

Committee of the Whole

Monday, February 13, 2023, at 6:30 P.M.
Library Meeting Room in Five Points, Washington,
380 N. Wilmor Road, Washington, IL

Mayor Manier called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., with a quorum present.

Present: Alderpersons Adams, Blundy, Butler, Dingledine, Schone, Stevens (remote) and Yoder

Absent: Alderperson Brownfield

Also Present: City Administrator Snider, P & D Director Oliphant, City Engineer Carr, Finance Director Baxter, Public Works Director Rittenhouse, Police Chief McCoy, City Clerk Brod, Attorney Keith Braskich and press

MINUTES

1. ALDERPERSONS WISHING TO BE HEARD: Alderperson Adams provided a comment regarding the proposed evidence building. He stated that when information is shared on social media, it should be factual. He has seen a reference to tuck-pointing on social media, but explained that is not in the report. He also noted that a social media post had stated that this is the first time the evidence building was talked about, however, it was discussed in the following meetings: February 2022, March 2022, April 4, 2022, April 9, 2022, and on November 2, 2022 they asked that it be brought to full Council. Alderperson Schone has seen a social media post that stated that “staff neglected the building.” He explained that staff did not neglect the building but held off on the maintenance due to the possibility of a new building.
2. CITIZENS WISHING TO BE HEARD: Washington resident Sharon Amdall introduced herself and her husband. She thanked Council for acquiring grants to address the Nofsinger realignment. She noted that staff is professional and credentialed and is working with IDOT’s staff who are professional and credentialed. She feels this project will improve safety, as they have just learned of another accident at that location.
Kurt Reynolds, owner of Brunks and resident of Ward 1, stated that there seems to be a lot of Facebook slamming about the proposed brewpub. He said the Pohl’s have provided him with items from the current building so he can improve his current business on the Square. He stated that it takes a long time to put the project together and alderpersons should not be bad-mouthing the brewery. Mr. Reynolds stated that he didn’t elect his alderperson to bad-mouth private businesses. He also stated that if a business is going to be bad-mouthed, bad-mouth his because he can use the publicity. He shared that he has to tell people that there is nowhere to eat on the Square.
Barbara Plata, owner of a Define the Home on the Square, thanked everyone and stated that she is looking forward to hearing about the progress of the Grist Mill. She shared that it has been challenging the last few years and they have considered closing their business because of uncertainty. She is sure the restaurant will improve the Square and she is looking forward to all the new people who will visit. Ms. Plata stated that it is paramount that no more delays are put in place because we need the development now. She shared that people come from all over to stay in the Airbnb and they see this is a quaint town.
Chris Hasten owner of Sentimental Journey stated that they need a restaurant badly. She stated that there are naysayers talking about the lack of projects but noted that construction projects are happening everywhere. She expressed appreciation and stated that the repayment of the TIF money will be a win-win. She thanked the developer.

Geannie Herbst, who shared that she is a third-generation business owner, stated that she is 200% behind the development. She anticipates that this will bring more business to the City. Ms. Herbst called it a “praying mantis mentality”, saying that as one gets to the top of the jar, another one pulls them back down. She has heard that if the development doesn’t happen, some businesses may close. She asked if Council members have talked to business owners to see what will help and stated that Washington used to celebrate its progress. She stated that she sees politics and powerplays. Ms. Herbst noted that if business do not pay the property taxes, property owners will. She shared that visitors say they adore our city and she has many return visitors with some saying they are coming back to see this when it is done. She asked Council to support it.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Alderperson Dingleline motioned to approve the January 9, 2023 meeting minutes; Alderperson Butler seconded. Motion passed by voice vote.

4. BUSINESS ITEMS:

- A. *Washington Chamber of Commerce Update* – P&D Director Oliphant shared that the Chamber provided a report that is attached to the agenda and noted the Meet the Candidate Night will be held on March 7th not March 8th.

- B. *Grist Mill Update* – Nathan Watson thanked everyone and stated that they share in the excitement and the impatience. They are thankful for the support and they are aiming for economic stability as they know voting to use TIF funds was tough. Mr. Watson shared that they strive for high quality design and want to achieve the highest quality possible. He shared that the architectural and interior design groups are working together and they have a few preliminary designs that are not ready to share. They look to submit their demolition permit this week. They are also planning to meet with the Historic Review Committee. Mr. Watson shared that they have reached out to their neighboring businesses who share walls with the development and they anticipate coming back with expanded plans. He also shared they will provide updates on their website and social media pages. He noted that it is a complicated project and that it is not practical for everyone to provide opinions about every detail of the interior. Mr. Watson noted that Jeff and Kelly Pohl are local and know the community well. He stated that this is not unusual and opened it up for questions.

Alderperson Blundy stated that there is a lot of concern and asked when the community will see updates. Mr. Watson said that it should be soon but he doesn’t have a specific date.

Alderperson Stevens said asking questions does not mean she is not supporting the project. She asked who the contractor is and Mr. Watson stated that it is not appropriate to share at this time. Mayor Manier stated that economic development concerns confidentiality and noted that these are private parties. He shared that this is no different than building a house and noted that it is not cheap to get a quality firm.

Alderperson Schone asked if they anticipate delays. Mr. Watson said no, but it is just complicated with the demolition of the structure which requires a lot of review and noted the need to be reviewed by the Historic Commission before they can get a permit.

Alderperson Schone expressed his excitement for the project but he understands that projects sometimes get delayed due to items like weather.

Alderperson Butler said he hasn’t heard anything but excitement in the community and expressed his support.

Alderperson Adams agreed with Alderperson Butler and shared that this is in his ward. He suggested moving the date in the agreement.

Administrator Snider shared that the developers have been engaged every step of the way. He stated that the dates are target dates and expressed concern for increased costs. Mr. Snider expressed his appreciation for the communication level with Mr. Watson and the Pohls. He also noted that Council can adjust the dates in the agreement if they wish.

Attorney Braskich stated that missed dates give the right for the City to take additional action but it is not a must. Discussion took place regarding moving the dates in the agreement.

Alderson Blundy stated that his questions do not mean he is not supportive and expressed concern for the City if the dates are not amended.

Attorney Braskich recommended deferring the question until more time passes.

Mayor Manier shared that dates have been missed in many TIF agreements due to contractor or supply issues. He expressed his appreciation for the interest from the developers and the Pohls.

- C. *Smoke Testing Municipal Defects Update* – Public Works Director Rittenhouse shared with Council that they found over 200 defects and they are organizing them into priority needs. He noted 36 catch basin defects which are considered high priority. He also noted difficulties due to small separations or cracks. Mr. Rittenhouse shared that some defects will be corrected with the CIPP lining and they think it will show that it is an issue with laterals. Mr. Rittenhouse shared that staff will develop a plan and they will provide a report to Council.

Alderson Blundy noted concern for finishing the projects and asked if there is a rough timeline. Mr. Rittenhouse noted time needed because it is difficult to see separations and shared that Distribution and Collections will address them. Mr. Rittenhouse stated that Council can shift the focus away from their other duties to address these if they choose. He also clarified that some defects may take a few days to explore and require excavation of an intersection. Mr. Rittenhouse stated that storm sewer is a high priority and the mainline will be removed once they get it lined. Alderson Blundy and Mr. Rittenhouse confirmed that they will do dye testing.

Alderson Schone and Mr. Rittenhouse briefly discussed department responsibilities and keeping items in-house versus outsourcing it.

Alderson Butler and Engineer Carr discussed inflow reduction and how much this could recover. Mr. Carr shared that there is a need to reduce inflow by 8,000 gallons per minute and these inlets would only reduce inflow by 467 gallons per minutes. He shared that any reduction is water that does not have to be treated at the plant and it will help the system.

- D. *FY2024 Budget Review, Group 1* – Administrator Snider explained that this overview uses a new program called ClearGov. He introduced Finance Director Baxter to provide details. Ms. Baxter stated that the new digital format can build the budget as we go and she presented the Draft Budget in the new format using the link: <https://city-washington-il-budget-book.cleargov.com/8274>

Following are her highlights:

- The ability to compare the estimated budget figures against the actual figures.
- We budgeted more for the Contract for Audit Services and it was less than anticipated.
- There is a spreadsheet breakdown that is similar to past years.
- It shows the current year compared to previous years and estimated actuals.
- A benefit is being able to look at revenue sources provided in a bar graph.
- The new program provides prepopulated demographics.
- Under capital improvement, all capital projects are shown and these will be refined as we talk about the budget.
- Liability is a single purpose fund that shows a 15% increase due to the addition of cyber insurance.
- Property taxes fund the liability fund.
- The IMRF fund shows a decrease in actual expenditures and it is well funded.
- She said that IMRF is very well funded and it is not run by the state and it is well managed.
- We look at IMRF yearly when we look at the Tax Levy.
- Social security and Medicare have been at 7.65% for a long time but as payroll changes, this number can change.
- The WACC debt service fund bonds were issued in 2006, they retired in 2029.

- The WACC use agreement was amended in 2021 which allowed for a reduced payment for three consecutive years but it will be added at the end and will go until 2031.
- The majority of the debt service is paid from the general fund, from home rule sale tax.
- Items may still be tweaked as they are being reviewed.

5. OTHER BUSINESS: None at this time.

6. EXECUTIVE SESSION: 5 ILCS 120/2(c) (1) – The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body. Attorney Braskich expressed the need to establish a quorum by roll call vote.

Present on roll call are: Alderpersons Adams, Blundy, Butler, Dingleline, Schone, Stevens (remote) and Yoder.

At 7:45 p.m., Alderperson Butler motioned to move into executive session and allow Alderperson Stevens to attend remotely; Alderperson Adams seconded. On roll was:

7 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Butler, Dingleline, Schone, Stevens, Yoder

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote

Mayor noted that there is no action coming out of executive session.

7. ADJOURNMENT: At 8:34 p.m. Alderperson Adams moved and Alderperson Yoder seconded to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Valeri L. Brod, City Clerk