



Special Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

Monday, August 21, 2023, at 6:00 P.M.

Wilmor Fire Station, 320 N. Wilmor Road, Washington, IL 61571

Mayor Manier called the Special Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., in the training room, with a quorum present.

Present: Alderpersons Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, and Stevens

Also Present: City Administrator Snider, P & D Director Oliphant, Finance Director Baxter, Public Works Director Rittenhouse, Police Chief McCoy, City Treasurer Abbey Strubhar, City Clerk Brod, Attorney Keith Braskich and Press

1. ALDERPERSONS WISHING TO BE HEARD: Nothing provided at this time.
2. CITIZENS WISHING TO BE HEARD: Sharon Amdall from Washington expressed her support for the EMTs and provided a statement from her and her husband John, regarding Council member behaviors at the previous meeting. Her comments are attached and made part of these minutes.

Fire Chief Kuhlman shared his comments regarding the ordinance addressing ambulance and 911 services in Washington. His comments are attached made part of these minutes.

Mike Ingold from Washington shared concerns regarding EMS services. He stated that under the current contract, the fire department is the exclusive provider of services and any contract by the mayor, police chief, clerk or council, for any service restricted by the contract, is a breach of contract on the part of the City. He stated the Stark EMS is advertising workers to operate in the city. He points out 3.01, 3.02 4.02A, 4.04, 4.05, 4.07 and 4.13. He stated that if the City allows a license to compensate the loss of income to the fire department, it is their opinion that this would create harm to the fire department and citizens. As a citizen he would be forced to file a restraining order to curtail a breach of contract to stop the unlawful actions.

3. BUSINESS ITEMS:

A. Discussion on Amending Chapter 103 of the Municipal Code – City Administrator Snider shared it was asked to be on agenda and he provided council with the information provided by the attorney.

Aldersperson Blundy stated that he doesn't feel prepared but thinks we needed this special meeting due to a sense of urgency. He stated that when he looks at the code, he feels it isn't clear. He stated that this isn't to stop a business from coming to Washington but instead to provide rules for our current contract with the fire department and anyone who wants to come to Washington. He thinks it is lacking definitions concerning types of licenses. He also suggested that expectations and rules be addressed. Aldersperson Blundy feels that he could get a license here and stated that he is unsure of the real intent of the business who wants to come to town and wants to make it clear to them.

Aldersperson McIntyre agreed with Aldersperson Blundy and said his concern has been the non-emergency portion of the code. He stated that he has no problem with a business coming to town, but this jeopardizes public safety. He thinks rules need to be put in place regarding non-emergency signage on their building. Aldersperson McIntyre referenced the current code, section 103.04 regarding requirements, stating that more rules will protect someone accidentally being there.

Aldersperson Adams agreed. He suggested a need to better clarify the type of ambulance services and stated that this will help protect our fire department and volunteers. He suggested creating a Class 2 license and requested that staff bring something back to the first meeting in September.

Aldersperson Stevens agreed and noted that Stark County is advertising on indeed.com for their Washington location. She stated that the fire department is the exclusive provider of all ambulance services. She also liked the Class 2 license concept.

Aldersperson Martin agreed that we don't want to keep businesses from non-emergency transport as long as it doesn't conflict with the contract. He also stated that we don't want a business to take over the current contact of the fire department.

Aldersperson Butler said this ordinance predates the current contract with the fire department and it was written to prevent two providers from providing advanced life support. He further stated that this requester is asking for a building permit and wants to operate a business outside the city. He feels the concept of a Class 2 license is okay. Aldersperson Butler feels the proposed language doesn't fit with our code and we can't have the public bringing piecemeal language to change our code. Aldersperson Butler stated that this has to go through staff and that he helped write Section 103. He also stated that he hasn't heard if this proposed company wants to get a license. Aldersperson Butler asked how we would handle an ambulance passing through our city from Eureka to Peoria. He also noted that we can address the signage but we can't change the name of the business. He requested taking the time to do it right. He would like staff and the attorney to look at it.

Mayor Manier shared that he met with Chief Kuhlman and Jeremy and stated that what they are proposing makes sense. He mentioned that Attorney Braskich will need to look at the 12-14 pages of ordinances

instead of just the one paragraph.

Attorney Braskich noted language addressing what the license authorizes. He asked if the intent is phrase “in the city of Washington” or does this address businesses operating entirely outside the City. He asked for clarification regarding housing ambulances that operate outside the City.

Alderson Brownfield asked do we restrict an EMT to bring a resident back to senior living.

Alderson Blundy feels that if the business is in Washington, they would need the license just to run the business here and house the ambulance here. He thinks if you are physically parked here and run the service from here, you would need a Class 2 license. If it were an emergency service you would need a license.

Alderson Stevens asked to focus on the three criteria provided by Chief Kuhlman. She stated that the focus is to get these done now and the three points need to be in the ordinance because the fire department thinks they are fair.

Alderson McIntyre shared that he searched for case law on terminology. He stated that if you are going to operate a business within the city, then you fall into these strict guidelines. He thinks the non-emergency signage is important.

Attorney Braskich shared that an ambulance may not have a system to run 911 within the state of Illinois and our current code says that all 911 calls will go to our fire department, so that is covered. Then, if a business comes in and complies with signage and is responding to 911 calls in another county, they would not get a license in Washington.

Alderson Butler expressed concern about making a hasty move and noted that we wouldn’t want to take a paramedic out of service for a non-emergency call. He agreed with addressing the signage concern.

Alderson Martin also agreed with the signage concerns and having multiple classes of licenses.

Mayor Manier asked the City attorney and staff to put something together to bring back at the first meeting in September and he will ask Administrator Snider to share information as it is being worked on. He stated the need to protect our great first responders. He shared a brief history about the beginning of the ambulance service in Washington.

Alderson Blundy and Mayor Manier discussed the time table.

Alderson Butler said stated that our current ordinance prohibits a company from operating any type of ambulance in the City.

4. ADJOURNMENT: At 6:42 p.m. Alderson Adams moved, and Alderson Smith seconded to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.



Valeri L. Brod, City Clerk



Washington Fire Department Inc.

P.O. Box 322

Washington, IL 61571

Telephone
309-444-8642

Fax
309-444-9532

Good evening Mayor, Council members, and Committee of a Whole, and thank you for being here tonight.

I am speaking on behalf of the Washington Fire Department's membership to address the issue of an ordinance change that would preclude another 911 service from housing or posting ambulances in Washington.

To be clear, Washington Fire Department membership does not wish to prevent a private non-emergency ambulance service from housing and running transports while stationed in Washington, but rather make sure there are rules in place to protect the Washington Fire Department and all of its membership and assets.

Our membership feels it is fair to ask an ambulance service wishing to house or post in Washington to meet THREE criteria.

1. Proposed ambulance service may not have a system plan to run 911 calls in the state of Illinois, or have the capability of being dispatched via 911 response model.
2. Proposed ambulance service must have "Non-Emergency" in its name to specify the type of service. This would help prevent citizens and visitors from calling this service and expecting emergency care or response.
3. Proposed ambulance service must have "Non-Emergency" on any exterior signage to prevent "walk in" patients expecting emergency services.

Washington Fire Department membership believes these criteria to be fair, and most importantly, should suit the needs of any non-emergency ambulance service wishing to run their business in Washington.

It is an absolute privilege of the membership of the Washington Fire Department to continue to serve the citizens and visitors of Washington with pride and honor, and we look forward to serving for many years to come.

On a special note:

Our membership is extremely appreciative of the support we have received from Council and the Mayor on this issue. I would like to make it very clear, from the standpoint of Fire and Emergency Medical Services, that the Mayor and the City Council have always been supportive of the Washington Fire Department's membership and response model, and we as membership have no reason to doubt their resolve in this matter.

Respectfully,

Clint Kuhlman
Fire Chief
Washington Fire Department

Jeremy Doerr
Assistant Chief
Washington Fire Department

Serving the Citizens of the Washington Area

Washington City Council Comments

August 21, 2023

These comments are from both John and Sharon Amdall and we live in Washington.

We were present last week for the Washington City Council Committee of the Whole meeting.

We were appalled by and disappointed in the behavior of some members of this Council.

Regarding the Hubler property.... we heard Council members proposing to strip away property rights from a property owner in Washington based on their emotions and personal opinions... with no thought about whether such an action is even legal... until Alderman Butler spoke up to raise this question. Thank you, Alderman Butler!

Then there was the discussion about Social Media usage by Council members. Thankfully, the city's lawyer clarified the Open Meetings Act's impact on the legality of social media postings and comments. But no one raised this issue as an ethical issue until Alderman Martin. Thank you, Alderman Martin!

Some Council members apparently have not yet absorbed the fact that they are no longer private citizens who can say whatever they want. As elected officials, Council members must rise to a higher standard.

Again, the discussion was based on emotions and personal opinions... not based on ethics. But we all know that, over the past few years, there have been social media postings that contained false information, misleading information, partial truths, and personal attacks... some of which has actually been called out by Council members in past Council meetings! The Council can and should establish its own Code of Ethics regarding social media usage.... clearly such a Code of Ethics is needed.

Thank you.

John & Sharon Amdall
901 Wellington Drive
Washington, IL