



# CITY OF WASHINGTON

# Council Report

January 16, 2026

## **MAYOR – *Lilija Stevens***

We welcome City Administrator Jeff Fiegenschuh, the chief administrative officer of the City of Washington, responsible to the mayor and city council for the proper administration of the affairs of the city, as per our Municipal Code:

[DIVISION 5. - CITY ADMINISTRATOR | Code of Ordinances | Washington, IL | Municode Library](#)

Since August 2024, the City of Washington has been without a full-time city administrator. Beginning September 2024, as per our Municipal Code, former Mayor Manier held both the role of mayor and city administrator until May 2025.

During the time period between September 2024 and May 2025, Planning and Zoning Director, Jon Oliphant and City Engineer Dennis Carr rotated the city administrator duties during City Council and Committee of the Whole meetings.

I was elected April 1, 2025 and sworn in as mayor May 5, 2025. During my first Council meeting on May 5th, I appointed, with the consent of the City Council, City Engineer Dennis Carr as Interim City Administrator.

On September 29, 2025 the City Council held a Special City Council meeting where Jim Arndt, President of Arndt Municipal Support, Inc. presented the process of a city administrator search. During an open public City meeting, Alderpersons discussed qualifications, salary, benefits, schedule of posting the position, interviewing candidates, and offering a contract.

Interviews were conducted on December 3, 2025 and subsequently Jeff Fiegenschuh was offered and accepted the City's employment offer.

At the December 15, 2025 City Council meeting, Alderpersons unanimously approved the employment agreement between the City of Washington and Jeff Fiegenschuh.

City Administrator Jeff Fiegenschuh begins his employment on January 19, 2026 with Interim City Administrator Dennis Carr, returning to his City Engineer position with a sincere thank you for his leadership during this time of transition.

Tuesday, January 20th will be City Administrator Jeff Fiegenschuh's first City Council meeting. Following Tuesday's City Council meeting, a public reception to welcome Jeff will be held immediately afterwards at Five Points Washington, in Banquet Room A, the same room where City Council meetings are held.

If you are unable to attend Tuesday, you have an opportunity to meet and chat with our City Administrator along with other City officials at our [January 'Let's Talk Washington' event](#) that will be held at Connect Center on Thursday, January 22nd at 4 p.m.

Two opportunities to communicate in person with your elected and appointed City officials - Tuesday the 20th at 6:30 pm or Thursday the 22nd at 4 pm.

Hope to see you at one or both events!

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#### **CITY ADMINISTRATOR – *Dennis Carr***

- The Christmas Trees in front of City Hall and in the entryway have been taken down and placed in storage. The ornaments and decorations for the school trees have been placed in a box.

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#### **ENGINEERING – *Dennis Carr, Ross Fuller & Mike Genard***

- Met with Enterprise to discuss the Fleet replacement for the upcoming budget.
- Updated the Cleargov software for the 5-year program to prepare for the budget.
- The 2025 MFT Maintenance Program has been closed out.
- Began preparing documents for the 2026 MFT program.
- Work on a traffic calming policy to be brought to a future Committee of the Whole for discussion.

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#### **FINANCE – *Joanie Baxter***

- Continued adding accounting calendar to Monday.com.
- Started budget process for Operations and sent out the request round to department heads.
- Started reformatting and adding narrative for Digital Budget Book.
- Completed Certification of Status of Exempt Properties due January 31, 2026.
- Completed NPDES Report for STP2 due January 30, 2026.
- Completed the final quarterly report and reimbursement request for the DCEO – Evidence Building Grant for personnel costs. The full \$125,000 grant amount has been incurred and thus a final performance and financial report was filed.
- The executed grant for the DCEO – Evidence Building Grant for construction has been received in the amount of \$170,000. Eligible costs will be reported and reimbursement request made beginning December 1, 2025 with the first quarterly report due March 31, 2026.
- Completed the Recycling Grant application due to Tazewell County January 31, 2026.
- Jill processed and I reviewed payroll for December 19, 2025, January 2, 2026, and January 16, 2026.
- Utility Billing (December 12, 2025 – January 16, 2026)
  - A total of 5,553 bills were processed for January, including 953 emailed bills (17.2%)
  - A total of 2,134 bank drafts were processed for December billing (39%)
  - A total of 489 penalties were assessed for delinquent December bills
  - A total of 33 cutoffs were processed for November, 28 emails were sent for shared lines, and eight payment arrangements were made
  - A total of 23 disconnects were processed for January, including 8 owing a balance, 21 with credit balances, and three with a zero balance
  - A total of 365 cutoff notices were processed for November billing
  - A total of six disconnect notices were sent for December billings and four for January billings
  - A total of four notices were sent for delinquent January disconnects
  - New accounts and account closings processed:
    - 23 ins
    - 26 outs
  - Leak detection through RNI and Sensus Analytics software – 77 leaks were caught and residents/businesses notified

- There were 10 new residents in December

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## **PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT – *Jon Oliphant & Joe Boyer***

- A discussion will tentatively be scheduled for the February 9 Committee of the Whole meeting to discuss and gain Council direction on a possible TIF redevelopment agreement to assist with the desired 122 N. Main interior and exterior renovation. The owner plans to begin proceeding with addressing structural issues near the northwest corner of the building around mid-February and staff anticipates the permit for that work soon. It would be done separate of the potential inclusion in an agreement in order to get it completed sooner.
- Staff continues to be satisfied with the new owner of 121 S. High Street to address the house issues that are currently present. The owner has been clearing many of the items from the house and has indicated that he will undertake the necessary interior upgrades. Staff has also seen progress with addressing exterior issues at 313 Court Street. A building permit was issued for all of the exterior work, which thus far has included the addition of a small vestibule and the roof replacement. Staff anticipates that the siding will be replaced soon. There are still significant interior improvements that must be made and until staff sees progress with those, it will continue the legal process with the assistance of the City Attorney towards expediting that.
- Staff met with the owner of M4 Steel to go over zoning- and building-code regulations pertaining to a possible expansion of his business. While this is still conceptual, plans could be submitted for a new building(s) construction within the next 90 days.
- The annual Square TIF Joint Review Board meeting with reps from the applicable overlapping jurisdictional taxing bodies was held.
- Building plans have been submitted and permits have been issued for the initial Protea Place multi-family residential buildings on the property at the southwest corner of Business 24 and Cummings Lane. The plan is for the first two buildings to begin construction on the west end of the property and eventually work to the east. The construction would tentatively begin in mid-March, or when weather allows. Each building will have eight units.
- Staff has been working with the Human Resources Director towards the upcoming posting for the Building & Zoning Coordinator position with Joe Boyer's planned retirement at the end of April. The goal is to have interviews in mid-February and to hire someone to allow for 4-6 weeks of cross-training depending on any prior experience.
- A building permit has been issued for the latest building for Main Street Mini Storage at 2154 Washington Road.
- Staff from the regional US Department of Agriculture (USDA) reached out to City staff about obtaining Council approval to allow for the release of any federal interest in our Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). The City received a grant of \$99,000 from USDA and had \$40,000 pledged by four local banks in 2015 to establish the RLF. Two loans were made with Plaza Lanes and IVP Plastics that expended those funds and both of them have been fully paid by the business owners. USDA has requested that the Council approve a resolution that requests the federal release in the RLF and the continued use of the funds for economic development purposes. As a result, a resolution will be scheduled on an upcoming Council agenda for approval.
- Staff participated in a webinar to hear of any new or proposed state legislation.

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## **PUBLIC SAFETY – *Chief Stevens***

- PD placed traffic counters on the newly repaved sections on Eldridge, Holland, and Catherine to gauge speed issues associated with the return of sound pavement after completion of sewer work.
- Sergeants bid shifts when patrol officers do, which resulted in a (rare) change among third and second shift supervision. Current sergeants by shift are:

Days: Brian Simpson (and Detective Sergeant Steven Smith)

Seconds: Ryan Hunsinger and Dan Foster

Thirds: Jacob Cernek and Ron Moore

- With the countywide Starcom radio system in place and proven, PD and EMA will shut down repeater networks for legacy systems wherever they are not in use for other applications (like outdoor warning sirens).
- Washington Emergency Management Agency switched to the Starcom system this month. This provides reliable connectivity and instant communication for the group at weather watch locations that previously relied on point-to-point cell calls due to gaps in radio coverage.

WFD 2025 Year-end Report (previously delivered in person at Committee of the Whole):

- WPD installed 1,033 free smoke detectors for Washington residents (donated by the Illinois Fire Safety Alliance; labor by WFD volunteers), ranking 3rd in Illinois and 1<sup>st</sup> among volunteer departments.
- Major apparatus progress: Replaced a 1993 tanker with a 2023 tanker (fully funded by WFD); replacement ordered for the 1996 ladder truck with delivery expected in 2028; new 2025 Horton ambulance delivered to replace a 2009 unit (City contributed 50%).
- Equipment upgrades & grants: Ventilator training and deployment (Hamilton T1); AFG grant awarded for LifePak 35 cardiac monitor upgrades with nearly \$200,000 in federal support.
- Facility improvements: Council-funded replacement of the exhaust mitigation system in the apparatus bay; Lowe's grant (\$55,000) secured for kitchen upgrades, with City supplementing remaining costs.
- Community outreach: Collected 3,000 lbs. of food for WHIP; provided charity raffle fire truck rides; hosted Fire Prevention Week with 600+ children attending.
- Financial stability: Leadership/Board emphasize funding replacements through carryover where possible and maintaining nearly one year of cash on hand for continuity of operations.
- Training & readiness: Hosted the first annual Mid-Illini Fire School (2025); combined training totaled 3,650 hours in 2025; staffing includes 20 fully certified interior firefighters and 12+ paramedics.
- Notable recent outcomes: Second-story rescue on an auto-aid call with rapid EMS transport; field delivery/live birth on 12/28/2025 with mother and newborn treated/transported without complication.
- Response capacity snapshot: Average 5.7 certified responders per fire call (not counting cross-trained duty crews); EMS provides two ALS ambulances 24/7, plus an ALS chase car and backup ambulances that frequently staff with local volunteer paramedics/EMTs.

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## **PUBLIC WORKS – Brian Rittenhouse**

- The street sweeper was out on warmer days. The focus was on the east end of town, concentrating on roads that have a lot of leaves.
- Staff have started stormwater outfall inspections to determine if any maintenance is needed. These inspections are conducted yearly.
- Staff have been locating water shutoffs and getting them on the GIS maps.
- Finalizing and scheduling of the Jefferson Street Storage Building is ongoing.
- Contractors are still working on equipment design and quotes to complete the Water Treatment Plant #2 chlorine change. It requires flow placed feeding of chlorine which the plant is currently not set up to do.
- Staff will be working on the budget over the next couple of months.