

ARLINGTON CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 16, 2008

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m., Mayor Kreft presiding.

Members present: Mayor Kreft, Borchert, Griep, Reetz, Wills

Members absent: Vrklan

Also present: Administrator Jaunich, Attorney Arneson, Keith Doetkott, Atty Raphael Miller, Jeff Klehr, Grant Bening, Waldo Reesen, Lawrence Duenow, J. Kube, Patrick Scharn, Bob & Stella Meyers, Eeva & John Traxler, Mike Scharping, Diana Robeck, Brad Robinson, Neal Wisch, Carlee Reiersen, Brian Reiersen, Wanda Nelson, Janice Doetkott, Brent & Peg Doetkott, Doris Heimkes, Jeff Tuchtenhagen, John & Roberta Zaske, Gloria Robinson, Jon Piotter, Jason & Lynda Quast, Rick Schmidt, Keith Dressen, Jim Farber, Emily Holberg, Lisa Holberg, Lisa Pasvogel, Duke & Jean Schmidt, Kim Quast, Felicia Brockoff, Rick & Anita Quast, Peter & Karen Archer, Velma Lindemann, Mabel Meyer, Celia Smykalski, Curtis Ling, Jeff Otto, Pastor Kurt Lehmkuhl, Jason & Amy Pautsch, Dennis Wentzloff, Bruce & Cheryl Rovinsky, Julie Winter, Debra Winter, Brian Thomes, Tony Kloeckl, Wayne & Louise Quast, Dale & Barb Pichelmann, Kurt Menk

Mayor Kreft explained that due to the nature of the meeting-employee involvement, that the meeting (per State Statute) must be closed to the public unless the employee requests that it be open. It was noted that employee, Keith Doetkott had requested the meeting be open to the public. Mayor Kreft commented that 3 individuals would be allowed to speak on Keith's behalf.

Adm. Jaunich read the allegations (of theft of public property) levied against employee Keith Doetkott by the Sibley County Sheriff's Dept. He noted that the allegations were in violation of the Employee Policy Sections 2.1-Conduct as a City Employee and 2.7-Conflict of Interest. A brief summary of events leading up to this meeting was given. Adm. Jaunich stated that the Employee Relations Committee had met with Doetkott to review the allegations against him and were recommending termination based on past performance issues in Doetkott's file and the current allegations being levied against him.

Pastor Kurt Lehmkuhl spoke on Doetkott's behalf, stating that he was a good and trustworthy person. It was noted that Doetkott is a member of Peace Lutheran Church and is the janitor (paid position) as well. Lehmkuhl stated that Doetkott was given the discretion to purchase cleaning supplies for the church as needed. Lehmkuhl commented that he was unaware that anything improper had been going on. He commented that Doetkott is a well respected member of the community and asked the Council to consider using some leniency in their decision about disciplinary action due to the circumstances (type of allegation) and also because of the way the situation has been handled.

Fire Chief Jeff Otto read a letter signed by members of the Fire Department in support of Doetkott being allowed to stay on the department.

Keith Doetkott addressed the Council on the issue and apologized for his actions. He stated that he feels he has been a good employee and will continue to be a good employee if he is not dismissed from his position. He also stated that he has enjoyed working for the City and the community.

Attorney Raphael Miller spoke on Doetkott's behalf as his attorney. He stated that due the alleged amount of public property taken (approximately \$100/year, petty misdemeanor) he feels that the Council has other means they can take as far as disciplinary action and does not need to take the extreme measure of termination. He also stated that Doetkott had nothing personally to gain from this alleged action. Attorney Miller expressed concern for Doetkott and how terminating him would affect his standing within the community, ambulance and fire department.

Mayor Kreft addressed a few of the comments made earlier in the meeting. He stated that the question at hand is not how hard Keith has worked or how valuable he is to our departments; the issue is about “theft”, regardless of the amount. He stated that as elected officials, they have a financial responsibility to watch out for the City. He stated that as a “city” employee (including fire and ambulance) Keith has violated the public trust.

Those in attendance attempted to ask questions and Mayor Kreft reminded them that this was not a public hearing and those who were asked to speak on Doetkott’s behalf had already done so.

Attorney Arneson stated that he had been instructed to research the legalities of allowing Doetkott to remain on the EMS services if he would be terminated from his full-time city position. His knowledge of the law and research found that it is an all or nothing type of situation if he is terminated as a full-time city employee.

Reetz commented that he feels bad about the position that the City has been put into due to the circumstances at hand, along with the duration it has taken to get to this meeting. He stated that he has had mixed feelings throughout the whole process, but after viewing the mocking gesture of parading around town (this past weekend) on his bike carrying cleaning supplies he no longer feels “community forgiveness” is in order. Doetkott responded that it was not intended to be a mocking gesture, he was responsible for cleaning church on Saturday and needed cleaning supplies and was told to go to the store and get what was needed.

Motion by Griep, seconded by Reetz, and passed by unanimous vote to accept the recommendation from the Employee Relations Committee to terminate Keith Doetkott as a city employee, including the Fire Department and Ambulance Service.

Mayor Kreft stated that anyone present that would like to address the Council may do so during the “Addressing the Council” portion of the regular Council meeting to be held immediately after this meeting and will be permitted 3 minutes each.

Motion by Reetz, seconded by Griep, and passed by unanimous vote to adjourn the meeting at 6:28 pm.

City Administrator Matthew Jaunich

Mayor James R. Kreft