

Galesburg City Council Regular Meeting
City Council Chambers
55 West Tompkins Street, Galesburg, Illinois
April 17, 2023
5:30 p.m.

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

Proclamations: Mental Health Awareness Month
 Arbor Day

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.

A moment of silence was observed in lieu of an invocation.

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Davis, to approve the minutes of the City Council's regular meeting from April 3, 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.

23-2023

Approve Resolution 23-21 in acceptance of the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program Grant award for proposed street, streetscaping and parking lot improvements along Simmons Street from Kellogg Street to Prairie Street.

23-4031

Approve Budget Adjustment #2 for the budget year ending December 31, 2022.

23-5003

Receive the December 31, 2022, Investment Schedule.

23-8007

Approve bills in the amount of \$879,878.04 and advance checks in the amount of \$824,437.01.

Council Member Smith-Esters moved, seconded by Council Member White, to approve Consent Agenda 2023-08.

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**23-2024**

Council Member Smith-Esters moved, seconded by Council Member Davis, to approve Resolution 23-22 to opt into the National League of Cities Service Line Warranty Program.

Council Member Cox moved, seconded by Council Member Hix, to amend the agreement by removing Section 2-B regarding Property Owner Data.

Roll Call #4:

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

Nays: Council Member Wallace, 1.

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

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.

23-2025

Council Member Smith-Esters moved, seconded by Council Member White, to approve Resolution 23-23 authorizing the purchase of the lot located near the Dale Kelley Tot Lot in the amount of \$5,000.

Roll Call #6:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Abstain: Council Member Wallace, 1.

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-2006

Council Member Smith-Esters moved, second by Council Member Wallace, to approve Resolution 23-24 to approve the Knox County All Hazards Mitigation Plan.

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.

23-2027

Council Member Smith-Esters moved, seconded by Council Member Wallace, to approve a Resolution authorizing the purchase of 435 East Third Street in the amount of \$350,000.

Council Member Cox moved, seconded by Council Member Dennis, to table agenda item 23-2027 until partnerships with other agencies and the Knox County Housing Authority are known.

Roll Call #8:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Dennis, Wallace, and Cox, 4.

Nays: Council Members White, Smith-Esters, and Davis, 3.

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-2028

Council Member Davis moved, seconded by Council Member Smith-Esters, to approve Resolution 23-25 approving a joint development and maintenance agreement with TRoLS, Inc. to maintain the multi-use recreational access trail and mountain bike trail with oversight provided by the City.

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.

BIDS, PETITIONS, AND COMMUNICATIONS

PUBLIC COMMENT

Robert Cain addressed the Council and thanked them for doing their best. He also suggested that possibly the property at 435 E. Third be used as an auction house. He also noted that he has been dealing with Bridgeway for family mental health issues and has not been getting any assistance and feels there is a gap in our community on this issue. Furthermore, he added that he is glad to see that demolition has started on the Broadview.

Ray Pickrel stated that he doesn't understand why there is a Public Comment section after resolutions and ordinances are already approved. The Mayor stated that if he is aware of something controversial or if he has been contacted by citizens, he does allow time for public comment on specific items.

Reverend Hailey addressed the Council and thanked Ward 5 Council Member, Jaclyn Smith-Esters, for her service and that he is looking forward to working with the new Council Member. He also reminded the public that Thursday, May 4, 2023, will be National Day of Prayer. There will be a service on the Public Square that day at Noon and again at 6 p.m. at Allen Chapel AME. This year's theme is derived from James 5:16.

Holly McDorman addressed the Council and stated that she was pleased to see the proclamation presented for mental health. She gave statistics on mental health, anxiety, and suicide amongst the queer community and transgender kids. She invited everyone to attend the next PFLAG meeting on May 13th, 3 p.m. at the Galesburg Public Library, where the theme for the meeting will be on mental health.

Reverend Jowers addressed the Council and thanked Council Member Wallace and Smith-Esters for their service and feels that they have done a good job and has admiration for the sacrifice of time and believes they were good choices for the Council. He also thanked Larry Cox. He challenged them all to do better and noted that he plans to stay involved. Likewise, he feels that the voter turnout was not good and is a problem for our community. He encouraged residents to reach out to their Council Members with concerns. He also announced that he has started a new initiative, Hearts for Justice. Reverend Jowers also stated that he believes Churchill has great potential and that he would recommend the City open a 24-lane bowling alley, which estimates would take 100 people to operate.

A Youth Commission Report was given by Elizabeth Varner, Director of Parks & Recreation.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS (AGREEMENTS, APPROVALS, ETC.)

23-4032

Council Member Smith-Esters moved, seconded by Council Member Dennis, to approve the payment of \$30,900 to Mechanical Service, Inc. for required electrical upgrades at HT Custer Park.

Roll Call #10:

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

Nays: Council Member Wallace, 1.

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-4033

Council Member Smith-Esters moved, seconded by Council Member White, to approve a new range of 36EX for the position of Assistant City Manager/Director of Public Works to the 2023 Classification and Salary Schedule for exempt employees.

Council Member Cox proposed a range of 34EX for this position, which is still within the recommended salary range suggested by GovHR. He noted that at a 36EX, this position would be 25% above the Finance Director and Community Development Director.

Council Member Cox moved, seconded by Council Member Dennis, to amend the salary ordinance and approve a new range of 34EX for the position of Assistant City Manager/Director of Public Works.

City Manager Smith stated that the other salaries are being compared to the status quo and that those classifications will be modified and recommended for a change once the salary study is complete. This is being requested in order to give the City the flexibility to recruit someone who may not want to come in at the mid-point range and that the City wants to recruit the best and brightest to the position. Instead, the hope is to get a seasoned Public Works Director/Assistant City Manager. This position will also aid in some of the day-to-day activities to assist him as the Manager.

The City Manager's recommendation is that Council accepts the consideration that is being suggested by GovHR, which is based on what the classification is for that position and its scope of work.

Council Member Smith-Esters stated that the City's past director was making approximately \$160,000 and that this range would be a lot less and is two positions instead of one. She noted that other cities are paying comparable salaries for the same positions. She noted that the City won't be recruiting individuals right out of college, but instead will be looking for an experienced candidate. She feels this is a good start to recruit a qualified person to Galesburg.

Council Member Cox stated that the previous Public Works Director was at a classification 33EX and was at the top of his range due to longevity.

Council Member White stated that several people have left the City because they are not being paid what they need to be paid. He understands that the City wants to be within the budget, but he guarantees that the City will attract terrible people if they are not paid what they are worth. The City will pay for what they get.

Council Member Hix asked what other communities our size have Assistant City Manager positions in Illinois. City Manager Smith stated that he couldn't give specifics since he hasn't been in Illinois that long, but that there are Deputy City Managers all over. He reiterated that this salary is based on the consultant's recommendation, not what he has compiled.

Council Member Wallace asked for clarification on the fact that this is only for one position and that another employee is not being added. The City Manager confirmed that was correct.

Council Member Smith-Esters stated that she did a search on Indeed and found several similar positions, such as Evanston, IL, which is larger than Galesburg. They are advertising the position at \$162,000 - \$244,000. She believes that the person who takes that job would be an expert in the field and that the City needs to compete. She stated that possibly the concern is if an Assistant City Manager position is needed or if it's the salary. She feels that the City does need to have a Public Works Director who is an engineer.

Council Member Dennis asked how many Department Directors are at the City and expressed his concern over the other Directors' salaries. City Manager Smith stated that the City has six or seven Department Directors and that the compensation study will help determine those salary increases at a later date. This agenda item recommends establishing the salary for this position in order to advertise and be competitive. He noted that he is not in a position to provide evidence as to why this recommendation is justified since he does not prepare classification studies. GovHR was hired to do this, and they were asked to review this one position for the sole purpose of beginning the recruitment process.

City Clerk Bennewitz read the amendment as outlined by Council Member Cox to amend the salary ordinance and approve a new range of 34EX instead of 36EX for the position of Assistant City Manager/Director of Public Works.

Council Member White asked for clarification on the difference between the two classifications and why there is concern. Discussion was held on the classifications and their ranges or steps, as well as longevity.

Council Member Wallace moved, seconded by Council Member Cox, to call for the question.

Roll Call #11:

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

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

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion failed.

Council Member Hix explained that a salary of \$135,000 could be offered to a candidate per the City Manager regardless of the 34EX or 36EX classification.

Roll Call #12:

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

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

Absent: None

Chairman declared the amended carried.

By unanimous consent, Council approved to sit as the Town Board.

TOWN BUSINESS

23-9008

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	\$7,561.16
General Assistance Fund	\$3,417.46
IMRF Fund	

Social Security/Medicare Fund	\$4,512.17
Liability Fund	
Audit Fund	
Total	\$15,40.79

Roll Call #13:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

By unanimous consent, the Township Trustees approved to resume as the City Council.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Council Member Wallace stated that it has been an honor to serve the City in capacity and thanked all those who supported him in this endeavor. He stated that he is ashamed of those who spewed hate, lies, racism, and sexism, only to try to retake power that they had lost and that the power should be with the people. Racism is a learned behavior and no child is born with it but instead is taught. He noted that the fact that the City would allow its representatives of this City to get away with lies and the unspeakable acts of violation such as the non-disclosure agreement in the case of Mr. Coleman is unforgivable.

Council Member Wallace stated for all the haters and racists that “we are woke.” He added that he will spend the rest of his time trying to make sure this City moves in the right position and that any time it endeavors to go back to that dark spot, he will be there as their conscience. Lastly, he thanked Mr. Smith for his service, coming here under a cloud of racism. He took the job anyway, likely on a hope and a prayer that the City would welcome him due to his qualifications. He added that he will do everything he can to help him retain his job and that if it comes to a point where he cannot retain his job, he hopes there is a good reason. He also thanked Mr. Nolden for the card and appreciated the kind words.

Council Member Wallace left the meeting at 6:46 p.m.

Council Member White restated that the National Day of Prayer is coming up and asked people to write down and read Matthew 25:31-46. He feels that tonight the can was kicked down the road for people who needed the help. He tries to do his best for others, not for himself. He added that he doesn’t have a lot of money but that he gives his time and volunteers.

Council Member White stated that a lot of people struggle with mental health issues in our community and have a lack of hope and added that depression comes from oppression. He feels that people are struggling and that we have to do something about it. He will continue to work with Pastor Hailey and watch out for people in need, his family and friends.

Council Member Smith-Esters was glad to recognize Mental Health Month. She stated that HUD has \$2.8 billion in funding that can go towards shelter projects and that it is important to acquire this building. She noted that Kewanee has a former hotel that was transformed into

housing. She believes Galesburg has approximately 67 households that are affected by homelessness. She also stated that there was a work session regarding the Community Center and that people failed to show up. She believes there is a huge need for one and that the City now has the space and location for one. She closed by saying that she loves the 5th Ward and thanked her husband, family and friends for helping with her campaign. She is a big believer in democracy and congratulated all who won. She plans to keep attending meetings to keep everyone accountable and ethical.

Council Member Davis stated that she is grateful for everyone who came for the Mental Health Proclamation, something she has struggled with a lot, including anxiety in her work and personal life. She feels that being queer has exacerbated these issues due to the way she and others are treated and that hateful things are done to them simply because they exist. All of these issues relate to mental health and that people need to feel safe here.

Council Member Hix stated that he is looking forward to the work session on mental health in May; something everyone has been impacted by in their life.

Council Member Dennis stated that a good friend recently committed suicide, struggling with mental health, and that his prayers are with his family.

Mayor Schwartzman announced that Earth Day will be on April 22nd and that Knox College is having many events that are open to the public. He also stated that community members will continue to plant trees this weekend as well.

He stated that this was the last full meeting of the standing City Council and that he has been through this many times over his last twelve years. Over the last 20 months, he praised the Council for moving forward on such initiatives as the scientific survey, Strategic Planning Sessions, renovation of the Hawthorne Pool, reconstruction of the Youth Commission, four new economic development grant tools, funding to the Railroad Hall of Fame and external agencies, balanced budgets, increasing the Fire Department by three firefighters and approving five new police officers for the Police Department, among others. He noted that this was all done with lowering property tax rates and that all these votes for approval were unanimous.

The Mayor stated that all of these great things happened in the midst of losing the City Manager, City Attorney, and the Public Works Director. He thanked the Council for these items at his requested accelerated pace, as well as the City staff for all their work.

Mayor Schwartzman thanked Council Member Wallace for his invaluable service and has appreciated his background in law enforcement and the railroad road. He thanked Council Member Smith-Esters for being one of the most dedicated Councilors in his twelve years, for her attending to details, and is glad she will still continue to participate. He appreciates her compassion and dedication to the community.

The Mayor stated that he has enjoyed working with Council Member Cox over the last twelve years and that although his austerity for finances does not resonate with him, he feels he is very

honest, has a lot of integrity and he deeply admires him. He thanked him for his many years of dedicated service.

There being no further business, Council Member Hix, seconded by Council Member Dennis, to adjourn the regular meeting at 7:06 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