



Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 12, 2026, at 6:30 P.M.
Five Points Washington, 360 N. Wilmor Road, Washington, IL 61571

Mayor Stevens called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., with a quorum present.

Present: Alderpersons Blundy, Ernst, Johnson, Martin, McIntyre, Moss, Sluder and Smith

Also Present: Interim City Administrator/City Engineer Carr, Planning & Development Director Oliphant, Public Works Director Rittenhouse, Police Chief Stevens, City Clerk Brod, Attorney Walton

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Mayor Stevens
2. APPROVAL OF REMOTE ATTENDANCE: Not needed.
3. ALDERPERSONS WISHING TO BE HEARD: Alderperson Martin shared that the EDC will meet tomorrow night at 6:30 at the Historical Society.
4. AUDIENCE COMMENTS: Trish LaHood from Ernest Street information about her neighbor's dog. She shared concerns and asked for Council's help to resolve the situation.
Kate Mulford also shared information about Ms. LaHood's dog issue. She noted that they have shared their concerns with the police department and an employee at city hall.
5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Alderperson Smith motioned to approve November 10, 2026, Committee of the Whole meeting minutes, Alderperson Sluder seconded. Passed by voice vote.
6. NEW BUSINESS:
 - A. *WFD Monthly Report* – Jeremy Doerr shared that in 2025, the fire department responded to a total of 238 calls, which included 236 EMS responses, 27 fire-related responses, 12 motor vehicle accidents, and 4 cardiac arrests. The department provided mutual aid for 3 EMS calls and 1 fire service call and received 1 EMS mutual aid call. There were 30 NTFPD calls, 38 overlapping calls, and 49 calls to skilled nursing and assisted living facilities. He noted that 76.5% of the calls received in December were within the City. He noted that calls have increased by about 1,000 over a 10-year period, that local medical facilities are utilizing them, that about 17% of calls are to assisted living facilities, and that 90% of all calls are for emergency medicine. Other highlights include installing more than 1,033 free smoke detectors, which is the third most in Illinois. They bought a new tanker, which was self-funded, and a new ladder truck has been ordered with help from the City for \$2.2 million. They purchased new cardiac monitors, and Lowe's provided a grant for a kitchen upgrade. The City also helped fund a replacement exhaust system in the bays. They collected 3,000 pounds of food for WHIP and provided fire truck rides for community events. They hosted the first Mid-Illini Fire School. Their annual budget meeting will be in March or April, and Council members are welcome to attend.
 - B. *Presentation of Christmas Contest* – Mayor Stevens shared Christmas house decoration winners. The Best Themed Home was 1604 Mackenzie. The Jolliest House on the Block was 418 N. Lawndale and Randi Brown was present to accept her award stating that she and her husband had been decorating for 30 years. The Santa's Showstopper went to 1614 Sycamore. The People's Choice Award was 1504 Hampton Road and Steve and Casey Harkess were present to accept their award. They shared that they started decorating in September.
 - C. *Update Police Department Administrative Structure* – Chief Stevens provided a proposal to restructure Police Department staff instead of adding personnel. He feels this will strengthen the

department's leadership structure. It was noted that this is becoming the standard, and since the Safety Act was implemented and FOIA requests have increased, departments are much busier. He explained how tasks would be restructured, including those of the administrative assistants, to improve efficiency. Discussion took place regarding the annual increase of \$32,000 for adjusting a position from patrol officer to deputy, as well as the average 3% raise that historically takes place. Chief Stevens also noted that a sergeant moving to deputy chief would lose overtime. Future pension costs are difficult to predict. One member asked for a system to measure the total costs associated with the proposal. It was also noted that Council is empowered to change ordinances at any given time if needed.

- D. *Discussion-Variance Request by Robinson Outdoor, LLC for a Large Billboard Variance at 1230 Peoria Street* – Mayor Stevenson shared that Robinson Outdoor proposed a sign at a PZC meeting in 2024, which was rejected. The company later decreased the size of the billboard, but that proposal was also rejected. Concerns about the location were expressed at the PZC meeting, a Council meeting, and on Facebook. Issues related to school traffic were discussed, and the superintendent from the nearby school, as well as the PZC, raised concerns about the proposed billboard. The majority of Council members did not support a billboard at the proposed location. Members shared ideas for alternate locations, including areas near Walmart or the US-24 Bypass. It was noted that the sign in Pekin does not affect residential areas, and some felt it could be a good opportunity if placed in a more appropriate location. Mr. Oliphant shared that the comprehensive plan does not specifically address billboards but noted that the proposal would not align with plans to enhance the corridor. With consensus not supporting the proposed billboard, the City Attorney indicated that the item would likely die; however, Council may place it on the next agenda to make it a matter of record.
- E. *Consideration of Expanded Remote Attendance for City Boards and Commissions* – Planning and Development Director Oliphant explained that adopting the rules for remote attendance that are utilized by Council would be beneficial for other boards and commissions. It was noted that this could also benefit entities such as the Planning and Zoning Commission, as these bodies are made up of volunteers who have jobs that may involve travel. The technology needed to facilitate this will need to be considered. Council members supported moving forward with the proposal.
- F. *WPD Monthly Report* – Chief Stevens shared that crime is down over a 12-month period. Details were provided in the agenda packet.

- 7. **OTHER BUSINESS:** City Engineer Carr thanked the Mayor and Council for their trust and support during his time as Interim City Administrator. He looks forward to supporting the new City Administrator. Planning and Zoning Director Oliphant provided a TIF audit packet, which will be submitted to the Illinois Comptroller's Office and is used to facilitate the annual TIF Joint Review Board meeting, as required by statute. The meeting was held, and the minutes will be provided on the next Council agenda for acceptance. Mayor Stevens shared that City Hall will be closed on Monday for the holiday, so the next Council meeting will be held on Tuesday. She thanked City Engineer Carr for his assistance and shared that a reception will take place after the Tuesday meeting for the new City Administrator. The public is welcome, and snacks will be provided. Alderperson McIntyre expressed gratitude to Mr. Carr for stepping into the role.
- 8. **ADJOURNMENT:** At 7:34 p.m. Alderperson Sluder moved to adjourn; Alderperson McIntyre seconded. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Valeri L. Brod, City Clerk