

City of Stewart Council Meeting Minutes

March 10, 2025

7:00 pm Call to Order the Regular Council Meeting

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll call; Mayor: Jason Peirce - here
 Council Member: Carol Altrichter - here
 Council Member: James Eitel - here
 Council Member: Wes Holtz – here
 Council Member: Daniel Broucek – here

Approval of Minutes from February 10th and February 18th;
Motion to approve Minutes from February 10th and February 18th, Altrichter/Broucek, all in favor, motion carries
Consent of Agenda;
Motion to approve agenda, Eitel/Holtz, all in favor, motion carries
Motion to approve Balance Sheet
Motion to approve Balance Sheet, Holtz/Eitel, all in favor, motion carries
Approval of Statement of Revenue and Expenditures;
Motion to approve Statement of Revenue and Expenditures, Holtz/Eitel, all in favor, motion carries
Approval of Payments (Claims);
Motion to approve Payments, Eitel/Broucek, all in favor, motion carries
Approval of Utility Billing Information;
Motion to approve Utility Billing Information, Holtz/Broucek, all in favor, motion carries
Approval of Bank Reconciliation;
Motion to approve Bank Reconciliation, Altrichter/Holtz, all in favor, motion carries

Emergency Services Report

1. Fire Department
 - There was 1 Fire
 - Township Reports were sent out for Township Day Meeting 3/11
 - Resolution 2025-27 Increase in Relief Association Pension
 - Motion to approve Resolution 2025-27, Altrichter/Broucek, all in favor, Broucek-yea, Eitel-yea, Holtz-yea, Altrichter-yea, Peirce-yea, motion carries
 - Motion to approve Fire Department Report, Altrichter/Holtz, all in favor, motion carries
2. EMR Department
 - Their training was rescheduled to March 12th
 - David is searching for EMR classes
 - Motion to approve EMR Department Report, Altrichter/Holtz, all in favor, motion carries

Petitions, requests, and communications

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1. Bolton & Menk Update

Resolution 2025-30 Approval for raising Water Rates for PFA Compliance

Motion to approve Resolution 2025-30, Holtz/Altrichter, all in favor, Broucek-yea,

Eitel-yea, Holtz-yea, Altrichter-yea, Peirce-yea, motion carries

Resolution 2025-31 Approval for raising Sewer Rates for PFA Compliance

Motion to approve Resolution 2024-31, Holtz/Broucek, all in favor, Broucek-yea,

Eitel-yea, Holtz-yea, Altrichter-yea, Peirce-yea, motion carries

Resolution 2025-32 Approval to Increase Water/Sewer Debt Service Fee

Motion to approve Resolution 2025-32, Eitel/Broucek, all in favor, Broucek-yea,

Eitel-yea, Holtz-yea, Altrichter-yea, Peirce-yea, motion carries

1. Storm Water Fund Balance to cover 2004 Bond

2. Change Order

a. Because we did not award within 90 days, we need to be sure that we incorporate the most up-to-date Federal Wage Rates

b. This is a no-cost change order, so it will not impact the cost of the project

c. R&R Excavating has requested an extension for the end of this year since they were not able to start in the Fall last year, as originally planned

d. This does not change any of the timelines for 2026 work

e. Bolton & Menk are anticipating having a pre-construction meeting in early to mid-April – by then R&R should have an idea of when materials will be delivered

Motion to approve Change Order No. 1 contingent upon getting the contract signed,

Holtz/Altrichter, all in favor, motion carries

2. Buffalo Lake Ambulance Discussion

a. Since the beginning of the ambulance service, the City of Buffalo lake has covered 100% of the expenses, while serving a large area in three different counties

b. What the City of Buffalo Lake has asked from the townships in their service area, was to cover the daytime wages for the on-call staff which equals around \$17,000

c. Buffalo Lake is asking for \$20,000 to help cover a portion of the costs for the overnight wages which equal around \$57,000 a year

d. Stewart comprises around 40% of the ambulance calls every year

e. This will get discussed at July/August Fire/EMR township budget meeting

3. St. Boniface Church House / Rental Ordinance

-The City has to decide if Councilmember Altrichter's house at the church is a rental or not

-Council member Altrichter feels that if the Lutheran Church is not being issued a rental application, then the Catholic church shouldn't be

-Laura had contacted the Lutheran church and found that no one was living in the house there, so no rental license is required. If someone were to start staying there, the Clerk's would require them to submit a rental application and pass an inspection

-Councilmember Altrichter once again said that, "If it is good for one, it should be good for all."

-Laura brought the issue before the council about Councilmember Altrichter coming into the office and telling Taylor she needs to take her address off the rental list. Taylor said that Council member Altrichter had pointed at her address and told her it needs to be taken off, and told her to cross it out in front of her, to which Taylor did.

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- Taylor contacted the building inspector and proceeded with his recommendation that it is a rental, and she sent out the paperwork to the church
- Council member Altrichter contacted the building inspector after receiving the rental application
- Taylor received a call from Councilmember Altrichter stating that she had told her to take the property off of the list and that she had talked to Darin herself
- Taylor called Darin herself and he said that it was the city's decision if it was a rental or not
- Laura said she felt the entire situation was inappropriate and that no council member should be coming into the office and telling us to do things that personally benefit them, especially if it may be violating any rules
- Councilmember Altrichter stated that none of the information is true and she simply asked Taylor why the address was on the list, because it is not a rental
- Mayor Peirce stated that he had received a call from Taylor where she was very upset about the interaction and felt she was put into a bad position
- He pointed out that this kind of behavior is malfeasance of office and is not acceptable
- Councilmember Altrichter once again denied that any of it happened, and that she simply asked about why it was on the list
- It was agreed that going forward, anything of this nature should be brought before the Council before it is brought to Laura or Taylor to handle

-Motion to state that the parsonage at the Catholic Church is a rental, Holtz/Broucek, Broucek-yea, Eitel-abstain, Holtz-yea, Altrichter-abstain, Peirce-yea, all in favor

-Laura will generate a letter stating that the city does not see the property as a rental property in its current state. It is our understanding that no one is living or sleeping there. If someone is going to be living there in the future, then the church will have to apply for a rental license and have the house inspected.

Motion to not have the Lutheran church not designated as a rental as it currently stands, but will need to apply if someone lives there, Peirce/Holtz, Broucek-yea, Eitel-abstain, Holtz-yea, Altrichter-no, Peirce-yea, motion carries

4. Annexation Approval

-The annexation of the 5-acre plot of land for Form-A-Feed was approved by the state

5. Capital Funds

-Laura updated the Capital Funds sheet as much as possible

-She asked the council if there were any other expenditures they could recall that should have been taken from capital funds, over the last 3 years

-Mayor Peirce stated that we should draw a line in the sand and continue from where we currently stand

6. Land Rental

-David Maiers is interested in renting the parcels of land between North Street and Mill Street to farm

-Laura cannot find the current contract with Tim Gennrich, but Mayor Peirce is certain a new contract was signed when they agreed to extend his contract after he paid for tiling

-There are 2 parties interested in purchasing the land, as well as 2 parties interested in renting the land for farming

-Laura will reach out to Xcel Energy to confirm if they are still interested in buying

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- Councilmember Altrichter stated that the city needs to decide if they would benefit from selling it over renting, keeping in mind that Form-A-Feed may want to expand further down the road
- Councilmember Holtz stated his preference would be to continue renting it, whereas Councilmember Broucek agreed since the price offered to buy was very low
- Mayor Peirce asked Laura to reach out and see if Excel is still interested in purchasing, and what they would offer

Ordinances and Resolutions;

Reports of Officers, Boards and Committees;

1. Police Department Report –
Motion to approve Police Department Report, Eitel/Altrichter, all in favor, motion carries
2. Public Works Reports
 - A. Maintenance Report
 - Jetter truck is up and ready to go for the season
 - Street sweeper is ready as well
 - a. Knocking down IGA building costs
 - i. Nate spoke to one contractor, and the cost to tear down the building is \$3500
 - ii. To completely clean it up and re-seed would be between \$50,000-\$60,000
 - iii. Nate will call Casey Stotts and see what the City's options are with the building
 - iv. If Casey decides to pursue blight protocol, then the council said to move forward with it

Resolution 2025-08 Attendance of Tree Inspector Workshop and Exam

-Recertification is yearly, online, for around \$50.00

Motion to approve Resolution 2025-08 for Rochester, Eitel/Holtz, all in favor, Broucek-yea, Eitel-yea, Holtz-yea, Altrichter-yea, Peirce-yea, motion carries

Motion to approve Maintenance Report, Holtz/Eitel, all in favor, motion carries

B. Water/Waste Water Report

-Organics are currently at 6.7 in both wells and they need to be at a 2

-All that is left to do is buy a tank for the ammonia. The ammonia should resolve the THM issue

-The ammonia will be bought from Hawkins

Resolution 2025-28 Bids to Purchase a 100-gallon Tank for Ammonia

Motion to approve Resolution 2025-28 with Core & Main, Eitel/Holtz, all in favor, Broucek-yea, Eitel-yea, Holtz-yea, Altrichter-yea, Peirce-yea, motion carries

Motion to approve Water/Waste Water Report, Altrichter/Broucek, all in favor, motion carries

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Building & Planning & Zoning Permits

Approved Building Permits;
930 Croyden St.

Unfinished business;

Employee Review,
Nate Hardel, three year

-Nate would like the meeting to be closed

-Nate received a 31.0 which is just above meets expectations

Motion to approve Nate's wage increase of 3%, Eitel/Holtz, all in favor, motion carries

Next Month: Laura's Annual Review

Miscellaneous;

ADJOURN

Motion to Adjourn at 9:37pm, Eitel/Broucek, all in favor, motion carries

By:

Jason Peirce – Mayor

ATTESTS:

By:_____

Laura Ranieri, City Clerk - Treasurer