

Cold Spring City Council January 27, 2014

The regular meeting of the Cold Spring City Council was called to order by Mayor Mark Stoeber. Pledge to the flag and prayer was led by the City Clerk. Roll call showed the following council members present – Lisa Cavanaugh, Lou Gerding, Dave Guidugli, Kathy Noel, Rob Moore, and Adam Sandfoss. Also present were Police Chief Ed Burk, City Clerk Rita Seger, Administrative Officer Stephen Taylor, and City Attorney Brandon Voelker.

Mayor Stoeber pointed out exits from Council Chambers, per Fire Department regulations.

Mayor Stoeber requested one addition to the agenda, under New Business, Item 10 B – Commission and Board appointments.

Mayor Stoeber stated that we have some wonderful items of interest on tonight's agenda along with one serious issue. Relating these topics to our residents are the best part of his job. He invited Police Chief Ed Burk to step forward. Chief Burk stated that most people remember firsts and lasts and today is one of those days. The first item on the agenda is the promotion of Chris Ratcliff from Patrolman to Sergeant. This a wonderful opportunity for him to use all of his skills that are necessary for this position. Chief Burk invited Chris Ratcliff to step forward and he presented the badge for Sergeant. Chief Burk thought it befitting to have his wife pin the badge on him since she has had to put up with all of the long and enduring hours. A round of applause with congratulations followed. Sergeant Ratcliff was then sworn into office by repeating the Oath of Office.

Chief Burk then invited our two new police officers, Nicholas Rhoden and Matthew Lloyd to step forward and he presented them with their shields. He stated that this is one of their "firsts", a time for them to remember. Officer Lloyd and Officer Rhoden then recited the Oath of Office as they were sworn into their positions. A round of applause with congratulations followed.

Chief Burk added that the state of Kentucky has a unique Oath of Office in making sure we haven't fought any duels or acted as seconds. He has been to a number of swearing ins for various positions throughout the country and this is the most unique and has the most heritage of any that he has heard. Mayor Stoeber addressed the new Sergeant and Officers and thanked them for being here tonight and being part of the department. He, council, and our residents are immensely proud of the city and feel very safe to live here. That is solely for what they do on a day in and day out basis, and on behalf of the entire city he welcomes and congratulates them.

Mayor Stoeber stated that the next item of interest on the agenda is a very serious issue which our Councilman Adam Sandfoss thought was important enough to discuss as a presentation. Adam Sandfoss stated that heroin addiction is one of the biggest issues being faced by the police force today, especially in Northern Kentucky. Kentucky is one of the worst states in the country for heroin use and Northern Kentucky is one of the worst places in Kentucky for heroin abuse. We are at ground zero for heroin in the country. The Newport Pavilion is a great area with all of these new restaurants and stores but that place has become ground zero for heroin abuse. People buy their drugs and sit down and shoot up in the parking lot. The hospital is seeing a 200 to 300 percent increase in patients at the hospital for heroin abuse. The ER's have become overrun with heroin abuse. It is just like other illnesses in that it doesn't affect a certain class or a certain socio social status, but it can affect everybody, even where you think this would never happen, because it is cheap and very available. One of the biggest issues facing candidates during this election year is what can they do to help with this pandemic. Eleven years ago he attended a convention regarding this issue, and took part in a journalism activity regarding heroin abuse and now, eleven years later it has only gotten stronger and worse. Tonight he will show a video that Northern Kentucky Group Against Heroin has created and he hopes you learn something from it and continue to be observant of the issue of heroin this year.

The video as presented covered many aspects of heroin abuse. It covered comments from various families and individuals affected and began with their first thoughts, many of which were that addicts were homeless people or lowlifes or criminals who lived in other neighborhoods until it affected them and their families. They told their stories of how they first learned about the addiction affecting them. They found out that information was very sparse on finding out what to do or various avenues to take to help them. Treatment is not a quick fix, and it would take long time recovery plan. Many physicians don't know what to do, or the programs are too short or cost prohibitive, or recovery centers are too full and the waiting lists are long. Many family members found that there was no way out and committed suicide. They discussed the plain truth, which is that heroin is a chronic, progressive and possibly fatal disease that needs and deserves a long term treatment and recovery plan instead of short term answers. They discussed what you need to know. You can be hooked after the first use. It doesn't discriminate. You must be educated. Trust your instincts and get help immediately. There is a drug that can help but it must be

prescribed by a physician who must acknowledge this as a disease. You can't get better on your own. A family intervention may be necessary. Court ordered treatment where you can't check yourself out may be in order. Don't ever believe that this cannot happen to you or a member of your family. It takes lives and destroys families. Our children need to know about heroin or this epidemic will not stop. You do know a heroin addict, you just don't know who it is yet.

Councilman Sandfoss stated that he is a registered nurse, and you can see that this is a disease. The stigma must be erased. These people need help and if you suspect that one of your loved ones is experiencing one of these things contact your local physicians or the police or fire department because they are all trained to help. This is in the news a lot more and conversations are being held and people are becoming more engaged and this needs to continue. Make sure that you look out for anything that is unusual. He hopes to continue to talk about this and keep the conversation going.

Mayor Stoeber thanked Councilman Sandfoss and stated that it is fitting that we have all of these items of interest on the agenda – the new officers, the officer promoted through long hard work, and the heroin presentation. Next will be the State of the City address. It is all tied together in a variety of different ways. Ninety percent or more of all of our crime in the city is drug related. These crimes somehow or someway revert to drug related issues, either to pay for drugs or to steal for a “pusher”. Think of the resources this consumes for our Police Department and the amount of time that they are involved with drugs rather than a variety of other things that they can be doing, as well as the dangers that the officers face when trying to arrest someone that is on drugs. He attended a conference and it was heart wrenching to see parents stand before you who live near your neighborhood and they are sobbing because their child is addicted to drugs. Crime and drugs are a business. In an environment where someone initially gives something away to have people try a product, it is the same with heroin. It is not uncommon for a pusher to initially hand you heroin for free just to try it for your enjoyment. You try it, like it, and maybe want to have another one and then you are addicted. It is a vicious business which affects our police, tax dollars, safety, and you because it is your community that is being harmed. If you suspect something you are ninety five percent right. If you see something report it to the police. Get involved. Mayor Stoeber thanked Adam Sandfoss for bringing this before us.

The next item on the agenda is the State of the City address. It is required by law and it is something that Mayor Stoeber looks forward to doing every year. He thanked the citizens of Cold Spring for allowing him to serve the community. It is an immense responsibility. This year he starts his eighteenth year of service to the city. He thanked council for all of their hard work over the past year and very importantly he thanked all of the spouses and supporters for their encouragement and understanding. We are not here on our own and he would like to thank those who are behind us and support us. Operationally he thanked Chief Burk for his dedicated service to the city all of these years, to city administrator Steve Taylor who handles all of the other necessary details that Chief Burk does not, and also to our longtime City Clerk Rita Seger, who has been with the city for 15 years and served under our former City Clerk Carole Huber who was with the city for over twenty years. Their around the clock dedication to their departments as well as to the city as a whole is extremely commendable. He thanked all city employees. They keep our city safe, cleaned, repaired and in good shape. You have probably seen our Public Works crew quite a bit lately. Over the last month and a half you have seen them in their snow plows seventeen times, between plowing and salting. They take great pride in knowing that they get the streets clean and they take their job very seriously. Last Saturday they were out for eleven hours, which means they were around the city three times. The good news is that they are very well trained, very well prepared and they do an outstanding job. A lot of cities are running out of salt, but our salt bins are full. They do such a tremendous job that they are always ready, they order salt in advance, and we are ready for the rest of the winter that comes before us. So he thanks all of our employees but particularly our Public Works Department. Also there are a lot of volunteers who have made a commitment to the city. Mayor Stoeber thanked our Board of Adjustment, Code Enforcement Board, Ethics Commission, Planning & Zoning Commission, and the Parks Recreation and Tree Commission.

Mayor Stoeber stated that our city is in very good financial shape, and with a slide presentation he showed a graph which reviewed our general city revenues since 2006. Beyond a bit of dip in 2008 and 2009 when the economy slowed down, we have recovered quite well, however, revenues are tapering off. As predicted in 2004 by our council members the city has plateaued and grown out, but we planned for this. We have our strategic plan and from 2010 forward we budget at the 2010 level so as to be very conservative and responsible with our residents' dollars. Actually revenues in 2011 and 2012 were better than we thought. In 2013 there was an oddity with our city revenues because we charge our residents for garbage collection. That goes in our revenue line as collections in the city, but we only charge our residents equal to our contract is for garbage collection, so the revenue comes in and we turn around and pay it right back out. In 2013 the city renegotiated a garbage contract and cut the charge drastically. You see our revenues go down but at the same time our expenses went down. The 2014 budget is again a very conservative number. While we expect more revenues we wanted to be prepared from the standpoint that if the revenues don't come in we have set our budget set accordingly.

Mayor Stoeber showed a graph on the real estate tax revenue. There are a variety ways to get real estate revenues. One way is to raise taxes. With the same amount of houses, you raise taxes and you wind up with more revenues. This is not fair to anybody in the city and it is not fiscally responsible. The good sign of our real estate revenue when looking at our tax rate, is that

revenues are going up. The city is growing on a residential basis and our property values are staying high or going up. The real estate tax is a function of the real estate value. Your property taxes may have gone up due to higher assessments, but the city tax rate has remained flat. Our tax rate is one of the lowest rates in the tri-state area. Even if you are paying more from your pocket it is a good sign of health for the city of Cold Spring.

The graph on payroll tax shows another very good sign for the city of Cold Spring. Revenues are projected to go down, because we budget conservatively. From 2008 through 2012, the payroll tax actually went up, though it is choppy, but it is a reflection of the businesses in the city. We had one of the most substantial recessions in the country from 2008 to 2012. A large number of cities in the United States were devastated by the recession because they didn't cut back, businesses left or dropped payroll, but not in the city of Cold Spring. The city actually thrived. The last slide shows that people still moved in, real estate values went up, and the businesses actually increased their investment in their employees, all very good and solid signs for the city of Cold Spring. Insurance tax revenues held solid. 2011 is an anomaly because the collection of insurance taxes is not in our purveyance but is the function of how insurance companies code on where they are located so if they are not coded properly we don't get the taxes.

The real estate tax rate in 2000 it was \$2.25 and now it is \$1.64. This tax rate has been that rate for close to seven years now. That is a function of very solid management plan by the department heads and also with our vibrant community so that our real estate tax rates can remain where they are.

In 2013 we renegotiated our waste collection rate to virtually the same as it was back in 2000, thirteen years ago. It was a substantial adjustment and we are in year two of a three year contract.

Mayor Stoeber summarized where we are today over his eighteen years of service to the city. We have grown a lot. The city has been the fastest growing city in the state of Kentucky three times over a period of seven years but that is behind us. You can see by the revenue and growth. The city revenues are growing flat, but this was planned for. A variety of council members in 2004 planned for today because they knew that our revenues would be tapering off and in fact that is what has happened, however they don't taper off if they remain flat. The city has to go forward and pay attention to details. We must hire new officers when needed to keep a good strong police force. Our police force account for fifty percent of our budget, but is that wrong or are eleven officers too much? Absolutely not if it makes you feel safe. Chief Burk does city surveys which show that our residents feel very safe. You do not see open crime and our property values go up. People still move into our city and our businesses do not move out. That is how you know if your investment in the police is the right investment. All of the other ancillaries show positive signs but we have to pay attention to the details and deliver city services to the best of our ability. That is why people move here. Our residents expect an extremely high level of service, and if they don't get it our phones light up. That is good because it keeps us doing our best in delivering services and paying attention to details. From now and forward we need to continuously improve as we can. In closing thanks for all of the feedback and care for the city. Thanks to council over the years who have made so many courageous decisions to put the city in the position that it is in today.

There will be a drawing for an American flag and pole for a resident staying until the end of this meeting.

The minutes of the December 9, 2013 special council meeting were reviewed by all. Lou Gerding made a motion for approval and Adam Sandfoss seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

There were no scheduled guests.

As an unscheduled guest, Wil Schroder addressed council. He is a candidate for Kentucky State Senator. He wanted to introduce himself and looks forward to talking and working with you in the future. On a side note he is glad that he picked tonight's meeting. He is assistant commonwealth attorney so it is always a pleasure to work with Cold Spring officers and he was excited to see Sergeant Ratcliff receive his promotion. Also as a prosecutor he added that the heroin epidemic is very real in Campbell County. When he started they averaged about 700 cases, and just this past year we had 1,100 cases. As the mayor stated, ninety percent of crimes committed are drug related, not directly with the drugs but with the thefts so it is a serious problem. Again he looks forward to talk to you some more. Mayor Stoeber thanked him for coming tonight.

Municipal Order 14-01 was read, **appointing Matthew J. Lloyd and Nicholas K. Rhoden to the Cold Spring Police Department.** Adam Sandfoss made a motion for approval, and Lou Gerding seconded the motion. All were in favor. **Motion carried.**

The next item of business was an addition to the agenda, for the appointment of new members to various city boards and commissions. Mayor Stoeber stated that during the holidays we had some activities from various board members for positive reasons in their lives but these reasons have prohibited them from spending time and attention to the various boards in the city.

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The first appointment is **Robin Hahn**, a 26 year resident and structural engineer, **to the Cold Spring Planning and Zoning Commission with his term to expire on 1/31/2017**. Rob Moore made a **motion for approval** and Kathy Noel seconded the motion. All were in favor. **Motion carried.**

A member of our Board of Adjustment, long-time resident **Dave Thiem** has stepped forward and would like to serve on the second seat that we have open on our **Planning and Zoning Commission with a term to expire 1/31/2018**. Kathy Noel made a **motion for approval** and Adam Sandfoss seconded the motion. All were in favor. **Motion carried.**

As a result of Dave Thiem moving from his position on the Board of Adjustment to the Planning & Zoning Commission, we need to fill that vacancy on the Board of Adjustment which meets on an ad hoc basis. Mayor Stoeber has requested that **Stuart Oehle** fill this vacancy on the **Board of Adjustment**, with a **term to expire on 12/31/2016**. Dave Guidugli made a **motion for approval** and Rob Moore seconded the motion. All were in favor. **Motion carried.**

The Code Enforcement Board has a vacancy for an alternate should they occasionally need a backup. **Darryl Geiman**, a long-time resident of the city has stepped forward to serve as **alternate for the Code Enforcement Board, for a term to expire 8/27/17**. Lou Gerding made a **motion for approval** and Dave Guidugli seconded the motion. All were in favor. **Motion carried.**

Nicole Ponting is the next appointment for a vacancy on the **Parks Recreation and Tree Commission**, with a new **term to expire on 1/27/18**. She, her husband and family live in Granite Spring and she has expressed interest in this position. Lou Gerding made a **motion for approval** and Dave Guidugli seconded the motion. All were in favor. **Motion carried.**

Mayor Stoeber stated that he appreciates the Board Members for volunteering their time and expertise in serving the city of Cold Spring.

There were no follow up citizens comments.

Departmental reports were submitted in writing. Mayor Stoeber congratulated Chief Burk on his new hires and promotions. Congratulations to public works for a fantastic job. Lou Gerding questioned the animal control report. It looks like the animal control officer did some work removing pit bulls in the city. He didn't know we had a problem with vicious dogs and asked Chief Burk if he had any reports on this and if this was a result from police calls. Chief Burk stated that he has not had any reports about the pit bulls, just a vicious dog off of Murnan Road. Lou Gerding stated that the animal control officer is apparently doing her job well.

Council comments followed.

Lisa Cavanaugh questioned Adam Sandfoss regarding treatment centers for the heroin epidemic and if there were any programs such as AA that people could turn to at the spur of the moment. Council Sandfoss stated that they do have such programs but the problem with any abuse, be it alcohol or drugs, is that they are only helpful to the people and families if you have already become clean. They are not treatment centers. Resources available are extremely limited. One of the best centers in our area is in Falmouth but they only have maybe 32 beds. Covington has plans for opening up an inpatient unit there, but sometimes insurance is an issue. The way the system is set up, people are sentenced to jail time when they are picked up with drug abuse and the jails are not licensed interventionists when it comes to health care. Instead of going to jail they should go to treatment centers but if you are over eighteen you can check yourself out, especially during withdrawal and nothing and no one can stop you. In Frankfort they recently passed Casey's law which is a hard process to pass for your child. If you are a parent and over eighteen, and you can prove they need help they can be forced into a treatment center and cannot check themselves out, but this is very limited. There is just not enough money for the treatment of mental illness or substance abuse. This has to change. People are trying to lobby in Frankfort right now to get more money dedicated to those things. Every week or two someone comes into the hospital needing to be admitted to a floor with chest pains, respiratory illnesses or infections from track marks. They are people who have just made bad decisions and the sooner that we can treat it as an illness and not something dirty the better it is for our communities. You take medicine for your heart and medicine for your diabetes and so forth, but as soon as you have to take medicine for your mind or substance abuse you are labeled crazy or dirty or a lowlife. Everything the mayor said about security, safety and education is all interconnected.

Lisa Cavanaugh commented that there is a website, NKYHatesHeroin.com. Adam Sandfoss stated it is a great avenue for resources and they are doing a lot of things in the area and trying to do a lot more but money is the big issue. In the last two years, we have seen more involvement from the community. It is not just the family and friends of individuals directly suffering from this heroin epidemic but the people outside of that, nurses, hospitals, physicians, and schools and everybody is getting involved because everybody is seeing the effects of it and everyone knows someone who is on heroin, you just don't know it yet.

Kathy Noel thanked Public Works for keeping our roads safe.

Mayor Stoeber again extended his congratulations to our two new officers and the promotion of Chris Ratcliff, who has worked very hard for the city for 17 years.

There was no winner of the American flag and pole.

Rob Moore made a motion to adjourn the January 27, 2014 council meeting, and Adam Sandfoss seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Approved:

City Clerk:

Mayor: