

Galesburg City Council Regular Meeting
City Council Chambers
55 West Tompkins Street, Galesburg, Illinois
April 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.

Semenya McCord gave the invocation.

Council Member Wallace moved, seconded by Council Member Smith-Esters, to approve the minutes of the City Council's regular meeting from March 20, 2023.

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 #2023-07

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

23-2016

Approve Resolution 23-18 reserving the City's 2023 private activity bonding authority.

23-3010

Approve the bid from Gunther Construction, a Division of UCM, Inc. of Galesburg, in the amount of \$323,483.65 for the 2023 annual seal coating contract.

23-8006

Approve bills in the amount of \$341,887.80 and advance checks in the amount of \$728,811.58.

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Smith-Esters, to approve Consent Agenda 2023-07.

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

23-1005

Council Member Smith-Esters moved, seconded by Council Member Davis, to approve Ordinance 23-3696 on final reading directing the sale of twelve City-owned vacant lots.

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.

23-2021

Council Member Smith-Esters moved, seconded by Council Member White, to approve Resolution 23-19 to enter into an easement agreement with Ameren Illinois to connect a solar project in the Galesburg Business Park.

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.

23-2002

Council Member Smith-Esters moved, second by Council Member Davis, to approve Resolution 23-20 to procure Galesburg's allocation of aviation fuel taxes from the Illinois Department of Transportation.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Schwartzman reminded citizens that electioneering is not permitted and that any individuals from external agencies will have a chance to address the Council later in the agenda.

Robert Cain addressed the Council and thanked them for their hard work and reminded everyone to vote tomorrow. He also noted that the solar sign in Oquawka is gone and that he hopes a fence is going up soon around the fire damaged building in Ward Three.

Jodi White read a statement from Pastor Antonio S. Franklin, Sr.:

Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend tonight's City Council meeting due to COVID in our home. My wife and I moved to Galesburg in 1995 and have adopted Galesburg as our new home. Two years ago we returned to Galesburg after residing in Urbana, IL for 7 years. Upon returning, I was pleased to see the diversity represented on the city council, thus reflecting the make-up of the city and demonstrating signs of actually being inclusive in both ethnicity and gender. However, after seeing the smear campaign tactics in this election, everyone may not be as enthusiastic as me about this positive change. The negative campaigning is unnecessary. The Bible tells us in Romans 3:23 "All of us have sinned and fallen short of God's glory." Jesus said in John 8:7 "If any of you have never sinned, then go ahead and throw the first stone at her!"

Galesburg, a city steeped with a diverse history, formed an abolishment group in 1837 called the "Galesburg Anti-Slavery Society. Proclamations are drafted to recognize the accomplishments of African Americans, Hispanics, and Women in Galesburg. Honoring the boxcar families by installing plaques to honor the Mexican immigrants and families who lived in boxcars on railroad property during the first half of the 20th century.

During former Mayor Pritchard's tenure as mayor, everyone was content with the status quo of an "all-white" city council. A city council that for years endorsed Pritchard's ideas – or shall I say "rubber-stamped." Now that the pendulum has moved, from my observation those left behind after Pritchard's term are extremely unhappy and unwilling to work across partisan lines to accomplish what is in the best interest of the city.

A respected mentor told me that when a person resorts to attacking another person's integrity nine chances out of ten the person is trying to divert attention from their own faults. If a person can stand on their own platform and merit, there would be no need to attack their opponent. Pride produces conflict and hinders the growth of the community.

I encourage you to defer judgment and get behind the vision of the Mayor and City Manager so Galesburg can become a more viable, innovative, attractive, and inclusive community. It is time to embrace the diversity in our community and allow all voices to be heard and respected!

Jim Jacobs addressed the Council and stated that he is amused and disturbed over the hand-wringing of the sales tax and believes it's a ruse. The people who are against this tax are predominantly white and live comfortably and he feels there is a resurgence of racism in our community. He noted one group is engaged in racism, political ads printing a public arrest record, although there were no convictions, and putting a racist caricature on social media. Mr. Jacobs also stated that there is so much vitriol and hatred towards the Mayor by a certain group of people. He reminded the public that voting ends tomorrow and that they have a choice for two groups -- one that wants progress or one that is moving backwards. He stated that everyone will find out tomorrow what kind of government the people deserve.

Sallee Wade addressed the Council and stated that our community has been moving forward and being progressive more in the last two years than the last eight years. The Council now represents the whole city, not just those with elegant homes or intact families. She noted

Reverend Jowers comments about sin at the last meeting and feels that if you see something, you should say something. She hopes the Council continues to move forward and that the movement to replace the Council with an all white Council is stopped. Furthermore, she added that the love of money is the root of all evil.

Holly McDorman addressed the Council and stated that she is a new resident in Ward Six. She believes there have been amazing things happening on a 4 to 3 vote and thanked those who attended the last PFLAG meeting. She announced that the next event for PFLAG will be on April 8th, 3 p.m. at Skate Palace. She hopes Council Members continue to attend their meetings and back the resolution they approved.

Reverend James Hailey, Allen Chapel AME, invited the Council and public to join his church on May 4th, the National Day of Prayer. He stated that people will be praying for all the elected officials and that he hopes we continue to think outside the box in order to change.

Reverend Jowers addressed the Council and stated that he stands up for democracy and read the Bible verse James 1:17. He added that there is no hate in his heart for anyone and that he does not think himself better than anyone but that God will not bless a sinful nature. He asked the Council to listen to the community.

Pam Davidson addressed the Council and stated that she is a life-long resident of Galesburg and is appalled as a fellow elected official of dirty politics. She feels that Council Members should respect the office and that the things on social media are appalling, hurtful, and racist. She hopes everyone votes tomorrow and that the hatred stops.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS (AGREEMENTS, APPROVALS, ETC.)

23-4027

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Smith-Esters, to approve external agency funding requests and fund applications in the amounts listed below for a total expenditure of \$115,750:

Agency	2023 Recommended
American Legion Baseball	\$10,000
Choral Dynamics	\$1,500
Galesburg Community Chorus	\$3,000
Galesburg Lions Club - Fireworks	\$15,000
Galesburg Symphony	\$7,000
Galesburg Youth Athletic Club	\$4,000
Galesburg Youth Baseball	\$5,000
Heritage Days	\$8,000
Knox County Fair	\$5,000

Knox County Scenic Drive	\$1,000
National Railroad Hall of Fame	\$3,000
National Stearman Fly-In	\$8,000
New Limited Rods of Western IL	\$3,000
Nova Singers	\$3,000
Prairie Players Theatre	\$1,000
Railroad Days	\$10,000
Salvation Army	\$4,000
Support Group for African American Affairs	\$5,000
The Great Balloon Race	\$6,250
TRoLS	\$3,000
United Way	\$5,000
VNA Community Services	\$5,000
Total	\$115,750

City Manager Smith reported that twenty-four organizations submitted applications, requesting a total of \$215,147 in funding, to support various events, programs, and services. A total of \$110,000 had been budgeted for fulfilling these requests. The funding requests vary by project, with 19 of the applications focusing on events, and five applications on providing a service or assistance. All funding applications were reviewed by him and a committee of staff members in order to prioritize the impact of each proposed project. All the projects and services submitted represent positive events and services in our community. However, as external agency requests for funding have trended upward each year, and budgetary constraints limit the city's ability to fund all requests, it is recommended to prioritize the projects submitted, and fund at the amounts listed on the attached summary chart to stay within budget. He also stated that he would be looking at outsourcing this process in the future, possibly to the Galesburg Community Foundation.

Council Member Cox stated his appreciation for the Administration's evaluation and believes it's fair; however, he still finds it difficult to give away taxpayers money. He challenged others to support these agencies and added that he will be doing the same, especially those organizations that bring families to the area.

Council Member Smith-Esters stated that she would be abstaining from this vote since she is employed by the Salvation Army. She also hopes that citizens will help fill in the funding gap for these agencies.

Council Member Davis also stated that all the agencies are deserving but that she will be abstaining from this vote due to her position on the Prairie Players board of directors.

Several organizations addressed the Council, including representatives from the Galesburg Youth Athletic Club, Support Group for African American Affairs, New Limited Rods of Western Illinois, Galesburg Historical Society, and the Knox County Fair Board, regarding the funding. Each described their organization or event and thanked the City for their consideration.

Mayor Schwartzman stated that he believes this is not where we want to be in terms of funding in the future and that all City Managers have handled this process differently. He agreed that it is difficult to do and that needs change every year. He stated that the City does have resources to fund these projects although at this time we are short approximately \$100,000 to fully fund the agencies.

The Mayor stated that they are all deserving and are investments into our community that pay back multiple times. He will ask the Council to reconsider fully funding these agencies in the future and giving each their full request amount. However, at this time he feels the recommendation by Administration should be approved.

Council Member Smith-Esters moved, seconded by Council Member Dennis, to postpone item 23-4027 to the April 17, 2023, Council Meeting.

After discussion, it was recommended to approve this item and look at additional funding in the future.

Roll Call #7:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Dennis, Wallace, White, and Cox, 5.

Nays: None

Absent: None

Abstain: Council Members Smith-Esters and Davis, 2.

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-4028

Council Member White moved, seconded by Council Member Davis, to approve an Urban Agriculture grant for Libby's Corner in the amount of \$25,000.

Roll Call #8:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-4029

Council Member Cox moved, seconded by Council Member Dennis, to approve the 2023 Classification and Salary Schedule for Exempt employees by adding a Public Safety Building Junior Systems Administrator position.

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.

23-4030

Council Member Smith-Esters moved, seconded by Council White, to approve the first amendment to the grant agreement with the Knox County Housing Authority for the winter warming shelter to extend the time frame to April 15, 2023, in order to expend the grant funds.

Roll Call #10:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Dennis, Wallace, White, Davis, and Cox, 6.

Nays: None

Absent: None

Abstain: Council Member Smith-Esters, 1.

Chairman declared the motion carried.

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

TOWN BUSINESS

23-9007

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

Fund Title	Amount
Town Fund	\$367.34
General Assistance Fund	\$5,375.72
IMRF Fund	
Social Security/Medicare Fund	
Liability Fund	
Audit Fund	
Total	\$5,743.06

Roll Call #11:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Council Member Smith-Esters applauded students at Galesburg High School for their production of *SpongeBob: The Musical* held over the weekend in the beautiful Hegg Auditorium. She also thanked Director Varner and the Parks & Recreation Department for the great Easter Egg Hunt. She noted again that she abstained from voting on Agenda item 22-4030 since the Salvation Army is her employer.

Council Member White left the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

Council Member Smith-Esters stated that she hopes people continue to help by investing in the agencies that were present tonight.

Council Member Davis stated that she is delighted that many agencies will be receiving funding and she hopes to revisit the item in order to fund them at their full levels. She also thanked everyone who spoke at the meeting and understands that it can be difficult to speak in public.

Council Member White returned to the meeting at 7:07 p.m.

Council Member Davis encouraged everyone to vote tomorrow and that their polling location will be listed on their voter registration or they can look it up online.

Council Member Cox expressed his condolences to the seventeen people who lost their homes in the fire this morning and have been placed in temporary housing.

Council Member Hix thanked all the agencies for attending the meeting tonight.

Council Member Wallace thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He also noted an article in the newspaper by Bruce Weik that he thought was enlightening and eye-opening. He also stated that he hopes to see something similar to the recently opened food establishment next to ON Custer Park at HT Custer Park in the future.

Council Member Wallace stated that sometimes there are conflicts with voting or votes that can't be placed if they are an employer but he hopes to keep advancing the City. He also announced that he has reached out to BNSF about providing information on how they would handle an emergency situation.

Council Member White gave thanks and applauded two gentlemen in the audience who are veterans. He also announced that March 29th was Vietnam Day.

Council Member Wallace left the meeting at 7:14 p.m.

Council Member White added that he is a veteran as well though he volunteered and was not drafted. He said many fought for freedom and for the right to vote and decide on who they wanted to rule their lives. He noted that he has watched the adulteration of the voting process in his city. He didn't fight and go to war so somebody could adulterate an election.

He looked up a memorial, Joseph St. Germain American Legion Post 85, in Baltic, Connecticut. It is a Vietnam Veteran Memorial for a female soldier who is kneeling for her comrades who died in the war. He stated that our country has become so disconnected with humanity that it appalled him when someone was called out for being disrespectful for kneeling at the flag. He believes that kneeling is the highest respect a person can give to a fallen soldier and it has been trashed.

Council Member White read a statement that he had written about the fallen soldiers that never came home but that he continues to pray for them and their families. He added that we

lost 58,000 men to the Vietnamese plus 300,000 to Agent Orange. The people who gave their lives are the true patriots. He stated that he doesn't want people to trash this with crazy politics. He hopes everyone exercises their right to vote and that the power is in the people.

Chief Hovind gave a brief update on the weather for Tuesday and stated that right now it is still too vague but that right now it is scheduled to hit between 5 p.m. and 6 a.m. on Wednesday. He is currently looking for storm shelters but added that Moon Towers will continue to be open for any homeless individuals.

Mayor Schwartzman thanked all twenty-four organizations for applying for external funding this year. He also encouraged everyone to vote and added that the outcome of tomorrow's election is unknown but that the people will speak and that he will be serving as the Mayor beyond that date no matter what. He noted that it is a true honor to serve the people and added that yesterday he started walking in the City, similar to two years ago, and will continue to do this until the end of the month. He has had amazing conversations with people and hopes he continues to hear about people's ideas and complaints.

There being no further business, Council Member Dennis, seconded by Council Member Davis, to adjourn the regular meeting at 7:29 p.m.

Roll Call #12:

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