



City Council Meeting Minutes  
Monday, November 18, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.  
Banquet Room A at Five Points - 360 N. Wilmor Road, Washington, Illinois

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**Call to Order** Mayor Gary W. Manier called the regular meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., with a quorum present.

**Present at Roll Call** Council Members Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens

**Also Present** Finance Director Joanie Baxter, Planning and Development Director Jon Oliphant, City Engineer Dennis Carr, Public Works Director Brian Rittenhouse, Police Chief Mike McCoy, City Treasurer Carol Crocker, City Clerk Valeri Brod, City Attorney Derek Schryer and Press

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**Pledge of Allegiance** All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mayor Manier.

**Agenda Deletions/Additions** Council Member Stevens asked to discuss waiting until after the April election to make any decisions about the amphitheater proposal. Council Member Blundy seconded Council Member Stevens' question. Mayor Manier directed Council to vote using the screen.  
**4 Ayes:** Blundy, Butler, Smith, Stevens  
**5 Nays:** Adams, Brownfield, Martin, McIntyre, Mayor Manier  
Motion failed by roll call vote.  
Mayor Manier broke the tie.

**Audience Comments** Washington resident Steve Zehner, would like documents pertaining to the proposed amphitheater to be placed on the website. He also requested information regarding the possible noise and setback and would like to make sure resident comfort is considered. He asked about cost projections, water sewer information, if a Peoria venue was considered and how contractor selection and communication will be handled.  
Mayor Manier shared that it will be discussed further in December.

**Consent Agenda** Mayor Manier presented the Consent Agenda for approval of the following items:  
A. Approve Minutes of the November 4, 2024 Regular City Council Meeting  
B. Approve Bills and Payroll  
C. Approve Workers Compensation Renewal  
D. Accept Financial Reports for Period Ended September 30, 2024  
E. Council Approval - Headstone Placement in Block 20 at Glendale Cemetery  
Council Member Adams motioned to accept; Council Member McIntyre seconded.  
**8 Ayes:** Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens  
**0 Nays:**  
Motion carried by roll call vote.

**Proclamation** Mayor Manier read a proclamation proclaiming November 30, 2024 as Small Business Saturday.  
**Small Business Saturday Proclamation** Council Member Stevens motioned to accept; Council Member Adams seconded.  
**8 Ayes:** Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens  
**0 Nays:**  
Motion carried by roll call vote.

**Presentations / Recognitions** Police Chief McCoy shared that on October 13, 2024, at 10:45 p.m., Washington Police and Washington Fire/Rescue were dispatched to a location of a 2-year-old not breathing.  
**Presentation of Life Saving Awards to Washington Fire Department** Captain Kevin Reynolds and Paramedic Jessica Buckley were the first to arrive and found Washington Police Sergeant Ryan Hunsinger and the child's mother doing CPR. Reynolds and Buckley took over patient care, delivering shocks and medication. The patient was transported to OSF St. Francis Medical Center Children's Hospital where he received further lifesaving treatment. Because of their timely action the boy's life was saved. Chief McCoy and EMS Chief, Jeremy Doerr recognized Captain Kevin Reynolds and Paramedic Jessica Buckley with a "Life Saving Award." Washington Police Sergeant Ryan Hunsinger will be honored for his lifesaving actions at the Washington Police Honors Awards Banquet.  
The patient's mother was also recognized for beginning early CPR on her child which allowed the first responders time to arrive.

**City Administrator Communication** Planning and Development Director Oliphant opened the floor for any questions regarding the Council Report. Mayor Manier shared that he had no new communications to provide. Council Member Stevens asked about nine people voting on an earlier item. Mayor Manier noted that he voted. Council Member Stevens asked for a system to allow her to know who voted yes or no and noted that Mayor Manier broke the earlier tie. Mayor Manier suggested Clerk Brod read the scored votes aloud. Clerk Brod noted the difficulties with readability that would allow her

to read the votes aloud and noted it will take time to learn the new system. Council Member Stevens asked the in-meeting IT provider was asked to read the votes. Council Member Butler doesn't feel this process will add value and feels the voting should be read aloud. Council Member Stevens feels the anonymous voting will be a benefit so votes are not swayed. Council Member Blundy would also prefer the votes be read aloud.

*Speed Limit Traffic Updates on New Road Changes, Gillman Ave., and Business 24* Planning and Development Director Oliphant introduced Chief McCoy who shared information about added patrols around Gillman the last five days. He shared that they have written eight warnings and five citations. He also shared that they are doing this on all side streets and they are trying to get people to slow down to 25 mph.

**Resolution:** R-1423(23-24) *Resolution for Truth-in-Taxation* Planning and Development Director Oliphant presented the following resolution for consideration:  
**Synopsis:** Adoption of this resolution would make the determination pursuant to the Truth-in-Taxation Act for the City of Washington for the 2024 Property Tax Levy.  
**Title:** Resolution for Truth-in-Taxation  
Council Member Brownfield motioned to approve the resolution; Council Member Adams seconded. Council Member Stevens asked for the purpose of this vote. Finance Director Baxter explained that this is a state requirement, and the levy vote will take place in December and this just clarifies that the rate exceeds 5%. Council Member Stevens shared that she pulled up her tax bill and noticed that all the taxing bodies rates have gone down except for the City's. Council Member Blundy doesn't agree with capturing the 8.56% increase in the EAV in our levy. Ms. Baxter explained that the amount of the levy is the same as the EAV, so it can capture the full amount. He shared that Pekin proposed an increase of 4.99% but their council chose 2.5%. He prefers somewhere between 0%-5%. He noted that the 2024 CPI is supposed to be 3.1% and next year the CPI is 1.8%. He asked if other revenue sources were explored. Ms. Baxter asked to clarify if Council Member Blundy was referring to the Fire and Ambulance increase. She shared that there is a \$181,000 increase and the Fire and Ambulance increase is over \$300,000. She shared that Council would have to look at other projects to cut or from the General Fund. She shared that there is a Fire and Ambulance Levy that only pays for 25% of that contract. She further noted that Council may need to make cuts to streets and other projects. She further explained that the total tax is not increasing, it is an increase in the assessed evaluation because houses are selling for more than their asking price. She reiterated that the rate will stay the same. Council Member Blundy feels last year was a special circumstance because the EAV. He questioned delaying projects and is worried about the potential loss of the grocery tax and shared that he is going to vote no. Finance Director Baxter reminded everyone that the City's percentage of the tax rate is only 6% of the total bill. Council Member Adams clarified that Council has had tough budget discussions and just because everyone doesn't agree, doesn't mean they are not discussing it. He clarified that the schools are the greatest taxing body and the City's portion is very low. This will help pay for the Ambulance and Fire contract and he supports this proposal. Mayor Manier feels Council should have discussed the Fire Contract. He noted this is the first time the City has paid for an ambulance which is a revenue generator for the Fire Department. Council Member Stevens feels Council should have increased the previous budget because ambulance and fire talks were going to take place. Mayor Manier further clarified that the ambulance was never considered because the City has never paid for one. Council Member Martin asked to clarify that not everyone's value went up this year. Finance Director Baxter explained that this is not a blanket valuation like the previous year. Council Member Blundy feels everyone got a letter from the County with an increased EAV. He noted that every four years they are required to do the Quadrennial Assessment and feels last year they did a special assessment across the board and this year they did the Quadrennial Assessment which was 8.54%. He shared that he didn't do any home improvements and his increase was 8.01% which he will pay next year. Finance Director Baxter clarified that the Quadrennial was done last year and affective this year and this levy is regarding next year. Council Member Blundy shared that anyone can look at their taxes on the Tazewell County website. Mayor Manier noted that we don't know what we are going to pay until we set our levy. Finance Director Baxter shared that the taxes that were paid in June were from last year's increase. Council Member Blundy disagreed and said the 7.07% was a blanket increase because housing increased, which was special. This year he received a letter for the Quadrennial increase and he will pay it next year. Finance Director Baxter explained that we are being conservative but trying to capture the EAV and the rate will stay the same unless your individual assessed valuation increased. Most of Council disagreed with Council Member Blundy stating that this year is not the Quadrennial increase. Council Member Stevens agreed with Council Member Blundy stating that it increased two years in a row. Council Member McIntyre clarified that this vote is only because the levy is more than 5% Council is not voting on the tax levy. Finance Director Baxter confirmed that this is only to provide a hearing and is a state requirement. She further clarified that there will then be a public hearing on the second Monday of December. Mayor Manier noted that tax bill will go up due to other taxing bodies.  
7 Ayes: Adams, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens  
1 Nays: Blundy  
Motion carried by roll call vote.

**First Reading Ord:** *Request of Steve and Alissa Vander Naalt to rezone 926 Dallas Rd from R-1 to AG-1* Planning and Development Director Oliphant presented the following ordinance for consideration:  
**Synopsis:** Adoption of this ordinance would amend Chapter 52 of the Washington Municipal Code to establish maximum speed limits along portions of the new Freedom Parkway and

Dallas Road and adjust maximum speed limits on N. Cummings Lane and portions of Dallas Road and W. Cruger Road.

**Title:** Approving Speed Limits for Freedom Parkway, Dallas Road, N. Cummings Lane, and W. Cruger Road

**First Reading Ord:** Planning and Development Director Oliphant presented the following ordinance for consideration:

*Short-Term Rental Zoning Code Text Amendment*

**Synopsis:** Proposed amendment to the Washington City Zoning Code, for the purpose of adding or deleting text. Specifically:

- a) Old Section 154.830; New Section 56-453 "Purpose"
- b) Old Section 154.831; New Section 56-454 "Definitions"
- c) Old Section 154.832; New Section 56-455 "Short-Term Rental Permitting/Certificate of Registration Requirements"
- d) Old Section 154.833; New Section 56-456 "Special Use Permit Required"
- e) Old Section 154.834; New Section 56-457 "Certificate of Registration in Commercial Districts and Owner-Occupied Short-Term Rentals in Residential Districts"
- f) Old Section 154.835; New Section 56-458 "Regulations Applicable to All Short-Term Rentals"

**Title:** Approve Short-Term Rental Zoning Code Text Amendment

Council Member Martin appreciated removing the owner operated text. He doesn't agree that 15 days or more is required and if someone wants to rent their residence for a month while they leave for vacation, they shouldn't need a permit. Planning and Development Director Oliphant shared that the owner occupancy language specifies that the owners are present during the rental period.

**First Reading Ord:** Planning and Development Director Oliphant presented the following ordinance for consideration:

*Amend Zoning Code, specifically, Old Section 154.727; New Section 6-59 "Ground Mount and Roof Mount Solar Energy Systems"*

**Synopsis:** Approval of this ordinance would allow for the consideration of properties in the city limits zoned AG-1 that have residential uses to have ground mount solar energy systems.

**Title:** Approve proposed amendment to the Washington City Zoning Code, specifically, Old Section 154.727; New Section 6-59 "Ground Mount and Roof Mount Solar Energy Systems", for the purpose of adding or deleting text

**First Reading Ord:** Planning and Development Director Oliphant presented the following ordinance for consideration:

*Amend Zoning Code, specifically, Old Section 154.156; New Section 56-273 "Variances"*

**Synopsis:** Approval of this ordinance would establish the process for the consideration of sign variance requests and to identify the City Council as the authoritative jurisdiction for such matters.

**Title:** Proposed amendment to the Washington City Zoning Code, specifically, Old Section 154.156; New Section 56-273 "Variances", for the purpose of adding or deleting text

**First Reading Ord:** Planning and Development Director Oliphant presented the following ordinance for consideration:

*Codification Revisions*

**Synopsis:** Approval of this ordinance would transfer the mentioned zoning regulations back into Chapter 56 of the Municipal Code.

**Title:** Codification Revisions

**Aldersperson Comments** Council Member Smith motioned to discuss term limits for elected officials at the December Committee of the Whole Meeting; Council Member Brownfield seconded.

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

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

Council Member Blundy noted that Council will bring back Amphitheater discussions at the December Committee of the Whole meeting. He asked if the feasibility study will be discussed and if the foundation will release it to the public. Mayor Manier does not know. Council Member Blundy feels they are asking for millions, Council has a duty to inform public, and there can't be an assessment to invest in infrastructure without the feasibility study. He is not in favor of until the feasibility study is released. Mayor Manier shared that \$6 million was invested in Freedom Parkway and the City does not own any of that property. He noted the City invested with hope that it would bring development. He also noted that the area for the amphitheater is the least desirable area on the 223 property. Council Member Blundy feels the City should be push the sale of other properties. He doesn't feel this makes financial sense. He shared that he provided Council Members with a document and stated that it was a high-level business assessment of the investment, including retail, lodging, transportation, etc. He feels the City would not get a return on investment after 10 years. He expressed his concern for a \$12-13 million option. He shared that there are two options, but the price tags are not near the \$13 million option. He said the numbers were based on a \$31 million option. He asked what if they can't get the events book or price point needed. He feels there are a lot of exclusions like the land cost. Mayor Manier shared other area projects that follow a similar process such as Bass Pro and a project in Pekin as well as other profitable ventures in the area and feels that the City should trust the professionals that do this. Mayor Manier further noted that Council does not have the expertise to pick apart a feasibility study. Council Member Blundy wants a fair market value for the land and questioned how they will deal with the sound. He shared a sheet with net value calculations. He suggested a townhall-type meeting and asked if Council would like to place an Advisory Referendum to ask for public feedback on the ballot. Council Member Adams asked if there was a townhall meeting or an Advisory Referendum on the ballot for

Freedom Parkway. He said he appreciates public input but they are elected to make decisions. Council Member Adams further noted that the City cannot control the private property that Council Member Blundy would like to push. He shared names of other cities with outdoor amphitheatres, and noted their vibrant hotels and restaurants and feels we are talking about growth. Council Member Martin noted that if a private company had this property, he could see Council Member Blundy's point but this will increase the value of our own property including the land leading up to the amphitheater. He feels the land value would increase by \$3.5 million or more. He feels that this is something we should already do and it would be irresponsible to not look at this big gift. He also noted that the \$3.5 is for our property not the amphitheater. Council Member Stevens doesn't feel it is a gift if we pay more than the gift that you put in. She asked about putting the amphitheater on Freedom Parkway. Mayor Manier shared that they have not yet studied the traffic and noise and the developer paid \$300,000 for the 10-month feasibility study. Council Member Adams noted that they have only had one meeting and looks forward to further discussion in December. He expressed concern for the negative feedback on an item they have not heard much about. Council Member McIntyre noted that the current land value is based on farmland and this is an opportunity to invest in the future that may improve the City. He feels there is ample time to ask questions and improving the property will increase its value. He also feels that the City can't rely on only one piece of 223 acres to give us the whole value and the City owns this land, unlike the land on Freedom Parkway. He shared that if we don't make positive changes, we will have to increase our taxes. Mayor Manier will have the developers come back for the Committee of the Whole meeting. He also shared that the foundation has a website.

**Adjournment** At 7:49 p.m. Council Member Smith moved to adjourn; Council Member Adams seconded. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

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Valeri L. Brod, City Clerk