



City Council Meeting Minutes
Monday, December 18, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.
Washington Fire Department Training Room - 200 N. Wilmor Road, Washington, Illinois

Call to Order Mayor Gary W. Manier called the regular meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., with a quorum present.

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

Also Present City Administrator Jim Snider, Finance Director Joanie Baxter, Planning and Development Director Jon Oliphant, City Engineer Dennis Carr, Public Works Director Brian Rittenhouse, Police Chief Mike McCoy, City Treasurer Abbey Strubhar, City Clerk Valeri Brod, City Attorney Derek Schryer and Press

Pledge of Allegiance All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance let by Mayor Manier.

Audience Comments Leri Slonneger came forward to say that statements came from Nathan Dean. She provided a list of possible people associated with the comment and questioned the plumbing and building permit process. She is assuming the developers will need to pull the permit not the property owner. She shared a story regarding a conversation between Marlene's renter and someone who was working, stating that they didn't know who hired them. Ms. Slonneger said that the workers left about 30 minutes after they broke a waterline and it took three to four hours to get someone else. Ms. Slonneger stated that the president of Global called Mr. Ward and they have asked for the blueprint because they need to move HVAC units and brick over windows before Global can put up more concrete blocks. They have gutters and electrical to move but no one can give them answers. Ms. Slonneger asked what Council wants her to do as she [Marlene] is the one who has spent \$100,000.

Review Agenda for Deletions/Additions Nothing added or deleted at this time.

Consent Agenda Mayor Manier presented the Consent Agenda for approval of the following items:
A. Approve Minutes of the December 4, 2023 Regular City Council Meeting
B. Approve Bills and Payroll
C. Purchase Authorization for Road Salt

Aldersperson Stevens motioned to accept the consent agenda with a change in the minutes to read "Aldersperson Stevens stated even though we..." as this clarifies her statement; Aldersperson McIntyre seconded.

8 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

Announcements/ Presentations/ Proclamations Mayor Manier shared that they are inviting the St. Patrick School 7th and 8th grade girls' basketball teams to the January 2nd meeting for a proclamation presentation. He congratulated the both teams for winning their State tournaments. If they cannot make it to the January 2nd meeting, they will do it at the January 15th meeting. Mayor Manier also commented, regarding the earlier comment, that there must be a communication problem because The Grist Mill asked for items to be moved at the Historical Society two months ago and it has not yet been done.

City Administrator Communications Administrator Sinder explained that Council had asked for a wet weather lagoon feasibility study to be put together in lieu of continuing with Phase 2B trunkline design. He introduced City Engineer Dennis Carr to provide details.
Lagoon Feasibility Study Proposal Mr. Carr shared that the original estimate was around \$40,000 but they were asked to include maintenance for the existing trunkline as well. The proposal is now \$50,400. Staff is asking for Council to discuss and give them direction.
Aldersperson Brownfield feels this is a good decision and as this study is being done, contact can be made with landowners. He noted that they have already approved Strand Route B. Aldersperson Butler asked if something is revealed that makes it obviously not feasible, can this be stopped by mutual agreement, noting Council's lack of lagoon design knowledge. Mr. Carr noted that this proposal is for the engineering agreement, and that can be included in the draft. He asked for clarification regarding Council direction noting that the engineers have made recommendations in the past that were not addressed. Aldersperson Butler said if it is fruitless, he would like to end the study because of cost.
Aldersperson McIntyre agreed stating that if soil samples alone determine that it is not feasible, we should stop it. He shared that he is in favor of looking into this, but he doesn't want to spend \$50,000 if they determine early that the soil won't let it work. Mr. Carr clarified that the first phase of the feasibility study does not involve obtaining any new soil samples.
Aldersperson Butler noted that other things could come up as well.

Mayor Manier shared that there was a past EPA issue due to a shooting range in the area. He said soil samples might be worth looking into to get a better idea.

Aldersperson Blundy feels a termination clause needs to be the Council's decision.

Aldersperson Martin agreed and asked that if anything else needs to be moved forward, such as an EPA loan, can it be done while we are doing this to keep the ball rolling. Mr. Carr shared that we are now at a fee with Strand and the timeframe with Kaskaskia is past. He shared that the landowners could be reached using an outside firm or done internally, to see if they are willing to negotiate. He expressed concern regarding negotiations and continued by sharing that if they are willing to negotiate, we can bring an agreement with a land acquisition firm. He also noted difficulties if imminent domain is needed, and noted that Council has not yet made a decision to move forward with Phase 2B. Mr. Carr expressed issues regarding enough Strand personnel to do the lagoon study as well as finishing the Strand Phase 2B plans. He recommends the City wait for a consensus from Council to determine direction.

Aldersperson Stevens motioned to approve the proposal; Aldersperson Smith seconded.

8 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

*Engineering Services
Agreement for
Evidence Building*

Administrator Snider shared that Dewberry's proposal is \$109,332. He introduced Police Chief McCoy to share details regarding the engineering services agreement for the proposed building. Chief McCoy shared that Council received the information and noted a Dewberry representative is present for questions.

Aldersperson Blundy motioned to table this item until after the next budget is approved; no response was initially given.

Aldersperson Stevens asked for clarification from Aldersperson Blundy, wondering if he is tabling the topic until the next budget is approved or the next Committee of the Whole meeting. She noted that a memo was not provided. She also asked about grant money for the project. Chief McCoy stated that it was previously shared, and Council agreed to move forward with an engineering study. Aldersperson Stevens asked for the cost of the whole evidence building. Aldersperson Blundy clarified his motion by explaining that this is \$110,000 now and they have a \$1 million shortfall between the cost of the building and the grants.

Aldersperson Stevens seconded the earlier motion to table the topic.

3 Ayes: Blundy, Smith, Stevens

5 Nays: Adams, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre

Motion failed by roll call vote.

Aldersperson Brownfield motioned to approve the agreement; Aldersperson McIntyre seconded.

Aldersperson Blundy stated that Finance Director Baxter provided projections including grant information and a total cost of \$1.8 million. He expressed concern regarding how they will pay for it. Aldersperson Blundy noted the Police Pension is underfunded. Mr. Carr noted that cost of work details are on page two of agreement which states \$1,504,156. Aldersperson Blundy asked about the total grant money to be received. Finance Director Baxter shared that there are three grants with one from the Department of Justice and two through DCEO. She shared that staff had identified CURE Grant money that was received for public safety expenses as well as police special project funds. She stated that she can resend what was provided in detail in October. Ms. Baxter further explained that they had already budgeted building fund money as well as money that has to be used for public safety expenses. Aldersperson Blundy said when he looks at unbalanced projections from the last meeting, he doesn't see any of those in it. Ms. Baxter noted that it was provided in the strategic planning meeting in January 2023 and also noted the newer grants were not included at that time. Aldersperson Blundy stated that we are still \$300,000 short. Ms. Baxter clarified the funding amounts again. She stated that the CURE Grant has been in the budget and this is the perfect way to use it because they are allocated to public safety. Administrator Snider reminded Council to look at the November 13th Committee of the Whole meeting agenda attachment and memo on the City's website, that clearly outlines the grants. He provided the amounts again and noted that the Covid funding was used for police salaries and that lessened the general fund's need. He shared a total revenue stream of \$1,818,120 which would cover the expenses. Chief McCoy stated that the cover letter was provided in previous meetings. Aldersperson Stevens said she would have liked it provided again. Mayor Manier noted that no one has reached out for information.

8 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

Aldersperson Stevens said she has reached out, but they only get information on Friday and they only have until Monday to get information. She stated that she saw walls being built at the brew pub and asked for an update. Administrator Snider stated that a building permit was issued to the developer and the building officer has the leeway to allow it to happen because of the weather considerations. It started Thursday. Planning and Development Director Oliphant shared that the framing is being done and they have been trying to work with the neighbors, allowing them to make repairs as well as move elements that infringe upon the brew pub lot. They want to be good neighbors and want to proceed with the project. Engineer Carr shared that the water plan was submitted, reviewed and approved in less than two hours, and he stated that he is not sure where the outside information is coming from because it is false.

Administrator Snider stated neighbors have provided complaints and staff has provided different answers to those complaints. He stated that staff knows what they are doing and they are willing to talk to citizens during business hours and remedy concerns but they can't please everyone. He further stated that their goal has been to be proficient and accountable and they have been responsive as well.

Resolution: Administrator Snider provided the following resolution for consideration:
R-1399 (25-23) Approve Collective Bargaining Agreement with Policemen's Benevolent Labor Committee from 5/1/23 through 4/30/26
Synopsis: Adoption of this resolution would approve a Collective Bargaining Agreement between the City of Washington and Policemen's Benevolent Labor Committee (PBLC) Local from May 1, 2023, through April 30, 2026, and related bonus payments
Title: A Resolution approving a Collective Bargaining Agreement between the City of Washington and Policemen's Benevolent Labor Committee (PBLC) Local from May 1, 2023, through April 30, 2026, and related bonus payments

Administrator Snider shared that Council has been working on this for a couple months and this agreement is retroactive back to May 1, 2023. It includes a 3% increase each year for three years. He noted the last contract included a 2.5% increase. Administrator Snider shared that it contains a one-time \$6,000 payment for the impact of inflation, added the Juneteenth holiday and a \$30 health and fitness reimbursement. He further noted an item for the field training officer, contributions, an increase in life insurance as well as added uniform costs. They also agreed that vacation can be used in four hour increments instead of eight and they have received word from the union that it is ratified.

Aldersperson Adams motioned to accept; Aldersperson Smith seconded.

8 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

Resolution: Administrator Snider provided the following resolution for consideration:
R-1400 (26-23) Amend existing Employee Handbook and provide a one-time payment to non-bargaining unit employees and benefits for full-time employees and certain part-time employees
Synopsis: Adoption of this resolution would amend the existing Employee Handbook and provide for a one-time payment to non-bargaining unit employees and certain increased benefits for those full-time employees and certain part-time employees
Title: A Resolution to amend the existing Employee Handbook and provide for a one-time payment to non-bargaining unit employees and certain increased benefits for those full-time employees and certain part-time employees

This will provide one-time payment of \$6,000 to non-bargaining full-time employees including sergeants who are not part of the bargaining union. It will provide a retroactive 3% raise for full-time employees instead of the 2.5% increase. Three permanent part-time employees will receive a prorated amount of the \$6,000 bonus. Employees will also receive a gym membership reimbursement, added Juneteenth holiday, life insurance increase and an additional personal day.

Aldersperson Adams motioned to accept; Aldersperson McIntyre seconded.

Aldersperson Martin asked if the payment for all non-bargaining employees excludes the Police Union. Administrator Snider stated that it is correct, and noted that he had spoken with sergeants to help keep a cohesive police workforce. The non-police union members will be negotiated in the spring.

Aldersperson Brownfield asked about the \$30 gym membership reimbursement and Administrator Snider explained that it will be reimbursed quarterly if the employee uses it.

8 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

1st Reading Ordinances: Administrator Snider provided the following ordinance for consideration:
Approve WACC Use Agreement Amendment
Synopsis: Adoption of this ordinance would amend the Washington Area Community Center Agreement such that future annual WACC payments are based on any difference between the previous year's 0.25% home rule sales tax revenue and the debt service payment. WACC payments would be forgiven so long as the 0.25% home rule sales tax revenue is at least \$75,000 more than the annual debt service for the payments due in 2024-2029.
Title: An Ordinance Approving the WACC Use Agreement Amendment

Aldersperson Stevens stated that the agreement on August 2, 2010, states the terms and conditions shall be reviewed on or before March 1, 2015 and every five years thereafter. She read the terms and conditions and stated that in 2020, Five Points didn't pay due to Covid and we shouldn't discuss anything until 2025. Attorney Schryer clarified that nothing prohibits review of the agreement, and those are just milestones. Aldersperson Stevens stated that according to Ms. West, there isn't a dire financial need and there is money in reserves. She further stated that the City has been told that they will have to take over Five Points if it fails and the agreement says if WACC doesn't pay the bond, the City can step in to manage Five Points. Mayor Manier shared that Five Points came to Council to ask for help. Aldersperson Brownfield said the biggest issue is the upcoming expenses, noting that Aldersperson Blundy and Stevens met with Ms. West who shared information with them. He noted the .25% sales tax covers the payment. He also noted that the pool is expensive. He feels we can help this staple in the community because they bring in sales tax and it will fall on the City if it fails. Aldersperson Martin said with the sales tax covering it, he would like to move forward and thinks that all non-elected City employees should receive 50% off membership. Aldersperson Blundy feels

there is nothing in place saying the City is obligated to take it over and this should go back to voters. He doesn't want to commit to the entire \$600,000 and would like an annual review and then decide to give another \$75,000 per year. He stated that the loan goes to 2029. He also stated that the Nofsinger stuff is in there and he asked about other grants. Engineer Carr restated that we didn't know we would receive certain funds until after the Strategic Planning meeting in January. Alderperson Blundy restated that he is not sure how we will fund the police pension fund and is unsure of committing until 2029.

1st Reading Administrator Snider provided the following ordinance for consideration:

Ordinances: **Synopsis:** Adoption of this ordinance would provide for the annexation of the requested two parcels into the city limits that are located adjacent to or near Centennial Drive, McClugage Road, and Spring Creek Road.
Request by Kenneth L. and Donna L. Haag, to Annex Two Parcels Near Centennial Dr., McClugage Rd., and Spring Creek Rd. **Title:** An Ordinance Approving a Request by Kenneth L. Haag and Donna L. Haag, as Trustees of the Kenneth L. Haag and Donna L. Haag Joint Revocable Trust Agreement Dated September 12, 2019, to Annex Two Parcels Near Centennial Drive, McClugage Road, and Spring Creek Road

2nd Reading Administrator Snider provided the following ordinance for consideration:

Ordinances: **Synopsis:** Adoption of this ordinance would utilize home rule authority to exclude the City from the Paid Leave for All Workers Act.
3517 (36-23) An ord., Recommending to Opt-out of the Paid Leave for All Workers Act **Title:** An Ordinance Recommending to Opt-out of the Paid Leave for All Workers Act

Administrator Snider explained that the state provided an approved bill that provides all employees in the state with one hour of paid time off for every 40 hours worked. He explained that due to unregulated concerns, the Illinois Municipal League tried to find ways to limit the obligation by suggesting an opt-out process. He shared that because we are a home rule community, we can opt out. Administrator Snider shared that our benefit structure covers this time already and he feels this doesn't meet the goal of the statute to address minimum wage workers. He also outlined issues where we couldn't control employees' time-off. He noted that our part-time employees will still have time off, and this will help avoid any type of payout of the unused areas. Alderperson Blundy said he hasn't had time to review this. He asked that we put it on the Committee of the Whole agenda for discussion. He feels this may be an opportunity to provide staff with extra benefits, although he noted it will help control staff leave. He shared that his gut reaction is to not opt out. Administrator Snider shared that every home rule municipality that he is aware of has approved this, but our Council can choose otherwise. Alderperson Brownfield shared that with the new bill, an employee doesn't have to give any lead time for time off and they can walk off the job without warning. He noted issues with time off in contracts and the need to deduct it off what they bargain for.

Alderperson Butler motioned to approve; Alderperson McIntyre seconded.

8 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

2nd Reading Administrator Snider provided the following ordinance for consideration:

Ordinances: **Synopsis:** Adoption of this ordinance would abate the property tax levy for the General Obligation Bond, Series 2023
3518 (37-23) An ord., Abating the 2023 Tax Levy in Connection with the \$4,735,000 General Obligation Bonds, Series 2023 **Title:** An Ordinance Abating the 2023 Tax Levy in Connection with the \$4,735,000 General Obligation Bonds, Series 2023
City Administrator Snider noted that this will be on the agenda at this time of the year for the next twenty years. He explained that we abate these, so we don't put that burden on the tax payers but instead use the sales tax. It will be filed with the County Clerk.

Alderperson Stevens motioned to approve; Alderperson Smith seconded.

8 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

2nd Reading Administrator Snider provided the following ordinance for consideration:

Ordinances: **Synopsis:** Adoption of this ordinance would set the 2023 property tax levy.
3519 (38-23) An ord., Levying the Annual 2023 Municipal Property Tax **Title:** An Ordinance Approving Levying the Annual 2023 Municipal Property Tax
Administrator Snider clarified his statement at the December 4th meeting when he shared that the tax levy is 8.41% which includes the 7.03% quadrennial reassessment of properties done by the county. \$165,143 is the total amount and we are 5.8% of the total tax bill. He further explained that Council has been made aware of the recommendation to address the underfunded police pension and this amount will be used for the police pension.

Alderperson Adams motioned to approve; Alderperson Brownfield seconded.

Alderperson Stevens noted previous comments and stated that she cannot vote yes for any increase in the City portion even though it is minor. She referred to a chart addressing when Council voted on becoming home rule, noting that it said the tax rate will continue to grow lower, which it has, but she feels there could have been an adjustment. Alderperson Blundy added that we just increased the home rule tax by .5%, the schools are probably going to max out their 5%, and if we are going to increase the home rule sales tax, this is an opportunity to give. He stated that other cities have not levied the increase. Mayor Manier noted that sales tax and property tax are two different things and other communities have more sales tax.

5 Ayes: Adams, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre
3 Nays: Blundy, Smith, Stevens
Motion carried by roll call vote.

Aldersperson’s Comment Aldersperson Stevens stated that the town is beautifully decorated for Christmas. She further stated that now that we don’t have standing committees, she is hoping the city administrator will have department updates. Administrator Snider noted that updates are on the agenda at each meeting and Council can call and ask staff. Mayor Manier noted the reports are very detailed. Aldersperson Brownfield provided a shout out for the Wreaths Across America event at Glendale Cemetery which had 200-300 people attend as well as a bus from Snyder Village. He shared that Carol Moss and her daughter coordinate the event and we have about 1200 veterans buried in Glendale Cemetery. Aldersperson Martin asked if flow meter data is coming. Engineer Carr shared that Mr. Waldron is working on it and he will follow up with him. Aldersperson Butler clarified that a “no vote” for the tax levy is not a vote to not raise taxes, it means the City will receive zero dollars. He stated that you either levy that amount or zero. He feels tonight’s discussion should have taken place a while ago and feels it is irresponsible to vote no because it would take years to recover. Mayor Manier noted that they attended the Central School Board meeting where they voted to increase their tax levy 14% and other schools are raising theirs as well.

Adjournment At 7:30 p.m. Aldersperson Brownfield moved to adjourn; Aldersperson McIntyre seconded. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Valeri L. Brod, City Clerk