

City of Erin
Regular Board Meeting
September 7, 2021

The City of Erin Board of Mayor and Alderman met in Regular Session on Tuesday, September 7, 2021 beginning at 6:00 pm at the Erin City Hall. Those present included: Alderman Wesley Mitchum, Lisa Moore, Betsy Ligon, Jackie Parchman, Paul Gooden, Cecil Baggett, and Ted Carson. Others present included: Angela Neilson- Recorder, Attorney James Stevens, Dale Perigo, Macey Vincent, Maddix Finch, Cary Rye, Kevin Sugg, Phillip Baggett, Jackie Wyatt, Sandy Parker, Jimmy Clark, Tammy Koonty, Will Mickle, Gracie Welker, Darrell Tiebor, Rick Gordon, Justus Perigo, Steve Gray, Amanda Baker.

Mayor Paul Bailey was present and presiding.

Senator Bill Powers gave the opening prayer.

Mayor Paul Bailey called the meeting to order.

Regular Board Meeting:

Motion to approve August 2021 minutes made by Ligon, second by Baggett. All said yes.

Communications from the Mayor:

- City of Erin will post where to collect site for City of Waverly.
- Reminder that September is Suicide Awareness Month
 - #9 leading cause of death in Tennessee
 - 132 per day
 - 1219 in 2020
 - If you suspect something- say something so someone can assist
- 8-21-2021 flood
 - A lot went on during this short amount of time
 - Appreciate all of the City of Erin employees – the City of Erin Police Department, Fire Department, Maintenance Department - Houston County Sheriff's Department - Thank you for helping minimize the damage in Houston County
 - Neighboring city (Waverly) had so much devastation and shamefully, we are thankful nothing to that extent happened to us
 - We received about 20% of our normal rainfall in less than 24 hours on the 21st
 - There is a reason that downtown Erin is in a flood zone and that's something that has to be looked at
 - Have a list with about 37 areas within the city that were affected by flooding issues
 - We will be submitting claims with FEMA for reimbursement for debris removal, repair and paving- some of the main places are the bridges on Front Street, Arlington, Maple Street, Gang Street, Metcalf Drive, Midway Drive and Pulley Street
 - If the cost of repair is above our threshold, we will have to make sure we go about it the proper way- such as bidding the project out and taking care of the issues
 - Phillip Baggett is here- Maintenance has been working very hard to rectify the issues
 - Paving estimate is about \$18,000 for 2 bridges

- When you have a rain event like August 21 - where you have so much water in a short period of time and a limited area that you can displace the water - it does make an issue- weather events are being seen in other areas such as New York, New Jersey, and Waverly where they're having flooding
- Issues are in the low-lying areas
- Any questions or comments about the flooding issues?
 - Cary: "What can we do about getting the creeks cleaned out?"
 - Jimmy: "Creek is a drainage system. Gravel is building up by the road.
 - Mayor: "The brush has been cleaned out, which was done for flood control."
 - Jimmy: "We all pay taxes."
 - Cary: "I called everybody I know, and Senator Bill Powers is the only one who has called me back. Jay Reedy hasn't called me back, and several others. There is a way to clean it out."
 - Mayor: "This is part of the reason why Mr. Powers was invited. Felt like there would be some concerns. I trust that he will take it back with him, but I'm not trying to throw anything at him. This is priority- we know that. This is nothing new. We've done some of this to ourselves. The more you pave, the more you build, the more rooftops you have- the more problems you have. Mr. Clark, you're a member of the planning commission- you know we have codes in place to assist us with this. That's why some of the things the City doesn't allow- because of flooding issues."
 - Jimmy: "Before 2010, it wasn't the same. There's been 4 major floods, and yet to have any water in the building."
 - Mayor: "You can do a LOMA and get taken out of that if you would like to."
 - Jimmy: "Can't take it out."
 - Mayor: "I do know they are changing things. We've had floods though. The 1st one was 1937, then it goes on from there. There was one in 1968 where the houses floated down. There are issues that we've had, and they probably are continuing to get worse."
 - Jimmy: "Main thing is cleaning the creeks and sides of banks."
 - Mayor: "I have a building on the West end of town before you actually get into town that flooded. I know there are some issues and we will look at them."
 - Cary: "In the past they had talked about going up there and building a dam on Mobley Lane."
 - Mayor: "In light of what has happened in Waverly, Tennessee may look at things differently now. FEMA has given us some information, and continue to provide us with information. I can promise you, anything FEMA will give us, we will spend on cleaning up. I can also say as an owner of property that witnessed the 2010 flood, the 2011 flood, and the flood a few weeks ago... When you have those volumes of water- sometimes it's underestimated. No, I don't know what the answers are, I'll be the first one to tell you that. And let me tell you; that was a volume of water like you wouldn't believe! I saw it in 2010 and sat there and watched it as it came up and thought it was going to wash my building away, but it didn't. I watched it again recently, and thought it's going to wash my building away. It didn't, fortunately. I have video footage. It was an "Act of God". I've said it before, and I don't do algorithms, but there's a reason that flood insurance is more than fire insurance. It's because they've done the algorithms, and you're more likely to flood if you're in a flood zone than you will burn. The City of Erin is going to continue to look at what we can do for the city, and if we get any money from FEMA (which they have given us a list, that we're still working on as to how to prioritize it and what they're going to do), but anything they give us or tell us

we can spend, we'll spend. We might have to bid it out, but we'll do what we have to do, and we'll spend as much money as they'll give us on flood control. That's what I can assure you."

- Wes: "We need more than a one-time fix. We need a plan. Like a preventative maintenance plan to keep everything flowing all the time."
- Mayor: "That's where I would encourage any homeowner to do what they can on their property not leave it up to the City of Erin."
- Cary: "Are you telling me the creek belongs to me?"
- Mayor: "I'm not saying that, but I'm saying I see stuff washed off in the creek. If people know they're in a flood zone, don't put that stuff where it will wash off in the creek. Don't put stuff where it will blow out into the bridges. That's something you have to look at. I saw a refrigerator in Cleghern's parking lot, I'm sure it wasn't their refrigerator. I mean, it does happen."
- Cary: "Plain and simple. We need the creeks cleaned out."
- Senator Powers: "In the TN senate when somebody mentions your name as a legislator, you're automatically allowed to talk to them. I appreciate you calling my name out because I think it's important that people understand that there are politicians who call other politicians back. I've been here twice already. Once I went to Yellow Creek, then I went to Wells Creek. Both are on TDEC's radar. All resources going as they should to Humphreys County and parts of Dickson County. There will be a time after this that there will be answers to the questions that have derived around here. It won't be any time soon. They've got a lot on their plate right now, but after that's over I don't have a problem calling another meeting and bringing down that power that be. This has gotten the state's attention. I'll do anything I can, that's why I'm here tonight. To remedy it so it doesn't happen again is probably highly unlikely, but to possibly lessen the effects of events such as this. I'll get with Jay Reedy and Mayor Paul for a meeting- if you'd like to be involved call Paul's office."
- Mayor: "Senator Powers was the first person who contacted me, and he contacted me directly after we had our flooding incident here in Erin. He was followed shortly by a representative from Mark Green's office. They both reached out to me and asked if there was anything they could do. Mr. Power's actually asked if there was a need for a volunteer in the city or county. I told him I felt like we had it under control, and that if he wanted to go somewhere else, Waverly might be the place to go. I appreciate what they have done. I think the recent events will help the State of Tennessee reconsider. Some of the issues, such as cleaning out the creeks, I think that might be something they reconsider us being able to do based on these recent events. It is something we will continue to look at and try to find out what we can do and push to do it. As I said, anything that FEMA will allow us to do, we will do. We will spend the money as wisely as we can. I also have Sheriff Kevin Sugg here, and he wanted to commend some people."
- Sheriff: "I appreciate the opportunity Mayor. I first want to say, you got complaints on cleaning the creeks with the prisoners, and I'm so sorry. We did it to save our town because we care about our town. I reached out to TDEC and followed their instructions. That's not what I'm here about today though. I'm here to talk about the Police Department. The 21st was hard for everybody. Humphreys County lost lives. We lost some property. Erin Police Department went over to Waverly to conduct themselves to the highest standard that any officer could; along with the deputies. Chris Davis, the sheriff over there, came down there to thank Houston County for what they done. I'm going to try to have him at the meeting on the 20th. Was called on the 21st by Humphreys County Sheriff, Chris Davis, begging for

help. Any kind of military equipment or anything we could do to come and aid him. We responded to the call. Chief Mark Moore assembled Justus Perigo. Justus and Josh were the first to get there with a deputy. Bring was covered. When I got there, there was a woman in about 20 feet of swift water. She had been hanging onto a limb for 3 hours. A minimum of 3 hours because that's how long it took us to get her out of that water. When you have officers that risk their life to save a life, that's about as high a merit you're going to get. We doubled life jackets on these two right here, roped them off, and fished them down into 20-foot water to save this lady. State Troopers, Chief Moore, myself, and the Fire Department came to aid. These two young men went out there, no questions asked, they chose to step up and take the lead on this. I can't swim. These young men went out about 50 yards and brought this lady to safety. Took 3 hours. After that, these young men went to a house where a man and lady were stranded in an attic. The man was on [oxygen] with only 1 hour battery life left. These 2 young men with the aid of the Game Warden went in there and got them to safety. We worked over there, donating our time, our prisoners went over there. Officer Rick Gordon from over here took two families into his home. When Senior would go home, he would go over there and work with Sheriff Davis. I don't know what kind of award the City would have to offer these men, but they risked their life to save lives. That lady is alive today. We all returned home after getting in the water. Every one of us had to get hepatitis and tetanus shots. Broke out in hives, and had rope burn. We didn't have cell phone service, no radio service, nothing. These two young men went above and beyond the call of duty. Anything the City can give them as far as an award of life saving, the Chief of Police and these young men deserve it. Then they came home and worked after that over there. You can't keep nothing from Mark; I was trying to work this out with Angie. We went back the next day, and it was a street, the bypass, that we were swimming in. Cars were flipping down it. I want you to know that we've got a fine Police Department, an honest Police Department. Proud of these young men for stepping up. I appreciate this moment to tell you this."

- Mayor: "Thank you sir, I appreciate it."
- Angie: "Kevin, what's his name?"
 - Charles Fisher
- Mayor: "Thank you guys, I really appreciate that. Sheriff Sugg, I appreciate that. I appreciate anything our city or county do. They work hard and are dedicated."
- Cary: "Paul, I'd like to say I appreciate the Sheriff and the City. They work together and work well."
- Mayor: "They do work well together, and I appreciate what they do to assist each other. As citizens of Houston County, I appreciate that they do work well together."

Committee Meetings:

Planning Commission

- Leah Pate came before the Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals to ask if she could move her business into her house on Main Street. That motion was approved.

New Business:

Personnel Committee

- Changes made
 - Page 7: Application
 - Added eight additional requirements to ensure the Employment Application would concur with the Personnel Policy
 - Page 9: Appointments- 2 and 3
 - Added “Department Head” to verbiage
 - Page 11: Performance Appraisal/Evaluation
 - Changed “will” to “may”
 - Page 12: Legal Holidays
 - Added June 19th
- Page 12: Annual Vacation with pay
 - We created scale for vacation pay- reached out to other communities
 - 1 to 4 years= 80 hours
 - 5 to 9 years= 120 hours
 - 10 to 15 years= 160 hours
 - 16 years and over= 200 hours
 - Employees may accumulate up to maximum of 240 hours
 - 120 hours may be rolled from one calendar year to the next
 - Payment in lieu of vacations up to but not exceeding 120 hours
 - Page 17: Voluntary Leave Donation (new addition)
 - Added the following: “Employees may make leave contributions to fellow employees who have exhausted all of their available comp, earned sick and vacation leave. A recipient employee may receive up to a maximum of 240 hours-donated leave within a five (5) year period. The intent of leave contribution to fellow employees is to provide an opportunity for employees to provide humanitarian aid and assistance to fellow employees. All leave transfers must be approved by the Department Head and Mayor in writing and submitted to the City Recorder for processing. The request form must be completed in its entirety.”

Motion to approve Ordinance 637, an ordinance to Revise the Personnel Rules and Regulations for Employees of the City of Erin on first reading made by Moore, second by Parchman. Roll Call vote as follows: YES- Mitchum, Moore, Ligon, Baggett, Parchman, Warren, Gooden, Carson. Motion carries.

MESH System

- Read 1400 meters from office
- 5 sites to collect data- transferred to office
- Takes less than 15 minutes to read these meters
- Still try to read our meters quarterly to make sure they’re working properly
- Assist with reading- less wear and tear
- Can do profiles for complaints instead of having to do work orders and send one of the guys out to check them
- Reads usage by hour- if water runs for 24 hours straight it will ding for a possible leak

Motion to approve upgrading the current drive by water meter system to a MESH system made by Gooden, second by Ligon. All said yes.

Delinquent Accounts

- Asking to procure a collection agency to collect on behalf of the City of Erin
- We have delinquent accounts in our water system and for fines & costs

- Some agencies add a comp charge & some do a percentage of what's owed
- Does not apply to taxes as they are turned over to the county
- Would be for fines, costs, water, and sewer
- As of right now, if someone moves from our system and still owes money we will try to collect if they come back. Some never come back though. Sometimes they'll come back and get it in a spouse or sibling's name.
- Anything over 60 days will be considered delinquent
- Fines & costs are required to be turned in to the State
- We would try to make it the same timeframe for both departments
- We may not collect, but we do know that the collection agency only gets money if we get money. So, we wouldn't be at a loss.
- A percentage of the collection would be recommended

Motion to procure a collection agency to file all delinquent accounts owed to the City of Erin made by Moore, second by Parchman. All said yes.

New Hire for Maintenance Department

- 5 applications turned in
- 3 turned down the position
- 1 had a better offer
- That left Brandon Arnold- he has been doing a good job
 - Hired on a probationary period

Motion to approve the hire of Brandon Arnold for the Maintenance Department made by Gooden, second by Carson. All said yes.

New Hire for Police Department

- There were a number of interviews
- Mark doesn't select them himself- the whole department is involved because they're going to be working with them on a daily basis
- Jordan has been working with us the last couple weeks
- He is doing a fine job
- Think he'll be a good asset to our department
- Got accepted into the academy for next month
- Lisa: "That is one position of two?"
 - The other will not go to the academy at the same time as him

Motion to approve the hire of Jordan Mickle for the Erin Police Department made by Gooden, second by Moore. All said yes.

Jordan Mickle was sworn in as a Police Officer with the City of Erin Police Department.

Police Report

Chief Mark Moore provided the police report for the month of August as follows:

- Total call answered- 330

- Citations- 53
- Arrests- 22
- Citations in Lieu of Arrest- 4
- Accidents- 5 (none with injuries)

Mark reflected on what Sheriff Sugg talked about. Can't be prouder of these guys. They worked many hours related to the flood here and in Waverly. We were assisted by Houston County Sheriff's Department, Tennessee Highway Patrol, and Houston County Fire Department. Didn't really think much of it that day, we just did what we had to do. Looking back now, have a feeling of guilt about what could we have done more. Justus, Senior, and the county I appreciate all you done. It doesn't go unnoticed. We tied Justus off and sent him out quite a way into the water. I put a life jacket on, and Kevin told me to ease on out there in case something happened. I got out there about chin high, and the current took the ground out from under me. I wasn't tied on so I was pulling on Justus. When it took my feet out from under me, the only thing I could think of was my family. I turned around and hollered "Kevin, don't let me drown." I felt a big hand on my shoulder and he said "I'm not going to let you drown." Then it dawned on me; he can't swim. I thought, I'm in a world of hurt, and as big as he is, he isn't going to float. I ask if you see these guys out, just tell them thank you. Nothing can be accomplished without working together. Mr. Rye, I agree with you, we do need to get something done with these creeks. We have a minnow that's more important than human lives. I don't agree with that. A minnow shouldn't have more protection than human life or property. Sheriff probably doesn't receive the credit he deserves. I know you were personally out with the trustees, sometimes working until 6:00. As much as I hated to be asked, I was greatly honored for me and Detective Gordon to be pallbearers at the funeral for Amber Newman. It was an honor for us to represent the City. Probably one of the biggest honors I've ever been asked.

Fire Report

Chief Danny Warren provided the fire report for the month of August as follows:

- Responded to 3 residential structure fires
- Responded to 2 utilities fires
- Responded to 1 gas leak
- Responded to 3 fire alarms
- Responded to 2 wrecks
- Responded to 2 landing zones
- On August 21st they were activated for a total of 18 hours responding to a total of 13 emergency calls, 7 of those being water rescues
- No applications for burn permits were received

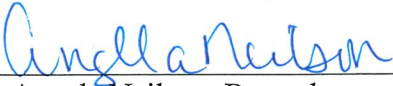
The firefighters took donations to Waverly and McEwen on the 22nd and 23rd. The leading cause of flood related deaths is due to individuals driving through flood waters. It only takes 3 inches of flowing water to float an SUV. Washouts are very common during flooding; just because you know where the roadway is supposed to be, doesn't mean the roadway is still there. When an emergency vehicle is parked across a roadway, that means that roadway is shut down. Disregarding sign or emergency personnel closing a roadway is a violation of multiple state laws. "Turn around, don't drown" is a common phrase to inform people not to drive through flood waters.

On that note, the City of Parson's actually puts those signs up on their roads. "Turn around, don't drown."

Motion to adjourn made by Moore, second by Parchman. All said yes.

Approved: 

Mayor Paul Bailey

Attest: 

Angela Neilson, Recorder