



## Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

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Monday, February 9, 2026, at 6:30 P.M.

Five Points Washington, 360 N. Wilmor Road, Washington, IL 61571

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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

*Absent:* Alderperson Smith

*Also Present:* City Administrator Fiegenschuh, City Engineer Carr, Finance Director Hurd, Planning & Development Director Oliphant, Public Works Director Rittenhouse, Police Chief Stevens, City Clerk Brod, Attorney Walton and Communications Specialist Roberts

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City Administrator Fiegenschuh welcomed new Finance Director Paulette Hurd.

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. ROLL CALL
3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Mayor Stevens
4. APPROVAL OF REMOTE ATTENDANCE: Not needed.
5. ALDERPERSONS WISHING TO BE HEARD: Nothing provided.
6. AUDIENCE COMMENTS: Nothing provided.
7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Alderperson Martin motioned to approve the January 12, 2026, Committee of the Whole meeting minutes, Alderperson Sluder seconded. Passed by voice vote.
8. BUSINESS ITEMS:
  - A. *Proposed 122 N. Main Redevelopment Project Financial Assistance Consideration* – P&D Director Oliphant presented a request for the former Brunk’s Sports Center building at 122 N. Main. The project primarily involves interior renovations to divide the space into two units, along with removing one parking space to install a new entrance that will provide access to both the front and rear units. The developer has secured a building permit and would like to begin soon due to structural concerns. The total estimated project cost is \$478,738, with Peoria Metro submitting the lowest quote. The work will address structural issues, bring infrastructure up to code, and complete the build-out. Mr. Oliphant explained that the economic impact is difficult to project until tenants are secured. With input from the township assessor, staff conservatively estimates \$6,100 in new tax increment beginning in 2027. The TIF Fund is projected to have approximately \$309,000 at year-end and will expire in 2033, with remaining funds distributed to the state and other taxing bodies. He does not anticipate other projects significantly impacting the fund and believes sufficient funds are available. Based on scoring, the applicant qualifies for a 40% exterior and 20% interior subsidy and requests \$103,303. Because the project cost is under \$500,000, program guidelines limit eligibility to \$50,000. Council discussed whether to set a not-to-exceed amount and whether assistance should be structured as a straight subsidy, increment reimbursement, or a combination of both. Mr. Oliphant noted this project is much larger than the Mud Creek project and recommended capping any increment reimbursement at no more than 50% in a given year and noted Council could also cap the total payout. Alderpersons Sluder and Johnson toured the building and noted significant work is needed. Alderperson McIntyre expressed support for the project. Alderperson Blundy is not comfortable approving \$100,000 without secured tenants but supports \$50,000, with the option to revisit the request once tenants are confirmed. Mayor Stevens and Alderperson Blundy suggested that any increment reimbursement be considered separately from the TIF application. Alderperson Moss requested safeguards to protect the City’s financial interests. Alderperson Martin expressed general support but shared some concerns.
  - B. *Request to Release of Federal Interest of USDA Grant* – P&D Director Oliphant explained that in 2015, the City received a \$99,000 Rural Business Development Grant from the USDA-RD to establish a Revolving Loan Fund. The grant was supplemented by \$40,000 pledged by four local banks. Two loans were issued, fully expending the original grant funds, and both loans have since been repaid. The RLF supports non-construction business needs such as inventory, working capital, machinery and equipment to promote growth. Because the original grant funds have been used, USDA-RD has asked if the City would relinquish federal interest in future RLF loans. This requires a resolution confirming the City will continue using the RLF for economic development purposes. There is no fiscal impact associated with this action. The RLF currently has about \$185,000 available, and staff anticipates future use by local businesses. This item is being presented to gauge Council’s interest before the February 16 City Council meeting. No objections were provided and the item moves forward for consideration.

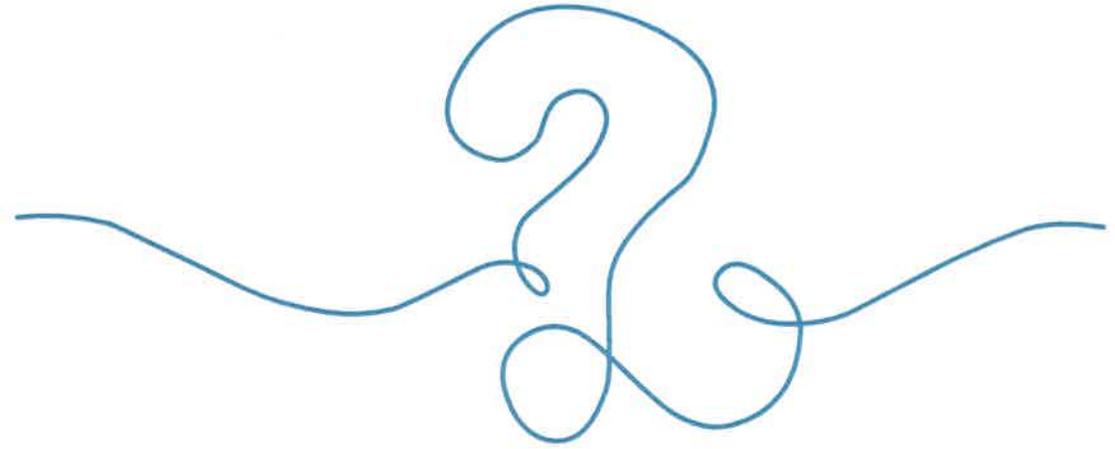
- C. *Washington Plaza Property Acquisition/Sanitary Sewer Extension Discussion* – P&D Director Oliphant explained that staff met with the new owner of Washington Plaza to discuss potential redevelopment, which aligns with the Comprehensive Plan. The initial concept includes creating a community green space on a portion of the property and extending the City’s sanitary sewer further into the site to encourage future development. The estimated cost for the sewer extension is \$100,000, with approximately \$15,000 needed for engineering consideration. The property owner supports the concept and has offered to donate a quarter-acre parcel. The space would include sod and sidewalks and could be developed in phases. The City would own and maintain the property. Electrical infrastructure would be included to support vendors and community events such as farmers markets and seasonal activities. Two outdoor restrooms may be added, and neighboring property owners have discussed improving roadway access. Council members expressed general support, noting the project aligns with Council goals and could create a flexible space that enhances the area. Some concerns were raised about long-term maintenance, parking lot conditions, access, easements, and ensuring adequate capacity for buses. The City Administrator indicated that a license agreement could address property access, and the City Attorney confirmed it is feasible. With no objections, the item will move forward for further consideration.
- D. *Possible Billboards Zoning Code Amendment Discussion* – City Administrator Fiegenschuh opened the discussion by first recognizing P&D Director Oliphant for his excellent work on the prior TIF discussion documentation. P&D Director Oliphant noted previous discussions and shared that a March public hearing will be held to consider possible code changes. He explained that billboards could be permitted through a special use variance or they could continue to be regulated under existing standards, requiring applicants to meet specific criteria before Council consideration. A special use permit would allow Council to apply additional conditions. Alderperson Martin does not support large billboards but would consider some digital signage. Alderperson McIntyre supports further discussion and believes impacts to residential areas should be considered. Alderperson Blundy prefers clearly defined standards in the code rather than exceptions. Attorney Walton explained that special uses allow Council to refine permitted business district uses and apply conditions such as size, setbacks, and location restrictions. City Administrator Fiegenschuh noted that special use permits provide an added review step and allow regulation of lighting and other impacts, while cautioning that variances could create liability concerns. Alderperson Johnson expressed concern about setting a precedent but asked whether there was a compromise, such as adjusting allowable speed limits along with other requirements. P&D Director Oliphant confirmed that additional restrictions could be included. Alderperson Moss agreed and expressed a desire to protect the community’s appearance, stating he does not want to make major changes based on one company’s request. This item will be reviewed by the PZC for a recommendation to Council.
- E. *Branding Process Update and Focus Group Recommendation* – Communications Specialist Roberts explained that creating a formal brand strategy was requested by Council in their strategic goals. While the City has a logo, it does not have a brand strategy or style guide, which would help ensure consistent and effective communication. She shared her professional experience in branding and noted that she led a staff workshop to begin to gather input. A designer began developing logo concepts, but the project was paused to allow input from the new City Administrator. Some elected officials suggested involving outside stakeholders and forming a committee. She shared that keeping the current logo is still an option. She is seeking Council’s direction on next steps and noted there may be costs for design services and updated materials. Mayor Stevens suggested including Alderperson Moss in the focus group. Alderpersons Martin and McIntyre expressed support. Alderperson Moss said the process slowed due to conflicting input and commended Communications Specialist Roberts for her efforts. She added that focus group members should understand the community and local government, and she would like the group to be diverse. City Administrator Fiegenschuh noted that other municipalities have invested significant funds in branding. Communications Specialist Roberts explained that the goal is to define the City’s identity and better communicate with residents, businesses, and potential newcomers. Alderperson Martin added that branding could also support economic development efforts. Alderperson Sluder expressed interest in participating.
- F. *WPD Monthly Report* – Chief Stevens shared that the data is steady and Beth Duley has been helping to improve the report. Alderperson Martin requested a rolling 12-month data average in the report.
- G. *WFD Monthly Report* – None provided.
9. OTHER BUSINESS: Regarding America 250, Alderperson Ernst met with members of the community, and they are creating a committee and will begin working on Candlewood Bridge dedication. He invited anyone to join the committee and contact him. Alderperson Blundy requested that the City Code be codified more often than the current quarterly contract. Alderperson McIntyre congratulated Jeramy Doerr on his baby that was born this week.
10. EXECUTIVE SESSION: At 8:15 p.m., Alderperson Sluder McIntyre motioned and Alderperson Sluder seconded to move into executive session per 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 setting of a price for sale or lease of property owned by the public body, including meetings held for the purpose of discussing whether a particular parcel should be acquired.
11. ADJOURNMENT: At 8:39 p.m. Alderperson McIntyre moved to adjourn; Alderperson Sluder seconded. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

# Creating **OUR BRAND**

**Our goal: Craft a modern, consistent, and community-driven brand that reflects Washington's pride, values, and future.**



# WHY



- **LISTED IN STRATEGIC PLANNING DOCUMENTS**

- Set by Council 2020/2021
- Re-added in 2025

- **A LOGO IS NOT A BRAND.**

- A logo is a single symbol.
- A brand is the full story: our voice, values, look, and message.
- Without a brand, every communication risks looking and sounding inconsistent.

- **CONSISTENCY BUILDS TRUST.**

- Residents, businesses, and visitors know what to expect when our identity is unified.
- Inconsistent communication can confuse or weaken public confidence.

- **A BRAND IS MORE THAN DESIGN.**

- It expresses who Washington is, what we stand for, and where we're going.
- It helps us correct misconceptions and highlight our true strengths.

- **BRAND = STRATEGY.**

- A strong brand attracts families, business, and investment.
- It makes our city competitive in the region and memorable to outsiders.
- It builds pride and belonging among residents.

- **A LIVING FRAMEWORK.**

- Guidelines will help staff, council, and partners communicate with one voice.
- It ensures our story is told consistently, whether on a billboard, social media post, or official document.

# ROLES

## COMMUNICATIONS (UNDER SUPERVISION OF CITY ADMINISTRATOR)

- Prepares data and elements for workshop and briefings.
- Facilitates meetings and engagement.
- Drafts, maintains, and enforces Brand Guidelines.

## CITY ADMINISTRATOR

- Supervises Communications and the process
- Aligns department participation and adoption
- Resolves conflicts and approves implementation steps

## CITY STAFF & DEPARTMENTS

- Provide subject-matter input during workshops
- Adopt voice, templates, and usage standards
- Use approved assets, request exceptions when needed
- Maintain compliant webpages, signage, and print pieces
- Act as day-to-day brand ambassadors and flag misuse

## CITY COUNCIL

- Receives briefing of pillars and archetypes
- Votes on logo and tagline (policy items)
- Votes to adopt the final Brand Guidelines

## DESIGNER PARTNER

- Refines logo, color, and typography
- Delivers master files and template starters
- Supports accessibility and usability checks



# THE FOCUS GROUP

- - - - - -> FACILITATOR - AMANDA ROBERTS
- - - - - -> CITY ADMINISTRATOR - JEFF FIEGENSCHUH
- - - - - -> 2 COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES
- - - - - -> 2 BUSINESS OWNERS
- - - - - -> 2 RESIDENTS



## **FACILITATION & QUALIFICATIONS**

This phase of the branding process does not require outsourcing. My professional background is in marketing strategy, management, and leadership, including multiple roles as a Marketing Director, where I have successfully led brand strategy, positioning, and stakeholder-driven workshops across a variety of organizations.

While I am newer to municipal communications specifically, I have actively sought guidance from experienced professionals in this vertical to ensure the facilitation approach is appropriately adapted for a city context. The strategic principles of branding, alignment, and audience clarity remain consistent across sectors.

My role in this process is to facilitate the strategy, not to design the visuals. Once the brand strategy is finalized, that work will be handed off to a professional designer to translate the strategy into a visual identity.