

Minutes from Meeting of December 1, 2009 - - -

The meeting was called to order at 5 PM. Over 15 members were in attendance, so it was a pretty good turn out. We also had two guests. We thank them for their interest in local government and our Committee.

The meeting began (as they have for a while now) with a report from Mayor Nickels. Due to the recent focus on the City's budget, the Mayor had a number of things to cover. He talked about the debate over an assessment to local businesses for putting up holiday decorations. He addressed how the budget had been affected by the directive to issue no notes (in addition to bonds) for 2010. He also spoke about his concerns that delaying repairs to City assets leads to forced replacement, and his disappointment that work to maintain our parks once again was cut. The Mayor mentioned that the City's non-represented employees (normally department heads and assistant department heads) would be getting a 1½ % increase for 2009. In concluding his remarks on the budget, he said that while he was not happy with some of the changes made by the Council, he would not veto what was over all a positive budget for the citizens for 2010.

The Mayor then updated us on the infamous Mirro building. He said that all that have been through the building are concerned about the condition of the building, that the City continues to look for funds to assist with the clearing of hazardous materials and the destruction of the building (but he doubts that such help will be forthcoming before late in 2010), and that the City will continue regular inspections and will issue appropriate citations. He hopes that a party with a business plan to develop the property will emerge and take advantage of some of the downtown grant programs available.

The Mayor then introduced Kristen Clark to the Committee.

Ms Clark is the City's Human Resources and Risk Assessment Manager. She began, by way of an introduction, giving a brief description of her education and work history. She addressed the City's need to remove the bargaining and other human resources duties from the responsibilities of the City Attorney. Ms Clark then talked about her collaborative and co-operative approach when working with the City's represented labor groups. She believes in working together to find solutions rather than an adversarial approach.

Ms Clark then, so to speak, put on her Risk Manager hat. She said that risk management is more than just looking at safety issues. Finding and reducing issues of risk means lower insurance costs and fewer Workman's Compensation claims. She remarked that her goal is to work for the maximum service to the public without increasing the costs for the same. She talked about the programs the City has available to help employees experiencing emotional or other personal hardships (regardless of the cause of those difficulties). She concluded by saying that her office has and continues to investigate issues of unsafe, inappropriate, or unsatisfactory work or behavior in the City. The goal is to fix problems as they emerge rather than allow them to build into larger and more difficult issues.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 5:40 PM.

Submitted by,

Ald. Christopher Able

