



## Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

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Monday, November 13, 2023, at 6:30 P.M.

Wilmor Fire Station, 320 N. Wilmor Road, Washington, IL 61571

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

*Present:* Alderpersons Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, and Stevens

*Absent:* None

*Also Present:* City Administrator Snider, P & D Director Oliphant, City Engineer Carr, Finance Director Baxter (remotely during a portion of the meeting), Public Works Director Rittenhouse, Police Chief McCoy, Deputy Police Chief Stevens, City Treasurer Abbey Strubhar, City Clerk Brod, Attorney Keith Braskich

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1. **ALDERPERSONS WISHING TO BE HEARD:** Alderperson Blundy noted that all City Council meetings are on the website but wondered why the Committee of the Whole meetings are not. Clerk Brod explained that they traditionally have only posted the Council videos, except for a few months, saving space on the website. Alderperson Blundy asked to consider putting all the videos on the website and Clerk Brod shared that it is important to consider the space needed to do so. Alderperson Blundy stated that he would like the Strand presentation materials up front and asked that they send information before the weekend so they can prepare for the meeting. Administrator Snider will ask them to provide it. Alderperson Blundy noted there was a TIF request by Kurt Reynolds in 2020, where staff recommended payment for the whole façade of the building. He said the request was for \$22,000. He stated that we paid \$31,000 and it is not unprecedented to redo a façade on a building. He asked to consider giving attention to Marlene and asked if anyone else was interested in the option of helping with the façade of her building. Alderpersons Stevens and Blundy suggested talking about it under Other Businesses. Alderperson Blundy stated that he thought we were going to revert to committee sections on the COW agendas and although he understands the Council report, he thinks it would be good to do this as well. He also shared that he doesn't hear from all the boards, specifically the WACC board, and suggested more frequent updates. He noted the EDC, Fire Board, Board of Local Improvements, and Tree Board and would like regular communication from them. Alderperson Blundy also noted that the strategic planning meeting scheduled in January 2023 was held at noon which was poor timing. He noted the 2024 meeting will be 3:00 p.m., which he feels is not ideal. He noted that it is on a Monday and we can start a little earlier but not easy for Council and public to be that early. Administrator Snider shared that the meeting will take about 4-5 hours as it kicks off the budget process. He stated that the majority of the Council can direct him how to move forward. He noted an effort to stay away from Saturday meetings. Alderperson Blundy noted the Mayor's Prayer Breakfast RSVPs were due on November 3<sup>rd</sup> but they were told on November 9<sup>th</sup> that the City was picking up the cost. Administrator Snider said this is coordinated by the Chamber and it wasn't received in a timely manner and there is no mystery. Alderperson Blundy asked how many people the City paid for and Administrator Snider noted that Ms. Baxter would have the answer and this was in line with last year. Alderperson Blundy stated that he doesn't agree with the City funding it unless it was an all-inclusive event. Administrator Snider said it is up to the will of the majority. Alderperson Blundy stated that he left the October 16<sup>th</sup> meeting mad. He shared that a motion was made to discuss long-term facility needs and Administrator Snider lectured them for wanting to discuss it. He thinks staff would be thrilled for them to talk about it and noted the evidence building discussion on tonight's agenda. He thinks if any staff doesn't want to participate in that discussion, this might not be the right job for them. Alderperson Blundy stated that he feels things get directed towards Alderperson Stevens from around the board table. He apologized to Alderperson Stevens for not saying something for the last few years. He stated that we have a female who looks like she is being picked on by all the men around the table and now Alderperson Smith might be nervous to speak in fear to be bashed

down. Administrator Snider said his frustration is in the fact that Alderperson Blundy has been on Council for three years, has passed a budget item each year for a city-wide space study for \$100,000, and is not prepared enough to know that that item is already in the budget. He said he expects that Alderperson Blundy would bring the request of an RFP and to read his budget. Alderperson Blundy asked why Administrator Snider hasn't executed it and Administrator Snider explained that he doesn't see the need for a million-dollar comprehensive building at this time. Alderperson Blundy said we have the evidence building and the cost and Administrator Snider explained that we have the funding for it. Administrator Snider noted that we also have the budget to pave the parking lot next to City Hall but he doesn't see the need right now. He noted items are in the budget as place holders but this came out of a plan that came before he was administrator. He said he looks at all costs and needs verses wants. He said if Council were to tell him to request an RFP, he would facilitate it. Alderperson Blundy followed up by saying there was a motion that was approved and it turned into a discussion that was not appropriate. Administrator Snider said it was a motion for something already in the budget. Alderperson Blundy said it was a discussion to direct the facilities. Administrator Snider noted that is more administrative than legislative. Alderperson Brownfield expressed disappointment in Alderperson Blundy for unfairly grouping all male council members together to criticize another council person, finding it offensive. He strives for neutrality, giving everyone a fair chance. Alderperson Blundy defended this by stating that it seems like Alderperson Stevens takes a lot of blows and he hasn't said anything to defend her. Alderperson Martin appreciated the defense of Alderperson Stevens but considered it a wild accusation to imply that it is based on gender. He urged Alderperson Blundy to remove that aspect from the conversation. Alderperson Butler also found Alderperson Blundy's comments offensive, expressing disappointment that they are half an hour into the meeting and Alderperson Blundy was the only one speaking. Alderperson Butler pointed out that while Alderperson Blundy expressed concern for spending money on the prayer breakfast, the City has paid for an attorney for this time, who is probably more expensive. Mayor Manier noted that he personally pays for his and his wife's tickets to the prayer breakfast.

2. CITIZENS WISHING TO BE HEARD: Kris Hasten, a resident of Washington, shared comments addressing the trunk line sewer project. She stated that she is not sure what the board members don't understand. This has lasted four years and cost the City in inflation, two engineering studies and additional testing totaling almost \$1 million. She noted that Strand and Hamilton have both expressed that Route B is the best route. She is addressing the board about the possibility of pushing it north to Route E. As one of the majority land owners, she stated that if it was in the best interest of the City, she would support the granting of permits on her property but two engineering firms, an experienced City Administrator and a knowledgeable staff engineer have all stated that we should proceed with Route B; therefore, she will not grant the city rights to cross her property. She noted that Route E would take out a large barn and steel I-beam bridge used to access property. She doesn't think there is a judge who would allow a few board members and a property owner to take her land when professionals have stated this isn't the best route. Joe Arnold, a resident of Washington, is asking Council to move forward with Route B. He stated that they won't give access to their property to the north and hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars have been spent but the answer hasn't changed. He was alarmed that Alderperson Blundy was asking for a route north of the tracks. He said Route B is the cheapest option and it could cost \$3 million more to push it more to the north. He noted that Farm Creek runs north of the tracks for a majority of the plan. Mr. Arnold stated that one of the points that doesn't get talked about is how any other route, other than Route B, affect how families can use their property in the future where Route B doesn't impact property use. The north route would put homes in Timber Rail at risk. They will not allow access to property north of the tracks. Lerri Slonneger, a Washington resident, stated that the brewery water line was hit for the 6<sup>th</sup> time. On Thursday, OSHA visited and shut the job down. The president was there on Friday. The expenses for Marlene is reaching \$100,000. She stated that the Historical Society has had to pay. They have now found additional damages and hired a contractor and engineer. There is confusion because in the agreement, water and sewer lines were promised. They have been told the engineer is too busy to look at the plan and Austin has a plan but is too busy to review it. She stated that she doesn't know if anyone has looked at the foundation.
3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Alderperson Brownfield motioned to approve minutes of the October 9, 2023, Committee of the Whole meeting and October 16, 2023 Special Committee of the Whole meeting; seconded by Alderperson Stevens. Approved by voice vote.
4. BUSINESS ITEMS:
  - A. *Discussion on Request from Washington Park District Obtaining Water for Pools at Cost* - Administrator Snider shared that this is a request from the Park District Board and they are seeking relief in the cost to refill the pool and splashpad. The cost to the City for the water at the pool is \$2,294.41, while the water at LaHood Park costs \$1,453.98. The reduction in rate to the City's cost would decrease revenue by

\$9,909.64 for the pool and by \$6,280.34 for LaHood Park. He shared that staff doesn't have a recommendation and it is up to Council. Mr. Snider pointed out that both their organization and the Council are responsible for their taxation. Alderperson Blundy inquired whether this financial assistance was a one-time occurrence or a permanent arrangement. Mayor Manier recalled a previous instance when they offered assistance during a pool leak. Administrator Snider indicated that the assistance might be ongoing. Alderperson Blundy sought clarification on whether it was a one-time hardship and shared the view that the Park District, being a separate taxing entity, should manage its own budget. Concerns were raised about setting a precedent, with Alderperson Butler emphasizing the potential impact on taxpayers and suggesting that the Park District could seek additional funding through its own levies. No one expressed interest in moving forward with funding when asked. Mayor Manier agreed that tax payers would be funding this and expressed concerns about potential requests from other entities like the schools.

- B. Dewberry Evidence Room Presentation* - Chief McCoy shared that as requested, they have sought the design by Dewberry. He introduced the presenters from Dewberry. Jonathan Tallman was present to share details regarding the facility. He noted that maintaining custody of evidence which is crucial for best practices. The proper storage of documented records is essential to prevent breaks in the chain, which could jeopardize a court case. Design considerations incorporate guidelines from industry leaders, and organizations like CALEA (Commission on Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies) and EMI (Evidence Management Institute) provide standards for managing the movement and processing of evidence. He explained the need for separate spaces for hazardous materials, firearms, and drugs, emphasizing the importance of secure concrete walls that must be grounded solidly for added security. He noted that the concrete floor is sealed and recommended two layers of drywall with secure wire mesh on metal studs for added security as well as exterior doors made of steel with security-grade hinges and locks. Mr. Luster also explained that while windows are discouraged, a security grill is advised if they are included. Consideration is also given to interior surfaces and HVAC systems to prevent damage to evidence as well as optimizing operation flow for efficiency with minimal touch interaction. He shared that the current facility has security issues, including an unsecured door, lack of air conditioning and heat due to a car accident, no surveillance video, and insufficient insulation. There is no access control to monitor evidence, and the shared building lacks the capability to process vehicles securely, noting the officer currently has to park outside to bring evidence in. It is recommended that officers should be able to drive in without outside access possibilities. Nathan Wister, a design director with Dewberry and a Washington resident shared that the proposed building would be next to the current fire station. He explained that despite exploring other options, they couldn't find one that accommodated all the necessary features mentioned earlier. This location could create a public safety campus without attracting undue attention. He mentioned plans to include parking for officers, allowing for easy access. The design also considers potential future road expansion. Mr. Luster explained that they aimed to avoid disturbing existing vegetation but left room for expansion if necessary. He emphasized the need to preserve evidence indefinitely and presented an early rendering of a 20-foot-high building with two large garage doors and additional access points. The design complements Five Points and the fire station. He shared that they tried to consolidate the space while making it functional. He explained that the layout incorporates a vehicle evidence review area, separated by a security gate, and included a small office for public evidence pickup. Mr. Luster also shared plans for specialized evidence lockers, accessible only by forensic officers, that utilize high-density storage similar to movable library shelves. He noted the design is fully fire-protected. Chief McCoy expressed gratitude for the presentation and mentioned that they initially favored a \$5 million building but it was unattainable. Alderperson Martin questioned if the available space would be sufficient, and Chief McCoy clarified that it effectively doubles the current space. He highlighted the benefits of a barcode system for managing evidence, emphasizing its capacity for both intake and outtake. Chief McCoy also mentioned the possibility of future expansion if required. Alderperson Martin expressed favor, considering the grants and the poor condition of the existing building. Alderperson Adams, who toured the old building, emphasized its deterioration and agreed that the grants make this project necessary. Alderperson McIntyre shared his industry experience, voiced support, and noted the challenge of maintaining the chain of custody in court cases. Alderperson Stevens inquired about having someone in the building at all times, to which the Chief McCoy responded the lack of need. Chief McCoy thanked Congressman LaHood for helping provide a \$583,000 grant and Senator Koehler and Senator Bennett for \$125,000 and \$107,000 grants as well. He shared that verbal requests were made, and they acknowledged the necessity. Alderperson Blundy expressed a different opinion, stating he is certain the existing building requires repairs. He feels this ties into the broader conversation about facilities. He emphasized limited space and the fire department's need for additional facilities. He noted our society's tendency to discard things easily and shift away from the downtown area. He suggested using grants to renovate the building, aiming to attract people to the square and enhance its appearance. He proposed relocating public works to

make space. While acknowledging the current poor conditions, he believes in the feasibility of rehabilitation. The representative from Dewberry countered, stating that renovating the existing structure would leave only the walls with rebar and cost more than starting a new structure. Alderperson Blundy asked if the police get a new building and leave the public works department, will it continue to look like a big turd sitting on the corner. Mr. Carr noted a previous council approval of improvements, and Mayor Manier clarified that public works could rehabilitate the building and store items indoors, improving its overall appearance. Mayor Manier also noted that there was past talk about rehabbing the building back to the old fire station or historic building. Mr. Tallman clarified the need to have a separate storage facility. The proximity to the fire station was noted discouraging a casual observer from the site. Administrator Snider explained that the Cure's money was used to pay public safety salaries, which relieved the general fund of having to pay those salaries. Alderperson Stevens mentioned in the current budget, there is \$300,000 in the building fund. Administrator Snider explained that this amount would extend into the next cycle. Alderperson Stevens expressed concern, stating that it is not budgeted. Administrator Snider clarified that the engineering portion is budgeted. Alderperson Stevens questioned special project funds used for something not normal. Administrator Snider pointed out that the police department has three funds with a balance. Deputy Police Chief Stevens clarified that specific funds are allocated for specific enforcements, based on their purpose. He provided an example of using a percentage of a special fund for use in building a facility to store drugs. Administrator Snider confirmed that these are eligible funds. Mayor Manier sought consensus. Alderperson Smith inquired about other communities with similar facilities. Chief McCoy mentioned that some have built-in facilities, but noted that stand-alone structures have advantages, such as lower cost per square foot. Mayor Manier noted the efficient use of the current police station, which was renovated when City Hall moved to the old library. Alderperson McIntyre shared his observation of a trend in newer community department buildings having attached storage. Alderperson Smith supported the idea, while Alderperson Stevens requested more time to think before expressing her opinion. Alderpersons Adams and Brownfield shared their support for the project. Alderperson Butler expressed disappointment at the additional million in the budget but acknowledged the use of CARES money. He emphasized the importance of not neglecting other needs. Alderperson Blundy suggested committing the \$940,000 to something else. He shared that he would like to see more commitment to the old building that would make it more attractive, provided it is the best use of the funds. Chief McCoy thanked everyone for their input.

- C. *Strand Engineering Presentation* - Administrator Snider explained that someone with Strand became ill so there will not be a presentation. They will reschedule for December.
- D. *Proposed Brecklin's Servicer redevelopment Project Financial Assistance Consideration* - Administrator Snider explained that the Council had established a scoring system for staff to assess TIF funding requests and there is no specific staff recommendation provided for this request. Mr. Oliphant presented the request details and scoring. He noted that staff received this request for regular maintenance items and a signage change, with the main focus being a rebranding from BP to Amoco. Mr. Oliphant explained that the scoring deems most of the request ineligible, except for the painting, which barely meets the criteria. The recommendation is to allocate 20% funding for painting. Alderperson Adams expressed appreciation for the evaluation process. He noted the dynamics of businesses like gas stations compared to other businesses, where people enter the establishment. He remains neutral but suggested contemplating the economic impact. Alderperson Blundy felt that rebranding is a business decision. He shared that items such as LED lights could be considered. Alderperson Stevens inquired about number of gas station competitors in the City limits. Mr. Oliphant clarified that Mr. Brecklin submitted the request, with staff helping to fill in blanks. Alderperson Stevens agreed with Alderperson Adams, emphasizing the desire of bringing people to the Square when they need gas. She feels this is a value. Mr. Oliphant explained that consideration of certain elements, related to opportunities during nights and weekends may carry more weight. It was noted that consumers don't go into the establishment unless they are interested in purchasing a candy bar and this should be taken into account. Mr. Oliphant acknowledged some gray areas in the application. He shared that despite improvements, there is no increase in additional hours. Alderperson Martin agreed with exploring options like downlights and increasing the percentage which could provide improvements. Alderperson Butler noted that this request is due to business changes and the benefits of business development need to be evaluated. He feels painting will enhance the overall image, and the LED lighting could be considered. The absence of local sales tax on gas was noted. Discussion regarding the potential economic impact, especially with the upcoming brewpub took place. Alderperson Stevens and Alderperson Butler feel there will not be an economic boom but noted the businesses working together. Alderperson McIntyre recommends a percentage of 30-35%, while Alderperson Blundy suggests going up to 40% for specific items. Alderperson Butler suggests a score sheet for deviation. Alderperson

Brownfield supports the guidelines but advocates adhering to the established framework. By incorporating LED lights, we will go above the requirements but we should not to exceed the 20% limit as per the specified guidelines. Alderperson Brownfield stated that adhering to the established scoring system is essential, as emphasized by Mr. Oliphant, who highlighted its role in minimizing subjectivity. Mr. Oliphant noted the canopy lights are routine maintenance, and suggested to stay close to the recommended percentage to avoid complications later on. Responding to Alderperson McIntyre's question, Mr. Oliphant confirmed that a higher score would indeed correspond to a higher percentage. Alderperson McIntyre agreed with Alderperson Brownfield, and acknowledged that Alderperson Adams has a valid point about the unique nature of this business compared to others. Alderperson Stevens suggested the subjectivity could be tweaked. She feels there should be some leeway. Alderperson Blundy noted that it is \$2,200 and feels it comes down to CL Real Estates calculation of \$125,000 but they asked for \$350,000. He stated that if we stick to this, then we need to do it with Prep Freeze Cook and the KC Hall. Mr. Oliphant emphasized that the CL Real Estate projects are in the "Major Catalyst" which is a half million-dollar value or higher, which was intended for more discretion. Mayor Manier asked if anyone was interested in going to 30% for lights and painting for a compromise. No one expressed opposition.

- E. *Ground Mount Solar Array Screening Discussion* - Mr. Oliphant stated that this topic has been discussed multiple times for both residential and non-residential purposes and the discussion included the use of six-foot fencing. He noted Eureka's regulations, which was outlined in the memo provided by Mr. Oliphant and highlights that residential ground mounts are not allowed. Additionally, Mr. Oliphant suggested considering a setback from the solar array to adjacent principal structures, citing details from the current code. He suggested that if the setback cannot be met between principal structures, the option of requiring fencing could be proposed. Mr. Oliphant acknowledged that this perspective is focused on potential challenges associated with ground-mounted solar arrays. He requested feedback and Alderperson Blundy mentioned a two-acre requirement on the residential side, suggesting that no fencing is necessary. He noted that you could see an array over a fence. Mr. Oliphant shared that concern was raised about the proximity of an array to the homes on the Pine Trees request and agreed that fencing might be excessive. Alderperson Blundy supports the setback. The discussion shifted to the 2018 ordinance prohibiting ground mount solar, which focused on roof mounts. Alderperson Butler mentioned a law from 2022 or 2023 allowing roof mounts, emphasizing the dislike for ground mounts on smaller lots. He supports the two-acre requirement and opposes the idea of a fence, preferring efforts to screen the array instead. Alderperson McIntyre initially raised safety concerns but now disapproves of the fence, favoring the larger lot size. Alderperson Brownfield and Alderperson Adams expressed agreement.
- F. *WACC Use Agreement Discussion* - Alderperson Brownfield, a representative on the WACC board, discussed the existing agreement and the bond to fund the original project. He explained that there's a proposal to seek forgiveness for the last eight payments which stems from the substantial costs of HVAC equipment replacement. He also explained that they have tried to budget for these and suggested to include periodic updates in their agreement, possibly on a quarterly or monthly basis. Alderperson Brownfield also proposed that if the .25% allocation doesn't cover the bond, they could compensate to ensure no financial burden is placed on the City. Mr. Oliphant shared that the sales tax should cover the payments. Alderperson Brownfield expressed concern that if Five Points failed, we would be left with just a building. Alderperson Butler asked for a specific dollar figure, and Alderperson Brownfield explained that they're receiving \$75,000 this year but are exploring if they can avoid that payment. He also emphasized that Five Points is not a taxing body. Alderperson Butler acknowledged the impact of Covid on Five Points but commended their efforts to cope. He suggested a thorough review of the situation. Alderperson Stevens proposed that Five Points should present directly to Council. Mayor Manier mentioned Sherril West's presentation that took place a week prior. Alderperson Brownfield shared broader plans beyond the current plan, emphasizing new business strategies and the need for fundraising efforts for Five Points. He noted that they were relying on the gym for funding. Alderperson McIntyre raised a question about the collection period since 2006, wondering if it's indefinite. Administrator Snider clarified that funds can be allocated to various items, not restricted to a specific purpose. He highlighted the .25% home rule sales tax providing support beyond the City's commitment level. Alderperson McIntyre expressed support for Five Points, citing its benefits to the community, and Alderperson Brownfield clarified their current focus is on funding for 2024 and beyond. Alderperson Blundy, shared that he is a longtime member and emphasized the facility's intent not to burden taxpayers and raised concerns about potential surplus and the overcharging residents. Administrator Snider indicated a surplus of \$300,000-\$500,000 from the sales tax. He stated that Council has managed finances well over the years, avoided overspending, and currently has the funds. Alderperson Blundy feels this should be a temporary tax, suggesting early bond repayment to retire the sales tax. Administrator Snider questioned the benefits of early repayment, but Alderperson Blundy

expressed favor for canceling the sales tax, and Administrator Snider noted that it is within the Council's prerogative. Alderperson Blundy expressed the need to honor the Silver Sneakers program and Alderperson Brownfield noted the pool as a key concern. Alderperson Blundy proposed increased community engagement, and Alderperson Brownfield agreed to inquire. Alderperson Blundy expressed concern about the long-term sustainability, noting profitability of the fitness center but challenges of the event center, theater, and other areas. He emphasized the need for a sustainable plan but doesn't want to shoulder the burden of it. Mayor Manier noted that taxing bodies, like the high school, Park District and library are paying into it as well. Alderperson Brownfield noted the importance of considering sales tax from visiting groups as a revenue source for the City. Alderperson Stevens recognized the positive aspects of Five Points but noted the impact from COVID-19 on other businesses. Concerns were raised about a lack of regular updates, and it was revealed that despite initial enthusiasm, there are deficits. Alderperson Blundy expressed his concern for investing in an event center on the Square and the banquet facility due to them being competitors. Alderperson Adams agreed on the need for careful consideration, expressing reluctance to remove the sales tax entirely, emphasizing the ongoing need for project funding. The discussion also touched on distinguishing between the brewpub and other entities, considering their different occupancies and demands. Alderperson McIntyre agreed and emphasized the importance of understanding the vision and suggesting potential city involvement and forgiveness for a stronger presence at Five Points. Mayor Manier and Alderperson Brownfield discussed revisiting the WACC Board vision, while Alderperson Butler emphasized the request to forgive future payments. He highlighted that they asked for payment forgiveness and noted a board made of volunteers. He expressed support, proposing an agreement where any surplus could be used for repayment. Alderperson Brownfield suggested covering payments if the .25% didn't suffice. Alderperson Butler emphasized the impact of COVID, urging consideration of available funds to preventing risk. Alderperson Martin asked about skipping payments, and Alderperson Brownfield identified the pool as a major financial strain. He also noted other schools not contributing. Alderperson Stevens noted the issue predates COVID and suggested opening board meetings to the community.

- G. *Street Sweeper Replacement Discussion* - Mr. Rittenhouse emphasized the importance of this piece of equipment, citing a recent costly repair. The staff assessed two options: following a ten-year Maintenance, Repair, and Equipment Replacement Fund (MERF) schedule or opting for a five-year MERF plan with a trade-in possibility. One drawback highlighted was the equipment's aging status in a demanding environment. Mr. Rittenhouse mentioned exploring a contract with a trade-in value, where a technician would handle all repairs, and after five years, they would have the option to trade in the unit. This approach would ensure a new unit every five years, along with warranties and reducing potential long-term repairs costing \$30,000-\$50,000. A drawback could be the potential impact of changing agreed amounts due to accidents on the buyback prices. Mr. Rittenhouse stated that with sufficient funds in the MERF, staff recommend considering a new street sweeper, priced at \$368,000, with the advantage of buyback options. Mr. Rittenhouse discussed potential future costs for street sweepers, emphasizing the benefits of keeping new sweepers on the streets under warranty. He asked for direction from the Council. Alderperson Stevens expressed agreement with Mr. Rittenhouse's recommendations. Mayor Manier mentioned receiving calls when the street sweeper is out of service and highlighted the positive reception from the retired community when it operates. Alderperson McIntyre expressed appreciation and support for the effort. Alderperson Martin suggested that any street sweeper beyond five years becomes a financial burden but supports the idea with a warranty. Alderperson Blundy inquired about leasing such equipment, and Mr. Rittenhouse explained he explored this option to avoid loan interest, if funded. Mr. Rittenhouse noted the diminishing value of aging equipment after 12 years. He expressed interest in reviewing this for other equipment types, acknowledging challenges in leasing specialty equipment. Mr. Rittenhouse agreed to look into companies providing this service per Alderperson Blundy's request. Alderperson Martin suggested that buying is preferable to leasing as leasing is better for the dealership, not the City. The general consensus was for Mr. Rittenhouse to move forward with what was presented.
- H. *2023 Tax Levy Discussion* - Administrator Snider introduced Ms. Baxter who called in to provide details remotely. Administrator Snider explained that State statute mandates a Council meeting to review the proposal, with the first reading of the ordinance on December 1st and the second reading on December 18th for submission to the county clerk. He highlighted an increase in the Equalized Assessed Value (EAV), emphasizing the need to capture this growth by adjusting the levy accordingly. He clarified that the tax bill won't increase, as they are not raising taxes but only capturing the growth. The plan includes allocating a significant portion of these funds to the police pension fund, aiming for full funding police pensions by 2040. Ms. Baxter, via phone, reported an 8.14% increase in evaluation and mentioned adjustments to special levies for rounding purposes. Ms. Baxter noted that this is the initial year of a full-

year consolidation with the IPPOF and despite some recorded losses, we hope to see to see stability. She noted that in addition to the \$64,000, this is a good time to include additional funds in order to meet state requirements. She stated that there won't be any property tax increases in the City portion, but since it's over 5%, a Truth in Taxation hearing will be necessary. She presented a summary of the police pension based on an actuarial study. Alderperson Stevens asked about a change in the number of choices available in the past compared to the last two years, where only one option was presented. She disagreed with Administrator Snider, stating that taxes will increase. Administrator Snider shared that the 8.14% captures the new buildings and growth, not Alderperson Stevens' house unless it is reassessed. Ms. Baxter explained that the amount is only for the City's portion. Mr. Oliphant shared a community with a 25% growth, would be able to capture that 25% to fund additional services. This process is intended to cover the costs of providing services. Administrator Snider noted the numbers provided by Joanne, and Ms. Baxter pointed out that preliminary evaluations for Tazewell County historically show a reduction due to the county board of review. She emphasized a conservative approach and shared that even though the levy would increase by \$164,000, the tax rate remains the same. She shared that if there are few Board of Reviews, taxes might actually decrease. Ms. Baxter noted that the county provided an accurate number, but we are being conservative. Alderperson Butler emphasized that we aren't required to restrict the amount to the growth, but we can utilize our full tax rate. He explained that we are currently levying only the growth and could potentially levy twice the amount; however, our goal is to maintain the current tax rate. Administrator Snider added that Canton is at 12%, as a point of comparison. He noted that Fairview Heights has never imposed a levy. Ms. Baxter pointed out that this year marks the most growth since 2007 and before last year, we were stagnant at 1% or less, making this a positive development. Administrator Snider expressed excitement about the City's growth, highlighting development in Trails Edge. Alderperson Martin inquired about leaving some funds aside for safety, seeking clarity on where those funds would be allocated. Administrator Snider pointed out that many businesses contest their taxes. He emphasized that being conservative provides a financial cushion, knowing that tax rates won't unexpectedly increase. Alderperson Butler raised concerns about leaving unused money by not using the full limiting tax rate. Alderperson Martin questioned the consequences of missing the mark and Administrator Snider explained that the taxes would decrease. Ms. Baxter stated that they will bring forward a resolution to set the tentative tax levy and schedule a public hearing.

- I. *Discussion on City Street Maintenance Plans* - Mr. Carr shared that this discussion item was requested by several alderpersons. He shared a memo that contained chip seal/fog, pressure paving, mill and overlay and details about pavement conditions. He shared costs associated with the different solutions and explained that that a 1.5" mill and overlay can use MFT funds while pressure paving cannot. He opened for questions. Alderperson Blundy clarified that he requested the discussion, noting that he received comments from Trails Edge residents about the current chip seal. He shared that a neighbor complained about chips in their garage. Alderperson Blundy asked why pressure paving isn't covered by MFT and Mr. Carr clarified that IDOT has strict guidelines on what is covered, and it is a proprietary process. Mr. Carr noted that fog coating has recently been accepted by IDOT. Alderperson Blundy suggested working with other cities to influence IDOT. He pointed out that Easy Street looks great, it has a rough chip seal. He proposed evaluating low-traffic areas. He suggested using surplus sales tax towards road improvements. He asked with newer subdivisions if we have a depth requirement. He inquired about depth requirements for newer subdivisions. Mr. Carr stated that the revised standard is three inches thick, and it applies to Lawndale, Hilldale, and Monroe. Alderperson Blundy also questioned the choice between concrete and asphalt for new roads in Trails Edge, expressing concern about maintenance costs. Mr. Carr noted the maintenance of concrete is less than asphalt and is more cost-effective in the long run. Mr. Carr shared that the developer has a family member with a concrete business. Alderperson Blundy asked for cost comparisons, and Mr. Carr stated that he would look into the matter. He also inquired about mandating developers to choose materials for lower maintenance. Mr. Carr clarified that such decisions are policy decisions of the Council. Mr. Carr reminded Council that every road type requires overlay, even concrete. Alderperson Stevens complimented Westgate but observed differences in the appearance of Trails Edge and asked if there were different contractors. Mr. Carr said it was the same contractor. The softness of Chelsea and Comfort Way was noted. Alderperson Stevens raised concerns about potential damage from snowplows and wondered if Kensington would be chip-sealed to match other roads. Mayor Manier commended the results of fog coating on cul-de-sacs off Kern Road, noting their improved appearance and fewer loose rocks. Mr. Carr noted that the roads were done in 2020.
5. OTHER BUSINESS: Stevens inquired about the opening date of Freedom Parkway, to which Mr. Carr's response was spring or summer of 2024. It was noted that the surface course for Hilldale was laid down today.

Regarding repairs on the Jefferson building, Mr. Rittenhouse mentioned ongoing work with Ameren to provide protective blankets on the line.

Alderson Stevens brought up a previous suggestion regarding live streaming and using YouTube to reduce costs. Concerns were raised about the potential speaker wires on the floor. Alderson Martin suggested the usefulness of additional microphones.

Mr. Carr noted that Mrs. Slonneger had already left the meeting but wanted to address rumors regarding Marlene Miller who had not yet pulled a permit for the waterline in her building, while the brewpub has already done so. Mr. Carr addressed the ill-spoken rumors that mentioned him, which he said he doesn't appreciate. He emphasized that the delay is on Marlene's end, not the City's, and urged her to obtain the necessary permit. Mr. Carr shared that in response to Alderson McIntyre's inquiry about whether the project has been halted, he stated that it has not.

Alderson Adams mentioned an issue with the facade and suggested a meeting on January 29th.

Administrator Snider clarified that changes can be made to an ordinance up to the second reading, but you cannot go higher.

Administrator Snider requested an additional executive session for personnel matters.

6. *Executive Session* - At 9:54 p.m., Alderson McIntyre moved to enter into executive session, and Alderson Martin seconded, for: 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(5) - The purchase or lease of real property for the use of the public body, including meetings held for the purpose of discussing whether a particular parcel should be acquired. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(6) - The setting of a price for sale or lease of property owned by the public body. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11): Litigation, when an action against, affecting or on behalf of the particular public body has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal, or when the public body finds that an action is probable or imminent, in which case the basis for the finding shall be recorded and entered into the minutes of the closed meeting. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) - The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body or legal counsel for the public body per of the Illinois Open Meetings Act.
7. ADJOURNMENT: At 11:16 p.m. Alderson Brownfield moved, and Alderson Martin seconded to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

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Valeri L. Brod, City Clerk