

Galesburg City Council Regular Meeting
City Council Chambers
55 West Tompkins Street, Galesburg, Illinois
January 17, 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, Dwight White, Jaclyn Smith-Esters, Sarah Davis, and Larry Cox, 7. Absent: Council Member Kevin Wallace, 1. 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 Smith-Esters moved, seconded by Council Member Dennis, to approve the minutes of the City Council's regular meeting from January 3, 2023.

Roll Call #2:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Dennis, White, Smith-Esters, Davis, and Cox, 6.

Nays: None

Absent: Council Member Wallace, 1.

Chairman declared the motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA #2023-02

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

23-2002

Approve a Motor Fuel Tax Maintenance Resolution for the annual sealcoating for the 2023 calendar year in the amount of \$275,000.

23-2003

Approve a Motor Fuel Tax Maintenance Resolution for the 2023 Intermittent Resurfacing project in the amount of \$400,000.

22-6001

Approve the following commission appointment:

Planning & Zoning Commission

Carla Markwart, term expires June 2024

Community Relations Commission

Andrea Bejarano-Robinson, term expires February 2026

Golf Commission

Dave Selkirk (reappointment), term expires June 2024

23-8001

Approve bills in the amount of \$886,052.90 and advance checks in the amount of \$1,053,822.39.

Council Member White moved, seconded by Council Member Cox, to approve Consent Agenda 2023-02.

Roll Call #3:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Dennis, White, Smith-Esters, Davis, and Cox, 6.

Nays: None

Absent: Council Member Wallace, 1.

Chairman declared the motion carried by omnibus vote.

PASSAGE OF ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

23-1000

Ordinance on first reading amending the zoning from Two Family (R2) to Institutional (I), for the parcel generally located west of Gale Village Drive.

23-1001

Ordinance on first reading amending the zoning from Single Family (R1B) to Single Family (R1A), for the property located at the southwest corner of Louisville Road and South Academy Street.

23-2004

Council Member Smith-Esters moved, seconded by Council Member White, to approve Resolution 23-03 in support of the sale of general obligation bonds in the approximate amount of \$5.3 million for a community center.

Council Member Dennis inquired about the interest rate for a bond issue. City Manager Smith stated that staff has nothing formal yet and only a preliminary rate. Gloria Osborn, Finance & Information Systems Director, reported that at the time of the sale, likely March 6th, the rate will be known. A preliminary rate, as of today, would be 3.6% on a \$5 million bond.

Council Member Dennis stated that if a bond issuance was done for Churchill, a \$7.5 million project, where would the remaining funding come from. The City Manager stated that the rest of the funding would be secured or obtained through fundraising and that the project would be done in phases.

Council Member Hix inquired as to why the bond proceeds would be restricted to a community center and not be broad enough to include other infrastructure projects. It was noted that staff

was directed to inquire about bonds that would be restricted to a community center, although not a specific address or location.

Mayor Schwartzman added that the reason why he sought Council support for a restricted bond was multifold. He noted that he was on the Council when the Utility Tax was passed six years ago on a 4/3 vote. This tax amounted to approximately \$2.2 million, of which \$700,000 per year for the next 20 years was to be dedicated to an infrastructure bond. When he voted for the tax at the time, he believed that it was clear that the \$700,000 would be used for a bond, which ended up being a \$9.6 million bond issuance in 2016. Of that \$9.6 million, \$3 million was to be earmarked toward a large project, and it was his understanding that the project would be a community center. One year later, no action was taken by the City Council to move forward with that project. It was then reported that the entire \$9.6 million was for infrastructure, specifically roads, streets, and sidewalks. The Mayor stated that direction was not his interpretation and not why he voted for the Utility Tax.

In this case, the reason why he sought support for a restricted bond is so that there is no ambiguity about what the money's for. The second reason why he advocated for a bond of this size was that a bond issued for roads and streets would likely be prohibitively expensive. The purpose of the increased sales tax is to ensure that there is money for bond payments, and any additional monies from that tax will be put towards streets and roads. That is estimated to be about 55-65% of the .25% sales tax increase.

This is a ten-year bond, and if passed in the next few months, that means that the next 10 years of the sales tax, 100% would be put towards streets and roads. He understands that streets and roads is a primary concern of the residents based on the scientific survey done by the City.

Council Member Wallace entered the meeting via telephone at 5:49 p.m.

Council Member Smith-Esters stated that for the remaining funding needed, approximately \$2.5 million, she is personally working on two projects to bring more money to Galesburg to help with the community center. She is also aware of other Council Members who are doing the same to help off-set the costs. She added that there are plans for the community center, and she is still getting data and information, and once that is received, the public will be made aware too.

Council Member Cox questioned that if the City does receive \$3-4 million in grants and the City does not need the entire \$5.3 million, what happens to those funds at that time. City Manager Smith stated that they could be specified for other uses within the facility in terms of programming or grants to individuals who cannot afford a membership. There are a variety of approaches on how additional funding can be used, but that it starts with construction and then will be used to sustain and maintain.

Mayor Schwartzman stated that the estimated \$7.3 million is based on certain features and basic needs of a community center. There have been discussions of this in the community and one event will take place on January 31st and made public shortly. He assumes the community will be asking for additional amenities and believes those items would be well suited for grant

application. The Mayor also noted that the gap could be utilized by ARPA funding that was received and set aside (approximately \$1 million).

Council Member Cox stated that he would like the option to use some of these funds for other projects, such as H.T. Custer park or other park projects. He inquired if bond counsel had been contacted about this resolution. City Manager Smith stated that the whole process began with bond counsel. Director Osborn stated that this resolution is one of support and commitment. She also noted that if the bond is approved, the funds and project must be managed by the City and not another entity.

Council Member Cox stated that there has been a recommendation and some discussion from members of this Council and members of the public off the record that perhaps the guidance and managing of the facility could be done by a board or commission and not necessarily by the City itself. He asked if that were to happen, would it prohibit the use of these bonds. Director Osborn stated that she would get an opinion from bond counsel to verify.

Council Member Hix inquired about unfunded Parks & Recreation projects and was told there were approximately 24 projects to date. Elizabeth Varner, Parks & Recreation Department Director, stated that those projects are in no particular order, but that Council will need to approve to move forward on each and noted that they are all included in the Capital Improvement Plan.

Council Member Davis stated the term “unfunded” is being used as a diversion. She noted that these projects don’t necessarily have a line item in the current budget, but that does not preclude them from making their way into a future budget. Director Osborn agreed that there is no budget at this time for these projects, but that they can be looked at each year. It was noted that these projects come down to priority by the City Council.

Council Member Cox stated that he has looked at this list, and has for the last twenty years, and it hasn’t changed much. They don’t rise to the top of the list because there are more important items to fund, such as personnel, utilities, etc. He believes that these items will continue to be put on hold due to funding being funneled directly to a community center instead.

Council Member Wallace stated that he is working on getting dedicated donations for the field at H.T. Custer Park.

Jim Jacobs addressed the Council and stated that the City has been spinning its wheels for many years and has been in a funk. He noted that there is no magic bullet, but that providing an opportunity for kids to be constructive and mentored will go a long way to appeal to the young people of our community to stay. He added that there is a lot of movement in our community with the new Library and hopes the Council votes yes on this resolution.

Reverend Jowers addressed the Council and thanked First Lutheran Church for hosting the Martin Luther King breakfast, as well as the City Manager for sharing his story. He noted that the Council Members’ votes tonight will tell a lot about their priorities. He is in favor of a bond and also congratulated the City on the article in the Peoria magazine. Furthermore, he noted

that he will be in Peoria working with kids on an engineering program, which could also be done here. Likewise, he added that some Council Members are trying to block the initiative and are against diversity and don't want to see the City move forward.

Heather Zeigler Acerra addressed the Council and stated that she lives in Ward Five and is a Galesburg native. She stated that she has worked out of town for many years, but she and her husband have spent a lot of time working with youth and ran a young Marines program. The program was a coed youth leadership and development program. She stated that what concerns and disturbs her is the characterization that is being placed on people that are against this vote. She stated that the Council is about to approve a ton of money for a property before the programs have been defined.

Ms. Acerra further stated that she believes it is very unfair of people to say that those who are concerned about fiscal management don't care about kids or Galesburg, which she believes is not true. She started a business and noted that planning is key and feels that the Council needs to be focusing on the programs and right leadership first. She stated that she had the benefit of being on a committee for a former Galesburg benefactor who donated a lot of money to keep youth in the community and to give them vocational training and development. Acerra also stated that she has been to Peoria quite a bit and is a member of the bicycle co-op there and knows there are people who attend the Dream Center and work with the youth. This gives the youth a wonderful opportunity to work with their hands and possibly spark an interest in the vocations. She implored to all that we need to love each other and though there may be disagreements on how to fiscally approach the project, no one should demonize people who are not in favor of this building.

Pastor Vince Marolla addressed the Council and stated that he lives in Ward Seven and spoke in support of a community center. He stated that he agrees with the discussion on community and family, which are important and the heart of Galesburg. When he looks at Galesburg, 25% of the people in this community live below the federal poverty line. He added that 25% of the people rely on Medicare for their healthcare. At the last Council meeting, 27 people spoke about the sales tax and 24 were in favor of an increase. He understands that the programs are not there yet, but that it will take time to formulate. Those 24 people, representing a wide variety of Galesburg, spoke in favor so that we can start to move forward and help those in need and in poverty. He added that the three people who spoke against the sales tax increase all had something in common -- they were old and white. They are people who have privilege, power, and money, and can use them all to get what they need. If the Council does not approve a community center, then they are denying services to people who need it. He feels that this community has enough money and that we need to get out of the belief that we are a community living on scarce resources. We have people in this community who could write a check for \$7 million dollars and the community center would be built. He noted that it's about where our priorities are and that if they are about community and family and caring for the least and taking care of those in need, they should not be voting against this item. They should be voting for the bonds and helping the community move forward.

Diane Crock addressed the Council and stated that she knows it's already been said that this will be approved and it's simply a technicality, but she believes it is important to have a legacy and

know what you will be remembered for. She is surprised by Council Member Dennis, having known him for many years, and he always seemed to be for the betterment of everybody. His legacy will be what he is doing for the children and families now. She feels it seems very trite and very rude to say that it is a project of a few, but instead it is the entire community coming together for a community center.

George Carter Jr. addressed the Council as the vice president and a coach of the Galesburg Youth Boxing Club. For over 28 years he has been involved in boxing and has seen things disappear from our community for youth. He feels that there is nothing here for the kids and that not all kids play sports. He believes that Galesburg is declining and crime is increasing. Furthermore, he hopes that we can all come together as one and help each other.

Robert Cain stated that he doesn't want to see a bond issue, but hopes the Council moves forward for future generations and to give youth a place to go.

A woman addressed the Council and stated that she was new to Galesburg, only having been here 5–6 years. When she came to the community it was great, her special needs' son had something to do, but now the community has gone down. She believes there is nothing for kids to do, the crime rate is up, and hopes the Council will say yes to the community center.

Andrea Bejarano-Robinson, Ward Two, addressed the Council and stated that she moved to Galesburg in September and did her research on our community because she has four kids (ages 7 to 16). She came here because she was told she didn't belong in her last community in South Carolina. People begged her to move from her last city because of her gender, her children having special needs, or for not being American enough.

She stated that her childhood was changed in Minneapolis due to a community center. This center was funded by the city and county and led by community members. She was able to talk to older people who had similar experiences and feels that the community center saved her life. She wants to invest time in our community and has children that want things to do, and she would have a passion for organizing a community center if it is funded. As a Hispanic person, there is nothing about the American flag that she doesn't respect as a naturalized citizen.

Council Member White stated that spirit is what is going to make this project go forward, even though there are still funding questions. He also believes there are people who love this community and will volunteer, which will allow community groups to grow. Many youths in the community know him from volunteering, and he believes that a community center will be the vessel to do it all and will change the lives of many kids.

Council Member Dennis stated that he is not against a community center, but instead the location. He is in favor of a new building with new equipment.

Mayor Schwartzman noted that the resolution does not specify the location of a building for a community center. This Council has approved a resolution for the Churchill building, but this bond resolution does not specify a building itself or a location. He added that this was intentional and noted that the community center will happen soon regardless. Based on

research, the Council looked at other properties but it was decided that the Churchill location was the best deal. He does not want to wait another three years kicking the can down the road and reiterated that this Council is working with the knowledge they have and the money they have. The Mayor also noted that this resolution does not commit the City to bonding, but does begin the process.

Council Member Cox stated that he also is not against a community center, but does not think the Churchill property is the right location and that the resolution is not worded the best. In the past, other projects have been listed that bond proceeds could be used for, and believes it should be an option. He noted that it would always be up to Council's discretion to where those monies were spent.

Council Member Wallace believes that for the last year and half, this progressive Council has been three-fold. He has been working with the Parks & Recreation Department on H.T. Custer Park and is assisting with outside fundraising efforts. He feels that at this time, the Council needs to approve a resolution to appoint a group of individuals who are like-minded and wise enough to go in the right direction with Council having complete oversight. Likewise, he believes that there is a plan but that it is scattered and one needs to be devised so that it is clear to the public, and for this reason he will be voting in favor of the bond, albeit with some reservations.

Roll Call #4:

Ayes: Council Members Wallace, White, Smith-Esters, and Davis, 4.

Nays: Council Members Hix, Dennis, and Cox, 3.

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-2005

Council Member Davis moved, seconded by Council Member Smith-Esters, to approve Resolution 23-04 in support of the City of Galesburg recognizing the ongoing struggle for dignity and equality for all lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQ+) people to forge a more inclusive society. The Mayor asked Interim City Attorney Paul Mangieri to read the resolution aloud.

Council Member Smith-Esters stated that there is no room in Galesburg for hate and that with the comments made tonight she fears for her queer friends. She thinks of the city of Laramie, Wyoming, where in 1998, Matthew Shepard was killed by citizens who thought hate of the LGBTQ+ was acceptable. She feels that being a Council Member means they are in a position of high standard and reflect the values and morals of this community. She stated that Council is having this discussion and making this Resolution of Support because of social media posts that were made by a Bradley A. Hix. She further stated that she has not heard Council Member Hix take ownership or deny these posts and feels that he should let Galesburg know if it was him or not and what his stance is on this matter.

Council Member Davis stated that she is disappointed that the Council is at this position where they have to bring forward this resolution and where they have to bring all of these people into

the Council Chambers to stand up for basic human rights and respect. In a city founded on the principles of freedom and equity, our residents and visitors feel unsafe. She is disappointed that shameful, ignorant, rude, and vile comments have been made against transgender people on social media and that no one has taken accountability. She is disappointed that as a city, we are doing what feels like the least of what can be done, which is speaking out against hateful rhetoric.

Council Member Davis stated that the last couple of weeks for her have included a lot of tears, and it brings her to the Bible verse where Jesus wept. She would be remiss not to have tears in light of the baseless hatred and unrelenting violence perpetrated against people who are just trying to live their lives. Another phrase often associated with Christianity is “love thy neighbor,” which is a mantra taught across nations, cultures, other religions, and is foundational to being a good citizen. She wholeheartedly supports this resolution, which declares that ignorance, bigotry, bullying, and hate has no place in Galesburg.

Council Member Dennis stated that he has never seen or heard of anyone from the LGBTQ+ community being harmed in our community. Some of his friends are gay, and he will be voting in favor of this resolution.

Roll Call #5:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Dennis, Wallace, White, Smith-Esters, Davis, Cox, and Mayor Schwartzman, 8.

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-2006

Council Member Smith-Esters moved, seconded by Council Member Hix, to approve Resolution 23-05 authorizing a feasibility study on the designation of a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District 6.

Director Gugliotta noted that the map attached to the resolution is preliminary and that once the study is complete, the map will likely change slightly. He also noted that the other taxing bodies will be notified and a meeting of the Joint Review Board will be held to review.

Council Member Smith-Esters inquired if a TIF District had ever been discussed for Monmouth Boulevard. Director Gugliotta noted that there is an Enterprise Zone in that area, but that there has not been one in that area. This does not preclude one being looked at in the future.

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.

BIDS, PETITIONS, AND COMMUNICATIONS

23-3000

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Smith-Esters, to approve the bid from Qubit in the amount of \$282,169.39 for the replacement of the City's network equipment.

Roll Call #7:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

Council Member Davis left the meeting at 7:12 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Louann Mahnesmith addressed the Council and is not in favor of a new TIF District and recommended that a clearer map be available for the public. She hopes the City looks at historical information on how a TIF District helped East Main Street and hopes a new program is not taken advantage of.

Council Member Davis returned to the meeting at 7:14 p.m.

Robert Cain addressed the Council and believes that a new TIF will help many businesses, but he also hopes it creates jobs.

Council Member Dennis left the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Jim Jacobs addressed the Council and thanked them for voting for the resolution, putting a stamp on the fact that we want to be inclusive. He specifically thanked Council Members Smith-Esters and Davis for their statements.

Reverend Vince Marolla address the Council and presented a statement from The Interfaith Collective of Galesburg for the minutes:

As people of faith and leaders within our faith community, we have been made aware and greatly troubled by recent comments and social media postings by community leaders that target and dehumanize members of the LGBTQIA+ community, specifically persons who are transgender, nonbinary, and gender-queer. Within our various traditions, we understand that humanity was created in the image of God. We read in the first chapter of Genesis, the first book of Jewish and Christian scripture, "God said, "Let us make humanity in our image to be like us.... Humankind was created as God's reflection: in the divine image God created them:... God looked at all of this creation, and proclaimed that this was good - very good". As part of God's good creation, all people are thus of infinite sacred worth, not in-spite of their gender identity but including their gender identity.

In today's increasingly polarized world, it can happen that the ways in which we talk about one another are framed as being rooted in ideology, political correctness, or as reflection of 'wokeness'. It is then tempting to reduce individuals to faceless groups. As clergy

and religious leaders, we believe that we are called to center the concern for others in our conversations on all subjects. Thus, we are not here to speak to political ideology or 'wokeness' but rather the ways in which we care for one another.

According to the Pew Research Center, around 5% of young adults identify as transgender or nonbinary. That is one in twenty young adults. As these young people grow up, they make up an increasingly large part of our community. The community that you lead and represent. Your example as leaders in this community makes a real impact on people's lives. In 2022, the Trevor Project found that 45% of LGBTQIA+ youth have seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year, including more than half of transgender and nonbinary youth. This is not because the LGBTQIA+ community is inherently more prone to suicide.

Rather, this is because of the stresses and stigma that is placed on them simply because of who they are. When they are part of communities that accept them for who they are, these numbers reduce dramatically.

When we use dehumanizing language to describe people and groups of people, including the LGBTQIA+ community our words have a real impact on real people. We are here today, as members of the faith community, to remind us all that we are talking today not about ideas, issues, or abstractions, but about people. We are talking about real people. We are talking about friends, relatives, loved ones, neighbors, congregation members, and constituents. These people live real lives, dream real dreams, and have real feelings. When we use demeaning and dehumanizing language it causes real harm: spiritual harm, emotional harm, mental harm, and physical harm. This harm is inflicted upon these persons that we know and love, as well as upon their friends, families, and communities. In Christian scripture, the Apostle Paul uses the metaphor of the body for the community, noting, "... So that there won't be division in the body and so the parts might have mutual concern for each other. If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part gets the glory, all parts celebrate with it". In other words, this harm is not isolated in the lives of individuals but flows all through our community causing ripples of pain and conflict. The harm inflicted upon our transgender and nonbinary siblings harms us all.

We thus thank this council for its continued affirmation of support for the LGBTQIA+ community, and invite us all into a time of reflection upon the impact of our words.

Gayle Galbreath addressed the Council and stated that she feels she is being discriminated against due to her home being placarded. She stated that she owns the home but her disabled son lived there with other individuals. She has been attempting to get a permit in order to perform plumbing work, but has been told that a licensed professional will need to do the work.

Council Member Dennis returned to the meeting at 7:19 p.m.

Ms. Galbreath stated that her son and friends were evicted from the home around Christmas time and that she is simply asking for a permit. Mayor Schwartzman thanked her for her comments but added that this is a complicated situation that staff has been addressing and does not believe all her comments were truthful.

John Pritchard addressed the Council and stated that he is a lifelong resident of Galesburg and has had an interest in the Open Meetings Act since the late 1970s when he served as publisher of the Galesburg Register-Mail and in his current position as president of Galesburg Broadcasting. He stated that he is addressing the Council regarding the need to keep public business public. The OMA provides direction for open and closed meetings and stated that on December 5, 2022, the Council voted to go into Executive Session for the purposes of discussing the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees (5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(1)).

Mr. Pritchard noted that almost all the Executive Session was streamed by the City and stated that WGIL routinely records the City Council meetings and ended up recording approximately 25 minutes of the executive session. After review, he believes there was no valid reason to discuss the topic being discussed in closed session and it is therefore a violation of the Open Meetings Act. He stated that his staff checked with the Illinois Press Association to get their opinion on what was said in the executive session, and they agreed that it was clearly a violation.

He also reported that his staff consulted with the EEOC regarding some of the comments that were made in the meeting by the City Manager and found some of them were problematic based on the answers received from the EEOC.

Mr. Pritchard stated that he doesn't understand how this happened and noted that the City Manager obviously requested that this item be put on the agenda for a specific person, and then it was approved by the Mayor. He added that a city manager of 38 years, as well as the Mayor and Council Members, should be aware of the rules. Mr. Pritchard stated that his staff has written a story about this incident and that there is a link on the WGIL webpage with the audio from the meeting. He added that citizens interested in local government will be interested to learn about the subjects discussed at the meeting. He stated that executive sessions are not for the purposes of discussing uncomfortable topics or items that Council does not want to discuss in open session.

He finally noted that it would be great if there was enough money to fund all the projects in the City of Galesburg. The CIP typically has projects totaling more than \$2 million, and all are valuable and relevant. The difficulty for the Council is to decide who and what gets the funding and who doesn't.

Reverend Jowers addressed the Council and stated that he has never seen that before (John Pritchard's comments) and that he knows former Mayor Sal Garza and that he has not shown up in respect for the current administration. He feels that Mr. Pritchard's comments are a gross conflict of interest. He stated there are a lot of things going on at this meeting and that people are going to have to go home and go to sleep tonight. Some may have a good night's sleep, but there are some who will not.

Andrea Bejarano-Robinson, Ward Two, addressed the Council and stated that when someone is on the job, they are typically working for a company or a city, and if that person Tweets or re-Tweets things, those would be subject to their boss' knowledge and company policy. If these Tweets were done by a City employee, they would have been fired. She has children and friends who identify as transgender, and she herself is nonbinary. She emailed all the Council Members so that they were aware of her feelings, and she wanted to publicly ask the people or person who made those comments to resign from the City Council. In doing so, that would be a statement of apology for their comments and actions. She respects human beings as they are and doesn't expect all people to accept they/them pronouns. She believes that Council Members are public servants and when speaking, they represent their Ward and the entire City.

Council Member White left the meeting at 7:36 p.m.

She chose Galesburg because there was a PFLAG and that it was a safe community for her and her children.

Jay McDorman stated that he is in the 9th grade and that the comments posted on Twitter by a Council Member are unacceptable. Jay lives in a house of people who are part of the LGBTQ+ community. Many friends get bullied and picked on because of the homophobic environment.

Council Member White returned to the meeting at 7:38 p.m.

Deanna Trout, founder and Executive Director of the Community Hygiene Pantry, addressed the Council and stated that when she first started the pantry she strived to make the space welcoming to everyone. She provides compassion and tries to make everyone feel comfortable but does worry about some of her clients. If anyone is in a position where they serve people with a variety of circumstances and lifestyles, you may not understand but that you are there for them and everyone deserves dignity.

Holly McDorman, Ward Two, addressed the Council and apologized to anyone that may be triggered or upset by what she has to say. On June 4th, a Twitter account with the name Bradley A. Hix re-Tweeted many homophobic Tweets geared toward the transgender community. Council Member Hix voted yes to the resolution to help support the queer community, and if he really meant to support it, then she believes he needs to publicly admit the Tweets were his and that he apologize for them and be a better ally in the future. He also needs to be open to education. She has had a child who has been bullied and had violence threatened against them for who they are. Violence against the transgender community increases every year, and they celebrate the remembrance of these individuals every November. Council Member Hix should resign if he is not genuine.

Jo addressed the Council and stated that they moved here from Canton after being given the opportunity to live in HUD housing in Galesburg and feels comfortable and safe here. Living here means not having to worry about being a trans youth. They are disgusted and disappointed at the hurtful comments by a Council Member and reminded them that they represent all members of the community.

Des Stenger addressed the Council and stated that while she lives outside of Galesburg, she is in our community every day. She thanked the Council for passing the resolution and for supporting a community center as well. She encouraged everyone to ask questions and seek information on things they don't understand, such as the LGBTQ+ community. Stenger stated that she sees a lot of good in our community and understands that the last couple of years have been tough on Galesburg.

The Mayor asked for a recess at 7:55 p.m.

The Mayor reconvened the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Max Gomez addressed the Council, formerly Maya Gomez, who was an afraid little girl who didn't know how to speak her mind and who wanted to blend in but couldn't. They came out as transgender at the age of 13 and everyone ignored it deliberately. They tried to blend in over the years and has had an amazing time coming out as Max, using they/them pronouns, and feels free. They further stated that he is not a freak and hopes the Council Member apologizes.

Diane Crock addressed the Council seeking a clarification about crimes against minorities or a member of the community who has scared individuals right now. She questioned if the City is saying there are no crimes against minorities or people of this community. Council Member Dennis stated that unless the Chief can correct him, he had not read or heard of anyone being harmed from the LGBTQ+ community.

Ms. Crock stated that people don't trust him and don't feel that there is a safe space to let people know these crimes are happening. She believes he was very contradictory and that it wasn't about a community center building but still voted against the item. She feels that there is a "circus" trying to take away from the real issue and feels that people lie all the time, but numbers don't. People need to go out and make some changes when it's time to vote.

Darla Krejci, Ward Five, addressed the Council and stated that it has been alleged that Council Member Hix has made some transphobic and homophobic Tweets and she and her partner and friends found them offensive. She stated that those comments could have been made from ignorance, peer pressure, etc. but feels that they aren't being addressed. She shared a story where she made a similar insensitive comment on a Facebook post, and it was pointed out that the information she posted was insensitive. She took this opportunity to learn and grow, but she did not block the person, dig up dirt on them to discredit them, or look for other offensive posts to allow her post to look better, nor did she portray herself as a victim. She hopes that Mr. Hix can admit his wrongdoing and then there can be grace with an apology.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

23-4004

Council Member Cox moved, seconded by Council Member Dennis, to table agenda item 23-4004 for the approval of a minor plat of the Gale Village Re-Subdivision No. 2 until the February 6, 2023, City Council meeting.

Roll Call #8:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Dennis, White, Smith-Esters, Davis and Cox, 6.

Nays: Council Member Wallace, 1.

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-4005

Council Member Smith-Esters moved, seconded by Council Member Davis, to approve a facade grant in an amount not to exceed \$40,000, or 50% of the actual final project costs, whichever is less, for the Galesburg Community Arts Center.

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.

23-4006

Council Member Smith-Esters moved, seconded by Council Member White, to approve a Workers' Compensation settlement agreement in the amount of \$18,916.25 for Police Officer Carr.

Roll Call #10:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-4007

Council Member Smith-Esters moved, seconded by Council Member Cox, to approve a Professional Service Agreement with PGAV Planners, LLC in the amount of \$31,500 to provide consulting services for the proposed creation of a new Tax Increment Financing District along Grand Avenue.

Roll Call #11:

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 White, to sit as the Town Board. The motion carried.

TOWN BUSINESS

23-9001

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

Fund Title	Amount
Town Fund	\$8,923.23
General Assistance Fund	\$4,540.07
IMRF Fund	
Social Security/Medicare Fund	
Liability Fund	
Audit Fund	
Total	\$13,463.30

Roll Call #12:

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 Dennis thanked everyone for attending the meeting tonight.

Council Member White stated that several years ago, President Obama stated that no one made anything (their business) by themselves, and he caught a lot of flack for the comment. He believes he was right thinking that the business owner didn't build the streets they need and that no one makes anything in this country by themselves. He wondered who picked all the cotton to start this nation off, who fed the first settlers, who welcomed the people out west. All the big people, all the money people, all the people who run things and have influence, all need little people underneath them to succeed. Don't belittle the people who got you where you are now just because you have authority, influence, and money. He wants to see the community move forward and the people on this Council work together.

Council Member White appreciated all who came to the Martin Luther King breakfast and added that when he leaves, he wants to make sure he's done something important in his City. Former Council Member W.C. Jackson was a mentor of his and tries to follow in his footsteps and give back to the community. He thanked First Lutheran Church for providing the food for the breakfast and for those who contributed to the scholarships.

Council Member Smith-Esters stated that the Martin Luther King breakfast was awesome and thanked City Manager Smith for being the keynote speaker. She also thanked those who attended the meeting tonight and stated that they are role models for those who are listening and watching.

Council Member Davis was delighted to hear the comments about First Lutheran Church, where she is part of the leadership, and was proud and delighted to be a member there and participate in serving the community. She appreciates all the dedicated people who volunteered and served as well.

Council Member Davis thanked everyone for coming to speak; something that takes a lot of courage and vulnerability. She is mortified that there are people still in leadership roles who continue to deflect accountability for cruel and shameful statements, but is proud of community members who continue to speak out and demand accountability and real leadership. These individuals refuse to accept excuses and diversionary tactics and who are doing the work every day to make the LGBTQIA+ residents and visitors feel safe. She remains an out loud, queer woman, and will use her power and privilege to give a voice to those who have historically been marginalized by systemic inequity. She invited every citizen to do what they can for this cause and together Galesburg can return to a beacon of hope and love.

Council Member Cox announced that a week from today, January 24th, 6 p.m., the City will host an HT Custer Park Public Design Workshop at the King Elementary School library. Residents can share their ideas on the proposed park development.

Council Member Hix thanked Council Member White on the Martin Luther King Jr. breakfast, as well as all the other volunteers. He thanked the IT staff and City Clerk's staff for the items he has requested on several projects and appreciates all their work. He also added that he is concerned about the Open Meetings Act violation and visited the Illinois Attorney's General's website to retake the OMA training.

Council Member Wallace thanked everyone who attended the meeting and thanked those who were also involved with the Martin Luther King breakfast. He noted that civil rights affects more than just black people, but also Hispanics, LGBTQ+ individuals, union people, and all those who are poor. Martin Luther King once said "he had a dream," which should include everybody. His motto is "I am my brother's keeper, and I am my sister's keeper."

Mayor Schwartzman wished Council Member Dennis' wife a speedy recovery from her surgery. He was also able to attend the Martin Luther King breakfast, which was a beautiful ceremony, with the new City Manager as the keynote speaker. He showed why he is a leader and thanked him for showing his vulnerability to our community after only being here for two months.

He also stated that there were three students who read their essays at the breakfast, all of which were profound on the civil rights movement. He stated that Martin Luther King would have turned 94 years old two days ago if he were alive today. He is famous for many quotes, one which he believes speaks to this community - "we may have all come on different ships, but we're all in the same boat now." When he thinks of Galesburg, he believes that we are all in the same boat and that our collective future depends on everyone working together and empathizing, listening, and learning from each other. He has tremendous confidence in this city and believes that sometimes the noise from outside confuses people and makes us become angry, frustrated, or filled with despair.

The Mayor stated that what he saw tonight was a civics lesson with incredibly courageous people coming forward and sharing their life story and hardships. We are blessed that they are here and willing to share, which is difficult to do. We all heard and learned about what's important from people taking from their hearts. They are the future of our community. As

everyone pursues their lives over the next several weeks, and until Council meets again, he asked everyone to keep in mind what is trying to be done and the power of each resident to influence others thoughts and dreams. He added that he believes everyone has the power to build this community.

Mayor Schwartzman announced the HT Custer meeting again on the 24th, as well as a City Council Work Session on Monday, January 30th. Topics will include a branding exercise for the City, and potentially the County. On Tuesday, January 31st, he will be hosting an event at the Vault at 5:30 p.m. to discuss the community center, specifically the operations, programs, and services that will be there. He reiterated that he is hosting this forum and Council Members are able to attend, but in order to avoid any OMA violations, they are not allowed to participate in discussion. He welcomes all to come and that he will be sharing his notes with the Council.

In closing, the Mayor stated that all these meetings have led people to attend and speak from their hearts and spread the love in our community. He believes all these meetings are like a page or chapter in a book -- we will find ourselves in the book and create a story, written by the community. There is no known conclusion yet, but everyone's an author. He hopes people continue to attend and participate in meetings. He noted that change is very hard and as Mayor of this city, he is indebted and very thankful for this opportunity to serve.

Council Member Cox moved, seconded by Council Member White, to adjourn into Executive Session at 8:41 p.m. for the purposes of discussing property acquisition (5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(5).

Roll Call #13:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

During the Executive Session, Council Member Smith-Esters, seconded by Council Member Hix, to adjourn the Executive Session at 9:38 p.m.

Roll Call #14:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

Peter D. Schwartzman, Mayor

Kelli R. Bennewitz, City Clerk