

# Down to Earth Tis the Season for Asters

Now that we’re into early autumn, golden yellow road ditch or field flowers might first draw your eye, as they should because they are abundant. But a more careful look will reveal another group of native flowers: the asters. Asters are vital autumn flowers for the spate of insects and other wildlife dependent upon their late season pollen, nectar, and seeds. In Greek, the word ‘aster’ means “celestial” or “star;” apt descriptors of the diminutive star-like flowers found in purple, blue, lavender, white, or pink. The Asteracea family includes 32,000 species worldwide, while the genus Symphyotrichum classification was created in the 1990’s when DNA studies indicated enough genetic variation that justified a new genera to differentiate the 120 North American natives from non-native genera.

To the human eye, color contrast heightens our reaction to a color combination. Complementary colors (those on opposite sides of the color wheel) pack a particular punch. Consequently, the yellow of plants like goldenrod and rosinweed waving above the colonies of purple, lavender, or blue asters underneath make a striking vision. Despite being more subtle, the lower aster growth really sets off the golden yellow above it.

Of the approximately 120 North American native aster species, Iowa has 31 according to The Vascular Plants of Iowa by Eilers and Roosa. Some of those 31 are common throughout Iowa and others are specific to certain habitats (marshes or fens for rush aster). There are both sun-loving asters found in prairie or grassland sites (heath aster) and dappled or full shade-loving species (blue wood aster). Others are specific to geographical parts of Iowa (forked aster identified in Madison County in 1917).

Whether you’re scanning roadside ditches or meandering through prairie, the white asters are a beacon of pristine white. Heath aster can be found throughout Iowa and sports an impossibly dense abundance of half inch flowers on the knee-high plant. Frost aster, also known as oldfield hairy aster, is a tall (3-5’) wide (2-4’) weedy plant with an airy architecture making it a less concentrated but billowy white.

## AGENDA Special Session Earlham City Council September 17, 2025

The Earlham City Council will meet in special session on Thursday, September 17, 2025, 6 p.m. at Earlham City Hall, 140 S. Chestnut Avenue, Earlham, Iowa.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

2. PULIC HEARINGS

3. PUBLIC FORUM – The Mayor and Council welcome comments from the public on topics not on the agenda. The Mayor may limit each speaker to five minutes

4. CONSENT AGENDA:

5. NEW BUSINESS

6. ADJOURN
- a. Emc Insurance- Bric Nelson

b. Police Building



If you’re wandering in woodlands, you may encounter blue wood aster sporting numerous small grayish lavender flowers. Known as a keystone species for its importance to the ecosystem, it provides essential nectar and pollen for pollinators and its seeds are a food source for birds and small mammals.

New England aster is the species most commonly sold for ornamental gardens. Flowers are large (1.5 inch) atop plants that can reach 5-6’. While native to the tallgrass prairie, a species this attractive has been actively bred for varied traits like color and plant height. If you’re shopping for New England asters, be aware that if the plant you’re looking at has an added name it is a cultivar, NOT the purely native species. Generally, a native plant is a higher quality source of food for the wildlife seeking sustenance before migration or hibernation.

Asters provide many ecosystem services to the wildlife who depend upon them. Because they are fall blooming plants they feed many pollinator insects at the end of the season including butterflies like the painted lady and the pearl crescent. The Xerces Society Guide: Attracting Native Pollinators notes that asters also provide essential food sources for bees active in the late fall, including new bumble bee queens trying to build up energy reserves before winter. New queens are the key link in the bumble bee life cycle: each queen founds and populates a new colony when she emerges from hibernation the following spring.

We humans feed our souls as we observe the wild plants and animals among us. Make this autumn your opportunity to notice and enjoy the colorful buffet and the feeding wildlife it attracts. You’ll satisfy your need for joy and wonder by noticing!

Unapproved Minutes  
Earlham City Council  
September 8, 2025

The Earlham City Council met in regular session on September 8, 2025, 7:00 p.m. at Earlham City Hall. Mayor Jeff Lillie called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. and the following answered roll: Fredericksen, Miller, Mudge, Nelson, Visser. Also present: Chief Stringham, Supervisor Coffman, and Clerk Visser  
Fredericksen absent

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
- Motion by: Mudge, second by Miller, to approve agenda.
- Roll: Ayes- Unanimous- Motion Passes

2. PUBLIC HEARINGS- none

3. PUBLIC FORUM – none

4. CONSENT AGENDA:
- a. Council meeting minutes for 8-14-25
- b. Treasurer’s Report for 9-8-25
- c. Claims and Receipts Report for 9-8-25
- Motion by: Nelson, second by Visser, to approve consent agenda.
- Roll: Ayes- Unanimous- Motion passes.

5. DEPARTMENT REPORTS
- a. Public Works - Supervisor Gary Coffman

All mowing trimming is going good, since it has stopped raining the cemetery is all done now. The pool is about empty. Lines all got painted and made sure the streets looked good for RVTV. Have an old trailer that we need to get rid of we can do two weeks sealed bids on the trailer. Two trimmers that we need to get rid of but let’s just put a dollar amount on it and post them at Caseys and couple other places.

- b. Police Department – Chief Matt Stringham

National night out went well. Madison County roads have got the speed signs fixed. Few first weeks of school have been going well. I have gun qualifications for the guys that we are taking. RVTV went well we had zero calls for service, safety wise went great. I brought this up to the mayor once the fire department started to build the building I am looking at a lean-to to attach to the new fire building so the cars are not sitting outside. The quote we got was about \$13,000.00 and would like to see if you would back this and find the funds to help get this done. We would be attaching this to the old grillier building. Lillie: It was not budgeted for so we will need to have a special meeting to find the funding for it. Special meeting set for 9-18-25 at 6pm.

6. BOARD, COMMISSION, COMMITTEE REPORTS- none

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS- none

8. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Earlham Garden Club- Michelle Grooves – Community Beautification project

Flower pots on all the corners on Chestnuts. We will take care of them, watering them planting them and removing and storing them if needed. We would like to keep them up year-round as long as they don’t interfere with the snow removal.

- b. Consider approval of location and run route for AutumnFest October 4th, 2025- Jackie Hansen

Map is good for the race route and blocking off roads. I will get with Chief and Gary to have road closures the week of.

- c. Consider approval to renew the Water Fund CD in the amount of \$16,439.27 mature date September 25, 2025

Motion by: Mudge, second by Visser, to approve to renew the Water Fund CD in the amount of \$16,439.27 mature date September 25, 2025 for a 12-month term with the higher interest rate.

Roll: Ayes- Unanimous- Motion Passes

- d. Approve to renew the Water Fund CD in the amount of 16,843.26.

Motion by: Visser, second by Miller, to approve to renew the Water Fund CD in the amount of \$16,843.26 mature date October 8, 2025 for a 12-month term with the higher interest rate.

Roll: Ayes- Unanimous- Motion Passes

- e. Consider approval on motion to set Beggers Night on Friday, October 31st, 5-8 PM

Motion by: Mudge, second by Nelson, to approve Beggers Night on Friday, October 31st, 5-7 PM

Roll: Ayes- Unanimous- Motion Passes

- f. Consider approval of the Final Amortization Schedule for Phase one of the Lagoon Project

Motion by: Mudge second by Miller, to approve the final amortization schedule for phase one of the lagoon project.

Roll: Ayes- Unanimous- Motion Passes

- g. Consider approval of Resolution 25-40 amending Resolution No 24-18 & 25-31 approving setting wages for full time employee effective July 14, 2025

Motion by: Nelsen, second by Mudge, to approve Resolution 25-40 amending Resolution No 24-18 & 25.31 approving setting wagers for full time employee effective July 14, 2025

Roll: Ayes- Unanimous- Motion Passes

- h. Consider approval of Resolution 25-41 Not to exceed \$300,000.00 Sewer Revenue Capital Loan Notes Fixing date for a meeting on the proposition to authorize a Loan and Disbursement agreement and the issuance of notes to evidence the obligations of the City thereunder.

Motion by: Mudge, second by Visser, to approve Resolution 25-41 Not to exceed \$300,000.00 Sewer Revenue Capital Loan Notes Fixing date for a meeting on the proposition to authorize a Loan and Disbursement agreement and the issuance of notes to evidence the obligations of the city thereunder.

Roll: Ayes- Unanimous- Motion Passes

- i. Consider approval of Application Number 227066 Pending Dramshop Review for Class F Retail Alcohol License (LF) for Patriot Ranch effective 10/10/2025

Motion by: Visser, second by Mudge, to approve Consider approval of Application Number 227066 Pending Dramshop Review for Class F Retail Alcohol License (LF) for Patriot Ranch effective 10/10/2025

9. MAYOR’S REPORT

RVTV went really well they spoke highly of our town.

Our insurance agent brought to me but not in time for the agenda, and they discovered in our policy that we had things that were not covered and we needed to get them added to the policy, but we may need to look into this and add it onto the special meeting on the 18th. The

insurance came out of the general fund instead if trying to break it up between departments.

10. CLERK’S REPORT
- a. Exam- went well and waiting on the results now
- b. RVTV- V&K wrote a check but it was supposed to go to RVTV we will need to do a budget amendment to show the in and out of the check.
- c. Williamson pool contract- getting the name changed on the contract to the trust name.
- d. Training Classes- Street Finance Report and then the first week in October have clerk classes virtually
- e. Conference Next week in Des Moines- TIF and other class on many other classes.
11. COUNCIL COMMENTS/DISCUSSION
- Miller- I got talked to about the building ordinance on the wrestling sign and a bunch of the committee couldn’t vote because there was not enough quorum. The scale of the sign to the building was not out of whack. They told me that there are signs that don’t meet the ordinance so just trying to figure out where things stand. They are very excited about the wrestling building and so is the school.

Coffman- with the lean-to what will we do with this building if the fire department gets a new station. Unofficially would have to be torn down and then sell the bare lot. What else can we use the old grillier building for.

Visser- instead of the lean-to can we put some overhead doors in the south side of the building to pull the cars in. We can talk with fire and look into this as an option.

12. ADJOURN
- Motion by: Mudge, second by Miller, to adjourn.
- Roll: Ayes- Unanimous- Motion passes

Being there was no further business, meeting was adjourned at 8:05 PM

## City of Earlham Approved Claims- September 8, 2025

Vender	Amount	Comments
IPERS	\$3,261.66	
TREASURER OF STATE	\$509.79	
INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE	\$5,688.89	
EBANK	\$80.76	credit card fees
EBANK	\$25.00	ach fees
PSN	\$239.00	service fee
INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE	\$5,842.33	
IPERS	\$3,258.83	
TREASURER OF STATE	\$544.61	
CUSTOMER	\$600.00	AXELROD REFUND 8/4
IPERS	\$0.01	
COLLECTION SERVICES CENTER	\$231.69	
BLUE RIBBON BUILDERS	\$198,037.59	Final Payment
USPS	\$369.05	
BTWI	\$512.00	
CITY OF EARLHAM	\$760.33	
DELTA DENTAL, INC	\$620.97	
ELAN FINANCIAL SERVICES	\$625.87	
ELAN FINANCIAL SERVICES	\$295.10	google suite
UNITED HEALTHCARE -2019	\$10,556.31	
IOWA LEAGUE OF CITIES	\$1,225.00	
US CELLULAR	\$119.46	
COLLECTION SERVICES CENTER	\$231.69	
DALLAS COUNTY TREASURER	\$488.00	full year
WARREN WATER DISTRICT	\$12,825.75	
Kayla Reynolds	\$100.00	RVTV

Total \$247,049.69

## Receipts August 31, 2025

Fund	Revenue	Expense
General Fund	\$32,639.00	\$112,687.68
Road Use Tax	\$16,124.70	\$6,504.90
Employee Benefit		\$13,867.81
Local Option Sales Tax	\$13,718.96	
Gendler Park		\$8,168.34
Cemetery	\$2,100.00	
SRF Sewer Lagoon	\$198,037.59	\$198,037.59
Water Fund	\$35,510.82	\$1,123.96
Water Tower Sinking	\$7,737.50	
Water Reserve	\$4,775.17	
Sewer Fund	\$20,920.22	\$18,861.88
Sewer Sinking	\$11,688.33	
Water Deposit	\$500.00	
Sewer Deposit	\$140.00	
Storm Water Fund	\$1,492.62	
Community Building	\$4,200.00	\$1,844.30
Total	\$344,879.87	\$368,163.37



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