



City Council Meeting Minutes
Monday, July 21, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.
Five Points Banquet Room - 360 N. Wilmor Road, Washington, Illinois

Call to Order Mayor Lilija Stevens called the regular meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., with a quorum present.

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

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

Pledge of Allegiance Mayor Stevens led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Audience Comments Fran Tubbs from Devonshire asking to change passing zones on Cruger Road. She feels the speed now being 40 makes it worse.

Deletions/Additions None provided.

Consent Agenda Mayor Stevens presented the Consent Agenda for approval of the following items:
A. Approve July 7, 2025 Regular City Council Meeting Minutes
B. Accept 2024 Motor Fuel Tax Documentation Review
C. Approve Bills & Payroll
D. Accept Financial Reports for Period Ended May 31, 2025
E. Approve Washington Police Evidence Storage Pay Request #4
Alderperson Smith motioned to approve the consent agenda; Alderperson Martin seconded.
7 Ayes: Blundy, Ernst, Johnson, Martin, Moss, Sluder, Smith
0 Nays:
Motion carried by roll call vote.

Mayoral Communication Mayor Stevens provided the following appointments for consideration:
Appointments 1. Appointment of Christian Lane to Historic Preservation Commission
Alderperson Martin motioned to approve; Alderperson Ernst seconded.
7 Ayes: Blundy, Ernst, Johnson, Martin, Moss, Sluder, Smith
0 Nays:
Motion carried by roll call vote.

2. Appointment of Bobby Martin III to Economic Development Commission
Mayor Stevens shared that Council Member Martin will be the liaison between the commission and Mr. Oliphant. The rest of the commission will be appointed after the first meeting in August.
Alderperson Sluder motioned to approve; Alderperson Smith seconded.
7 Ayes: Blundy, Ernst, Johnson, Martin, Moss, Sluder, Smith
0 Nays:
Motion carried by roll call vote.

3. Appointment of Paula Balistreri, Gerald Storer, and Michael Vaughn to the Board of Police Commissioners
Alderperson Johnson motioned to approve; Alderperson Moss seconded.
7 Ayes: Blundy, Ernst, Johnson, Martin, Moss, Sluder, Smith
0 Nays:
Motion carried by roll call vote.

Recap of July Let's Talk Washington Mayor Stevens thanked Lucas Myers for hosting her July "Let's Talk Washington" event. She encouraged other business to host future events. She shared that around a dozen people have attended each meeting and it is overall positive. The August event information will be posted on the City's website.

City Administrator Communication Interim City Administrator/City Engineer Carr opened the floor for questions. None were provided. He added that the milling and overlaying on N. Main St., started today. He explained that it is county project and we appreciate their maintenance. He shared that we will assist the township on the closure of BUS24 for bridge painting. Scott Weaver is targeting the 20-30th to clean up the bridge and apply base paint. The Historical Society will bring in mural artist and we will assist with traffic control.
Council Report Regarding commercial grants, Planning and Zoning Director Oliphant shared that after council direction, the draft agreements were sent to city attorney who provided edits. They were then

sent to applicants. Two applicants had responded by Friday wishing to move forward as presented. He anticipates receiving the others sometime this week.

*Approve Proposal for
City Administrator
Executive Recruitment*

Finance Director Baxter shared that she reached out to Jim Arndt from Arndt Municipal Support and sent information to council for review and staff is seeking council's direction. Included in both proposals, is that Jim Arndt's services are directly related to the candidates and the collaborative approach allows staff to create a "Team Washington" which would focus on developing recruitment materials. Option A, with the traditional approach is \$23,500 and Option B, with the collaborative approach is \$19,500. She noted that we have sufficient funds and staff feels Option B leverages the talents of our staff but still uses professional services. *Aldersperson Ernst motioned to approve Option B; Aldersperson Martin seconded.* Aldersperson Moss favors Option A, feeling it provides more accountability. He feels the amount of savings isn't great enough to warrant staff's involvement. He expressed concerns with the timing of hiring the new Communications Specialist. Aldersperson Blundy agreed with Aldersperson Moss. He expressed concern when dealing with a possible internal candidate. He fears bias can occur. He feels the outside firm should vet the candidates. He wouldn't have an issue with only advertising the position and he feels Arndt Municipal Support should handle all the negotiations. He agrees that the mayor should be involved and work with AMS. Aldersperson Martin expressed concern with Alderspersons insinuating that staff can't do the task without bias. He favors Option B and feels the City would have done the items listed under Team Washington.

5 Ayes: Ernst, Johnson, Martin, Sluder, Smith

2 Nays: Blundy, Moss

Motion carried by roll call vote.

*Purchase Authorization
to Complete the Fire
Repairs to the Jefferson
Street Building*

Public Works Director Rittenhouse explained that the City has been working with PJ Hoerr and our insurance company for the repairs. Our insurance agreed to cover up to \$340,000 for the fire repairs. PJ Hoerr estimates \$321,065 to complete the repairs and insurance has already provided \$304,000 of the total with the remainder to be provided upon completion. Staff recommends having PJ Hoerr complete the remaining repairs at the Jefferson Street storage building.

Aldersperson Smith motioned to approve; Aldersperson Sluder seconded.

Aldersperson Blundy requested future discussions on what other money we can put into this building to enhance its exterior.

7 Ayes: Blundy, Ernst, Johnson, Martin, Moss, Sluder, Smith

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

First Reading Ord:
*Amending the
Procurement Policy
(Request to Waive
Second Reading)*

Interim City Administrator/City Engineer Carr presented the following ordinance for consideration: **Synopsis:** Adoption of this ordinance would amend the procurement policy & clarify the city code section authorizing procurement authority. **Title:** Amending the Procurement Policy with a Staff recommendation to waive the Second Reading. Finance Director Baxter shared that these changes are required from DOJ and they are regarding the evidence building grant. She hopes by waving it she can get back to the DOJ so they can clear the monetary review of the grant.

Aldersperson Moss motioned to waive the second reading; Aldersperson Smith seconded.

7 Ayes: Blundy, Ernst, Johnson, Martin, Moss, Sluder, Smith

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

Aldersperson Johnson motioned to approve the amendment; Aldersperson Smith seconded.

7 Ayes: Blundy, Ernst, Johnson, Martin, Moss, Sluder, Smith

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

First Reading Ord:
*Former Blumenshine
Property Cell Tower
Lease Extension Second
Amended Agreement*

Interim City Administrator/City Engineer Carr presented the following ordinance for consideration: **Synopsis:** This ordinance would approve and authorize the execution of a second amendment to a ground lease agreement and memorandum of lease agreement between the City of Washington and Celco Partnership d/b/a Verizon Wireless. **Title:** Former Blumenshine Property Cell Tower Lease Extension Second Amended Agreement

First Reading Ord:
*Section 14-36 Code
Amendment*

Interim City Administrator/City Engineer Carr presented the following ordinance for consideration: **Synopsis:** Adoption of this ordinance would strike Chapter 14, Article II, Section 14-36 titled "Demolition or repair; lien" from the Municipal Code. **Title:** Section 14-36 Code Amendment

First Reading Ord:
*Commercial Building
and Property
Improvement Grant
Agreement with
Precious Hospitality*

Interim City Administrator/City Engineer Carr presented the following ordinance for consideration: **Synopsis:** Adoption of this ordinance would approve an agreement with Precious Hospitality, LLC, an Illinois limited liability company, for planned building and property improvements at 1101 N. Cummings Lane. **Title:** Washington Commercial Building and Property Improvement Grant Program Agreement with Precious Hospitality, LLC

First Reading Ord:
*Commercial Building
and Property
Improvement Grant
Agreement with*

Interim City Administrator/City Engineer Carr presented the following ordinance for consideration: **Synopsis:** Adoption of this ordinance would approve an agreement with Kristi LaHood Cape doing business as Countryside Banquet & Catering, for planned building and property improvements at 659 School Street. **Title:** Washington Commercial Building and

Countryside Banquet & Catering Property Improvement Grant Program Agreement with Kristi LaHood Cape Doing Business as Countryside Banquet & Catering
Alderson Blundy is not in favor of the requests from Precious Hospitality, LLC or Countryside Banquet and Catering. He feels even if a request makes it through the filters, the City still needs to be cautious. He feels these two items are maintenance items. He prefers the requests like Ben Franklin because they are a new business fixing up an old property. He further noted that Washington Plaza has changed hands and suggested reaching out to them to discuss our comprehensive plan. He also shared that the City gave Countryside \$70,000 last year and wonders about setting time restrictions like once every five years.

Second Reading Ord: Interim City Administrator/City Engineer Carr presented the following ordinance for
Square Parking Code Amendment consideration: **Synopsis:** Adoption of this ordinance would amend the Restricted Parking Area I and II standards that regulate the allocation and time restrictions for public on- and off-street parking near the Square. **Title:** Square Parking Code Amendment
Alderson Smith motioned to approve; Alderson Ernst seconded.
7 Ayes: Blundy, Ernst, Johnson, Martin, Moss, Sluder, Smith
0 Nays:
Motion carried by roll call vote.

Alderson Comments None provided.

Adjournment At 7:03 p.m. *Alderson Smith motioned to adjourn; Alderson Sluder seconded.*
Motion carried by voice vote.


Valeri L. Brod, City Clerk