



Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

Monday, May 12, 2025, at 6:30 P.M.

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

Mayor Manier called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., with a quorum present.

Present: Alderpersons Blundy, Ernst, Johnson, Martin, McIntyre, Moss, Sluder, Smith and Stevens

Also Present: Planning & Development Director Oliphant, City Engineer/City Administrator Carr, Finance Director Baxter, Public Works Director Rittenhouse, Interim Police Chief Stevens, City Treasurer Carol Crocker, City Clerk Brod, Attorney Kate Carter

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
2. ALDERPERSONS WISHING TO BE HEARD: Alderperson Martin asked for any updates from the Hengst Foundation. Mayor Stevens said there were none to her knowledge.
3. CITIZENS WISHING TO BE HEARD: Washington resident Jacob Spizer shared comments regarding the allowance of chickens. He feels chickens can be educational and owners will support local businesses. He is concerned about lot sizes being too restrictive because it excludes over 90% of Washington properties. He suggested making lot sizes a ¼ acre and smaller lots considered on a case-by-case basis.
Washington resident Jewel Ward spoke regarding term limits. She noted that it is hard to find people to run for office and feels creating limits could affect the history of the board. She feels they are already limited by the people who want to serve.
Washington resident Kris Hasten shared that she oversees the food pantry garden near the fire house that provides 5,000 pounds of produce per year. She shared that they are having issues with water pressure. She shared that they water 2-3 days a week and they can only run one sprinkler at time. She wonders about the timeline. She also shared that Rove and Ramble was successful, and they are working with Clerk Brod and The Chamber of Commerce to streamline the permitting process. She wonders if the city could set up a drinking fountain and turn the outlets on prior to the event. She also wondered about having the street sweeper remove debris from the gutter in the spring. Kris explained that they are making the event more compact and the larger trucks can go to the alternate events where they fit better.
Washington Township Supervisor Jim Bremner shared that Jewel Ward will be taking his place next week. He shared that they have ride services where residents 65+ can travel for \$3.00. The board is considering providing services to Peoria for \$5.00 as a trial program for 90 days. These services will help reduce the stigma of isolation which can affect mental health. The census shows that 16% of Washington people are 65 years or older and 7% have a disability. He feels about 2,000 members of community could utilize their services. The services have been well received so far, and he feels the city should be proud to help provide the service.
Washington resident Brad Marshall shared comments regarding the residency requirement of the Police Chief. He noted that he has seen a lot of changes over time and he is not sure when the requirement started. He feels modern communications address items remotely. He has respect for Jeff Stevens and feels he would be an excellent choice.
4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Alderperson Smith motioned to accept the April 14, 2025, Committee of the Whole and Meeting Minutes; Alderperson McIntyre seconded. Passed by voice vote.
Alderperson Smith motioned to accept the April 14, 2025, Budget Public Hearing Meeting Minutes; Alderperson Martin seconded. Passed by voice vote.
5. NEW BUSINESS:
 - A. *Residency Requirements for the Chief of Police Discussion* – Mayor Stevens shared that she intends to appoint Jeff Stevens as Police Chief. City Engineer/Administrator Carr introduced States Attorney Kevin Johnson who shared that he chose to live in Washington because of the schools and safety. He feels Jeff Stevens has been consistent since he started at his office. He feels continuity and institutional knowledge are important. He noted the ordinance requiring residency for the Police Chief was created in 1991, but many things have changed since that time, namely, communication resources. He noted that Jeff Stevens, has been at any major incidents involving loss of life. He is confident that Deputy Chief Stevens would continue to be present for community events as well. He feels Deputy Chief Stevens is committed to the community and many residents in the community know him. He also noted that many communities of our size don't require residency and he supports amending the ordinance. Alderperson McIntyre agreed and noted that communication has improved and feels the ordinance is outdated. Alderperson Smith is in favor of amending the requirement. Alderperson Ernst agreed, but doesn't want to remove the requirement all together. Alderperson Moss feels the value of community engagement, response and years of service should be considered. He feels Jeff Stevens is a great candidate with many years of service which should serve to waive the residency requirement. He would also be in favor of setting a radius. Alderperson Blundy asked about having council vote to waive the requirement or allowing Mayor Stevens or the City Administrator to waive it in this case. City Engineer/Administrator Carr explained that this requires an amendment to the code. Alderperson Martin feels a position like this should be opened for anyone to apply and feels it is important for those who make rules to live under them. Deputy Chief Stevens shared that he was previously encouraged to not to move to Washington for family safety reasons. Of his family members, he feels he should make the longer drive. He further feels that the cost of a buying a house with current interest rates would not be best financially. He noted that Alderperson Martin lives in Washington but doesn't have a store in the city, even though he is dedicated to the city.

Deputy Chief Stevens shared that he serves on county committees, represents Washington for the TC3, represented the city multiple other areas and the Council has voted him liquor commissioner. He also considers himself a Washingtonian. He tells people they should live in Washington, including Alderperson McIntyre. He also noted that most houses for sale in the area are not in Washington, and he doesn't want to live in East Peoria. Mayor Stevens shared that the code states that the police chief is appointed by the mayor. She noted suggested including language that residency could be waived if an employee has been with the city for more than 15 years and lives within a 25-mile radius. Alderperson Martin does not favor waiving the residency requirement. Alderpersons Smith, Blundy, McIntyre, and Johnson favors the code amendment. Mayor Stevens said if it was anyone else, she would not consider it. She feels Jeff is proven, stable, dedicated. Alderperson Martin prefers this to be a one-time exception. Deputy Chief Stevens shared that unlike when he started, there is now 24/7 supervision. Mayor Stevens is not comfortable changing the code for only one person and feels that our code is antiquated. Alderperson McIntyre feels they should include the extra language and also feels secession planning is important in building integrity within the department. He also noted now is not the time to buy a house. A straw poll revealed that Alderpersons Johnson, Sluder, Smith, McIntyre and Blundy favor moving forward with the amendment and Alderperson Martin does not favor it.

- B. *Water Rate Project Plan Discussion* - Mayor Stevens explained that this is information for the new members and it will be discussed more in future. Presenter Abbey explained that the existing system has two pressure zones and two water plants. Both have a water tower and a water distribution pipe network. About 30% of the piping is over 100 years old. Less than 1/3 is cast iron but cast iron is where most breaks occur. City staff has done a great job investing in the system and there are additional improvements currently occurring. Washington has great water quality. She shared that there are six different projects.
1. Bondurant Street Watermain Replacement - The four inch watermain is past its life expectancy and serves the high school. Past breaks have impacted the schools' activities. The estimated cost is \$375,000.
 2. BUS24 Watermain Relocation - It will be relocated from Legion Road to Lynn Street. IDOT is driving this project. The total length is estimated at \$7,730,000. The critical length is estimated at \$4,500,000.
 3. Water Tower #3 - This will be placed near the intersection of Cruger and Nofsinger. They would increase size of watermain. The city doesn't currently meet fire flow recommendations or IEPA minimum storage standards. She shared that if a critical failure occurs at Water Tower #2, we could only serve residents for one day. The water tower is estimated at \$4,300,000. The Cummings watermain is estimated at \$530,000.
 4. Sunnyland Water Service Redundancy - There currently is a single 10" watermain. If it fails, Sunnyland would be without water until it is fixed. The estimated cost is \$875,000.
 5. Southeast Area Watermain Improvements - Most of the pipes in the area are over 100 years old and it receives 2/3 of city's watermain breaks. The estimated cost is \$8,870,000 split into multiple projects over 20 years.
 6. Well #13 - This is a proposed new well and it includes a new block building over the pump. It would be connected to the raw waterline. Currently, treatment plant #2 is being served by Wells #11 and #12. If another failure occurs the city would be without water. Wells #9 and #10 have high ammonia and are ill-equipped. The estimated cost is \$1,500,000.

City Engineer/Administrator Carr feels this can be reviewed by looking for short-term or long-term goals. He shared that Bondurant has been worked on many times but not over 20. Mayor Stevens clarified that the former council was presented with a 9% increase. Finance Director Baxter explained that a 5.2% increase has already taken place and if these projects are being financed as presented it would be an additional 3%. She shared that the increase will be seen on the June bill. She also shared that the previous total of 9% included the current 5.2%. City Engineer/Administrator Carr shared that the previous proposal structured the cost based on the meter size and properties with a larger meter would be charged more.

- C. *Square Parking Update Discussion* - Planning and Development Director Oliphant shared that Tangled Roots opened about a month ago and staff has received questions about parking, but calls have dissipated. He noted that the previous regulations were adopted in 2002 and shared that there is a single 15-minute space on North Main and eight spaces with 30 minute restrictions between 9:00 am and 10:00 pm. In Restricted Parking Area #1 there is a four-hour max limit. Restricted Parking Areas #2 and #3 have off-street parking with #3 located on the east side of Lindy's. They have had discussions with businesses to bring a joint recommendation. Ideas included: Eliminate the 104 Zinser and 105 N. High lots from Restricted parking, add the lots at 104 S. High and 105 S. High to the restricted parking areas, establish several 15-minute maximum spaces near Faire Coffee for hours between 6:30 am to 2 pm, Monday through Saturday, and add spaces in front of Tangled Roots and Ipava State Bank. Also, 30-minute spaces could be added in front of The Bent Penny and Maloof Realty. He noted that Tangled Roots is not interested in a specified parking space. Regarding policing, Planning and Development Director Oliphant noted that enforcement is a challenge and Police Chief Stevens noted that voluntary compliance occurs. Mayor Stevens noted that this will be discussed again in June. It was clarified that Council could consider more parking spaces in the 107 S. High lot. Alderperson Blundy suggested color coded signs. Police Chief Stevens clarified that there are sign guidelines. Planning and Development Director Oliphant noted that a kiosk with parking info might be considered, and he has heard that IDOT may be resurfacing more of BUS24 and it may start sometime this year. He noted that they would also add a crosswalk on the north side of the square. City Engineer/Administrator Carr shared that they are targeting late summer or fall to do work. Alderperson Smith asked about ADA spaces. Planning and Development Director Oliphant noted that there are a few planned and we are required to have a certain number according to the State.
- D. *Alderpersons and Mayor Term Limits Discussion* - Planning and Development Director Oliphant shared that the prior council had discussed term limits and it was tabled to bring it back to this meeting for new council consideration. The current ordinance would set a three full term maximum for the mayor and alderpersons. Alderperson Smith wonders about considering only limiting the mayors' terms. Alderperson Blundy supports it for the mayor but feels 12 years is a long time. He feels this will encourage involvement. It was noted that in the most recent election only three of the four alderperson

positions were sought and only one was contested. Alderperson Moss supports mayoral term limits. Alderpersons McIntyre and Martin agreed. Alderperson Martin feels this should be put on a referendum for the voters. Alderpersons McIntyre and Sluder agreed. A majority supported term limits for the mayor. City Engineer/Administrator Carr noted that this wouldn't affect anyone for another two years.

- E. *May PZC Meeting Recap* – Planning and Development Director Oliphant shared that the PZC heard six cases and four of them regarded non-owner-occupied short-term rentals (STRs). The council adopted STR regulations last year to put them on the same playing field as hotels and motels. The four that were presented will come to council for approval of a special use permit. All were unanimously approved by the PZC. Mayor Stevens noted that the council can discuss and amend any parts of the proposed ordinance. Planning and Development Director Oliphant shared that the residential chicken ordinance was adopted in 2019 then repealed one year later. Council expressed interest in discussing it again. While most of the language was the same as four years ago, minimum lot size is now included. The current language requires a ¾ acre minimum lot. Alderperson Smith recommended approval from neighbors. Planning and Development Director Oliphant shared that he would be more in favor of that than a special use permit. He noted previous objections from neighbors. Alderperson McIntyre feels lot size shouldn't matter and wondered about setbacks. Planning and Development Director Oliphant shared there would be setbacks that might eliminate some properties but not too many. Alderperson Martin feels the setback and distance from other houses are more important than lot size. He is in favor of allowing chickens. The consensus was to remove lot size requirements. Planning and Development Director Oliphant shared that there is a request to rezone the property behind Sleep Inn which has changed zoning several times through the years. The person would like to sell sheds, coops and blinds. Staff and the PZC recommended acceptance. He also shared that there will be a minor annexation and a disconnection case. These involve Wehnes Trucking and Grace Bible Church, which will fix a land error of less than 1/10 of an acre. Planning and Development Director Oliphant clarified that landscaping and buffering requirements will help with the property behind the Sleep Inn and they might not build a building. He wouldn't recommend very strict guidelines for visibility but they could look into additional landscaping.
- F. *Sump Pump Discharge Ordinance Update* – City Engineer/Administrator Carr explained that this was brought to attention by public comments. In 2022, the city updated the ordinance on both downspouts and sump pump line setbacks. There were areas where sump pumps were discharging directly onto the sidewalk, leaving the sidewalk with puddles that would ice over causing a safety issue. He feels code enforcement does a good job discussing these with residents and noted that these issues can cause water to cross sidewalks or road and freeze. Alderperson Blundy shared that the current ordinance could address it. City Engineer/Administrator Carr explained that Item D in the memo may address it as it affects the health, safety and welfare of the public. Mayor Stevens feels we should do this because we did it for someone on Gillman and Elgin. City Engineer/Administrator Carr said if the council wants, we can put together an RFP and it could be done in-house if utilities did not need to be relocated. Alderperson McIntyre is concerned with stagnant water and noted the road hasn't been done in a while. He wonders if any projects will be done in the future. City Engineer/Administrator Carr feels there may be some field tiles up hill as well as a lot of water is discharged. City Engineer/Administrator Carr shared that the drainage work wouldn't be a huge priority because of the location and noted the sanitary sewer had been replaced nearby. Alderperson Martin and City Engineer/Administrator Carr clarified that a stormwater inlet is near the edge of the driveway.
- G. *Jetter Truck Replacement Discussion* – Public Works Director Rittenhouse explained that the city purchased a Vac-Con Jetter Truck in 2017. It was replaced in 2019 after having major issues. In fiscal year 25-26 the Truck will be 6 years old. There are concerns that it may need major repairs in the next couple years. Staff saw this happen to the street sweeper which required \$40,000 to fix. He noted that this is a critical piece of equipment, used in extreme conditions, for long periods of time. The potential for costly repairs and downtime increases with equipment kept for longer periods. Staff's goal is to clean 100,000 to 125,000 feet of storm and sanitary sewers per year and hiring it out would cost \$250,000-500,000 per year. Staff was told the 2027 models have more emission standards which increase the price of the truck. Staff reached out for quotes and budgeted for it. Some of the cost would be covered by the trade in. He also noted they use this more frequently every year and maintenance and downtime will increase. Public Works Director Rittenhouse explained that they would enter into a buyback program so long as they follow a maintenance plan. He noted the prices increase every five years. Alderperson Martin and Public Works Director Rittenhouse clarified that both new truck options would have warranties. Alderperson Martin supports this and feels this is a good example why we shouldn't keep old equipment, noting that the previous Jetter Truck was replaced because it had a warranty to cover the major issues. Alderperson McIntyre also supports this, noting that it is specialized. He feels waiting would deteriorate the trade in value. Public Works Director Rittenhouse explained that they use this equipment to work around utilities, watermain, jetting sewers, install manholes, etc. He shared that it is used almost daily. Public Works Director Rittenhouse clarified that a fan and blower work similarly but a blower is meant for longer runs. Regarding fuel economy, the dual engine saves money because you don't have to run the main engine so much. He feels the savings is minimal unless you have many trucks. Public Works Director Rittenhouse shared that we trust the provider of maintenance. Alderperson Blundy asked about the schedules and wondered if we are underfunded. Public Works Director Rittenhouse shared that he is only estimating because he doesn't know how much they will increase per year. When asked if council wanted to move forward, no one answered.
- H. *Public Works Storage Building Discussion* – Public Works Director Rittenhouse explained that the building was damaged by a fire and Blue Sky stepped away from it. They estimate \$340,000 for the repairs. He shared four options: 1. Complete repairs as identified by the contractor and insurance company. 2. Demolish it and build a parking lot. 3. Demolish it and sell the property. 4. Sell the property as it currently sits. He also shared that the past council has budgeted \$200,000 to set aside for a public works facility and the building is lacking because moving equipment in and out can be tough. They have also looked into raising the roof 16" but it would cost \$300,000 so he wouldn't recommend it. He also shared that building a new building would cost over \$1 million which he feels is too expensive for a storage building. Staff requested direction from council. When asked for his opinion, Public Works Director Rittenhouse noted space struggles and feels he would like to keep insurance money and plan on

a new more efficient building to help address future needs. City Engineer/Administrator Carr shared that the Police Department and City Hall is also almost out of space. He suggested completing a city-wide space study to a previous administrator and wondered about adding on to City Hall or creating one campus with everyone. He further noted that the two previous administrators had different opinions on the matter. He suggested creating an RFP to begin the process. Finance Director Baxter shared that we have \$600,000 set aside for Public Works. Public Works Director Rittenhouse noted the insurance company is asking what we want to do and noted that insurance would like this wrapped up within the two-year mark. Alderperson Blundy favors doing the study and pocketing the insurance money. Finance Director Baxter clarified that insurance just wants to know if we are going to rebuild not the other decisions. Public Works Director Rittenhouse noted that the building continues to deteriorate and it is an eyesore and feels the demolition may be done in-house. City Engineer/Administrator Carr noted the question is the value of the building or lot if the building is gone. He asked if council would like to research demolishing the building or keeping the building in its burned state, noting that with a demolition, the city would lose the remaining \$36,000 of insurance. When polled, the majority favored doing a city-wide space study.

- I. *City Administrator Recruitment* – Finance Director Baxter shared that there have been eight administrators since she has been with city. She shared a memo showing that in most cases we have used a company for recruiting and GovHR was used for our last one. She noted staff and alderpersons helped in one situation. She further shared that recruiters help get the information out and they help with initial screening. We have seen varying results but she feels the advantage of using a consultant is the time that is needed comes at a cost. She does not feel staff has the time to take this on. Alderperson Blundy would like to proceed with a RFQ to see what it will cost to have consultant and he feels council needs to be clearer about what they are expecting. Alderperson Martin feels a lot of people can be reached online and he would be willing to be on a committee. Alderperson McIntyre favors getting a RFQ and doesn't want to burden staff. This allows more transparency and he noted there is an internal candidate, so a consultant would be unbiased. He feels it is an investment. Alderperson Smith agreed. No objections were given.
6. OTHER BUSINESS: Nothing provided.
7. ADJOURNMENT: At 9:35 p.m. Alderperson Johnson moved to adjourn; Alderperson Moss seconded. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.



Valeri L. Brod, City Clerk

5/12/2025

Good evening, members of the City Council.

My name is Jakob Spitzer, and I live here in Washington. I spoke previously at the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting on May 7th to share my support for the proposed ordinance to allow backyard chickens within city limits. My original memo and request can be found with the minutes from that meeting. I appreciate the thoughtful work that's gone into this so far, and I'm here tonight to continue that conversation and offer a few more points for your consideration as the council prepares for a future first reading ordinance.

For me and many families, this proposed ordinance is about more than just chickens. It's about health, education, and the ability to make thoughtful, sustainable choices. Fresh eggs from backyard hens are more nutritious, and raising chickens teaches children where their food comes from and how to care for animals responsibly. These are lessons that stick for a lifetime.

Allowing backyard chickens also supports local businesses like Runnings, which supply chicken feed, chicks and specialized coop accessories. Instead of purchasing a prebuilt coop, those who decide to build their own support other local businesses like Nena Ace Hardware and Menards. All of these transactions generate sales tax revenue for the city.

I support many of the restrictions in the draft ordinance such as a five hen limit, no roosters, and requirements for cleanliness and odor control. These are smart and reasonable safeguards to ensure neighborhood harmony.

However, I remain concerned about the proposed minimum lot size of 0.75 acres. According to the memo presented to the Planning & Zoning Committee, that requirement excludes over 90% of properties in Washington. That means most families who want to responsibly raise chickens and who are willing to adhere to all rules and guidelines set by the city won't even be eligible to participate.

On top of that, the proposed setback requirements make it even more restrictive. The current draft requires coops to be placed at least 15 feet from any side or rear property line, and at least 25 feet from any residential structure on an adjacent lot. These significantly limit placement options especially on smaller lots.

That's why I respectfully ask the Council when time comes for the first reading ordinance to consider my proposed amendment reducing the minimum lot size from 0.75 acres to 0.25 acres. Even at that reduced size, not every property would qualify once you apply the setback rules but it would open the door to many more responsible, committed families.

I also encourage you to include an option for case-by-case approval for lots smaller than 0.25 acres, particularly those in lower density areas or not directly next to other homes. A conditional use process or administrative review would allow the city to maintain oversight and ensure neighborhood compatibility, while giving more residents a fair opportunity.

It's important to remember that the people who are waiting for the city to adopt a permitted chicken ordinance are often the most committed. They're the ones who will take the time to do things right building safe, clean coops, managing waste properly, and following rules the city puts in place.

This is an opportunity to make the ordinance both safe and inclusive to support healthier families, hands-on learning for kids, and a stronger sense of connection to our food. I hope you'll consider these suggestions as you move toward a vote at the first ordinance hearing.

Thank you for your time, and for continuing to listen to the residents you serve.