

CITY OF WASHINGTON, ILLINOIS

City Council Meeting – Monday, September 21, 2020

Five Points Washington – Banquet Room

6:30 p.m.

Approve Remote Electronic Attendance of Elected Officials	Alderman Adams moved and Alderman Cobb seconded to approve remote attendance of elected officials. <u>Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.</u>
Call to Order	Mayor Manier called the regular meeting of Monday, September 21, 2020 to order at 6:30 p.m. in a Banquet Room D at Five Points Washington.
Roll Call	Present and answering roll call were Aldermen Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Cobb, Dingledine and Stevens. Alderman Yoder in attendance via remote access. Also present were City Administrator Forsythe, City Engineer Dennis Carr, Public Works Director Kevin Schone, Attorney Derek Schryer, Finance Director Joanie Baxter, P & D Director Jon Oliphant, and City Treasurer Ellen Dingledine and City Clerk Valeri Brod.
Pledge of Allegiance	All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.
Agenda Review	The Agenda was reviewed and stood as presented.
Approve Consent Agenda	Alderman Cobb moved and Alderman Butler seconded to accept the minutes. Alderman Adams noted three changes to the minutes and clarified that they will be corrected on the final minutes. On roll call on the motion to approve with the noted change vote was: <u>Ayes: 8</u> Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Cobb, Dingledine, Stevens, Yoder <u>Nays: 0</u> <u>Motion declared carried.</u>
Announcements	Brian Rittenhouse, Utilities Superintendent introduced Derek Hackney who was recently promoted to Water and Sewer Maintenance Supervisor. Mr. Hackney has been with city 2.5 years and has more than ten years previous laborer and operator experience. Mr. Hackney addressed the room to say thanks to Council and looks forward to being an active supervisor. Tom Burroughs, Audit Senior with Phillips, Salmi & Associates, LLC provided an overview of the audited financials, year ending April 30, 2020. Mr. Burroughs distributed financial packets which will be made available to the public via the City website. He indicated that the statements of government activities, business-type activities, and the major funds of the City of Washington were audited by a public accounting firm. Mr. Burroughs shared that there were no notable concerns and complimented the City for implementing the previous year's recommendations. He stated that the audit was strengthened by the work performed by the City Treasurer. Mr. Burroughs shared that the City's long-term debt is the lowest it has been in years due to debt payoff while total payroll cost remained consistent. Detailed cost breakdowns were provided in the financial packet. He thanked City Treasurer Dingledine, Finance Director Baxter and City Accountant Glueck, for their hard work and preparation for the audit while also transitioning to new accounting software for the City.

No questions were presented to Mr. Burroughs concerning the report.

Alderman Cobb moved and Alderman Adams seconded to accept and place on file the audited financial statements for fiscal year ending April 30, 2020 as presented.

On roll call the vote was:

Ayes: 8 Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Cobb, Dingleline, Stevens, Yoder

Nays: 0

Motion declared carried.

Audience Comments City Clerk Brod stated that she received no public comments via email.

In reference to the rezoning of the Prairie Built Barns property Valerie (Winland?) from Briar Lane came forward and read a letter from residents also from Briar Lane, stating concerns about property values. The letter stated that the property has seen past flooding issues, loitering issues, and garbage issues. Valerie then expressed her own safety and privacy concerns. She noted that she has seen kids playing on current deer stand displays. She shared concern for how businesses could use the rezoned property if the current owners leave, the potential privacy issues, property value issues and vandalism issues. Sara Weiss shared that there has been an influx of crime in recent years. She feels that an increased commercial area could increase crime. She is concerned it could lead to an empty building or empty lots similar to others in the area. She stated that there are currently eight empty buildings and spaces along same street. She shared that her children play in the green space and would not feel safe if her kids walked across the area if a building were to be built on the property. Another resident, who did not provide name, shared that her grandkids use the area to play and feels that the current lot creates flooding in her yard. Linda White of Briar Lane shared that this idea of rezoning has been going on for 25 years and that they have to come in front of Council every 5 years regarding this issue. Mayor Manier clarified that the owners of the property make the request to rezone. Jon Oliphant shared that any owner of any property has the right to make a request to rezone and Council has the ability to accept or deny such requests but cannot prohibit the request from taking place. The Mayor finished by recognizing that this neighborhood has been active in addressing rezoning concerns and it is appreciated.

Standing Committee: Finance & Personnel Committee Alderman Daniel Cobb, Finance & Personnel Committee, brought forth one item as it relates to the wages of the City Clerk. Mr. Cobb shared that the Finance and Personnel Committee discussed exploring a yearly cost of living increased based on the Consumer Price Index. Mr. Cobb introduced City Administrator Ray Forsythe to explain the process of tying the increase to the same percentage as social security increases announced annually. Mr. Forsythe stated that he had a brief discussion with the City Attorney to discuss the legality of doing such a tie in. He also shared that the committee discussed doing this same process for other elected positions and moving to a yearly salary payment for Aldermen instead of the current, per meeting payment. These positions include Mayor, City Clerk, City Council, and City Treasure.

Standing Committee: Public Safety Committee Alderman Brian Butler, Public Safety Committee, brought forward for consideration purchasing Police Armor Vests. He introduced Chief McCoy who explained that this purchasing was part of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Chief McCoy shared that there are currently 14 officers that have vests that are out of compliance and the replacement of the vests would total \$14,994.00. Ray Forsythe added that the City would receive a partial federal reimbursement for the purchase.

Alderman Butler brought forward for consideration purchasing security cameras for Square. Chief McCoy shared the increased incidents of vandalism and “soaping” of the fountain on The Square and shared that there is considerable cost to shut down the fountain for cleaning due to “soaping”. Chief McCoy also expressed the need for cameras to record accidents or unwanted activities that take place on The Square. Several Aldermen expressed interest in moving forward with the idea of purchasing security cameras for The Square. They would like to look at costs for cameras and storage services. They agree it may be needed. In conclusion, Chief McCoy shared that the traffic trailer did not catch speeding issues on Kelsey Street.

Alderman Butler introduced Fire Chief Brown and welcomed his comments. Chief Brown shared that he looks forward to working with Council. He also shared that he is going to start tracking activity information for reviewing purposes. Chief Brown provided his contact information to the Council and stated that he looks forward to a long relationship and welcomed questions from Council if needed.

Standing Committee:
Public Works update

Alderman Mike Brownfield, shared that there were no agenda items to present and introduced Public Works Director Kevin Shone to provide project updates. Mr. Shone shared the Pay Requests for Dixon Engineering and Seven Brothers Painting. He shared that there are a few sunken areas that will be filled on the Cambridge Estates project. Mr. Shone shared that the street sweeper was used for an emergency situation, cleaning up rock that was accidentally dumped on a road but it is in need of repair and shouldn’t be used until the new part is installed.

City Engineer, Dennis Carr shared that the Lawndale project now has curbs on both sides of the road; Stratford is moving forward with beams coming in early October; Holland is about 2/3 down the road; N. Main has contractors moving in to do removals and flaggers will be present on the road. Mr. Carr provided a reminder that there will be closures at the railroad tracks on Main and on Lawndale/Hilldale. He recognized that it will negatively impact traffic on the East side of town for a few days.

Mayor:

Mayor Gary Manier read aloud a letter written to the citizens of Washington. In it he reminds everyone that Washington froze our tax levy while others chose to increase theirs. He shared that most of our tax bill goes to schools and the City is one of the largest employers in Washington. Mayor went on the state that we are blessed to be able to keep providing during the COVID shutdown. He stated that even though we had budgeted raises, Washington held implementing the raises for three months until we could see if the pandemic affected revenue. He went on to share that our sales tax revenues are up around 30% compared to last year and we are fortunate to carefully consider salary increases that will allow the City to attract and motivate City staff to be the staff that he considers to be the best in the State of Illinois. He expressed his pride in working with a Council and Staff that make us one of the most financially sound communities in the State. He thanked the elected officials for their time and thanked City Administrator Ray Forsythe and his staff for keeping Washington moving forward.

Ray Forsythe thanked City Treasurer Ellen Dingledine, Finance Director Joanie Baxter and City Accountant Jeanette Glueck, for their preparation for the audit.

City Administrator:
Adopt ord, granting
Proposed Annexation
and Rezoning part of
a parcel north of Kern
Road and south of
Washington Road;

City Administrator Forsythe provided second reading of the following ordinances, by title and brief synopsis: an ordinance would approve the annexation of a parcel south of 1303-1321 Washington Road properties, into city limits and rezone said property from R-1A (Single-Family Residential) to C-2 (General Retail)

Alderman Cobb moved and Alderman Stevens seconded to adopt the ordinance as read. There were no questions or comments provided.

On roll call the vote was:

Ayes: 8 Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Cobb, Dingleline, Stevens, Yoder

Nays: 0

Motion declared carried.

Adopt ord, Request to
Rezone part of a
parcel on Washington
Road from R-1
(Residential) to C-3
(Retail)

City Administrator Forsythe provided second reading of the following ordinances, by title and brief synopsis: an ordinance would approve the rezoning of a portion of a parcel on Washington Road from R-1 (Single and Two-Family Residential) to C-3 (Service Retail)

Alderman Cobb moved and Alderman Adams seconded to adopt the ordinance as read. There were no questions or comments provided.

On roll call the vote was:

Ayes: 0

Nays: 8 Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Cobb, Dingleline, Stevens, Yoder

Motion failed.

Mayor Manier expressed his appreciation for the community that came out to express their concern for the issue and provided their involvement. Mr. Forsythe agreed with the Mayor's statement and shared that this is a good example of why the Comprehensive Plan is a useful tool for future land use planning and development.

Aldermen's
Comments

Alderman Dingleline shared his excitement to see progress with an aggressive plan for the completion of street projects.

Adjournment

At 7:10 p.m. Alderman Cobb moved and Alderman Dingleline seconded to adjourn.
Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.



Valeri Brod, City Clerk