

5:00 p.m. CDBG Housing Rehabilitation Application

Galesburg City Council Regular Meeting  
City Council Chambers  
55 West Tompkins Street, Galesburg, Illinois  
January 3, 2023  
5:30 p.m.

Called to order by Mayor Peter Schwartzman at 5:30 p.m.

Roll Call #1: Present: Mayor Peter Schwartzman, Council Members Bradley Hix, Wayne Dennis, Kevin Wallace, Dwight White, Jaclyn Smith-Esters, Sarah Davis, and Larry Cox, 8. Also Present: City Manager Gerald C. Smith, Interim City Attorney Paul Mangieri, and City Clerk Kelli Bennewitz.

Mayor Schwartzman declared a quorum present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The Mayor asked for a moment of silence in lieu of an invocation.

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Wallace, to approve the minutes of the City Council's regular meeting from December 19, 2022.

Roll Call #2:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Dennis, Wallace, White, Smith-Esters, Davis, and Cox, 7.

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

### **CONSENT AGENDA #2023-01**

All matters listed under the Consent Agenda are considered routine by the City Council and will be enacted by one motion.

#### **23-4000**

Approve a property tax assessment freeze program for historic, owner-occupied, residences.

#### **23-4001**

Approve updated purchasing policies and procedures.

#### **22-6007**

Approve the following commission appointment:

Mia Haneghan, Youth Commission, term expires December 2023.

#### **23-8000**

Approve bills in the amount of \$507,364.20 and advance checks in the amount of \$357,054.94.

Mayor Schwartzman asked for a brief explanation of the property tax assessment freeze. Steve Gugliotta, Community Development Director, stated that the program has been around since the late 1980s to encourage preservation of historic residences. The program freezes the assessed valuation of an owner-occupied historic residence when substantial rehabilitation is performed. The assessed valuation is frozen for a period of eight years at the level when the rehab began. Director Gugliotta noted that there are 24 local landmarks, of which 15 or 16 could be eligible for the program.

Council Member Cox inquired if a utility bill had been received yet for the Churchill building. Elizabeth Varner, Parks & Recreation Director, reported the most recent bill, for the month of November, came in at \$10,929. Director Varner noted that she contacted District #205 to try and determine why this cost was so high compared to last year and was told that the steam traps throughout the building are a big problem, as many do not work.

Director Varner also stated that it was also suggested to have the boiler set for night, never during the day, which the City was already doing. Unfortunately, the boiler can only be set to on or off, versus setting a thermostat for a temperature reading. She noted that Park staff did shut off the boiler during the New Year holiday since the temperatures had warmed up above freezing.

Council Member Hix asked where the funding would be coming from for the high utility bill. City Manager Smith stated that he will be working with the Finance Department to make that determination.

Council Member Smith-Esters moved, seconded by Council Member Davis, to approve Consent Agenda 2023-01.

Roll Call #3:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Dennis, Wallace, White, Smith-Esters, Davis, and Cox, 7.

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried by omnibus vote.

## **PASSAGE OF ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS**

### **23-2000**

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Smith-Esters, to approve Resolution 23-01 supporting the City of Galesburg applying for a State of Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Community Development Block Grant Program housing rehabilitation grant.

Roll Call #4:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Dennis, Wallace, White, Smith-Esters, Davis and Cox, 7.

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

## 23-2001

Council Member Smith-Esters moved, seconded by Council Member Cox, to approve Resolution 23-02 authorizing execution of a grant agreement with Discovery Depot Children's Museum in the amount of \$60,000; prorated to \$5,000 per month through 2023.

Diane Crock addressed the Council and stated that she has a concern about giving so much funding to a children's organization that doesn't allow access for a lot of children. The times open are inconvenient, and the cost is too high. She stated that if the City is helping with grants, it would be great to see an expansion of hours of operation for all children.

Denise Gerstenberger, Executive Director of the Discovery Depot Children's Museum, clarified that their operating hours are normally 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. but several nights there are extended hours for different programs. Most of these are low to reduced cost programs as well to meet the needs of the community. She also noted that they open early every Friday morning for "Smart from the Start," a free program in partnership with the Regional Office of Education for moms and children to attend. She encouraged residents to check out the Museum's Facebook page or call the museum for more information.

### Roll Call #5:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Dennis, Wallace, White, Smith-Esters, Davis and Cox, 7.

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

## BIDS, PETITIONS, AND COMMUNICATIONS

### PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Schwartzman read the guidelines and rules for Public Comment as published in the City's Municipal Code:

#### *30.06 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.*

*(A) Members of the public shall be allowed to address public officials at any regular or special meeting of a public body of the city only under the public participation rules as set forth herein. Public participation shall be permitted during the following portions of any meeting:*

- (1) Public Comment;*
- (2) Public Hearing; and*
- (3) Invited speakers.*

*(B) Public participation shall not be permitted during any meetings or portions of meetings which are deemed closed sessions under the Open Meetings Act, ILCS Ch. 5, Act 120, §§ 1 et seq., as amended.*

*(C) The presiding officer may impose reasonable limitations on public participation at public meetings, such as barring repetitious, irrelevant, immaterial, or inappropriate comments or testimony. The presiding officer shall have the authority to halt or suspend the public communications/hearing to a later date due to the duration of the public forum/hearing or lack of compliance with this section. In addition to those portions of a meeting set aside for public*

*participation, the presiding officer shall have the discretion to permit public comment at any other time during a meeting, subject to the provisions of this section.*

*(D) All items must pertain to city business. All speakers shall comply with this section and rulings of the presiding officer. Speakers must be called upon by the presiding officer prior to addressing the public body.*

*(E) Speakers shall identify themselves before beginning their comments or questions, and provide any supporting documentation and/or evidence they may wish to submit to the City Clerk. Speakers shall refrain from engaging in debates, directing threats or personal attacks at the presiding officer, council, city staff, other speakers or members of the audience. The presiding officer and other members of the public body shall have no obligation to respond to any comments or questions raised by members of the public.*

*(F) Members of the audience shall refrain from applauding, cheering, or booing during or at the conclusion of remarks made by any speaker, staff member, board member or presiding officer.*

*(G) Groups of residents should, whenever possible, consolidate their comments and avoid repetition through the use of representative speakers.*

*(H) All speakers shall limit their comments to approximately three minutes.*

*(I) The petitioner of an agenda item is a person or entity with a direct interest in a decision. The petitioner may proceed with a brief presentation of the petition for no more than ten minutes.*

*(1) Thereafter, other speakers may comment or ask questions on the agenda item after the presentation of the petition provided they comply with all the applicable provisions of this section.*

*(2) The petitioner shall have no more than five minutes to reply to comments or questions. Public participation after the petitioner's reply shall be prohibited unless the presiding officer directs otherwise.*

*(3) The presiding officer and council may, but need not ask questions of the petitioner and speakers at the conclusion of their comments.*

*(4) The council may then deliberate upon the petition. No additional comment may be made by the public or the petitioner except upon the express permission of the presiding officer.*

*(J) The above rules shall generally apply to public hearings and meetings of the Galesburg City Council, and all subsidiary boards, commissions and committees of the City of Galesburg.*

*(K) Any citizen may address the Council by invitation of the presiding officer or a majority of the Council present. Speakers invited to participate shall be subject to such limitations as the presiding officer or majority of the Council shall prescribe. In the absence of other restrictions, such speakers shall be governed by the same rules which govern the public forum.*

*(Ord. 14-3463, passed 10-20-2014)*

Samuel Carrington, Ward Five, addressed the Council and stated that he moved to Galeburg four years ago because it seemed like a safe place to live since being a queer, transgender, non-binary person is very important because people like them are attacked and murdered at unprecedented rates. They understand that bullies exist everywhere but did not expect bullies to hide behind the title of an elected official.

Carrington stated that this elected official, a Council Member, is not a friend when he retweets or posts articles that are full of hatred or makes comments about other elected officials. The elected official should publicly acknowledge his wrong doing and not use his position to bully people online while claiming to be a friend in person. Because the Council Member from Ward

One has failed to demonstrate leadership or accountability for his actions, Carrington urged the Council to do it for the City, which was founded in the spirit of freedom for all people. They asked that the comments be condemned and formally silence his voice through a censure until he does the work to repair the damage he has done.

Jerry Ryberg, Ward One, addressed the Council that thirty years ago he wrote a letter to the local newspaper stating that homosexuals are born that way and many studies since have proven that this is still the case. He believes that this trait shows up as early as age two in children, along with other traits. He quoted an article from the *Washington Post* regarding genetics as well.

Linda Miller addressed the Council and wished them all a happy new year and thanked them for being brave and moving forward with the increase in the sales tax, and understands it wasn't an easy decision to make. She appreciates them listening to the community, of all ages. She asked that possibly a consideration be made for the restaurants and hotels who currently have an additional tax and possibly make a reduction in their taxes collected. Furthermore, she thanked the Council for serving the community and being courageous.

Holly McDorman, president of PFLAG Galesburg, is committed to offering support and advocacy for the LGBTQIA+ community within the City of Galesburg and Knox County. They believe in inclusivity and equality for all, regardless of race, color, creed, gender identity, or sexual orientation. They also believe that elected officials have a duty to respect, represent, and serve the citizens of Galesburg in the same way.

McDorman noted that for the last four years, PFLAG Galesburg has been committed to creating a safe environment and providing education for the community and town. They stand with the LGBTQIA+ friends and family that live in Galesburg and will continue to strive to make their voices heard, as well as continuing to advocate.

She invited the Council and any residents to attend the next PFLAG Galesburg meeting at the Galesburg Public Library on January 14th and 3 p.m.

Des Stenger addressed the Council and stated that he does not live in Galesburg. He stated that he came to the meeting but is unfamiliar with any of the Council Members and only moved to the area in 2021 with his new family as transgender. She does fear for the safety of her spouse and child, especially during the pandemic. While not a resident, she does come here to shop and work, and believes it's nice to know that there are people who care. Being scared of where you live could be terrifying and hopes the Council looks for ways to bring together the diversity that Galesburg has from all backgrounds.

## **CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

### **23-4002**

Council Member Smith-Esters moved, seconded by Council Member White, to approve a minority and/or woman owned Business Startup Assistance Program and Southside Occupancy Assistance Program incentives for Brittany's Beautique, 1580 East Knox Street, Suite 3, in an amount up to \$3,200 over a two-year period.

Roll Call #6:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Dennis, Wallace, White, Smith-Esters, Davis and Cox, 7.  
Nays: None  
Absent: None  
Chairman declared the motion carried.

### **23-4003**

Council Member White moved, seconded by Council Member Cox, to approve a minority and/or woman owned Business Startup Assistance Program and Southside Occupancy Assistance Program incentives for All Star Sports Academy, 1855 East Knox Street, in an amount up to \$10,000.

Roll Call #7:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Dennis, Wallace, White, Smith-Esters, Davis and Cox, 7.  
Nays: None  
Absent: None  
Chairman declared the motion carried.

Council Member Smith-Esters moved, seconded by Council Member Davis, to sit as the Town Board. The motion carried.

## **TOWN BUSINESS**

### **23-9000**

Trustee Smith-Esters moved, seconded by Trustee White, to approve Town bills and warrants to be drawn in payment of same.

| <b>Fund Title</b>             | <b>Amount</b>      |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Town Fund                     | \$2,758.06         |
| General Assistance Fund       | \$4,460.60         |
| IMRF Fund                     | \$1,795.25         |
| Social Security/Medicare Fund | \$2,321.84         |
| Liability Fund                |                    |
| Audit Fund                    |                    |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>\$11,335.75</b> |

Roll Call #8:

Ayes: Trustees Hix, Dennis, Wallace, White, Smith-Esters, Davis, and Cox, 7.  
Nays: None  
Absent: None  
Chairman declared the motion carried.

Council Member Smith-Esters moved, seconded by Council Member Davis, to resume as the City Council. The motion carried.

## **CLOSING COMMENTS**

Council Member Cox inquired about the item listed on the agenda under the City Manager's report, "The role of code enforcement in working to ensure safe housing." He did not see

anything in the agenda packet and asked the City Manager to elaborate. City Manager Smith stated that he had asked Director Gugliotta to provide a summary of the process when the Community Development Department placards a home. City Manager Smith noted that this overview will be provided as a miscellaneous item presented to the Council at a future meeting.

Council Member Hix wished everyone a happy new year and is looking forward to all the changes that will happen in 2023.

Council Member Dennis also wished everyone a happy new year.

Council Member Wallace wished everyone a happy new year and stated that he supports his community in every way necessary. As a former counselor in the field of mental health, psychology, sociology, and early childhood development, he has always believed in the nature of a person being created by nature and a gift from God. He has been a champion for all people's rights, whether in office or not.

Council Member White stated that at the end of the last meeting he mentioned that he interrupted Council Member Hix when he was speaking and made an apology and noted that what he did might have been out of line. He stated that he read later, after the meeting, that he was a "man with no class." Council Member White stated that he is a man who humbled himself in front of everyone in order to say he was sorry. He felt the comments posted online later were terrible and hurtful, and makes one not want to apologize to anyone ever again, even if wrong. For the record, Council Member White apologized again for the interruption at the last meeting.

Council Member Smith-Esters wished everyone a happy 2023. She stated that she can only speak for herself and how she is going to lead and the way she will represent her city, which is to always have a full heart, be unconditional, see the people who are talking to her, as well as the ones who aren't saying anything, as they are sometimes the ones that are speaking the loudest. She noted that she wants everyone to know that she is a safe person and believes that everyone has a chance in this world and needs the opportunity. She is proud of Galesburg and thinks that the community is rolling into 2023 looking good and will keep the momentum going.

Council Member Davis also wished everyone a happy new year and stated that she wanted to reintroduce herself and add some information that she has not been too public about and stated that she is queer. She was elected by the citizens of Ward Six, but represents the entire City of Galesburg and believes that representation matters. LGBTQIA+ members of the Galesburg community deserve to see themselves represented in their leadership and personally cannot speak for all, but will also listen to everyone and value their voices. She believes everyone deserves safety and that this community should be a safe space for everyone to live and thrive because they matter and are loved.

Mayor Schwartzman stated that there have been allegations made about an individual member of this Council and that the City is following through to see what the validity of those allegations are. He will keep his comments limited on this subject until further investigation.

He stated that he is very proud of Galesburg for its support of people from all backgrounds, no matter their age, ethnicity, language they speak, home of origin, sexual preference, gender, sex, and all of the above. He will support, represent, and listen to anyone in our community and finds diversity in our community to be one of our greatest strengths. The Mayor further stated that it is uncomfortable for him to know that there are people in our community who do not feel safe. He believes it is incumbent upon all of us to rectify this, and believes that the vast majority of residents agree that we are a community of acceptance.

The Mayor stated that most are aware of the injury to NFL player Damar Hamlin and wished him the best from Galesburg.

He noted that artist Cora Soissa Markwart will be celebrating her 100th birthday and that some of her paintings will be on display at the Beanhive during the month of January.

Mayor Schwartzman commended the City Council and Chief Idle regarding a memo that stated that on January 9th the City will have hired their eighth officer, five of which are either people of color or women. He noted that two of these officers are African American and grew up in Galesburg.

The Mayor closed by stating that there will be a public meeting on the Community Center later this month when community members will be invited to share their thoughts on the operational and functions that will take place in the community center. An announcement about this meeting should be made by the end of this week.

There being no further business, Council Member Dennis, seconded by Council Member Smith-Esters, to adjourn the regular meeting at 6:21 p.m.

Roll Call #9:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Dennis, Wallace, White, Smith-Esters, Davis, and Cox, 7.

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

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Peter D. Schwartzman, Mayor

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Kelli R. Bennewitz, City Clerk