



City Council Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 16, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.
Washington Fire Department Training Room - 200 N. Wilmor Road, Washington, Illinois

Call to Order Mayor Manier called the regular meeting to order immediately following the Special Committee of the Whole Meeting, at 8:00 p.m. with a quorum present.

Roll Call *Present:* Alderpersons Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens

Also Present City Administrator Jim Snider, City Engineer Dennis Carr, Planning and Zoning Director Jon Oliphant, Public Works Director Brian Rittenhouse, Finance and Personnel Director Joanie Baxter, Police Chief Mike McCoy, City Treasurer Abbey Strubhar, City Clerk Valeri Brod, City Attorney Derek Schryer and Press

Pledge of Allegiance Mayor Manier led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comments Jacob Spitzer of Spitzer Properties shared that he has a rezoning item on the agenda tonight. He read a statement that is attached and made part of these minutes. His statement described his plan for the property, noted that the surrounding properties are zoned C-3 and asked for the property to be considered without restrictions. He noted that only one bay of his rental building will house his dumpster rental business and this is not the primary reason for the request. He noted that concern was expressed about the smell of the dumpsters, but stated that they do not smell as they sit empty. They will also abide by the City Code.

Review Agenda for Deletions/Additions Nothing was added or deleted at this time.

Consent Agenda Mayor Manier presented the Consent Agenda for approval of the following items:

- A. Approve Minutes of the September 11, 2023 City Council Work Session Meeting and October 2, 2023 Regular City Council Meeting
- B. Approve Bills and Payroll
- C. Payment Authorization for N. Wilmor Mill and Overlay- Pay Request 2 (Final)
- D. Payment Authorization for 2023 MFT UCM Pay Request #2
- E. Additional Purchase Authorization for WWTP Generator Installation

Alderperson Brownfield motioned to accept the Consent Agenda; Alderperson Adams seconded.
8 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens
0 Nays:
Motion carried by roll call vote.

Announcements/Awards/Presentations/Recognitions/Proclamations City Administrator Snider shared information regarding the FY23 Audit and introduced Finance Director Baxter who shared that Jamie Wilkey a Partner of Lauterbach & Amen, LLP was is present to provide details. Ms. Baxter noted that this is their second year doing our audit and it went smoothly. She expressed her appreciation.

Item A: Lauterbach & Amen, LLP Presentation: Audited Financial Statements Year Ending April 30, 2023 Ms. Wilkey thanked everyone. She provided a memo and booklet for Council. She shared that other communities don't have as clean of an auditing process as Ms. Baxter's team. She shared that they only had a few journal entries which is unusual with a government of our size. They typically see more. She explained that the bound booklet has 130 pages and follow-up questions are welcome after the meeting. Ms. Wilkey shared that the auditor's opinion is contained in the booklet and they provided two goals. 1. That the financial statement is true. She noted that they gave their highest opinion and as part of the process, they looked at the overall control of the environment. She further explained that if there were red flags or deficiencies, they would communicate those and they found none. Ms. Wilkey encouraged everyone to read the Management Discussion, Analysis and Executive Summary section in detail and noted that the goal of these pages is to provide key goals and results. She pointed out that the City's equity increased, which is on trend with other municipalities. She noted that key assets and long-term debt retirement also increased the equity of the city. Ms. Wilkey went on to share that page 86, begins the comparison schedules and it is a score card of how the funds performed. She then opened the floor for questions. City Administrator Snider stated that Ms. Baxter and her staff are as good as it gets and he appreciates all their hard work. Mayor Manier thanked Ms. Wilkey for her presentation.

Item B: Accept & Place on File: Audited Financial Statements, Year Ending April 30, 2023 Mayor Manier presented the acceptance and filing of the audited financial statements, year ending April 30, 2023. Alderperson Stevens motioned to accept; Alderperson McIntyre seconded.
8 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens
0 Nays:
Motion carried by roll call vote.

**Mayoral
Communications/
Requested Actions**

Nothing additional at this time.

**City Administrator
Communications/
Staff Reports/
Requested Actions
CodeRED Renewal**

Police Chief McCoy shared information regarding the Code Red system. He noted that they have used the system for several years. He shared two package options and recommend the approval of the package that is for only emergency notifications, not the unlimited-emergency notifications, simply because they can use the City's website for non-emergency items. Chief McCoy explained that they also offer a single-year or three-year renewal contract option and if the three-year option is chosen, it falls within the City Administrator's spending authority.

Alderson Stevens motioned to approve the three-year, unlimited-emergency use contract; Alderson McIntyre seconded.

8 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

**Resolutions:
R-1394 (20-23)
Temporary Closure of
a State-Maintained
Roadway for a Public
Event**

City Administrator Snider provided the following resolution for consideration:

Synopsis: Adoption of this resolution will authorize the partial closure of the Washington Square/Illinois Business Route 24 on Thursday, December 7, 2023, for the "Candlelight Stroll in the Washington Square".

Title: R-1394 (20-23) Temporary Closure of a State-Maintained Roadway for a Public Event

Alderson Adams motioned to accept; Alderson Smith seconded.

8 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

**Ordinances:
First Reading
Ordinance: Animal
and Rabies Control
Contract**

City Administrator Snider provided the following first reading ordinance:

Synopsis: Adoption of this ordinance will authorize an intergovernmental agreement between the City of Washington and the County of Tazewell for animal and rabies control services.

Title: First Reading Ordinance: Animal and Rabies Control Contract

City Administrator Snider explained that there is a significant increase with this service that we outsource to the county. He shared that we have not had a rate increase since 2014. He also shared that they had done a cost analysis and determined that they need to phase in a four-year increase of 53.46%. This increases our 2024 cost to \$2,037.76. Administrator Snider noted that this will impact our budget, but he feels this is still a great bargain. Administrator Snider and Chief McCoy shared that the county does a great job.

**Ordinances:
First Reading
Ordinance: Request by
Spitzer Properties,
LLC, to Rezone 2140
Washington Road from
C-2 to C-3**

City Administrator Snider provided the following first reading ordinance:

Synopsis: Adoption of this ordinance would rezone 2140 Washington Road from the C-2 District, General Retail, to the C-3 District, Service Retail

Title: First Reading Ordinance: Request by Spitzer Properties, LLC, to Rezone 2140 Washington Road from C-2 to C-3

Alderson Brownfield shared that the Planning and Zoning board had long discussion and the four neighbors were in favor of this because of the provisions that were put into place. Alderson Blundy said he appreciates the neighbors' concerns but noted the provisions don't apply to the neighboring properties.

Planning and Zoning Director Oliphant noted that each neighbor has some component like landscaping for commercial use, outside storage considerations, and trash that would need fencing but nothing to the degree that is being presented.

Alderson Blundy questioned the fairness that the neighbors are asking for the petitioner to meet things they are not required to meet.

Alderson Blundy motioned to amend the ordinance to remove the three provisions; Alderson Stevens seconded.

Alderson Stevens shared that the neighbors main concern was the smell of the dumpsters, but it was explained that these were not for food waste. The dumpsters are for home remodeling. She also noted that while eight dumpsters are owned, they are mostly on site and not in storage.

Alderson Butler said he doesn't see how this is consistent with the comprehensive plan. He expressed concern for dumpster storage on the main thoroughfare. He said if C-2 is restrictive, we can't rezone it to C-3 to be fair to the neighbors. Alderson Buter expressed concern with scheduled it for 10 bays, but it might come in at 12 bays. He is not in favor of removing the restrictions.

Alderson Martin clarified that properties on either side of this property are zoned C-3 and wondered if there are any other lots in the City with these restrictions. Mr. Oliphant clarified that the restrictions were developed because of complaints received from the neighbors, and he cannot remember a time when there were conditions put on a rezoning in the last 15 years, except for a property across from Cherry Tree Shopping Center.

Alderson McIntyre shared that he spoke with Mr. Spitzer who explained that he is simply asking for a change from C-2 to C-3 and he added that they have dumpsters. Alderson McIntyre explained that Mr. Spitzer will have to follow the rules and we should not set a precedent by putting additional restrictions in place.

6 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens

2 Nays: Brownfield, Butler

Motion carried by roll call vote.

Aldersperson's Comment Aldersperson Stevens expressed that she attended a great firehouse open house. She stated that we are talking about an evidence building and Public Works needs a new building.

Aldersperson Stevens motioned to hold a planning session to discuss the fire department, police department, and City facility needs; Aldersperson Blundy seconded.

Aldersperson Brownfield asked for clarification noting that Council should not direct staff as to what staff wants. Aldersperson Stevens feels the Mayor and Council should be able to give input and this allows the fire department to give information about Northern Tazewell Fire Department going away due to financial problems. She shared the needs of the fire department building, Public Works building, evidence building and Council meeting space. She noted an email from the president of the fire board regarding fixed Council furniture and expressed that she would like this discussion before budget talks start.

City Administrator Snider stated that Aldersperson Stevens could have a planning meeting but the current practice is for staff to bring operations to Council and Council sets policy.

Administrator Snider noted that there is a process with the evidence building and Chief anticipates a presentation in November. He expressed that for Public Works it is needs versus wants and he cautioned Council from building buildings just to reduce distance. He shared that a growth spurt would be different, but everything works well now.

Aldersperson Blundy feels the policy aspect is clear and an open planning session would help them understand what the needs are for all the departments. He stated that we will have a broader picture to set policy.

Aldersperson Snider stated that he is not against the majority, however, staff knows if they need a new building, and would come to Council if they felt they had a need. He noted that the Fire Department is a separate group, and we have no say on where they put things. He also shared that the City contributes more than \$1 million per year and he hasn't received a call asking for a new building. He also thinks it would fall under the contract negotiations.

City Engineer Carr shared that when City Administrator Forsythe was here, we seeded a City-wide building fund that has some money that can be used.

Mayor Manier noted previous talks about building a new police station several years ago and they ended up buying the library where City Hall is today.

5 Ayes: Blundy, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens

3 Nays: Adams, Brownfield, Butler

Motion carried by roll call vote.

Administrator Snider asked for direction and clarification, noting the approaching holidays. He expressed that this is unfair for staff and is not a pattern that will continue with staff.

Aldersperson Stevens doesn't feel this is a big deal and feels this is to allow everyone's opinion all at one time. She stated that the fire department has to be taken into consideration and they could be here to explain what will happen to Northern Tazewell.

Administrator Snider feels Council has done well because they have nurtured an environment with staff members who have been at the City up to 29, 15, 9 years. He shared that Public Works Director Rittenhouse has done an excellent job at succession planning and we don't hear complaints from citizens about our Police Department. He noted the turnover that takes place at election time and feels we shouldn't go overboard trying to drive these issues.

Aldersperson Brownfield stated that the City is running well in spite of this Council and he is tired of Council trying to micromanage staff and not make decisions. He stated that Council is causing extra work and he would not work for a place like this. He noted the timing it took to find a good administrator.

Aldersperson Martin thought he was voting to have discussion and is in favor of the discussion.

Aldersperson Blundy feels micromanaging would be telling where things would be, and they just want to be made aware of their needs.

Aldersperson Brownfield asked for feedback from Council regarding the current meeting structure, noting that the new structure was supposed to save time. He wondered if committees allowed for more discussion time and more information.

City Administrator Snider clarified that written reports are provided and he gets very little prompting from Council prior to a meeting which creates a difficult environment. He feels he provides timely information, and that information has improved since he has been with the City.

Aldersperson McIntyre expressed his appreciation for Mr. Snider and staff. He shared that he feels bad when he has to reach out and he doesn't want to blindside anyone. He also feels this will help figure out what they have their hands on. He feels this will allow Council the opportunity to bring what they want to see. He noted the committee meetings were removed because it went from a committee meeting directly to a vote without a lot of understanding.

Administrator Snider expressed his appreciation for his thoughts but he looks at things from a top-down approach. He stated the need for trust and shared that Council can call, email and text but noted replies might be slow in the evening when staff is with family.

Aldersperson Butler expressed confusion for staff and stated that this is an ill-conceived idea. He has not known any staff member or member of leadership who hasn't given them information. He feels it is terrible that it was stated in public that a fire department is having financial troubles.

Aldersperson Adams noted the approaching holidays and stated that this meeting doesn't need to happen soon. He stated that staff has done a good job of explaining wants versus needs at

budget time. He shared that he likes this meeting format better and doesn't want to go back to committee meetings because of the duplication. Alderperson Adams continued by sharing that the evidence building was brought up during budget times and he is interested to see what they bring. He stated that if Public Works hasn't said they need a new building, then they don't need to talk about them getting a new building. He feels staff does a good job of bringing building needs to Council's attention. He recommends waiting until after the first of the year to have this meeting.

City Administrator Snider noted that that is his plan.

Executive Session: At 8:57pm, Alderperson Adams moved to enter into executive session; Alderperson McIntyre seconded for 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.

Alderperson Adams motioned to accept; Alderperson Smith seconded.

8 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

Adjournment At 9:15 p.m. Alderperson McIntyre moved to adjourn; Alderperson Smith seconded. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.



Valeri L. Brod, City Clerk