



City Council Meeting Minutes  
Monday, May 19, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.  
Five Points Banquet Room - 360 N. Wilmor Road, Washington, Illinois

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**Call to Order** Mayor Lilija Stevens called the regular meeting to order at 6:31 p.m., with a quorum present.

**Roll Call** *Present:* Alderpersons Blundy, Ernst, Johnson, Martin, McIntyre, Moss, and Sluder  
*Absent:* Alderperson Smith

**Also Present** Finance Director Joanie Baxter, Planning and Development Director Jon Oliphant, City Administrator/City Engineer Dennis Carr, Public Works Director Brian Rittenhouse, Police Chief Jeff Stevens, Deputy City Clerk Lisa Anderson, City Treasurer Carol Crocker, City Attorney Mark Walton and Press

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**Pledge of Allegiance** Mayor Stevens led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Presentations** None Provided.

**Audience Comments** Washington Resident, Meg Sutherland spoke as a representative for the Washington Bridge Education Foundation. She welcomed new council members and spoke about the organization's mission and how grants help with the education of local students involved in the skilled trades. She thanked the city for a recent tourism grant and shared information about upcoming fundraising events, including Paint the Path. Township resident, Bob Montgomery addressed the Council with concerns regarding the proposed amphitheater development on the 223 property. He provided a prepared statement that is attached and made part of these minutes.

**Agenda** None provided.

**Deletions/Additions**

**Consent Agenda** Mayor Stevens called upon City Attorney Mark Walton to share the process to remove items from the Consent Agenda.

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

- A. Approve May 5, 2025 Regular City Council Meeting Minutes
- B. Approve Washington Police Evidence Storage Pay Request #2
- C. Approve Bills & Payroll
- D. Accept Financial Reports for Period Ended March 31, 2025
- E. Accept Police Pension Fund Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ending April 30, 2025 (Unaudited) per 40 ILCS 5/3-141
- F. Approve Purchase Authorization - ClearGov Budgeting Suite and Digital Budget Book Subscription Services
- G. Approve Depository Banks
- H. Approve Payment Authorization for CIPP Lining Final Pay Request FY 24-25
- I. Approve Purchase Authorization for Vac-Con Jetter Truck
- J. Approve Felkers Drainage Improvements Pay Request #4

*Alderperson McIntyre motioned to approve the consent agenda; Alderperson Ernst seconded. Alderperson Blundy asked about Item B. He inquired if any cost reduction opportunities were found. Police Chief Stevens shared that items were identified as value engineering and explained several were removed and the design altered to save money. Finance Director Baxter and Police Chief Stevens shared that the net amount by change order was \$50,703.50 which took the contract sum from \$2.3 million to \$2.286 million dollars roughly.*

7 Ayes: Blundy, Ernst, Johnson, Martin, McIntyre, Moss, and Sluder

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

**Mayoral Communication** Mayor Stevens shared that Alderperson John Blundy was named as the city's representative to the Five Points Board replacing prior representative Alderperson Brownfield. She and Alderperson Blundy will be attending an orientation scheduled for May 20.  
*Appointment of John Blundy as City Representative to Five Points Board*

**Memorial Day Committee Update** Mayor Stevens shared that nine people attended the May 8 Memorial Day Parade/Ceremony Committee Meeting. She said that Alderperson Martin will oversee the ceremony while Cyndy Jefford and Leri Slonneger will oversee parade entries. She mentioned meetings scheduled for the following day and hopes everyone will be in attendance. May 19 is the last day for parade entries.

*Monthly Meeting with the Mayor on May 24 at 11 a.m.* Mayor Stevens would like to continue meetings with constituents, monthly. She announced that the first meeting is scheduled for May 24 at 11 a.m. in the library meeting room and added information will be posted on the city page and website. Police Chief Stevens and City Administrator Carr will also be in attendance.

**City Administrator Communication Council Report** City Administrator/Engineer Carr added that the city contracted with Millennia Professional Services to perform a topographic survey of the 223 property south of the bypass. They have completed everything east of Dallas Rd., and the intent is to go from Nofsinger to the east edge of the property. He explained the reason for the survey is that there has been a growing interest in the possibilities for the property from the past and current council. He wanted to ensure it was complete before plant growth results in significantly increased cost.

No additional comments or questions were provided.

*Approve Bid Award for Catherine Reconstruction Project Phase 2* City Administrator/Engineer Carr shared this is a continuation of last year's project moving from Elm to Spruce this year. They received three bidders with the lowest being Stark Excavating at \$1,779,436.30. He added the city budgeted two million dollars for the project and staff recommends approval of the contract award for the Catherine Street reconstruction project to Stark Excavating out of Bloomington, Illinois.  
*Alderson McIntyre motioned to approve; Alderson Blundy seconded.*  
7 Ayes: Blundy, Ernst, Johnson, Martin, McIntyre, Moss, and Sluder  
0 Nays:  
Motion carried by roll call vote.

*Approve BNCO Contract Renewal for Audio/Visual Meeting Streaming* City Administrator/Engineer Carr explained this is the contract with BNCO for audio/visual streaming. The only difference from the previous being that for any meeting exceeding two hours, the city would be billed at \$150 per hour for the additional time. If there is an additional meeting beyond the three regularly scheduled, the cost would be \$750 for a three-hour meeting and anything exceeding three hours would be billed at \$150 per hour. Staff budgeted \$25,000 for AV support at council meetings and is seeking approval for BNCO to continue AV support and live streaming of council meetings.  
*Alderson McIntyre motioned to approve; Alderson Sluder seconded.*  
Alderson Moss asked for a rundown of the equipment and whether it's part of the contract. City Administrator/Engineer Carr explained that the equipment is owned by the city and was acquired through an original contract with Pearl Technologies. The contract with BNCO is for them to operate the equipment. Alderson McIntyre said he is extremely happy with the AV streaming and YouTube channel. He feels that community members have benefited, and he's received compliments from other cities. He is in support of moving forward.  
Alderson Blundy asked about the remote attendance option and will have to use it next month. City Administrator/Engineer Carr said that a test run was completed at a previous meeting, and it seems to be functioning as it should.  
7 Ayes: Blundy, Ernst, Johnson, Martin, McIntyre, Moss, and Sluder  
0 Nays:  
Motion carried by roll call vote.

*The Hengst Foundation Letter of Intent Discussion* Mayor Stevens reviewed a timeline of the city receiving the letter of intent. She would like to put the brakes on related decision making until after the council completes a goal setting session. City Administrator/Engineer Carr read from the memo summarizing what the Hengst Foundation is asking and opened the floor for discussion. Alderson Blundy thanked Mayor Stevens and staff for making the letter of intent public. He shared he has no level of comfort with the letter of intent currently because his questions have gone unanswered. He feels a third-party analysis including a financial review, risk assessment, interest cost validation, and a market viability assessment representing taxpayer interests needs to be done and that the Hengst Foundation feasibility study was for their own interests. Alderson Moss expressed agreement saying it is more appropriate for the city to undertake the study rather than the developer. He would like it to include a sound study as well and would like to see the foundation put an operating endowment in place. Alderson Martin expressed support for a goal setting session and operating endowment. He believes the letter of intent isn't a commitment that we will proceed, rather an agreement that if everything aligns and a sound study comes back good, then the city commits to putting in infrastructure and road on our property up to that property and the lease or sale of the property. He agrees with suggestions but feels they are down the road. He asked for clarification that the foundation is just saying if everything works out, then we're willing to put in infrastructure and road. City Administrator/Engineer Carr agreed that is what the letter is asking, and they would like us to move forward with engineering the road for them to continue engineering the architecture. Alderson McIntyre added the previous council was on the same page that if all boxes are checked, then they would move forward. He agrees that independent and non-biased studies need to be done. He mentioned the original sound study was based on the ground as it currently sits and should take into consideration restrictions and barriers and decide what is comfortable for citizens. He referenced that adding infrastructure brings up the property value \$20,000 per acre. Alderson Johnson agrees that independent studies should be done and feels the council needs to discuss what they want to do with the 223 property as a whole. Alderson Ernst agrees that an independent study is necessary and wonders why questions have gone unanswered by the foundation. Mayor Stevens said the goal setting session will address the 223 property and ideas to make the whole area cohesive, and the amphitheater may be a part of that. She said the goal setting session starts with a survey of the community to gain input.

**Resolution:** City Administrator/Engineer Carr presented the following resolution for consideration:  
*R-1438 (14-25) Temporary Road Closure of a State Roadway for Candlelight Stroll*  
**Synopsis:** The following resolution would allow for a temporary closure of a state-maintained roadway for a public event. **Title:** Temporary Road Closure of a State-Maintained Roadway for a Public Event - Candlelight Stroll  
*Alderson Moss motioned to approve; Alderson Johnson seconded.*  
**7 Ayes:** Blundy, Ernst, Johnson, Martin, McIntyre, Moss, and Sluder  
**0 Nays:**  
Motion carried by roll call vote.

**Resolution:** City Administrator/Engineer Carr presented the following resolution for consideration:  
*R-1439 (15-25) Temporary Road Closure of a State Roadway for Washington Autumn Fest*  
**Synopsis:** The following resolution would allow for a temporary closure of a state-maintained roadway for a public event. **Title:** Temporary Road Closure of a State-Maintained Roadway for a Public Event - Washington Autumn Fest  
*Alderson McIntyre motioned to approve; Alderson Ernst seconded.*  
**7 Ayes:** Blundy, Ernst, Johnson, Martin, McIntyre, Moss, and Sluder  
**0 Nays:**  
Motion carried by roll call vote.

**First Reading Ord:** City Administrator/Engineer Carr presented the following ordinance for consideration:  
*Amending Code to Revise Residency Requirements for the Police Chief*  
**Synopsis:** Adoption of the following ordinance would amend the City of Washington Code to Revise Residency Requirements for the Police Chief. **Title:** Amending Code to Revise Residency Requirements for the Police Chief  
*Alderson Blundy motioned to waive second reading; Alderson McIntyre seconded.*  
Alderson Martin asked the reason to waive a second reading. Alderson Blundy said he wasn't aware of a time constraint but feels it was talked about at Committee of the Whole and the majority favors the amendment; he doesn't see a reason to delay.  
**5 Ayes:** Blundy, Johnson, McIntyre, Moss, and Sluder  
**2 Nays:** Ernst, Martin  
Motion failed by roll call vote.

**First Reading Ord:** City Administrator/Engineer Carr presented the following ordinance for consideration:  
*Request by Wehnes Trucking, Inc., to Annex Part of a Parcel on S. Main Street*  
**Synopsis:** Adoption of this ordinance would annex part of a parcel on S. Main Street totaling 0.039 acres into the City of Washington corporate limits and zone it R-1. **Title:** Request by Wehnes Trucking, Inc., to Annex Part of a Parcel on S. Main Street

**First Reading Ord:** City Administrator/Engineer Carr presented the following ordinance for consideration:  
*Request by Grace Bible Church to Disconnect Part of a Parcel on S. Main Street*  
**Synopsis:** Adoption of this ordinance would de-annex approximately 0.008 acres from a 0.35-acre parcel owned by Grace Bible Church at 1105 S. Main Street from the City of Washington corporate limits. **Title:** Request by Grace Bible Church to Disconnect Part of a Parcel on S. Main Street

**First Reading Ord:** City Administrator/Engineer Carr presented the following ordinance for consideration:  
*Special Use Request of Anabelle and Gale Johnson to Operate a Non-Owner-Occupied Short-Term Rental Located at 1406 Westgate Road*  
**Synopsis:** Adoption of this ordinance would allow for a non-owner-occupied short-term rental to operate at 1406 Westgate Road. **Title:** Special Use Request of Anabelle and Gale Johnson to Operate a Non-Owner-Occupied Short-Term Rental Located at 1406 Westgate Road

**First Reading Ord:** City Administrator/Engineer Carr presented the following ordinance for consideration:  
*Special Use Request of Schlueter Properties, LLC, to Operate a Non-Owner-Occupied Short-Term Rental Located at 132-134 N. Main St. A-B*  
**Synopsis:** Adoption of this ordinance would allow for a non-owner-occupied short-term rental to operate at 132-134 N. Main St. A-B. **Title:** Special Use Request of Schlueter Properties, LLC, to Operate a Non-Owner-Occupied Short-Term Rental Located at 132-134 N. Main St. A-B

**First Reading Ord:** City Administrator/Engineer Carr presented the following ordinance for consideration:  
*Special Use Request of Candy Presley to Operate a Non-Owner-Occupied Short-Term Rental Located at 711 S. High Street*  
**Synopsis:** Adoption of this ordinance would allow for a non-owner-occupied short-term rental to operate at 711 S. High Street. **Title:** Special Use Request of Candy Presley to Operate a Non-Owner-Occupied Short-Term Rental Located at 711 S. High Street

**First Reading Ord:** City Administrator/Engineer Carr presented the following ordinance for consideration:  
*Special Use Request of Bethany Zerbonia to Operate a Non-Owner-Occupied Short-Term Rental Located at 406 N. Main Street*  
**Synopsis:** Adoption of this ordinance would allow for a non-owner-occupied short-term rental to operate at 406 N. Main Street. **Title:** Special Use Request of Bethany Zerbonia to Operate a Non-Owner-Occupied Short-Term Rental Located at 406 N. Main Street  
Alderson McIntyre asked clarification if the previous four property owners were operating or waiting on Council's approval. He would motion to waive second readings if they were currently restricted. Planning and Development Director Oliphant explained the owners were given the green light to continue operation while approval is pending.

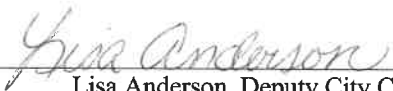
**First Reading Ord:** City Administrator/Engineer Carr presented the following ordinance for consideration:  
*Request by Brent Ricketts to Rezone Mallard Crossing Commercial Park Lot 5 (the "Subject Property") from C-2 to C-3* **Synopsis:** Adoption of this ordinance would rezone Mallard Crossing Commercial Park Lot 5 from the C-2 District, General Retail, to the C-3 District, Service Retail. **Title:** Request by Brent Ricketts to Rezone Mallard Crossing Commercial Park Lot 5 (the "Subject Property") from C-2 to C-3

**First Reading Ord:** City Administrator/Engineer Carr presented the following ordinance for consideration:  
*Residential Chickens Zoning Code Text Amendment* **Synopsis:** Adoption of this ordinance would allow no more than five chickens on any residential lot subject to the acquisition of a building permit. A building permit would be required to construct the coop and the chicken enclosure could be located no closer than 15 feet from a side or rear lot line and at least 25 feet from an adjacent residential structure. **Title:** Residential Chickens Zoning Code Text Amendment

**Second Reading Ord** None provided.

**Aldersperson Comments** None provided.

**Adjournment** At 7:23 p.m. *Aldersperson Martin moved to adjourn; Aldersperson Moss seconded.*  
Motion carried by voice vote.

  
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Lisa Anderson, Deputy City Clerk

## City Council Meeting May 19, 2025 Public Comment

I am Bob Montgomery. I live at 1322 N. Main Street. Our farmland extends from N. Main to the eastern edge of the Washington 223 property. I spoke at the December 9, 2024 City Meeting concerning the Hengst Amphitheater proposal. My complete comments are attached on page 7 of those minutes.

On December 9<sup>th</sup>, I stated the following, "It is the appropriate time to affirm our desire for both the Dee Amphitheatre and our farm to successfully co-exist. The Hengst Foundation is passionate about this project. We are passionate about agriculture and hope to model what it takes to farm successfully adjacent to a City." We also asked ten questions that night and await answers.

We are pleased that the City has been transparent and released the 'revised' Hengst Foundation Letter of Intent dated April 28, 2025. We have some concerns.

**Non Binding Provision #2** – "The City will sell or lease to the Foundation approximately 50 acres of vacant land owned by the City of Washington and located generally in the northeast corner of the real estate located between the Route 24 Bypass on the North, Cruger Road on the South, North Main Street on the East and Dallas Road on the West (the "Property").

For a revised legal document to describe the 223 as extending to "North Main Street on the East" is concerning. The 223 ends near Wellington Drive, a full half mile west of North Main Street. Our land is not within the City limits nor should it be described as a part of "the property" in this agreement.

**Non-Binding Provision #11- Compliance with City Codes**

Paragraph 2, "The study will also provide expected sounds levels at & crossing Cruger Road." The county residents are in the direct line of the speakers and not mentioned. We request noise data for our property to ensure the long term value is not degraded. This Letter of Intent ignores the responsibilities the Foundation has to County residents.

In addition, in the past, there's been discussion of how loud a rock concert would be. Most rock concerts operate between 90 and 120 decibels. Federal Law requires locomotive train horns to operate between 96 – 110 decibels. Rock concerts last for hours. We can hear the train blasts inside our house.

**Binding Provisions - Letter D- Confidentiality**

It states in part, "City Parties will not at any time ... permit any person whatsoever to examine or make copies of any reports, plans, specifications, ..." We want to be sure that what the Foundation and its PARTNERS submit to government agencies is factual and then built as permitted.

Dec. 9<sup>th</sup> I requested that an engineer we hire be allowed to review the placement of berms, slopes, basins, trees, lights, and trails prior to submissions to permitting agencies and final plat and build due to past experiences with the City and involved partners.

In the 93 years my family has owned this farm, a lot has changed. Our long term commitment to farm has not. Our farm has paid and will continue to pay property taxes and support our schools. We wish to model what it takes for a farm to thrive at the intersection of Urban & Ag.

Thank you for your consideration.

**Please attach these comments to the minutes.**