

**CITY OF HAZELWOOD  
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 19, 2017**

**CALL TO ORDER**

A special Council meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. on September 19, 2017, at the Robertson Fire Protection District administration building, 12641 Missouri Bottom Road.

The following members of the Council were present:

Mary G. Singleton\*  
Carol A. Stroker  
Robert M. Aubuchon  
Don W. Ryan  
Robert Parkin II  
Matthew G. Robinson  
Warren H. Taylor  
Rosalie Hendon

Council Member Russell Todd was not present. A quorum was present. Also present were City Clerk Christine Thomas and City Manager Matt Zimmerman.

\*Mrs. Singleton arrived at 7:25 p.m.

**SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**FIRE SERVICES  
MERGER**

The Council discussed the proposal to merge City and Robertson Fire Protection District (RFPD) fire and EMS services with the following: RFPD Board of Directors Joan Noel, Mike Conley, and Jenn Parkin; Attorney Chuck Billings; Fire Chief Don Miner; and Assistant Fire Chief Maynard Howell; and Hazelwood Fire Department (HFD) Fire Chief Dave Herman and Assistant Fire Chief Dan Luley.

The RFPD and HFD shop stewards and assistant shop stewards were also present.

The proposed organizational chart and pay rates for HFD employees were reviewed. HFD employees would be placed in the RFPD pay structure according to seniority.

The most recent draft budget for the merged district was discussed. With cost savings from attrition, it reflects a slight surplus.

Mr. Billings stated there are no legal concerns. The ballot issue would be voted on by all Hazelwood residents except those served by the Florissant Valley Fire Protection District (FVFPD).

The signatures of 25% of voters who voted in the last gubernatorial election must be obtained on a petition to place the issue on the ballot. To assure the required number of valid signatures is obtained, approximately 2,500 signatures are needed. Fire personnel and the Council will acquire the signatures. For inclusion on the April 3, 2018 ballot, the petition must be submitted to the judge for approval by December 22, 2017 and certified by the St. Louis County Election Board by January 23, 2018. The merger could take effect January 1, 2019 if it is approved by the voters at the April 3, 2018 or August 7, 2018 election.

The pros and cons with respect to placing the issue on the April or August ballot were discussed. An August ballot would allow more time to inform and educate the public. If placed on the April ballot, this process could take place in the months before the election and the approved ballot language could be used. An April ballot issue would provide the City time to consider budget cuts for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2017 in the event the ballot issue fails. If the issue fails in April, it could be placed on the August ballot. In addition, voters could be motivated to pass the issue in August due to the budget cuts that would result from an April failure.

It was noted that, in the event an April ballot issue fails, a petition to place the issue on the August ballot would be due by the end of April which would provide little time to obtain petition signatures. The same petition could not be used because it is specific to the election date. However, the same voters could be asked to sign a new petition.

A suggestion to hire a campaign consultant was made.

It was noted that the net savings to the City of approximately \$7.2 million resulting from a merger could be used for the Police Department, streets, and parks.

Chief Miner stated it's unclear whether or not the Council supports the merger proposal. With the Council's support, the Merger Committee will investigate costs and generate a campaign budget and strategy. He asked if the Council supports the merger proposal.

Mayor Robinson stated he has requested a more detailed district budget and has not received it.

Assistant Chief Howell responded the district's budget doesn't include detail like the City's budget.

Mayor Robinson emphasized the importance of performing due diligence on the residents' behalf. He stated he has many unanswered questions. He asked if the district's \$2.54 property tax rate would be lowered. In addition, he asked if the district has plans for a bond issue. He noted the inequity in the amount of property taxes that

would be paid by the citizens served by the newly merged district versus those served by the FVFPD must be considered.

Mayor Robinson was informed the \$2.54 rate is needed and cannot be lowered at this time. The need for any future bond issue would be made at the judgement of the district.

Chief Miner suggested the Mayor provide a list of any questions to him for the Merger Committee's response.

The Council discussed taking a vote to express support of the merger proposal.

Mayor Robinson suggested placing consideration of the ballot issue on the October 4 regular Council meeting agenda.

Councilman Aubuchon suggested the Council form a subcommittee to facilitate the process of scheduling meetings. He suggested a committee member could be chosen to act as liaison who would attend Merger Committee meetings and report back to the Council.

The Board and the Council expressed interest in scheduling another meeting for next week.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

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Matthew G. Robinson - Mayor  
City of Hazelwood, Missouri

ATTEST:

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Christine Thomas, CMC - City Clerk  
City of Hazelwood, Missouri