

**MINUTES  
CITY OF ALTAMONT  
January 12, 2023**

- REGULAR MEETING The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM with Mayor Richard Hayward presiding. Mayor Hayward opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and prayer. Councilmembers present: Ben Cochran, Raymond Coffey, Kyle Wiford, Lyle Sykes & Cameron Johnston.
- MINUTES Councilmember Cochran moved and Johnston seconded to approve the minutes from December 27, 2022. Motion carried.
- INVOICES Councilmember Sykes moved and Wiford seconded to pay the invoices totaling \$114,331.77. Motion carried.
- CORIE BROWN Corie Brown is the new full time police officer for the Altamont Police Department. Corie comes to Altamont with about five and half years of law enforcement under his belt, with his most recent being with the City of Columbus.
- Chief Shields is happy to have Corie here, and was excited to hire someone who was already certified.
- RESOLUTION #293 GAAP Resolution #293 whereas there are no revenue bond ordinances or resolutions of said municipality which require financial statements and financial reports to be prepared in conformity with said act for the year ended December 2022. The City of Altamont shall cause its financial statements and financial reports of the said municipality to be prepared on the basis of cash receipts and disbursements as adjusted to show compliance with the cash basis and budget laws of this State.
- Councilmember Cochran moved and Sykes seconded to approve Resolution #293 the GAAP Resolution. Motion Carried.
- ORDINANCE #642 Ordinance #642 providing for the control and operation of the municipal electric and power system of the City of Altamont, Kansas. Repealing Ordinance #554 & 607 and proposing an increase of \$16.50 based on 1000 kWh and \$19.00 based on 2000 kWh.
- City Administrator Myers stated that the cost of everything is on the rise and in order to recoup some of the cost spent on maintenance of the electric, it is important to raise the rates. In 2019 an ordinance was passed where residential electric was changed from 2.5 cents to 4.5 cents. Prior to 2019 the price went from 2 cents to 2.5 cents in 2008, but hadn't been changed since 1988 before that change. With the proposed change if you used 1000 kWh of electric a month that would increase the bill \$14.00, 2000 kWh of electric per month will increase the bill \$19.00. The ordinance is set up to have smaller increases every year moving forward. Starting in 2024 the electric base would stay the same but the electric would raise 5 cents per kWh through 2027. Councilmember Cochran asked what the average household usage was per kWh was. LeaAnn Myers said that it would depend on the time of the year. Councilmember Coffey isn't overly fond of the large jump in the base.
- Councilmember Coffey moved and Johnston seconded to accept Ordinance #642 the electric rate increases. Motion Carried.
- Rollcall Cochran yes, Coffey yes, Wiford yes, Sykes yes and Johnston yes.
- Councilmember Coffey moved and Cochran seconded to rescind Ordinance #642 for the electric increase. Motion Carried.
- Rollcall Cochran yes, Coffey yes, Wiford yes, Sykes yes and Johnston yes.
- Administrator Myers asked when the Council would like to revisit the electric rate increase, because the increase needs to be made. Attorney Myers suggested approving the Electric Ordinance now to take effect at a later date.
- ORDINANCE #643 Ordinance #643 providing rates and certain controls for the gas distribution system of the City of Altamont with provisions for adjustment upon wholesale. Repealing Ordinance #615 and proposing an increase of \$11.00 based on 10 (mcf) and \$19.00 based on 20 (mcf).
- Mayor Hayward asked City Superintendent Brad Myers is there was any cause for concern about gas loss with the temperatures being as cold as it is. Myers said no, the only reason there was gas loss when we were in the negatives for days on end was because Southern Star was pushing 750 pounds of pressure across the country. When that pull got to Altamont there were so many trying to pull off of the line it had dropped to around 300 pounds. City Superintendent Brad Myers says that the costs of keeping the gas up and running and maintained safely have gone up.

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In order to maintain the gas the price increases will help to cover these rising costs. City Administrator Myers said that the price would go from \$2.70 per cubic foot to \$3.50 per cubic foot. There hasn't been a gas price increase since 2006, prior to that there hadn't been an increase since 1981. After the initial increase there will be 20 cent increases through 2027. The mcf used will depend on the temperatures and how much usage people have they will typically be 10-12 mcf. When it's colder if they use 20 mcf the increase on the bill would go from the \$11.00 to the \$19.00 base. Councilmember Cochran isn't a big fan of raising the electric and gas at the same time and Councilmember Wiford was in agreement. Councilmember Wiford asked about meeting more in the middle on a price increase, and spreading it out so it's not such a big jump up front. Councilmember Coffey agrees with what Wiford said about easing into to increase. Administrator Myers explained how the gas fund was negative at the end of the year and how at this point the gas increase is more important than the electric. Mayor Hayward asked if the Council would like to raise one and not both at this time. Councilmember Coffey asked if they thought they needed to make the gas increase and a priority, Councilmember Cochran thought it sounded like it. City Attorney Myers asked if there was a plan to restore the money in the reserve account that was taken out in transfers. Administrator Myers says there is money in the budget to transfer money back into that account, but not as much as was transferred out. Myers stated we could pass an ordinance to transfer more money, since she wasn't aware of this when the budget was passed in June of 2022. Councilmember Coffey brought up that people will likely decrease their usage with a rate increase. Councilmember Wiford felt that the 20-25 cent increase over the next year was fair and he understood that we are trying to play catch up, but the initial jump concerned him. Councilmember Cochran thought that delaying the Electric increase would make it less of a hit on residents.

Councilmember Cochran moved and Johnston seconded to approve Ordinance #643. Motion Carried.

Rollcall Cochran yes, Coffey yes, Wiford yes, Sykes yes and Johnston yes.

**ORDINANCE #644**

City Attorney Robert Myers said that the Electric Ordinance would need to be renumbered to #644 since it has been passed and then repealed as #643.

Councilmember Coffey moved and Wiford seconded to accept Ordinance 644 with section 26 stating that this Ordinance will take place July 1, 2023 and be enforced in the same as passed by the governing body and published in the official City Newspaper.

Rollcall Cochran yes, Coffey yes, Wiford yes, Sykes yes and Johnston yes.

Mayor Hayward thanked Council for the discussion on the utility rate increases, stating that it was encouraging.

**GAS EMERGENCY**

The Council was provided with a copy of the Altamont Emergency Liaison Program Outline in their packets. Federal and State Regulation 192.615(c) states that each operator shall establish and maintain liaison with appropriate fire, police and public officials to:

- (1) Learn the responsibility and resources of each government organization that may respond to a gas pipeline emergency.
- (2) Acquaint the officials with the operator's ability in responding to a gas pipeline emergency.
- (3) Identify the types of gas pipeline emergencies of which the operator notifies the officials.
- (4) Plan how the operator and officials can engage in mutual assistance to minimize hazards to life and property.

City Superintendent Brad Myers went over the procedure for what would take place in the case of a gas emergency. This is a yearly update that has to take place in order to stay in compliance. Brad says that he always takes the plan to the Fire Department, Altamont Police Department and the Labette County Sheriff as well.

Cochran moved and Wiford seconded to approve the gas emergency liaison program. Motion carried.

**CITY ADMINISTRATOR**

- 1) Year End** – The City Office finished 4<sup>th</sup> quarter reporting and working on year end.
- 2) Parsons Area Community Foundation** – Heather Beasley completed the PACF grant for Landsdowne Garden. Final decisions are made in late March, and grants are awarded in late April or early May.

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**3) Police Department** – Hired Officer Corie Brown who is full-time certified. Welcome to Altamont!

a) Officer Anthony Austin will start Police Academy on February 13.

**4) New Employee(s)** – Processed new employment paperwork and enrollments in employee benefits.

a) City Clerk Heather Beasley did the newest employee to get her feet under her more with doing those.

**5) Solid Waste** – Attended the Solid Waste work session on January 11 to discuss what kind of increase Cities could handle to help offset hauling cost.

**6) Building Repairs** – TW Construction was delayed on starting on utility building but plans to start sometime after Christmas. The metal has been ordered.

**7) Health Insurance** – Received new Health Insurance paperwork for the employees.

**8) KMU Training** – Rob Gartner presented employee safety training on Compressed Gas Safety.

**9) Poor Boys Tree Service** – Started trimming trees on December 12.

**10) Low Interest Gas Loan** – The City was notified the interest rate for the low interest gas loan from the February 2021 polar vortex went from 0.25% to 2.68% for 2023. The interest rate is reviewed annually. Councilmember Cochran would like to know what the balance is left owed on that loan.

**11) Utility Rates** – Reviewed electric and gas utility rates.

**12) Lead and Copper** – If you haven't turned in your Lead and Copper Survey, please get those turned in. Heather Beasley recorded a new video on Facebook trying to encourage people to turn their letters in, if they haven't already.

**13) Cox Communication** – Brad Myers and LeaAnn Myers met with Cox about their upcoming fiber install.

LeaAnn said that new computers were ordered for the City Office today, the last ones had been ordered in 2019.

Mayor Hayward thanked Heather and LeaAnn for being proactive with the Lead and Copper studies, we are ahead of other communities.

**FIRE QUARTERLY**

Fire Chief Bryson Shaffer was present to give an update to council on what the department covered in the 2022 year. Bryson said looking forward into 2023 the department would like to take advantage of as many grant opportunities as possible. The SBCA's is the department's next big need the grant they applied for last year got turned down. It will cost the department over \$100,000.00 to update the SBCA's that were put into service in 2007. Chief Shaffer said for being a small area they are doing good as far as help goes. Sometimes they have a small force, but the guys are trained well and they take pride in that. They are also looking into getting some new training courses in the area for not only their department, but others in the surrounding area as well. LCC Fire School is coming up this spring and the free training is always encouraged for the department to take advantage of. Mayor Hayward said that the price of the SBCA's three years ago was \$107,000.00, the quote that the department received this week was \$125,000.00 which is about \$9,100.00 per SBCA up from \$7,400.00. Councilmember Coffey asked how many units the department needs and Hayward said 12 complete units and four additional facemasks. The Fireman's Relief Fund is used for capital expenditures, Chief Shaffer said it predates him but that was what had been decided in the past. If the department has good equipment then that would take place of some of the other things that the department could possibly use those funds for such as life insurance. Councilmember Cochran asked if there was a mental health option for firefighters. Chief Shaffer said that they have "the circle of the table" debriefing and whatever is said in those meetings stays at that table. There is always a meeting after the call and then they reach out a few days out to check on their fellow firemen. LeaAnn reminded Chief Shaffer about the employee assistance program as well that they could utilize.

The 2022 calls that the Altamont Volunteer Fire Department responded to were as follows

Overall Department – 165 calls responded to

City Calls – Total 77 calls responded to

Medical – 49

Vehicle Accident – 3

Structure Fire – 21 (Including all mutual aid calls to other cities as well)

Outside Fires – 2

Gas/Odor Investigation – 2

Township Calls – 88 Total calls responded to

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Medical – 42  
Vehicle Accident – 11  
Structure Fire – 5 (Including all mutual aid calls in rural areas)

Outside Fires – 28 (Including all mutual aid to other departments)  
Gas/Odor Investigation – 2

Councilmember Coffey thanked Chief Shaffer and his department for everything that they do.

**POLICE QUARTERLY**

The police department has handled numerous calls during this period from animal control, civil standby's/child exchanges, citizens assist, lake patrol, and safety checks. Several Warning and Citations issued for traffic infractions by officers.

- Officers issued 380 warnings for traffic violations during the 2022 year and 156 court citations.
- Arrested 3 subjects for forgery and possession of drugs a little over 11 grams of Methamphetamines and numerous prescription pills, charged a subject with discharge of firearm within the city limits, 2 separate charges for vicious/dangerous dogs, several incidents with student in possession of THC vape pent at school.
- Department participated in the STEP enforcement during the Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year enforcement periods.
- Myself and Administrator Myers conducted interviews, background checks and hired 2 new officers, Corie Brown who is already certified and started working January 3<sup>rd</sup> and Anthony Austin who started December 16<sup>th</sup>, Anthony will be attending KLETC basic law enforcement training class 309<sup>th</sup> February 13<sup>th</sup> for 14 weeks and graduating on May 19<sup>th</sup>.
- Part time officer Joshua Daniels resigned his position with the department January 7<sup>th</sup> to take a full time officer position with Parsons Police Dept.
- Working on both end of the 2022 year items and starting the 2023 year process.
- Looking for training for myself, Sergeant Powell, and Officer Brown to maintain our mandatory 40 hours of continuing education re-certifications.
- Gave a presentation at senior center pertaining to elderly scams and some self-defense lecture.

Chief Shields is excited to get his guys back from academy and get the round the clock schedule in motion. Councilmember Coffey thanked the Police Department for everything they have done and continue to do for the City. Councilmember Wiford added, especially recently being short-handed.

**UTILITY**

-Cut trees out of electric lines for upgrade  
-Clean sewer main in alley between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> from Wabash to High School  
-Hook up electric to bank warehouse  
-Check on 3 gas leak calls  
-Plant trees we received from K-State Extension  
-Replace electric pole on 4<sup>th</sup> that was hit by a semi  
-Unplug sewer main behind Dollar Store  
-Repair water leak at 4<sup>th</sup> and Gartner  
-Repair 8" sewer main cut out 6' of broken main and replace  
-Get ready for poker run and pick up after  
-Replace primary electric fuse by Rex Robbins  
-Electric upgrade is complete 11-17-22  
-Cut trees out of primary (June Taylors old house) 5<sup>th</sup> and Washington 3 hours  
-Replace broken water tile on South Ness  
-Burn the burn site and brush pile from lagoon and cemetery old hedge row  
-Replace frost free hydrant at campsite 4  
-Replace batteries in fire sirens  
-Replace three street lights  
-Put water and gas in to new garage on Centennial  
-Pull electric pole at Holiness Church and move for new add on to church  
-Replace lightning arrestor and fuse cut out behind Harrison Auditorium  
-Cut trees on North Wells 3 crew 3 hours  
-Patch holes on North Wells  
-Replace fuse cut out on South Huston  
-Relocate gas line on South Ness, they were pouring new slab  
-Clean sewer main in Reed addition  
-Replace water spigot at Fire Department and replace 2 fittings that were leaking  
-Repair outflow pipe at 3<sup>rd</sup> cell at lagoon ponds (replace 6" clamp under water and 8" piece of pipe)  
-Replace water valve at 400 S Wells

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-Cut trees

Mayor Hayward asked about the next electric upgrade and street resurfacing.

Brad Myers said that Twin Valley had given him some ideas on upgrades, and states the City still has a lot of copper. With the street resurfacing the worst four blocks got picked out and when the first two blocks took 4 or 8 truck-loads to get them level, showed just how bad they were. Brad received an email for a company that is going to set up an asphalt plant in Parsons for another job and sent that on to Ralph and Sandy at the county. Brad would like to see the prices on that and hopefully continue on the streets with asphalt. Councilmember Coffey thanked Brad and his guys for all their hard work and Mayor Hayward thanked Brad for being so proactive.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

City Offices will be closed on Monday, January 16<sup>th</sup> in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Thank you note from the family of Jane Kite for the donation from the City.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Councilmember Cochran moved and Sykes seconded to adjourn. Motion carried. 8:22PM

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DATE

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Heather Beasley, City Clerk