



Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

Monday, August 11, 2025, at 6:30 P.M.

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

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

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

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

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
2. APPROVAL OF REMOTE ATTENDANCE: Not needed.
3. ALDERPERSONS WISHING TO BE HEARD: Alderperson Smith thanked the township and bicentennial committee for their work on the viaduct mural. Alderperson McIntyre thanked the Police Department and Officer Taylor for the excellent annual Night Out Against Crime event. Alderperson Martin acknowledged the upcoming drone show and Mayor Stevens asked if Jewel Ward would share details during audience comments.
4. AUDIENCE COMMENTS: Tazewell County Clerk, resident, and Bicentennial Committee member John Ackerman shared an idea to create a historic marker to commemorate the bicentennial year. He noted that a historic marker will be placed in October on the square to commemorate Lincoln's affiliation with Washington. He also mentioned that surrounding communities have such markers, but there are not many in the county.
Washington resident and Bicentennial Committee member Jewel Ward shared that the Historical Society and Township helped coordinate the railroad viaduct mural. She thanked Mr. Rittenhouse and Mr. Carr for their assistance, as well as Public Works for managing the road closures. She noted difficulties due to the heat. She also shared that she is co-chair of the Bicentennial Committee along with Leri Slonneger. She noted that John Ackerman, Kim Brownfield, Jennifer Essig, Kit Zinser, John and Sharon Amdall, and John Stromberger also serve on the Committee. She added that everyone is excited about the upcoming drone show.
5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Alderperson Johnson motioned to approve the July 14, 2025, Committee of the Whole meeting minutes, Alderperson Sluder seconded. Passed by voice vote.
Alderperson Smith motioned to approve the May 12, 2025, Committee of the Whole meeting minutes with corrections, Alderperson McIntyre seconded. Passed by voice vote.
6. NEW BUSINESS:
 - A. *Proposed Enterprise Zone Boundary Expansion Discussion* – Planning and Development Director Oliphant explained that the City is part of the Northern Tazewell County Enterprise Zone, which includes East Peoria, Germantown Hills, Tazewell County, and Woodford County. The City's original zone from 1986 expired over ten years ago, and the State encouraged joint zones under new guidelines. Enterprise zones offer incentives such as a five-year property tax abatement for new non-residential projects and a sales tax waiver on construction materials. Creve Coeur and Metamora are interested in joining, and staff supports their inclusion. The zone currently covers 10 of the 20 allowable square miles, and all entities can still expand. Washington amended the zone in 2023 to allow Miller Custom Welding to expand, and staff recommended additional expansions at McCluggage and Centennial to accommodate pending and future development. Council supported allowing Creve Coeur and Metamora to apply and Washington to pursue expansion. Attorney Walton noted joining an existing zone is easier than starting a new one. Mr. Oliphant clarified that most non-residential property in the City is already included, with limited additional eligible land, and extending the zone at Centennial and McCluggage would be beneficial. Mayor Stevens said having two more municipalities participate in the 10-year extension is positive, and Mr. Oliphant reported no significant downsides.
 - B. *400 N. Lawndale Property Lien Foreclosure Discussion* – Planning and Development Director Oliphant explained that the house at 400 N. Lawndale was demolished in 2016 after being deemed unsafe, and a lien was placed on the property. The City can foreclose on such liens to acquire the property. Attorney Walton noted this is standard for municipal demolitions, as the City seeks to recoup its investment, though it may be difficult in this case. Alderperson Moss asked if the owner had been contacted; Oliphant said no. Alderperson Smith suggested contacting the tax payer. Attorney Walton explained that buyers who purchase these properties often purchase them in bulk and usually just want their investment back, and it is not uncommon for them to respond to notices. Consensus was to move forward.
 - C. *T-Mobile Water Tower #1 Cell Lease Extension Consideration* – Planning and Development Director Oliphant explained that Catalyst Network Services, a T-Mobile vendor, submitted a proposal to extend their lease on Water Tower #1, where they have had equipment since 2007. The extension would include six five-year terms, with the final term at a proposed \$3,500 per month (current lease would reach over \$3,700). The current lease has a 3% annual escalator; the proposal includes a 15%

escalator every five years. The current lease is 136% of the county average, prompting the vendor's request to reduce it. Staff had no opinion. Alderperson McIntyre suggested asking for \$3,600–\$3,700 and prefers the five-year escalator to retain the vendor. Alderperson Moss noted that the proposed escalator would save the vendor 8–9% over the lease, about \$150,000.

- D. *Bid Award – Candlewood Bridge Repair Project* – City Administrator/City Engineer Carr explained that costs, bids, and budgets have changed. Concrete companies indicated they could bid if the surface is changed to concrete, which would require a new resolution to use MFT funds. The City could also reject all bids and rebid. Concerns exist about using a vibratory roller on the arches, making concrete preferable. Tearing down the structure and building anew is another option. Staff recommend rejecting the bids, switching to concrete, and rebidding. Carr clarified that the arches and bridge are historic, but the pavement is not. Consensus was to reject and rebid.
- E. *Review of Door-to-Door Soliciting Code* – Police Chief Stevens explained that the code was originally enacted to protect citizens, but it is unenforceable as written because it is a blanket prohibition. Alderpersons Blundy and McIntyre support this, noting many comments on social media and the need to create a tool for the police department to enforce. Alderperson Moss also favors it. Chief Stevens would like to draft an ordinance, submit it to the attorneys for review, and bring it to the council.
- F. *N. Main Street Jurisdictional Transfer Discussion* – City Administrator/City Engineer Carr explained that N. Main's repaving was not previously known, making it a good time to discuss a jurisdictional transfer from the township. Pros for the City are limited, though citizens likely assume it is City-owned; cons include future maintenance and snowplowing. Alderperson Martin supports honoring the City's commitment if the road was improved. Carr noted a small sunken section of curb but said most of the road is in good condition. The transfer may be considered because the road lies between two City roads. District 52 has not indicated needed modifications for their new school, though the turn lane may need extension. Alderperson Moss stressed school safety, and Carr confirmed the transfer will not affect the City's budget. Consensus was to move forward.
- G. *Non-digging Inurnment Fee Consideration* – Public Works Director Rittenhouse explained that staff received requests for headstones containing cremation urns and were asked if fees could be waived since no digging is required. He noted administrative costs still apply and requested direction on whether to charge the full \$360 inurnment fee or reduce it to cover only administrative costs. This could also affect about 44 graves that cannot be sold due to sloping land. Staff recommends reducing the fee to administrative costs only. Alderperson Johnson supports the recommendation, noting it helps residents in difficult situations. Alderperson McIntyre supports the concept but suggested exploring a multiplier for future increases instead of a flat \$10 yearly increase. Alderperson Blundy supports a \$150 flat fee if it covers City expenses, and City Clerk Brod noted other fees increase by \$10 per year. The majority supported moving forward as presented, though Alderperson Martin suggested lowering the \$10 per year increase.
- H. *WPD Monthly Report* – Police Chief Stevens explained that the monthly numbers are only a small slice. Crime is down this year.
- I. *WFD Monthly Report* – Police Chief Stevens thanked the fire department for providing their report. He noted generally, EMS calls are rising over the year, and it goes with trends. Alderperson Moss noted the DUI arrests have tripled and asked about the trends. Chief Stevens explained that those numbers can go up and down due to staffing. He noted that new officers are excited and like handling traffic calls.
7. **OTHER BUSINESS:** Mayor Stevens shared that preparations are complete for the City Administrator search kickoff and requested a special meeting on September 29. The kickoff will cover processes, salary ranges, scheduling, data gathering, and advertisement sources. She also noted her Let's Talk Washington event will be Wednesday at 8:00 a.m. at the Washington Historical Society, with Administrator/Engineer Carr and Alderperson Johnson attending.
- City Administrator/City Engineer Carr reported that milling on Grandyle will start tomorrow and should finish before school begins. Some sidewalk and landscaping work remains, and the strategic goal-setting survey will be shared with the public soon. He noted the chlorination of WTP#1 will change, possibly increasing the chlorine smell, but the water remains safe. Regarding a historical marker, he asked Council for a discussion time frame; the majority favored addressing it at the next COW.
- Planning and Development Director Oliphant provided an update on the digital billboard. A follow-up with Mr. Giebelhausen confirmed no interest in the proposed intersection, and no suitable City-owned properties are available. Alderperson Smith expressed concern about driver safety at McDonald's, which staff shares, along with student traffic. Alderperson Ernst asked about other properties; Oliphant suggested the Fire Department would be better suited for a traditional message board. Alderperson Sluder asked about property near Walmart and Menards; some surplus right-of-way exists near Washington Greenhouse. Carr noted that a public display board for City events differs from advertising boards, and staff could consider an electronic sign at the Fire Department. Mayor Stevens noted the Fire Department's interest, and Council supported additional ways to communicate with the public.
- Alderperson McIntyre praised Night Out Against Crime signage, particularly on the eastern side of town. Oliphant added that signs near residential areas, including the Fire Department, would require a variance.
8. **ADJOURNMENT:** At 7:44 p.m. Alderperson Sluder moved to adjourn; Alderperson McIntyre seconded. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.



Valeri L. Brod, City Clerk