



For Media Contact, please call: 314-873-7975

Ferguson City Council Announces New Programs to Reduce Community Concerns

Ferguson, MO – September 8th, 2014 – Ferguson City Council announced today that they are implementing several changes and new programs in response to community concerns. These new laws and policies are designed to reduce court fine revenue used for general city operations, reform court procedures, and establish a Citizen Review Board to provide citizen oversight and guidance for the police department. Additionally, the City Council will commit to pursue funding for the West Florissant Great Streets Project with the City of Dellwood and St. Louis County.

“The overall goal of these changes is to improve trust within the community and increase transparency, particularly within Ferguson’s courts and police department,” says Council Member, Mark Byrne, Ward 1. “We want to demonstrate to residents that we take their concerns extremely seriously. That’s why we’re initiating new changes within our local police force and in our courts.”

While these changes have been accomplished or are in the process of implementation, the City Council continues to explore additional changes. The Council will be holding ward meetings to hear the views of community members and anyone is welcome to contact the Council with ideas.

Specifically, the changes that are currently underway include:

The City Council has started the process to establish a Citizen Review Board to work in conjunction with the Police Department. This Board will include citizens who are not involved in local government. The Board will work closely with the City’s administration and the Police Chief in advising and reviewing operations and actions of the police department and will provide valuable input in improving operations.

At its next meeting the City Council will be introducing an ordinance that will ensure that budgeted court fine revenues remain at or below 15% of the City’s revenue **and** that any excess revenue is earmarked for special community projects instead of general revenue purposes. The Council believes that this ordinance sends a clear message that the fines imposed as punishment in the municipal court are not to be viewed as a source of revenue for the City. We are hopeful that the Council’s clear statement will encourage the Municipal Judge and Prosecutor to explore and utilize alternative methods of sentencing, such as community service, to punish violators and deter similar unlawful conduct.

In conjunction with this change, the Council will be introducing an ordinance that will repeal the separate offense of “Failure to Appear” in Municipal Court. So, defendants who fail to appear will no longer be charged with or fined for failing to appear in Municipal Court.

In addition, the City Council will be introducing an ordinance to abolish certain administrative fees which may impact low-income persons to a greater extent than others. The City is aiming to abolish the \$25.00 administrative fee to cover the cost of police personnel who arrange for the towing of abandoned, nonfunctional or other vehicles; the city will now absorb this cost. And, the City Council will be abolishing the \$50.00 warrant recall fee and the \$15.00 notification fees which are both associated with municipal court cases where a defendant has failed to appear.

The Municipal Judge has signed an Order establishing a special docket for defendants who are having trouble making monthly payments on outstanding fines. Sometimes, financial circumstances change and although a defendant may have agreed to a particular payment plan when the case was first resolved, that person may now have trouble making those payments. This docket will allow those defendants another opportunity to speak to the judge and/or prosecutor about his or her financial circumstances and the possibility of modifying the payment plan or seeking alternative sentencing.

At the request of the City Council, the Municipal Judge signed an Order establishing a warrant recall program which will run from September 15, 2014, through October 15, 2014. All defendants with outstanding warrants are urged to contact the Municipal Court Clerk to obtain information about having the existing warrant recalled.

Lastly, the Council has expressed its commitment to seek funding for the West Florissant Great Streets Project in conjunction with the City of Dellwood and St. Louis County. The City will seek federal and state highway funds, streetscape grants, and other sources of funds for this Project, which will improve and revitalize the entire corridor.

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AGENDA
SEPTEMBER 9, 2014
CITY COUNCIL MEETING, 7:00 P.M.
FERGUSON CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA
GREATER GRACE CHURCH
3690 PERSHALL ROAD

1. OPENING CEREMONIES

Call to Order
Silent Prayer
Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag
Roll Call

2. BUSINESS PORTION

Upon a motion duly made and approved by affirmative vote of a majority of a quorum of the Council, the City Council may go into closed session at any time for discussions and/or action pertaining to one or more of the reasons set forth in Section 610.021 R.S.Mo., which includes, but is not limited to: (1) legal actions, causes of action or litigation and confidential or privileged communications between the Council and its attorneys; (2) lease, purchase or sale of real estate; (3) hiring, firing, disciplining or promoting particular employees; (9) negotiations with employee groups; (11) specifications for competitive bidding; (12) negotiations of a contract; (13) personnel matters where individually identifiable personnel information or records may be disclosed; (14) any other information which may be protected by law; (19) existing or proposed security systems and structural plans of real property owned or leased by a public governmental body.

A. MINUTES

City Council Meeting Minutes- July 22, 2014

B. CONSENT AGENDA

Board of Adjustment Meeting Minutes- July 24, 2013
FSBD Board of Directors Meeting Minutes- May 15, 2014, June 19, 2014

C. RESOLUTIONS

2014-26

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT WITH THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF FERGUSON

2014-27

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF FLORDELL HILLS FOR THE RESALE OF FUEL AND THE NECESSARY ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

2014-28

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF FLORDELL HILLS FOR VEHICLE MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR SERVICES

D. BILLS REQUIRING FIRST READINGS

BILL 7056

AN ORDINANCE LEVYING SPECIAL TAX BILLS AGAINST CERTAIN PROPERTIES FOR COSTS OF CUTTING AND REMOVING WEEDS AS PROVIDED UNDER CHAPTER 46. VEGETATION, ARTICLE III. WEEDS AND VINES, OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF FERGUSON, MISSOURI

BILL 7057

AN ORDINANCE LEVYING SPECIAL TAX BILLS AGAINST CERTAIN PROPERTIES FOR COSTS OF BOARDING UP BUILDINGS AS PROVIDED UNDER CHAPTER 7. BUILDINGS AND BUILDING REGULATIONS, OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF FERGUSON,

MISSOURI

BILL 7058

AN ORDINANCE LEVYING SPECIAL TAX BILLS AGAINST CERTAIN PROPERTIES FOR COST OF REMOVING TRASH AND DEBRIS AS PROVIDED UNDER CHAPTER 28. NUISANCES, OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF FERGUSON, MISSOURI

BILL 7059

AN ORDINANCE REPEALING SECTION 44-50 AND THE FEE IMPOSED BY THE CITY RELATED TO THE TOWING OF VEHICLES

BILL 7060

AN ORDINANCE ABOLISHING CERTAIN FEES ASSOCIATED WITH MUNICIPAL COURT CASES BY AMENDING SECTION 13-70 OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE AND REPEALING SECTION 13-72 IN ITS ENTIRETY

BILL 7061

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE BUDGET BY REDUCING AND LIMITING MUNICIPAL COURT REVENUE TO BE APPROPRIATED AS PART OF THE GENERAL BUDGET AND ESTABLISHING A SPECIAL LINE ITEM FOR CERTAIN MUNICIPAL COURT REVENUE TO BE USED FOR PROJECTS TO BENEFIT THE COMMUNITY

BILL 7062

AN ORDINANCE REPEALING, IN ITS ENTIRETY, SECTION 13-58 OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE, PERTAINING TO THE SEPARATE OFFENSE OF FAILURE TO APPEAR IN MUNICIPAL COURT

BILL 7063

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF FERGUSON REPEALING SECTION 44-31 OF THE TRAFFIC CODE AND ENACTING A NEW ARTICLE III OF CHAPTER 33 ESTABLISHING A CITIZEN REVIEW BOARD

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Citizens' comments and discussion will be heard at this time and shall be limited to a total of three (3) minutes per speaker, which may be increased at the discretion of the Mayor, or by a motion approved by a majority of the members of the Council present at the meeting.

4. ADJOURNMENT

AGENDA POSTED: September 8, 2014