to see if this is a route that the city would like to take on lawns and snow removal.

Motion by Galey with a second by Bangasser to start the process to identify a job description, procedure/policy, and begin to look for a code enforcer to help focus on nuisance homes in town. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Motion Carried.

City Clerk, Alexis Wiegmann gave an update on the water meters. The 4 that were left on the list from RMR are in the works of being completed. 3 are installed and 1 is scheduled to be done this week. We are still waiting for an update from the project manager Aaron Williams regarding who the 12 on the list were under ‘to be determined.’ Alexis will be reaching out to the company to try to get a response.

Council member Jodi Bangasser talked about a procedure that could go into place to help with the water meters. To help ensure that all meters have been caught and an account has been created, a water meter audit needs to be completed. Council Member Karen Galey brought a listing from the Courthouse of all the town properties to City Hall so that the list can be cross referenced during the audit.

The steps that would need to take place are as follows:

1. Deputy Clerk, Chris Graser runs a list of all accounts out of the GWORKS program and compares the list with the audit list to ensure that all properties have an account.
2. Once the first set of bills are run after the water audit, they need to be gone through and compared against the walk around list to ensure all have printed. Once Deputy Clerk, Chris Graser does the comparison, City Administrator/City Clerk, Alexis Wiegmann will go through the list as well to double check.
3. All water meters will be kept at City Hall instead of the shop going forward, so that when a new meter is needed, the Public Works can check one out of City Hall and bring back the paperwork that goes with it to have an account established.

The goal with the above procedure is to help avoid missing meters/setting up accounts.

Brett Harms asked why there was not an audit with all the accounts being cross referenced before the meters were put in.

Council member Bangasser and Mayor Henrichs replied that it was discussed, but did not happen, and there was a quorum that agreed to move forward with water meters.

Janis Cramer commented that she was disappointed that people did not say anything about not receiving a bill when they had a meter.

Mayor Scot Henrichs replied that those who had not received a bill but had a meter will be back billed based on the meter reading from the meter that was replaced with the new meters.

The meter issues that have arisen have been with new buildings with one owner making it easier to back bill. If additional accounts come up, they will be discussed and addressed at that time.

Shop accounts were looked at as there are shop accounts that are billed for water, sewer, and applicable taxes if the shop is on the same parcel as the house. There are also shops that are billed for everything on top of their house if the shop is not on the same parcel. The Council will be discussing this further and re-evaluating billing for accounts in the future, as more information is needed. More information will come on this as it is available.

The current billing on accounts is Water, Sewer, Storm Water ($2.00) Sewer relining fee (7.50), Debt Service (31.65), garbage, and applicable taxes. City Clerk, Alexis Wiegmann will be in contact with the City’s Financial Advisor Chip Schultz to get an answer on how long the sewer relining fee will need to be on the water bill, and to update the Debt service amount as the City has received forgiveness on the Lagoon project which will in return bring the debt service amount down.

Per the council minutes from February 10th, The Council reviewed the information that was presented by financial advisor Chip Schultz, and due to not having enough information regarding the rates and what they could look like with different meters, they made the decision not to make a large adjustment on the water rates at this time. Instead, it was proposed and approved that there would be a 10% rate increase on the water rate for each tier, along with a $5.00 facility fee added to the first 5 tiers, and a $100 facility fee added to the 6th tier which is larger commercial users. While there will be a $5.00 facility fee added, this will be able to have some offset with the debt service change due to SRF forgiveness on the Lagoon Project.

The action to discuss garbage charges with the $8.05 charge to those who are not able to use Jendro’s services was tabled for additional information to be gathered.

The Council talked about going to look at the old restaurant building to see the inside.

Old Business:

The council will discuss taping Council meetings and options to do so at the next council meeting on 07/28/2025.

Adjournment:

Motion by Bangasser with a second by Henning to adjourn at 6:29 p.m. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Motion carried.

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Scot Henrichs - Mayor

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Attest: Alexis Wiegmann – City Clerk