

July 2025

CITY OF EARLY

City Information

Bill Cougill, Mayor

City Council

Brian Pickhinke
Tim Langner
Christine Madden
Brandon Scadden
Cory Tiefenthaler

Council Meeting-1st Tuesday
Lexi Wallace, Clerk
Kristine Luy, Deputy Clerk
Kris Alesch, D.P.W. Super.
Dillon Kuenneke, D.P.W.

Keith Horan, Fire Chief
Fire Meeting - 2nd Wednesday

Library Board

Julie Carlson-President
Sue Loggins-Vice President
Becki Petersen - Secretary
Julie Wadsley
Kathy Robley

Board Meeting - 4th Tuesday
Kristine Luy, Library Director

City of Early POP. 587

Snail Mail:
107 Main Street
PO Box 411
Early, IA 50535-0411

Phone: 712-273-5283
Fax: 712-513-2411
Email: cityclerk@earlyia.com
Website: www.earlyia.com

Official Newspaper:
The Chronicle

Online Bill Pay:
earlyia.frontdeskworks.com

City Office Hours

**Monday thru
Thursday**
8AM - 3PM

(Closed during the noon
hour)

Friday
8AM - 12 PM

City Council News

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Early, Iowa was held on the 1st day of July 2025. The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor William Cougill called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM with roll call as follows: Present: Brian Pickhinke, Brandon Scadden, Christine Madden, Tim Langner. Absent: Cory Tiefenthaler. A motion was made by Councilor Pickhinke and seconded by Councilor Scadden to approve the consent agenda including agenda, minutes, bills for payment, Liquor License- Lucky Wife Wine Slushie Inc. On show of hands: Ayes: Pickhinke, Scadden, Madden, Langner. Motion passed.

Citizen Input- 5 members of the Early Achievers 4-H Group were present to ask the council for the final funding for the 3rd Street (Lion's Cub) Park project and to ask if the city was still on board covering all expenses for the sidewalk to be poured. It was mentioned that the previous estimate given to them last year has not changed for the poured-in-place rubber surfacing and the group had recently talked with Schmitt Contracting, who will be repouring the city sidewalk, he stated that concrete has gone up but is also staying with the original estimate. The 4-H group has pledges that are still being received and are asking the council for approximately \$1,500.00 to reach their goal. Once the goal is reached the potential start date for this project will begin on or around August 25th when the children go back to school so as not to disrupt the summer.

A motion was made by Council Pickhinke and seconded by Councilor Scadden to continue with the expenses for the sidewalk to be poured. On a show of hands. Ayes: Pickhinke, Scadden, Madden, Langner. Motion passed.

A motion was made by Councilor Pickhinke and seconded by Councilor Madden to pledge the final funding for the 3rd Street Park project. On a show of hands. Ayes: Pickhinke, Scadden, Madden, Langner. Motion passed.

Citizen Input- P. Carstensen - not present. Mr. Carstensen had recently received a letter from the city saying that a complaint was received about his propane tank in the front yard of his property, this propane tank has been on the trailer and property for quite some time but most recently has become a nuisance to some of the neighbors. It was discovered that in the Early Planning and Zoning Ordinance (PZ 109.11) that all liquid propane fuel tanks shall be placed in the rear or side yard of the property, with additional guidelines to follow pending the size of the tank. Mr. Carstensen had called city hall asking for an extension to the letter so he could address the council for an exception to the tank as he leaves the tank there for easy filling purposes. The council discussed the details and are wanting more information from Mr. Carstensen before a decision is made. Item is tabled until more information is obtained.

Citizen Input- R. Wolf was present to address the council about a door tag she had received after paying her utility billing. Lexi Wallace, City Clerk, acknowledged that a mistake was made while she was out of State and that it was corrected the following workday and the administrative charge was taken off her account. R. Wolf also addressed the council about not being able to contact City Hall to change her online payment arrangements. Lexi Wallace informed Ms. Wolf that she was able to change the status to autopay when she logs in each time and where she initially had entered her payment information and if she needed further guidance the city would be more than willing to assist her.

Citizen Input- J. O'Bannon was present to address the council about the vehicles parking in front of his building at 105 N Main St. Mr. O'Bannon stated that members of the community have not been proactive in staying off his property and he wishes for the city to paint hatched lines in front of his property to show people that they are not to park in front of his building any longer.

A motion was made by Councilor Madden and seconded by Councilor Pickhinke to paint hatched line in front of Mr. O'Bannon's building on the city street. On a show of hands. Ayes: Pickhinke, Scadden, Madden, Langner. Motion passed. Building permit #845 - S. Mason, replace concrete driveway and patio. A motion was made by Councilor Langner and seconded by Councilor Pickhinke. On a show of hands. Ayes: Pickhinke, Scadden, Madden, Langner. Motion passed. Building permit #846 - D. Kunneke, add fencing to backyard. A motion was made by Councilor Scadden and seconded by Councilor Madden. On a show of hands. Ayes: Pickhinke, Scadden, Madden, Langner. Motion passed.

Council member Cory Tiefenthaler showed at 6:35 PM.

Well Improvements- W. Boyer with Bolton & Menk was present for any questions or comments from the council.

A motion was made by Councilor Pickhinke and seconded by Councilor Scadden to approve the amendment of the original agreement for Well Design Services by adding in Phase 3: Final Design and Bidding Services for \$111,700.00. On a roll call vote. Ayes: Pickhinke, Scadden, Madden, Langner, Tiefenthaler. Motion passed.

No motion was made regarding the proposal to preserve RO Trains 1&2 for extended shutdown. This proposal was tabled until more information is obtained to determine how certain funding for the proposal can be made in regulations to the State SRF Guidelines.

Ordinance 332 - Amending provisions pertaining to pedestrians' right-of-way 1st reading was offered and 2nd and 3rd readings waived by Councilor Pickhinke and seconded by Councilor Madden. On a roll call vote. Ayes: Pickhinke, Scadden, Madden, Langner, Tiefenthaler. Whereupon the Mayor declared said ordinance duly adopted. A copy of said ordinance is attached hereto and by reference made a part thereof.

Ordinance 333 - Amending provisions pertaining to electronic meetings 1st reading was offered and 2nd and 3rd readings waived by Councilor Madden and seconded by Councilor Langner. On a roll call vote. Ayes: Pickhinke, Scadden, Madden, Langner, Tiefenthaler. Whereupon the Mayor declared said ordinance duly adopted. A copy of said ordinance is attached hereto and by reference made a part thereof.

Ordinance 334 - Amending provisions pertaining to operating budget preparation 1st reading was offered and 2nd and 3rd readings waived by Councilor Pickhinke and seconded by Councilor Scadden. On a roll call vote. Ayes: Pickhinke, Scadden, Madden, Langner, Tiefenthaler. Whereupon the Mayor declared said ordinance duly adopted. A copy of said ordinance is attached hereto and by reference made a part thereof.

Ordinance 335 - Amending provisions pertaining to publication of minutes 1st reading was offered and 2nd and 3rd readings waived by Councilor Tiefenthaler and seconded by Councilor Langner. On a roll call vote. Ayes: Pickhinke, Scadden, Madden, Langner, Tiefenthaler. Whereupon the Mayor declared said ordinance duly adopted. A copy of said ordinance is attached hereto and by reference made a part thereof.

Ordinance 336 - Amending provisions pertaining to fireworks 1st reading was offered and 2nd and 3rd readings waived by Councilor Madden and seconded by Councilor Pickhinke. On a roll call vote. Ayes: Pickhinke, Scadden, Madden, Langner, Tiefenthaler. Whereupon the Mayor declared said ordinance duly adopted. A copy of said ordinance is attached hereto and by reference made a part thereof.

The City Attorney was not present.

(See reverse side for more)

The Sheriff's Office, Deputy Stange, was present. She brought to the council's attention of another court order for an "aggressive" dog to be removed from city limits and asked the council how they would like to proceed with the removal. The council had a long discussion about this case and the dog that is involved and asked the City Clerk to reach out to the City Attorney on some of their concerns, they have since then told Deputy Stange to serve the owner of the dog paperwork that states they have until July 15th to remove the dog themselves, or the Sheriff's Office will dispatch the dog. The Council also requested the Deputy Stange investigate putting more pressure on some of the residents who have not yet registered their pet(s). Deputy Stange also reported to the council that our FY26 contract will decrease this year by roughly 27%.

The City Clerk presented the treasure report and the year end for fiscal year 2025. During that time discussion was had about the library budget following with the library board's duties and responsibilities, along with the Library Directors pay. The library budget along with the parks budget had gone over the amended amount. Each department has reserves for unforeseen overages. The council requested that the city clerk reach out to the library board to hold a special council meeting to discuss their part in the budget. The Council also discussed utility rates as it was mentioned by the city clerk that the garbage rate increased as of today [for inside city limits by \$0.69 and outside city limits by \$1.37]. These were set by ordinance in February 2023. It was also mentioned that with the current well project underway and the loans due, we will need to discuss increasing water rates to keep up with the enterprise as we are falling behind. Both residents present and council were upset with this news, but state laws are in place that enterprises must be self-maintained by the utility it covers.

Mayor Coughill addressed the council that there was still bottled water leftover from the donations that were received prior in the year. The donations are not enough to fulfill another weekend distribution so instead the water will be disbursed with the churches and placed out for folks to grab during the Crossroads Days Event for consumption. He told the council that he had submitted a new article in the Storm Lake Times to help correct the previous article that was written regarding water consumption and well project. He addressed the city clerk on our recent audit with the state and the clerk had stated that everything has been submitted and awaiting final review from the State. He then asked the clerk how things were coming along with getting things caught up in the office. The clerk stated that with securing necessary funding for the budget, budget amendments, dealing with the state auditor and having other required reports due for the month of July that no forward movement has been made. Now that things have slowed down this will be the top priority to move forward with. Mayor Coughill asked the clerk how often she attended the Koffee Klatch gatherings. The clerk stated that she attends periodically when asked upon by residents to speak about concerns they may have or any new items for the city. Mayor Coughill stated that she was no longer to attend those gatherings. Mayor Coughill mentioned to the council that he was unable to find time this past month to investigate prices on ordering shirts for the council and staff for attendance at League meetings and other public events. He would investigate those prices when he could find time to do so. The last thing he mentioned was that city elections are around the corner and that those up for election can get with the clerk for necessary paperwork if they are interested in rerunning for their seat. [Three seats are up election, Brian Pickhinke, Tim Langner, Christine Madden.]

K. Alesch, PWD, updated the council for the month. "The wells are both up as high as they have ever been, running Well 1 our draw down at 115gpm is at 3ft, Well 2 drawn at 115gpm is at 7ft plus. Our static level is there but the water replenishing and the water being able to come back in is not." He added that residents have concerns as to why we have not come out of the conservation status that we are in because of the current static levels, it was discussed that we could not be confident in our answers if we discontinued the status and then we potentially must reenter it again. The DNR wouldn't allow it to happen as such. Well 2 still shows us that it is still unreliable for us to do so. The softeners are nearing proportional completion, it just needs a few more PVC piping and some cabling and the softeners should be ready. The underground piping from the new building to the old building should start, weather permitting, the third week of July. Rehab Systems will be coming towards the end of July to televise Main street starting at 2nd Street to the Dead End near 6th Street, the plan is to also televise the tile line behind the houses on the northside of 4th Street but to get behind there will include additional costs, they will have to dig it up on the northside of the crossover bridge on 4th Street in order to get into the tile line and go up. This project with the tile line investigation is becoming more expensive for the people who are directly involved. Street patching is going to begin as of right now early next week. Right now, we are looking at 3-4 loads at \$3,000.00/ load installed, and patch everything that we can patch to bypass and give us more time. Kris addressed the council of the ongoing problem out at the lagoons. "People dump whatever they want when they want for concrete, block, rock and not paying the fees associated with dumping. There have been maybe three people in the last few years who have paid to dump, but it does not equal what is currently sitting out at the site." A resident stated to possibly have a reminder posted in the newsletter of which Kris replied that it has been in the newsletter multiple times, there is even a great big sign at the entrance of the lagoon site that a permit is needed prior to dumping and to go see the city clerk, and in recent years another sign was posted to tell folks that the great big sign exists. The council jokingly stated to add another sign to look at the other two signs. A resident stated maybe send out a reminder on the utility billing to make it known again. Kris redirected the council to say that a sanitary survey was done for control over our lagoon system, and we do not have control over our system, and the DNR mandates that we have control over our system. What was discussed prior to the concrete is that a fence was going to be erected to close off access to the lagoon system and the only thing accessible was the burn pile for the residents. The burn site also hosts several problems currently for people taking garbage and rubbish and unlawfully burning those items at will. Kris has stated the employees have followed everything and the council has yet to act upon such items. He mentions that "we gather all information for vehicles: makes, models, license plates, we've included signage that states they are being recorded, and nothing is being done about it." The city threatens to prosecute with municipal infractions, but nothing is ever done about it. Christine Madden stated that we need to prosecute and hold true to our word. Kris stated that the next violator out there, he will send her all the information, and she can follow through with it. The council seemed to agree with that decision. Kris went to the next item he had which wasn't completely compiled about the water service lines and the water service connections. He has confirmed with several entities that the cost is borne with the property owner to hook up to the city main and that the curb stop is a law to have made available to the city. He will wait until the next meeting to cover it entirely. TeamLab survey on cell Lagoon #1 came back and was reported to the council.

Fire Department nothing was reported on.

The library nothing was reported. The mayor stated that we have touched base on some items with them.

R. Wolf stated that for her first time in a council meeting she felt it was very disrespectful as a member of the meeting was "rolling their eyes" and she made the body aware of her disapproval and if they didn't believe her that security camera footage would show otherwise. The council thanked her for her input.

Councilor Tiefenthaler made a statement that he wished to see a community chest fund. He stated it would be for those in our community that may be struggling to pay for utility bills or any other hardship. He would like to see if a committee could be put together as it would be a good thing to have for our residents. He stated he hasn't done much research on what it would take to start this, but he wanted to see what the council's thoughts were towards the idea. C. Bainbridge spoke and commended Tiefenthaler for the idea and that she was shot down by past council members for something along the same line as to what he is proposing, except she would place used clothing items in city hall. The council at that time informed her to remove the items immediately and to discontinue her efforts. She informed Councilor Tiefenthaler that if he were successful with the community chest fund that she would be the first to donate.

T. Feilmeier had walked in and interrupted the meeting at this time and seemed to be in a different state of mind due to his speech and body language, the mayor had addressed him that all citizen input was conducted at the beginning of the meeting and if he wished to speak, he could come to the following council meeting. Mr. Feilmeier was extremely aggressive towards the council body and residents present after he was asked to leave by the mayor. Mr. Feilmeier was appearing to leave at this time when the mayor asked for a motion to adjourn (see below motion) right after the motion was approved Mr. Feilmeier came back around and continued to talk aggressively towards the council body and had made threats towards them stating that they are all guilty for treason and all will be hung and killed and left the meeting very quickly afterwards.

A motion was made by Councilor Pickhinke seconded by Councilor Madden to adjourn the meeting at 8:27 PM. Meeting closed.

William Coughill, Mayor
Lexi Wallace, City Clerk

