

**LOWELL CITY COUNCIL MINUTES  
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
JANUARY 21, 2014 - 6:30 p.m.**

**PUBLIC HEARING – AMENDING S.T.E.P SYSTEM SEWER RATES FOR SEWER SERVICE FOR THE CITIZENS OF THE CITY OF LOWELL WHO ARE USERS OF THE S.T.E.P. SEWER SYSTEMS.**

**OPEN: 6:37PM**

**CLOSE: 6:39PM**

Citizens from Lowell did not speak for or against the amendment. Finance Director explained for 2014 \$120,000 is scheduled to be transferred from general fund to step system fund. He is proposing going from \$35 to \$40/month which is in line with area cities. It will help offset some of the transfers from general fund to this fund. It will not cure the problem, but it will help.

**CALL TO ORDER OF REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING:** The Regular Meeting of the Lowell City Council was called to order at 6:40PM by **Mayor Long** at the Lowell Council Chambers.

**INVOCATION:** The Invocation was given by **Councilman Ronnie Breland**.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Pledge of Allegiance was led by **Mayor Long**.

**ROLL CALL:** **Mayor Long** asked for roll call. City Clerk made a verbal roll call. Council Members present were: **Thomas Evers, Eric Schein, Janette Lasater, Kendell Stucki, Dean Bitner, Ronnie Breland, Keith Williams, Connor Jones**. No one was absent. There was quorum. **Deputy Attorney Kieklak** was also present. A roster of all others in attendance is on file with these minutes.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

**Lowell City Council Corrected Minutes Regular Meeting – December 17, 2013  
Financial Statement – December, 2013**

Councilman Breland made some corrections to the minutes of December 17, 2013 meeting.

**Motion was made to approve Consent Agenda.**

**Motion: Janette Lasater**

**Second: Keith Williams**

**Voice Vote Aye: Unanimous**

**Voice Vote Nay: None**

**Motion to accept Consent Agenda was approved.**

**PUBLIC FORUM:**           **OPEN: 6:52PM**   **CLOSE: 7:02PM** (No one from the public spoke.)

Councilman Breland brought questions for discussion covering various subjects such as elections, previous council decisions and budget.

**PRESENTATION OF ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:**

**OLD BUSINESS:**

1.       **ORDINANCE AMENDING S.T.E.P. SYSTEM SEWER SERVICE RATES FOR SEWER SERVICE FOR THE CITIZENS OF THE CITY OF LOWELL WHO ARE USERS OF THE S.T.E.P. SEWER SYSTEMS OWNED AND OPERATED BY THE CITY OF LOWELL, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

It is a \$5 increase and in line with sewer rates of other cities in our area.

**Motion was made to suspend the rule and place Ordinance as presented on third and final reading by title only.**

**Motion: Dean Bitner**

**Second: Keith Williams**

**Vote Aye: Bitner, Evers, Stucki, Schein, Jones, Lasater, Williams**

**Vote Nay: Breland**

**Motion to suspend the rule and place Ordinance as presented on third and final reading by title only was approved.**

**City Clerk read the Ordinance as presented by title only.**

**Motion was made to approve Ordinance as presented.**

**Motion: Janette Lasater**

**Second: Eric Schein**

**Vote Aye: Lasater, Williams, Schein, Stucki, Bitner, Jones, Evers**

**Vote Nay: Breland**

**Motion to approve Ordinance as presented was approved.**

**Ordinance was assigned No. 942.**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- 1. ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE WAIVER OF THE REQUIREMENT OF COMPETITIVE BIDDING FOR THE PURCHASE OF AN ADDITIONAL STORM WARNING SIREN, AND OTHER ITEMS FOR THE CITY OF LOWELL, ARKANSAS AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.**

Additional equipment is being purchased to install storm warning siren on north side of Lowell by Tucker Elementary School. We will be 65% covered and hope to be 90% covered next year. It is the same siren we have purchased in the past. Since we are using the same contractor and equipment as before, bids are waved.

**Motion was made to suspend the rule and place Ordinance as presented on third and final reading by title only.**

**Motion: Dean Bitner**

**Second: Ronnie Breland**

**Vote Aye: Schein, Stucki, Bitner, Williams, Lasater, Breland, Evers, Jones**

**Vote Nay: None**

**Motion to suspend the rule and place Ordinance as presented on third and final reading by title only was approved.**

**City Clerk read the Ordinance by title only.**

**Motion was made to approve Ordinance as presented.**

**Motion: Kendell Stucki**

**Second: Ronnie Breland**

**Vote Aye: Breland, Lasater, Williams, Schein, Stucki, Bitner, Jones, Evers**

**Vote Nay: None**

**Motion to approve Ordinance as presented was approved.**

**Ordinance was assigned No. 943.**

**Motion was made to approve the emergency clause.**

**Motion: Janette Lasater**

**Second: Ronnie Breland**

**Vote Aye: Bitner, Lasater, Jones, Evers, Williams, Schein, Stucki, Breland**

**Vote Nay: None**

**Motion to approve the emergency clause was approved.**

**2. RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING FUNDING FOR ON-GOING PROJECTS AT THE CLOSE OF FISCAL YEAR 2013.**

Resolution lists three ongoing projects: Maintenance/Vehicles (refurbish Fire Truck Engine 41), Trails Expense (complete NWA Regional Razorback Trail Project), Professional Services (complete engineering services on North Dixieland Sewer Extension Project. At midnight December 31, 2013 the appropriations expired. The projects are not in the 2014 budget, but were in the 2013 budget.

**Motion was made to approve the Resolution as presented.**

**Motion: Dean Bitner**

**Second: Kendell Stucki**

**Vote Aye: Evers, Stucki, Jones, Lasater, Breland, Schein, Williams, Bitner**

**Vote Nay: None**

**Motion to approve the Resolution as presented was approved.**

**Resolution was assigned No. 14-01.**

**3. RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR TO SIGN THE ATTACHED AGREEMENT FOR AUTOMATIC MUTUAL AID BETWEEN THE CITY LOWELL FIRE DEPARTMENT AND THE CITY OF SPRINGDALE FIRE DEPARTMENT.**

Automatic Aid Agreement is with Springdale Fire Department. When a fire call is turned in, Springdale will dispatch units to assist with the fire. It is a reciprocal agreement with Lowell also. This agreement takes out the delay and the biggest gain for City of Lowell is the additional manpower.

**Motion was made to approve the Resolution as presented.**

**Motion: Janette Lasater**

**Second: Eric Schein**

**Vote Aye: Williams, Schein, Lasater, Evers, Jones, Bitner, Stucki, Breland**

**Vote Nay: None**

**Motion to approve the Resolution as presented was approved.**

**Resolution was assigned No. 14-02.**

**4. RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR TO SIGN THE ATTACHED AGREEMENT FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES BETWEEN THE CITY OF LOWELL, ARKANSAS AND THE CITY OF SPRINGDALE, ARKANSAS.**

Previous contract with Springdale charged Lowell \$400 for each transport which expired December 31, 2013. Springdale will continue their service to the City of Lowell on a percentage based fee or contract amount of \$136,559.17.

**Motion was made to approve the Resolution as presented.**

**Motion: Kendell Stucki**

**Second: Janette Lasater**

**Vote Aye: Breland, Lasater, Williams, Schein, Jones, Bitner, Stucki, Evers**

**Vote Nay: None**

**Motion to approve the Resolution as presented was approved.**

**Resolution was assigned No. 14-03.**

**5. RESOLUTION SETTING FORTH THE MEETING RULES OF THE CITY COUNCIL FOR THE CITY OF LOWELL, ARKANSAS.**

Question was asked if the resolution should reflect something concerning staggered terms. Deputy Attorney said it was consistent as it was. There was discussion among the councilmembers concerning

following proper protocol during the council meetings. One change was made on Item No. 23: Agenda shall be delivered by *Thursday* before the meeting.

**Motion was made to approve the Resolution as presented (with one change on Item No. 23).**

**Motion: Keith Williams**

**Second: Dean Bitner**

**Vote Aye: Lasater, Bitner, Williams, Schein, Jones, Stucki, Evers**

**Vote Nay: None**

**Motion to approve the Resolution (with one change on Item No. 23) as presented was approved.**

**Resolution was assigned No. 14-04.**

**6. RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING FUNDING FOR THE PURCHASE OF COMPUTERS FOR THE COURT DEPARTMENT.**

Eric Seyfried told the council he would be purchasing four computers (current computers are three years old) in order to upgrade technology for a cost of \$6,000 out of a budget of approximately \$46,000.

**Motion was made to approve the Resolution as presented.**

**Motion: Janette Lasater**

**Second: Eric Schein**

**Vote Aye: Breland, Lasater, Bitner, Williams, Schein, Jones, Stucki, Evers**

**Vote Nay: None**

**Motion to approve the Resolution as presented was approved.**

**Resolution was assigned No. 14-05.**

**MAYOR'S UPDATE:**

1. McClure Avenue Improvements Update
2. Mudtown – May 30-31, 2014
3. Transportation Needed for Two Council Members to AML Conference
4. Community Action Plan, Wayfinding Signage, Visitor Survey
5. Lowell Emergency Team
6. Saturday January 25<sup>th</sup>, County Ambulance Forum Meeting, City Hall Council Chambers
7. Councilman Breland asked for a committee to be established for Preservation of

**Historical Sights in Lowell**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS: Ordinance Committee – Dean Bitner – No report.**

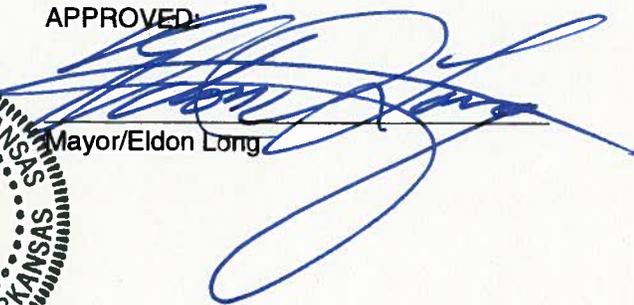
**ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn was made by Councilman Breland and second was made by Councilman Dean Bitner. There being no objections, the meeting adjourned at 8:17PM.**

ATTEST:

  
City Clerk/Elizabeth Estes



APPROVED:

  
Mayor/Eldon Long

**CITY OF LOWELL**

**MAYOR ELDON LONG  
2014 STATE OF THE  
CITY**

I would like to begin this evening by expressing my sincere thanks to the Rogers-Lowell Chamber of Commerce for hosting our reception tonight and to the sponsors who helped make this reception possible. I would also like to thank the Chamber for their continued partnership with our city in promoting economic development and offering key programs to the many businesses licensed in Lowell. These programs and events help businesses to grow stronger, become more sustainable and ensure their success. As a city, we thank the Chamber and its staff for all they do to help us improve commerce here in Lowell.

It is also my privilege to publicly acknowledge members of the Lowell City Council, City Attorney, City Clerk, City Directors, members of the Planning Commission, City employees, members of the press, visitors and fellow citizens...welcome to each of you and thank you for being here tonight for it is with great excitement and thanksgiving that I present to you this 2014 State of the City address.

I am thankful for the continued diligence and dedication that City department heads and employees have given to infrastructure projects, capital improvements, and attention to City services this year.

I am also very appreciative of the commitment the City Council and Planning Commission have displayed through City planning, legislative changes, and policy development this past year.

Our commitment in working together has not only aided in finding solutions to quality of life issues but provided a firm foundation for building our future.

Looking at our City symbol - the stage coach - we can accomplish great things when we are harnessed together, focused on our goals for the future, and pulling in the same direction.

This spirit of teamwork, established in 1881, when our city was founded, will propel us forward in determining new goals and priorities for our City's future. This same spirit of teamwork will enable us in taking full advantage of new opportunities on the horizon for Lowell.

I believe we are a great city, destined for even greater things. We are committed to provide our fellow citizens and future generations the legacy they deserve.

Financially, God has blessed us this year...

**City sales taxes** closed out 2013 with:

\$793,094 ABOVE our 2013 budget.

This was \$673,374 above our 2012 collections,

Which meant a 26.7% INCREASE for 2013 over 2012.

2014 is currently tracking at a 24.42% increase over the same period last year.

**Combined City and County sales tax** made up 58.4% of our General Fund revenues for 2013.

**General Fund revenues** (less transfers and loan revenue) was up \$1,008,003 over budgeted revenue for 2013.

**Our cash position** on December 31, 2013 improved by:

- \$276,161 in the **General Fund**
- \$772,458 in the **Street Fund** and,
- \$8,155 in the **Utilities Fund** for the year.

2014 is set to be a banner year for infrastructure improvements to our City, thanks to the passage of Issue One and the City Sales Tax Extension - passed 2 years ago.

- AHTD has now begun construction on the widening of I-540 from Monroe to Wagon Wheel Road.
- AHTD has also begun the widening of the south Goad Springs/I-540 bridge.
- Exit 78 will soon see 4 million dollars in interchange improvements, including the widening of the Highway 264 Bridge.
- There are strong indications that the construction of the new 412 bypass may begin this year.
- The City is in the contract phase of widening Monroe to 5 lanes from I-540 to Goad Springs Road.
- We are also close to putting out to bid the long-awaited intersection improvements and traffic light at the Goad Springs/Monroe intersection.
- The City has begun the first phase of McClure street improvements from Bloomington to Lincoln street.
- Phase One of the Razorback Greenway at Appleblossom and Goad Springs is now under construction and Phase Two to Mills Lane is slated to begin this spring - with full expectation of completion this year.
- The City is moving forward with its Dixieland Sewer Extension Project in attaining more site-ready construction locations for business development.
- We have also partnered with the city of Bethel Heights on a joint drainage project for East Appleblossom Road.

Add to this list our yearly Street Overlay Projects throughout the City and the mobility and safety of our streets and highways are going to improve dramatically this year.

We still have many projects worthy of our 5 year future street plan and we are in the process of re-assessing, re-evaluating, and re-prioritizing this plan, due to the substantial growth our city is experiencing on the West side of I-540.

The Arkansas State Police Headquarters, new businesses, sub-division growth, the new Janie Darr Elementary School, Razorback Greenway and increased XNA traffic are all factors in motivating our Planning, Streets, STEP, Building Services, and Utilities Coordinators for the development of a responsible plan. A plan to bring before the Planning Commission and present to the Council to establish these long range goals so that we may pursue State and Federal funding for these prioritized projects, should they qualify for funding.

I am also thankful to our retired resident engineer, John Ratzki, who attends countless meetings, and provides invaluable insight and expertise in helping determine the City's priorities.

When it comes to our growing infrastructure, he donates his time and energy and, in addition to assisting revise the 5 year plan, John attends N.A.C.A. meetings on my behalf.

The City Building Services Department has also been extremely busy this past year with 124 residential building permits issued. Our sub-divisions continue to show solid growth and our Planning Department is working on numerous development projects that will not only change and enhance the landscape our city, but also change our skyline. Fortune 500 companies are now considering Lowell for base operations, largely due to our centrality to the region and the ease of doing business with our Building and Planning departments.

Lowell is also poised for business. We continue to have new businesses start up or move here.

Some of those businesses to open during 2013 are:

RadioPhone	The Wine Basket	Northwest Family Medical
Purkey's Electric	Advanced Cabling	Catering Concepts
Thai Ginger	Anytime Fitness	Peterbuilt of NWA
Razorback Computers	Atwood's Farm & Home	Dish Network

and Crossfit Argonaut.

Our Planning Director, Kris Sullivan, has been working with Creative Things and Arkansas Economic Development to assist in the grant process for a plastic injection molding company. She was also responsible for the outstanding Way-Finding signage we now see along Bloomington and Monroe streets.

We are also a safer city. This year we will add a THIRD storm warning system, providing the City with approximately 85% coverage.

2014 is also the year for special projects. We now have funds donated for a proposed Lowell Veteran's Memorial. As with the J.B. Hunt Senior Center, it is a cause worth promoting and supporting. I believe the time has come for us to honor those who have honored us with their service and their very lives. Finding funding and building this memorial is not just a worthy cause - it's the right thing to do for those from our community that have served in our armed forces. I will soon be asking the City Council to adopt a resolution of support toward that end.

Another project that has the potential to change the face of the west side of Lowell and attract new business development is the Kathleen Johnson Memorial donation. This is 100 acres of

pristine property to be used for the development of public services and non-profits. We already have a school and enclosed recreational facility that are showing an earnest desire to locate there. The City Attorney is now preparing an ordinance to establish a steering committee and a resolution of support for a project sure to benefit thousands for generations to come. Therefore, I will be asking for the Planning Commission to revisit the zoning along Bellview road, as well as the areas of:

- The recently proposed Dixieland extension to West Appleblossom
- The North/South corridor along Old Wire Road
- The proposed Garrett Road interchange on I-540 North

These are areas that are going to be impacted by our growth in the near future and we should be certain we are sensitive to future development in these areas. If you would like specific information regarding any City project, please don't hesitate to call or come by City Hall. My door and the doors of all departments are always open to assist in any way we are able.

I suppose there are many good ways to measure a great city but I know I would not do this office justice if I failed to mention those individuals who make my job so much more enjoyable. I would like to report to you tonight that one of the things that makes Lowell special is the strong work ethic and positive attitude of its employees.

Three years ago, we began the "Lowell Employee of the Year" award; an honor bestowed upon the recipient by their co-workers. This is done with consideration of their individual work ethic, attitude, skills, and professionalism.

We now have three recipients of this award that I would like to recognize tonight:

2011-12 Ray Drummond, Animal Control officer

2012-13 Don Harkins, Building Services

2013-14 Jim Hendrix, Public Works

These individuals have set a standard for all City employees and they model those qualities I previously mentioned.

{PLEASE STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED}

These three men have also modeled teamwork throughout their careers. Speaking of team players...if you are one of the City's 65 employees, I want to thank each of you for your hard work and dedication. I thank you for working as a team and pursuing the goals we have determined important for your department and the overall goals and ordinances of the City. We are grateful to you and appreciate your service.

{PLEASE STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED}

I would like to call attention to an individual that I believe recently embodied the spirit of service, dedication, and love for community.

It started out as a simple act of kindness on a cold and icy winter day. After a picture of this act was posted on a social media site, it immediately went "viral" and gained regional and even national attention in the media. The picture, as you can see, simply shows a police officer carrying a small child across a school crosswalk in the snow and ice. What is so amazing about this incident to me is, that it shows how the power of one random act of kindness in everyday life can potentially cause us to pause and hit our own "reset button" for the things that are

truly important in life. This picture was truly worth a thousand words and, more notably, the school was Lowell Elementary and the officer is our very own Chief of Police - Randy Harvey.

{Chief Harvey, please stand}

Thank you for reminding us how important the small things we do in life are to others we serve.

I would like to close with this...

A highly regarded mentor of mine used to tell me over and over, "To fail to plan is a plan to fail." I can't tell you how many times those words have helped guide me through the years. We all know how crucial planning is to a progressive and growing city.

But for a moment, let's lay aside the infrastructure, the economic planning, and even the finances and begin to imagine a community of thousands committed to doing one unrewarded random act of kindness every day. We live in a community that shines on a hill but I am of the belief that we have the potential for shining even brighter than we ever have before. I believe that, as progressive as we have been in the past and as passionate as we are about our city, it is sometimes easy to forget our roots. The secret to Lowell's future is its people.

If we can work as a team, with a commitment to helping one another (one random act of kindness a day), who wouldn't want to live in Lowell? Who wouldn't want to do business in Lowell? Who wouldn't want to call Lowell home?

I challenge each of us to change the future by investing in our community, one good deed at a time for, when we invest in our community, it will always give back - whether it's a friendly wave of the hand, a sincere smile of thanks, a meal to help in time of illness or trouble, or a phone call of encouragement.

These are the things that speak volumes about our community and testify of the goodness of our City and its people.

God bless our beloved nation.

God bless our great state.

God bless our wonderful community.

God bless each and every one.

I count it great privilege to serve you as your Mayor.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and strokes, positioned below the text.