



# Alton Council Splits On Bill Payment

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter  
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ALTON - A typically routine motion to pay the bills led to a split vote by the Alton City Council on Wednesday night after specific bill items were debated heavily at the Committee of the Whole meeting earlier this week. At issue were the use of Tourism Tax dollars to pay Alton Main Street, as well as the city's paid membership in the [Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative](#).

The original bill listing for the city called for \$5,312 to be paid to Alton Main Street from the Tourism Fund, but Alderman Raymond Strebel said at the Committee of the Whole meeting that those funds couldn't be used to pay the organization.

"There's no ordinance that says you can pay Alton Main Street," said Alderman Raymond Strebel. "It specifically says 'Travel & Tourism Bureau.'"

After some debate over whether those dollars could also be used on anything meant to promote the city, Alderman Strebel moved to separate that bill listing from the rest. That item was separated from the final bill listing by the committee before moving on to the City Council. The council voted on Wednesday to approve the bill listing without the Alton Main Street payment.

At the Committee of the Whole meeting on Monday, Alderwoman MacAfee questioned the benefit of the city paying \$3,000 to be part of the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative, to which Mayor Goins responded the organization provides the city with more federal funding opportunities, specifically in the form of an online portal that's only accessible to members.

The initiative is made up of all the mayors of towns along the Mississippi River corridor from Minnesota to New Orleans, and they also help with things like grant writing and flood mitigation studies, Goins said.

On Monday, MacAfee made a motion to separate the membership from the bill listing, but her motion failed due to lack of a second. At the City Council meeting Wednesday, she made another motion to separate the bill, which passed by a 4-3 vote. After it was separated, the membership bill itself passed 6-1, with MacAfee casting the sole “no” vote.

Later in the meeting, she asked Mayor Goins to produce a report outlining what benefits the city gets out of being a member of the initiative.

A full recording of the June 28 City Council meeting can be watched at the top of this story or on the [Riverbender.com Facebook page](#).