

Committee of the Whole

Monday, November 14, 2022, at 6:30 P.M.
Library Meeting Room in Five Points, Washington,
380 N. Wilmor Road, Washington, IL

Mayor Manier called the Committee of the Whole meeting of November 14, 2022 to order at 6:31 p.m. with a quorum present.

Present: Alderpersons Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Dingledine, Schone, Stevens and Yoder

Also Present: City Administrator Snider, Finance Director Baxter, P & D Director Oliphant, Works Director Rittenhouse, Police Chief McCoy, City Clerk Brod and Attorney Brittany Miller

MINUTES

1. *Aldermen wishing to be heard:* None was provided
2. *Public Comments:* ---Allison Montgomery, a resident from Washington Township, asked to make changes to the minutes.
3. *Approval of Minutes:* Alderperson Dingledine motioned to approve the October 10, 2022 meeting minutes; Alderperson Brownfield seconded. Motion passed by voice vote.

4. BUSINESS ITEMS

- A. *2023 Sidewalk Replacement Program Funding Share* – Mayor Manier introduced Planning and Development Director Oliphant to provide details. Mr. Oliphant shared details regarding three possibilities including: 1) funding for every sidewalk location, 2) funding certain areas, and 3) funding a 70/30 program if multiple properties within the same block were to replace their sidewalks. Mr. Oliphant stated that this is to open conversation for a pilot program. Alderperson Brownfield asked if an area has been determined and Mr. Oliphant stated that while a particular location hasn't been chosen, the east side of town has the most broken sidewalks. He clarified that the areas east of Wilmor would need about 90% of sidewalk replacement. Alderperson Brownfield asked if these sidewalks would be torn up with capital projects because he wouldn't want to spend money on something that will be replaced in a few years. Mayor Manier shared that conversations show that we are going to be redoing some of the streets with curbs and gutters and suggested looking at the older part of Devonshire. Mayor Manier mentioned doing a program with a special assessment that might be a five-year pay off and \$200 on their tax bill. He stated that this would be similar to North Holland. Alderperson Schone asked how much of the \$16,000 was used in this budget cycle. Finance Director Baxter shared that it was very minor this year. Alderperson Schone and Mr. Oliphant discussed making the program better known. Alderperson Blundy noted that we got rid of the mandate and the incentives are a good idea. He also shared that he researched how other cities handle it. He stated that the City can replace the sidewalks then the property owner pays them back when they sell their property; this would then require them to fix the sidewalk if they sell and haven't fixed it yet. Alderperson Schone shared his concern with providing something free, and if everyone would want to do it. Alderperson Blundy said we can budget it and replace them as houses turn over on normal cycles. Alderperson Schone asked if it would require placing liens. Alderperson Adams expressed his interest and liked the conversation about getting older areas replaced. He stated that he would be open to a combination of ideas except if the sidewalks will be done then ripped out when the roads are redone. Alderperson Dingledine noted that sidewalks may not be redone unless the road was widened. He express concern for policing the sidewalks and feels the City would contact a homeowner who would need the replacement. He also stated that he doesn't want to make it mandatory but wants to give an incentive to get it done. City Administrator Snider stated that we can take this information and bring back more information to review. Mr. Oliphant stated that we can target an area that is no longer compliant and budget for it but not mandate it.

Aldersperson Dingleline stated that if a person doesn't want to do it, the City would have to put a lien. Aldersperson Blundy said it is not a lien but a condition of the title sale.

Aldersperson Schone stated that a yard of concrete is cheaper today than it will be in 30 years, so if a homeowner waits, they will have to pay the future price. Mayor Manier noted the difficulties with tracking rental properties. He thinks a special assessment to do specific areas might work. Aldersperson Yoder likes the concept of the 70/30 program but wonders if everyone in town knows they are responsible for their sidewalks and putting it on a tax bill would allow residents to pay upfront or they can put it on a payment plan. Aldersperson Stevens said she would be interested in finding out more about Aldersperson Blundy's concept. Aldersperson Butler stated that the original concern is dilapidated sidewalks and doesn't know how any of these could help unless we plan to enforce this. He noted that if our current budget is \$16,000 there aren't many people taking advantage of it. He thinks we need to focus on enforcement. Mr. Snider said that they will compile this information.

- B. *2022 Tax Levy Discussion* – City Administrator Jim Snider shared this is our annual Tax Levy discussion and the City's portion is a little over 5%. He noted that the City is growing and this is a good thing. He stated that Finance Director Baxter has done a great job of laying out the details and it is important to note that we are setting the levy dollar amount, not the tax rate. He also shared that by recommending this dollar amount it is a 3.88% increase over last year but we are not increasing the tax rate, it is because the pie is larger. Ms. Baxter said this is the first time in five years that we have shown growth and this is favorable. She provided a spreadsheet in the Council agenda packets. She noted that we take a conservative approach because there are a few Board of Review numbers to be determined later. Ms. Baxter shared that the majority of the increase is in the police pension and Medicare. She also shared that the IMRF rate went down. Ms. Baxter stated that we are fully funding the amounts and it is important to take full advantage of our growth. This results in an additional levy amount to about \$21,000, which would be an increase over the last levy but she does not anticipate the rate will change. She also shared that the City's portion would not increase based on this recommended levy amount. Aldersperson Blundy said there is a lot in here and asked what would he see on his average tax bill. Ms. Baxter explained that we are taking a conservative approach so she anticipates that it could be even lower. She stated that the tax rate for the City portion would stay the same and we only have control over the "City Corp". Mr. Snider added that if you look at the last page in the packet the 2021 tax rate is paid in 2022 and the City portion is 5.92% and going into 2022 which is payable in 2023, our tax rate will be the same amount. Aldersperson Blundy clarified that our portion is a little more but our rate is the same. Mr. Snider noted that he worked in a city that saw growth of 30% and that created a Truth-in-Taxation Hearing. Aldersperson Butler said we can't control individual properties and their rate or if the assessors increase the property rate. Mr. Snider noted that Menards and CVS are going through the process of protesting their taxes. Mayor Manier shared that we will see more with the 10-year tornado relief due to the houses that were rebuilt.
- C. *223 Property Farm Lease Extension Consideration* - Mr. Oliphant shared that staff is seeking feedback regarding the 223 farm lease with Mr. Vercler. The current agreement goes back to 2020, and was for two years with one-year options. He shared that the City currently receives just less than \$60,000 for the annual lease with \$22,800 in bonuses based on yields. The total we are owed is just over \$82,500 for the current farming year. Mr. Oliphant shared that Mr. Vercler is interested in continuing to farm the property and noted that the Nofsinger project may shrink the tillable acres. Aldersperson Dingleline expressed interest in moving forward as well as Alderspersons Schone, Yoder and Adams. Aldersperson Stevens asked if we are expecting anything to happen with the Nofsinger realignment and wonders if there would be a penalty if we interrupt planting progress. Mr. Oliphant explained the timeline and touched on when to plant to avoid crop loss.
- D. *City Code Chapter 31.58 Follow-Up Discussion* – Mr. Snider said there is an extensive report about clarifying what determines the use of abstentions and what is a pass vote. Aldersperson Blundy feels this is still a little complicated. He would like to make it consistent by saying a "majority of members present" and the rest say that we will follow Roberts Rules. He also stated that it gets confusing if you have to give your reason to abstain. Aldersperson Stevens agreed with Aldersperson Blundy and stated that if you take Section 6.7, then use Roberts

Rules of Order it is the simplest solution. Attorney Miller said she understands the need for simplicity, but if we abide by Roberts Rules of Order for abstentions, it will be taken as a NO vote and allowing for abstentions based on conflicts of interest might not want to be taken as a NO vote. Alderperson Blundy asked if other communities do this. Attorney Miller said some communities specifically adopt Roberts Rules of Order but can change provisions and set policy. Alderperson Butler thinks it is well laid out and thinks we should move forward with what is presented. He noted that Roberts Rules of Order only applies if it is not in our Municipal Code and this would be addressed in the Municipal Code. He stated that if we start having abstentions, it can affect the number of members present. He is in favor of what is presented. Alderperson Brownfield stated that he thinks it makes sense, it is easy to follow and it captures what they wanted. Alderperson Adams expressed favor for removing the pass vote. Alderperson Yoder clarified that is why Council uses the vote rotation. Attorney Miller noted that Council has the opportunity ask clarifying questions before a vote. Alderperson Schone expressed favor with the ideas. Mr. Snider stated that they will bring an ordinance forward.

- E. *Grist Mill Ventures Project Update* – City Administrator Snider provided an update regarding the Grist Mill project. He shared that the developer is planning to come to the Planning and Zoning Commission to request a few variances that will include sidewalk dining and the possible removal of two parking spaces. They are hoping to attend the December meeting and maybe provide an update of the site design. Mr. Snider also shared that Grist Mill has bought the Knights of Columbus and the Prep Freeze Cook Buildings for additional rental spaces. Alderperson Blundy asked if they are still anticipating opening in December of 2023. Mr. Snider confirmed that they were. Alderperson Dingledine asked if the December date incorporates the whole development, Mr. Snider clarified that it is for the brewpub.

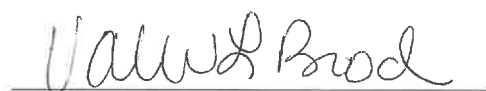
5. OTHER BUSINESS

Alderperson Blundy asked about the easements and archeological study regarding the Phase 2B Trunkline. He asked what will come next to Council. Mr. Snider said there will be the archeological study then selection by staff to negotiate for a right of way. Alderperson Blundy asked what is coming to Council next for action. Mr. Snider stated that the bid to do the Trunkline will come to Council and Council will be updated about the archeological study and any issues with the right away. They will also bring any decisions that need help or insight to Council. Alderperson Blundy asked about the abrupt end with the Hamilton Report and stated that he still has concern with moving forward with the replacement of the Trunkline. Alderperson Blundy asked if there would be a chance to talk with Howard regarding remaining questions. Mr. Snider and Mayor Manier noted they could bring Hamilton back for about \$40,000 if Council would like. Alderperson Butler feels that it would be better to bring in Strand because they are the engineers on the project. Mr. Snider noted that Strand is reworking new numbers that will be provided to Council.

6. EXECUTIVE SESSION - 5 ILCS 120/2(c) (6) for the setting of a price for sale or lease of property owned by the public body. At 7:22 Alderperson Dingledine motioned and Alderperson Schone seconded to move into executive session. On roll call was:
Ayes: 8: Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Dingledine, Schone, Stevens and Yoder
Nays: 0
Motion carried.

7. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:57 p.m. Alderperson Adams moved and Alderperson Yoder seconded to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.



Valeri L. Brod, City Clerk