

5:00 p.m. Reception Honoring Outgoing and Incoming Newly Elected Officials

Galesburg City Council Regular Meeting
City Council Chambers
55 West Tompkins Street, Galesburg, Illinois
May 1, 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.

Reverend James Hailey, Allen Chapel AME, gave the invocation.

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Smith-Esters, to approve the minutes of the City Council's regular meeting from April 17, 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.

Mayor Schwartzman thanked outgoing Council Members Kevin Wallace, Jaclyn Smith-Esters, and Larry Cox for their service to the City. He presented them with gifts and expressed appreciation on behalf of the Council, City employees and other elected officials for their service to the City Council. Laura Williams, Township Assessor, also presented the Trustees with a gift.

Council Member Smith-Esters thanked all who attended tonight and that it was great to see everybody be so present for their civic duty. She thanked everyone and her family who supported her. She stated that she wanted to give some words of wisdom for those stepping up in that they will have to sacrifice so much when they sit up at the dais. There is so much time that everyone puts in and that takes away from those that we love, but that everyone does it for our community.

Council Member Cox thanked Mayor Schwartzman for his closing comments and kind words two weeks ago. He congratulated Steve Cheesman and offered his help to anyone if ever needed. He wished good luck to the incoming Council and thanked all those who have supported him along the way and in his campaign. He added that there are too many people to mention, but he wanted to especially thank his wife, Diane, who was his strongest supporter. Likewise, he also thanked the City staff for their service and hard work over the last four years,

and even over the last 35 years that he was with the City. He closed by saying that sometimes he may seem a little cold or stern in his comments regarding the City, but that sometimes he is concerned with the direction of our City and our country. In many ways, he feels we are moving away from God, but that he remains optimistic because he knows that in the end, God wins.

City Clerk Kelli Bennewitz reported the following were elected in the Consolidated Election held April 4, 2023, per certification from the Galesburg Board of Election Commissioners:

Ward One Council Member	Bradley Hix	412 votes
Ward Three Council Member	Evan Miller	212 votes
Ward Five Council Member	Heather Zeigler Acerra	307 votes
Ward Seven Council Member	Steve Cheesman	593 votes

Knox County Circuit Judge Andrew Doyle gave the oath of office to the following: Ward One Council Member Bradley Hix, Ward Three Council Member Evan Miller, Ward Five Council Member Heather Acerra, and Ward Seven Council Member Steve Cheesman.

Roll Call #3: Present: Mayor Peter Schwartzman, Council Members Bradley Hix, Wayne Dennis, Evan Miller, Dwight White, Heather Acerra, Sarah Davis, and Steve Cheesman, 8. Also Present: City Manager Gerald C. Smith, Interim City Attorney Paul Mangieri, and City Clerk Kelli Bennewitz.

Proclamations: Letter Carriers' Food Drive Day

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.

23-3011

Approve the bid submitted by Gunther Construction, a Division of UCM, Inc., in the amount of \$387,053.48 for the 2023 Intermittent Resurfacing project.

23-3012

Approve the bid submitted by Brown Excavating & Demolition in the amount of \$103,249 for the demolition and clean up of the following seven properties:

1. 179 Fulton Street
2. 462 North Cherry Street
3. 1212 Maple Avenue
4. 314 South Henderson Street
5. 203 Lake Street
6. 939 South Academy Street
7. 543 Liberty Street

23-3013

Approve the bid submitted by Allstate Coatings Company in the amount of \$30,690 for the purchase of white and yellow traffic paint for 2023.

23-3014

Approve the bid submitted by Gunther Construction, a division of UCM, Inc., in the amount of \$394,503.75 for the reconstruction of McClure Street from Coulter Avenue to Monmouth Boulevard.

23-3015

Approve the bid submitted by Miller Trucking & Excavating in the amount of \$58,000 for the purchase and installation of a vault-style restroom at the East Lake Storey boat ramp.

23-4034

Approve a joint funding agreement with the Illinois Department of Transportation for the Carl Sandburg Drive resurfacing project.

23-4035

Approve the revised Galesburg Public Transportation Policy for Paratransit Operations.

23-4036

Approve an Emergency Vehicle Operations Course (EVOC) Training for Public Safety Personnel on August 21-22, 2023, at the Galesburg Municipal Airport.

23-4037

Approve the Remote Control Fly-In on August 26-27, 2023, at the Galesburg Municipal Airport.

23-4038

Approve an agreement with Civic Solutions, LLC for administrative oversight and management services in the Public Works Department.

23-5004

Receive the 2022 Annual Firefighters Pension Fund Report.

23-5005

Receive the 2022 Annual Police Pension Fund Report.

23-5006

Receive a petition to annex the property located at 694 U.S. Highway 150 East.

23-8008

Approve bills in the amount of \$2,893,019.17 and advance checks in the amount of \$655,859.42.

Council Member Hix moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to remove agenda item 23-4038 from the Consent Agenda.

Roll Call #4:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Dennis, Miller, White, Acerra, Davis, and Cheesman 7.
Nays: None
Absent: None
Chairman declared the motion carried.

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to approve Consent Agenda 2023-09.

Roll Call #5:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Dennis, Miller, White, Acerra, Davis, and Cheesman 7.
Nays: None
Absent: None
Chairman declared the motion carried by omnibus vote.

23-4038

Council Member Davis moved, seconded by Council Member Dennis, to approve an agreement with Civic Solutions, LLC for administrative oversight and management services in the Public Works Department.

Council Member Hix stated that he doesn't believe Council has enough information on this position and that the salary equates to \$183,000 annually. This would be the highest paid position in the City, even higher than the City Manager.

City Manager Smith stated that this approval is for a one month extension of Mr. Rothert's contract while staff is in the process of recruiting a Public Works Director/Assistant City Manager. He noted that the current interim Public Works Director has operated under this contract for the last two months, but that he needs authorization to extend it beyond this time frame.

The City Manager stated that he anticipates that this extension could potentially be for a minimum of one month or a maximum of two months until the recruitment process is complete. He explained to the Council that when a contract employee is hired, the City also has to cover the expenses that are encompassing and comprehensive, which includes fringe benefits.

Council Member White inquired what would happen if this contract was not approved. City Manager Smith stated that the City would then be without an interim Public Works Director.

Council Member Acerra moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to table agenda item 23-4038.

Council Member White stated that he doesn't understand why other Council Members don't think the City needs an Interim Public Works Director on a temporary basis. If the contract is not extended, there is no one to do this job.

Council Member Cheesman asked the City Manager to explain the terms of the contract before the City Council, how the compensation compares, and how long he has been in the position as the interim.

City Manager Smith stated it is the same contract and is merely an extension, and he believed he has served in the interim position for two months. He noted that the City is currently in a holding pattern trying to move forward to complete the recruitment, but that staff had to wait for the City's consultant to give a baseline or a midpoint salary before advertising. The City Manager stated that if not approved, the City would be operating without a public works director until that recruitment is complete and expects recruitment to take as long as two months.

Council Member Cheesman asked the City Manager to review the contract package and all the items that are involved with the benefits that the position is receiving. The City Manager stated that there is a base salary but that he did not have a copy of the current contract in front of him.

Mark Rothert, Interim Public Works Director, stated that the contract for his services has a base rate, but it covers the cost that he has to incur for health insurance, retirement benefits, federal employment taxes and other administrative overhead costs that are related to running a consulting firm. He stated that what he is receiving from the City is just the base hourly rate and no other benefits.

Rothert noted that the base rate is set at that level in order for him to purchase those fringe benefits, outside the City, just like any other employee has a base rate. When you add in the full fringe benefits of IMRF, health insurance, etc., rates usually will be higher than their base rate.

Council Member Acerra stated that when she ran numbers for this position, the salary is equivalent to approximately \$183,000 a year. When she looked at the salary structure for other City employees, this was significantly above that even with a factor put in place for benefits.

Council Member Davis stated that the nature of a contractor, especially one that is on a month by month basis is not employment, but contract labor. The nature of this position is that it's going to be more expensive. She feels that the Council attempting to estimate his business costs are ultimately private information to him.

Council Member Davis believes this is a silly conversation to have when the City needs a public works director and if not approved, it is sending a message to the City employees that the Council does not care to keep all the appropriate people in place to help manage the workload in order to simply pinch pennies. The Council is also sending a message to the contractor that we are not operating in good faith knowing that the City still needs the services.

Mayor Schwartzman stated that this is the first he has heard of this concern from anyone on the City Council. The impact that this individual would no longer be employed tomorrow seems like an egregious act and not consistent with previous policy. The Mayor stated that he could attest, having worked with Mr. Carl very closely for many years, there is a tremendous amount of work

that goes through that office. He also pointed out that in the two months Mr. Rotherth has been in that position, he has not heard one complaint about him from the community or from the Council.

Council Member Acerra stated that she has 30 years of experience as a human resources director and is a certified compensation professional. All the salary data for the public employees is available on the website, and that none of this is against the current incumbent in this role. She noted that it is rather a matter of trying to exercise some sense of fiscal responsibility and valuing internal equity. For current City employees' salaries, even with the addition of the benefits, this position's salary would far exceed most of them, including the current City Manager. She added that we have amazingly competent staff that will be able to manage until this matter gets settled.

Roll Call #6:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Dennis, Miller, Acerra, and Cheesman, 5.

Nays: Council Members White and Davis, 2.

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-4039

Council Member White moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to approve a Minority and/or Woman Owned Business Startup Assistance Program grant in the amount of \$5,000 for K & K Beauty Bar, 341 East Main Street.

Roll Call #7:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Dennis, Miller, White, Acerra, Davis, and Cheesman, 7.

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-4040

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to approve a Southside Occupancy Assistance Program grant in the amount of \$3,200 over two years for Nova Singers, 64 South Prairie Street.

Roll Call #8:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Dennis, Miller, White, Acerra, Davis, and Cheesman, 7.

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-4041

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Cheesman, to approve a Tax Increment Financing Redeveloper Agreement in the amount of \$306,969.46 over four years with the Galesburg Civic Art Center, Inc. for the property located at 349 East Main Street.

Roll Call #9:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Dennis, Miller, White, Acerra, Davis, and Cheesman, 7.

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

PASSAGE OF ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

23-1006

Ordinance on first reading approving a zoning amendment for approximately the south 360 feet of Lot 4 of the Benny Schachtrup Subdivision Phase II, from Single Family (R1C) to Institutional (I).

Mayor Schwartzman inquired with Interim City Attorney Mangieri given that the City is aware of what the development is, would this fall under what is considered spot zoning. He stated that the City would be changing the zoning after knowing what the development is and asked if this would put the City in jeopardy of a possible legal challenge.

Interim City Attorney Mangieri stated that he does not have that fear, but it is certainly something that he would look into.

Steve Gugliotta, Community Development Director, stated that when the City knows what a project is going to be, generally this is the reason why someone asks for a rezoning and staff helps determine what is the most appropriate zoning classification. Spot zoning would be more along the lines of if they wanted this property to be zoned M2, heavy industrial, in the middle of an area that's surrounded by residential.

Council Member Cheesman stated that representatives of Graham Hospital had a meeting with the neighborhood and that it went very well. The Planning and Zoning Commission and Graham Hospital, as well as the neighborhood, have all been very open and transparent. He added that neighbors asked a lot of questions that were answered very clearly, including concerns on security, traffic, etc. Council Member Cheesman stated that he has been very pleased with the whole process.

23-1007

Ordinance on first reading annexing the property located at 694 U.S. Highway 150 East.

23-2027

Council Member Davis moved, seconded by Council Member White, to remove agenda item 23-2027 from the table.

Roll Call #10:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Dennis, Miller, White, Acerra, Davis, and Cheesman, 7.

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

Dale Carlson, Galesburg Rescue Mission Board Member, addressed the Council. He stated that he is a lifelong farmer in Galesburg and has been a board member and a volunteer for the Galesburg rescue mission for 18 years. He congratulated the new Council Members on their

election and Council Member Hix on his reelection. Furthermore, he stated that the Galesburg Rescue Mission and Women's Shelter on E. Third Street has a new building and sent an email to Council about why this would be an ideal place for a warming center and future location for housing for those in need.

Mr. Carlson stated that City officials, the Knox County Housing Authority, and the Salvation Army have toured the building several times and agreed that it has great potential to serve the homeless and provide care for those in need in the Galesburg area. He recommended that the item be tabled since there are several new Council Members and that they reach out to the City Manager for a tour and more information. He added that the Galesburg Rescue Mission appreciates their sincere consideration.

Council Member Miller asked the City Manager if a survey of the neighborhood was done regarding the purchase. City Manager Smith stated that since this property is already a homeless shelter it was assumed that this type of facility would pose minimal impact to the community or the neighborhood that has grown accustomed to having one located there.

Council Member Miller stated that he did walk the neighborhood and received no positive comments about the building remaining a homeless shelter. He was told by one neighbor that they had somebody walk in their home within the last two weeks and that there is a lot of concern in the neighborhood. He feels that the Rescue Mission has done a very good job in taking care of people and making sure that everything is under control but that many are concerned with it being moved to a different authority that is not going to be handled correctly.

Council Member Cheesman stated that this is an extremely difficult item in which to analyze and vote on as a new Council Member. He believes it is absolutely imperative as a Christian and as a decent human being that we do things in any way we can to help those that are less fortunate and those with challenges. He noted that as it stands right now, he would not vote to move forward and would like to see the other parties and organizations with more knowledge than what the City has. explain how the property could be turned into a homeless or warming shelter.

Council Member Cheesman noted that these organizations could make a better decision in putting together and formulating a plan on how we can best address this, without potentially buying a building that is extremely expensive. He stated that he believes the Council needs to have more information, especially from those that can research, study and have the data available to formulate a plan and see if the City can move forward with it. Council Member Cheesman added that he feels it is very much like what has been done with a community center, and that we would buy a building and then figure out what to do with it without knowing all the total costs. He would like to figure out operational items first, and then move forward with how the City can best serve those people that are truly in need.

Mayor Schwartzman stated that he had the opportunity to walk the neighborhood as well and that the topic was not brought up to him by any residents. He noted that he would be sharing the comments that he has received walking the community with the Council.

The Mayor announced that a community entity approached the City with the desire to possibly sell, lease, or transfer this property to the City. Administration met with them and had some early dialogue which subsequently facilitated a closed session Council meeting in order to deliberate on the purchase of property. In that session, City Manager Smith elaborated on the potentiality of purchasing this building and what use it would be at that meeting. The director of the Knox County Housing Authority was also present.

Mayor Schwartzman stated that at that meeting, the City Manager asked for the authority to negotiate a price and move forward with the purchase of this building. In that discussion, the Knox County Housing Authority director spoke of potential sources of revenue for the purchase for the ultimate purpose of using it as a warming shelter or homeless facility. He noted that at that time, the City Council unanimously approved to move forward with that bid at a certain amount and that the City Manager approached the Rescue Mission to purchase the property at that set price and an agreement was made.

Council Member Acerra stated that most understand that homelessness is an extremely complex problem, oftentimes intermingled with substance abuse, addiction problems and mental illness. She doesn't feel that the Council has been presented with an understanding of how many individuals received services at the Rescue Mission and that there is a substantial amount of data that hasn't been presented to justify buying a building without a clear and detailed understanding of what is trying to be achieved.

Mayor Schwartzman reported that over the last two years, the City has set aside \$75,000 a year for the programming of a warming shelter. He believes that the building, which is still currently being used for housing people, could be repurposed as apartments. He noted that it was brought up at the closed session that HUD has significant dollars for that purpose. The City will be engaging in a housing study, which was recommended in the Comprehensive Plan that we will need housing in the community and apartments that have reasonable rental cost.

Council Member Davis stated that many times, people tend to paint something like homelessness as an individual failure, but that it is a systemic structural issue that requires systemic structural change to address it. She will continue to push the issue of how we can get involved to solve this systemic issue in our community and to continue communicating on plans and ways that the City needs to address in order to take the right path to get something in place that is sustainable and truly addresses homelessness in this community.

Council Member Hix stated that he read an article from WQAD in 2020 where the Rescue Mission was talking about the news of them moving to the former Nielson school. They were discussing the old building and noted that water has seeped through several of the building's walls, creating discoloration and mold, the chimney needs to be replaced, as well as all the windows and several of the walls. He noted that he has concerns that the City is going to purchase a building that is going to cost too much to fix.

After discussion, Council Member Cheesman moved, seconded by Council Member Davis, to defer agenda item 23-2027 to the June 5, 2023, City Council Meeting.

Roll Call #11:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Dennis, Miller, Acerra, Davis, and Cheesman, 6.
Nays: Council Member White, 1.
Absent: None
Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-2029

Council Member Davis moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to approve Resolution 23-26 amending the Preannexation Agreement to modify one of the allowed access points to the property from North Seminary Street to a different location and amend the zoning of a portion of the property.

Roll Call #12:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Dennis, Miller, White, Acerra, Davis, and Cheesman, 7.
Nays: None
Absent: None
Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-2030

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to approve Resolution 23-27 updating paratransit service rates offered by public transportation to match the updated paratransit policy.

Roll Call #13:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Dennis, Miller, White, Acerra, Davis, and Cheesman, 7.
Nays: None
Absent: None
Chairman declared the motion carried.

BIDS, PETITIONS, AND COMMUNICATIONS

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jim Jacobs, Ward Two, addressed the Council and stated that he had planned to talk about the Farnsworth Study, but that he is concerned with the interim Public Works position and believes that it is not about Mr. Rothert, but instead about the City Manager. He feels that this action was meant to undercut the City Manager and the Mayor, and to eventually have people say the City Manager wasn't up to the job. He added that people can try to figure out why it is that they want to get rid of Mr. Smith, but that maybe it is a physical characteristic that he has that they don't like.

Council Member Hix left the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Jacobs stated that he witnessed this modus operandi in the last election and is ashamed of one person who he is finding likes to have it both ways. He stated adamantly that he is here to call this action racism, plain and simple.

Reverend Hailey addressed the Council and 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. He noted that the National Day of Prayer was instituted in 1952 by President Harry Truman and has been proclaimed each year since.

Council Member Hix returned to the meeting at 7:03 p.m.

Reverend Linda Baldwin addressed the Council about the community center as it relates to the Farnsworth agreement and how she is excited that they are all working together. For many years, she has thought that a good way to bring the community together could be by this multipurpose community center. She expressed her appreciation for their unbiased protective leadership and not allowing any strong partisan opinions to overshadow, slow down, or stop progress on addressing and implementing any plans or projects. She hopes everyone will learn how to work together in peace, love, and in harmony and patience. Furthermore, she presented the City Clerk with a list of nine goals that were presented to her by Mayor Schwartzman.

Carl Dortch addressed the Council and stated that he was 19 years old, born in Chicago and was speaking on behalf of supporting a community center. He believes kids don't know how to make friends or communicate with each other without technology or their phones. He spoke with kids in grades fifth to ninth, and they know how to smoke weed and drink alcohol, but there is no place for these kids to go. He stated that there is a new alcohol shop built in a place where kids used to have birthday parties, make new friends and have fun without technology. He believes it is up to the Council to change the situation.

Mr. Dortch stated that not only will a community center help these kids get away from seeing these places, it will teach them how to have fun without the consumption of things that malfunction their brain. People he has talked to call Galesburg a mini Chicago. Kids don't have any place to see the good ways of life and to have a chance to create a better life for themselves. He doesn't understand why the City isn't creating a better future for what this town needs and that he has not found a good explanation on why the Council is opposed to this situation.

Sallee Wade addressed the Council and wondered if Galesburg will become a lighthouse or a clubhouse and believes Galesburg has the potential to become a lighthouse. We are a City where people want to raise their children, begin a second career when their kids have fled, or maybe want to return home after being away. Galesburg could also be a place where people can come to retire. She believes that In the last 20 months, Galesburg has taken on a fresh new vision that has been focused on sustainability, diversity, as well as art and culture.

Ms. Wade stated that if Galesburg were to become a lighthouse, rather than a self-congratulating historical clubhouse, it will lead to strengthening our future focus on both sustainability and diversity. She read information from author Max Lucado and his distinction between lighthouses and clubhouses. She further stated that sadly, the Council is now reduced to two African American faces. If Galesburg loses diversity going forward, the City will lose sustainability.

Holly McDorman, Ward Six, addressed the Council and welcomed the new Council Members. She stated that she is normally talking about the local queer community because she advocates

for those that identify as part of that, and she invited everyone to attend their PFLAG meetings for more education on the queer community, the second Saturday of the month at the Public Library.

Ms. McDorman stated that she has many comments about the things that have happened so far at the meeting, including stopping somebody's job today. She felt it was highly unethical and didn't understand how the Council could have somebody work under a contract for two months and pull it out from underneath them in just one day. She addressed Council Member Acerra and stated that she knew she was new and that she commented about her history with HR and talked about how the sky would not fall if someone was not in that position. Ms. McDorman stated that she was grateful that she has never had to work under her because she believes that those that have worked under her probably had to suffer.

Council Member Acerra asked for a point of order. Mayor Schwartzman asked for legal counsel to advise on public comments due to the direct mention of a specific Council Member.

Paul Mangieri, Interim City Attorney, stated that he was going to respond to the general question because it encompasses this specific one and is relative to public comment. Public comment is extremely broad, and a speaker can say just about anything. He noted that at one time or another, every single Council Member, the Mayor or public official may be praised or criticized rightfully or wrongfully through free speech. He added that what is prohibited is the threat of physical violence or profanity that would disrupt the proceedings. He added that there are many villages, towns and cities that have said there cannot be a specific criticism, a specific person named or no implication about a particular individual. Many of these have items in their bylaws or in their rules of conducting business, but that they are absolutely unenforceable. He stated that a person has the right to engage in free speech, although it may be uncomfortable, we cannot prohibit the comments.

Council Member Acerra stated that it was her understanding that public comments were to be related to City business and asked for direction. Mr. Mangieri stated that is the case, but that there are plenty of ordinances that are in effect relative to restriction of speech, but that the City cannot restrict speech. His legal opinion whether or not Ms. McDorman can criticize a particular Council Member would be that she can and that it does relate to City business.

Ms. McDorman continued to say that she felt it was horrible that the City would terminate the interim Public Works Director without notice, especially since he's been doing the job for two months without any type of criticism or delay, and that the fact that the City Manager had to bring it to the Council was just a matter of logistics. She was very disappointed in the vote and felt it was unethical. She added that the fact that it happened with a new City Council makes her very worried about the future of Galesburg and the future of what this Council is going to do with other items that are going to be up for vote. She challenged those that have been voted in and those that have been in their seats for a while to talk to somebody that looks different from them, speaks different from them, or comes from a different economic background. She believes the City needs to talk about diversity and keep that at the forefront.

Pastor Tony Franklin addressed the Council and hoped that people would pay attention as he spoke and welcomed the new Council Members. He stated that he read an article as he was doing research about the power of paradox. The author argues that true power requires modesty and empathy, not forced coercion, and that people want social intelligence. He added that when people take power out of context and misuse it, then there are issues with the community. Studies have found that when people are given power, they are more likely to rely on stereotypes when judging others and pay less attention to the characteristics that define other people. They also judge others' attitudes, are more likely to interrupt others, to speak out of turn, and fail to look at others when they're speaking.

Pastor Franklin stated that he has lived in this community over 20 years, and it hurts him to see what's happening. In this case, withholding and stalling the progress to advance a community center. He prays that everyone will practice civic responsibility, not individual responsibility and not abuse the power that's put in front of them. He added that everyone has to put their own pride aside for the betterment of our whole community. He hopes everyone can come together, get away from personal or single agendas, and be motivated to work for the City and for the people in the community.

Bob Senneff, President CEO of Graham hospital, addressed the Council. and announced that they will be opening a second clinic in a couple of months, and if that project is successful, they plan to open another clinic. He offered a genuine thank you to the Council, especially to Steve Gugliotta and Ken Springer, who have been fabulous to work with and a tremendous asset. He added that they are proud to invest approximately \$10 million in their three clinics here and to be part of the long term future of Galesburg.

Reverend Andrew Jowers addressed the Council and stated that he was surprised about some of the things that have happened tonight. He reminded everyone that the meeting started off with the Pledge of Allegiance, where you put your hand over your heart and the closing words are with liberty and justice for all. He believes that Galesburg is waking up and spoke directly to all those who did not vote in the last election. He added that there are over 17,000 people and only 3,500 voted. He added that this new Council is going to make decisions that are going to directly impact everyone's life, and they need to be engaged.

Reverend Jowers stated that he believes by the Council's decisions made tonight, a young man, doing a great job, was fired. He feels that the Council had enough information to make decisions about that, as well as the Rescue Mission. He closed by stating that the church is a place where love is evident and God delivers lives with change, hearts are healed, and families restored. He stated that it is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men. He looks at Mr. Smith, Mr. White, and himself, with a heritage of slavery and segregation. He plans to form a grassroots movement and go throughout the City and try to get that percentage of people that did not vote to get involved.

Molly Miller addressed the Council and stated how ironic that in one moment somebody lost their job tonight and in another moment the Council was tabling a warming center. She expressed that none of this sits well with her, that it felt planned, and was heartless and malicious. She added that she is in favor of the former Churchill building and believes that the

City will work out all the fine details but does understand it's expensive. She closed by saying that she believes that quality of life is more important than streets and sidewalks.

Steve Cohen addressed the Council regarding how the City might move ahead with the community center. He is in favor of completing the Farnsworth Churchill study, with an emphasis on determining whether critics' concerns about hazard abatement can be addressed. If Council Members are adamantly opposed to the Churchill site, he thinks concerns about Churchill should not undermine the project of having a robust community center. He believes that regardless of the site, it's important to move ahead with the project and continue to be engaged in discussions with various nonprofits about how they might be involved. He suggested that the City move forward with fundraising to try to raise money as was done with the library. He would also like to see the City solicit volunteers who might propose some project that they would help operationalize.

Robert Cain congratulated the new City Council Members and was happy to see movement on the planting of trees and the demolition of the Broadview. He also noted the wonderful honor and memorial for Deputy Weist.

Jackie Smith-Esters addressed the Council and encouraged the City Council to move forward with the funds for a study. She has been walking around the City and has written down all the repurposed buildings that Galesburg has, many of which are amazing. She noted Bright Futures, the former Northwoods Church, Knox Galesburg Symphony, The Vault, Willis Lofts, Iron Spike, K-Mart, Graham Medical Clinic, Riverbend Food Bank, etc. She does not understand why the Council is not addressing this and that if we are not investing in our children and our youth, our poverty rate will go higher. Youth are not learning skills or having anyone believe in them. She noted that the Governor just announced that he's going to be putting money towards child care, which is desperately needed in our community.

Ms. Smith-Esters further stated that she believes we need to move forward with the funds for the Farnsworth study, which is what they do and their expertise. She understands that the power bill was high, but that something was broken. She noted that as she was sitting in the gallery, she heard two things -- one was that Council was going to get rid of the interim public works director and put in Larry Cox, and then vote out Gerald Smith and put him in his place. She hopes this is hearsay. She implored the Council to do their research and talk to the legislators because that is where the money comes from. If they make those partnerships with the legislators at the state as well as federal level, the money is going to come to Galesburg. She reminded everyone that on December 5th, the Council voted that Churchill was our new community center. She challenged them to put it there and show us that they can do it as a new Council.

Hannah Lyons stated that she was curious how much money was spent on the Lake Storey feasibility studies and understands that we pay for these studies so we see if something's feasible. She feels that this is the point of paying professionals such as Farnsworth, and it might not be Churchill, or it might be too big of a building and might have too high of utility costs, but there are likely a lot of good things about the property also. She noted items such as a gymnasium, individual rooms, and a full kitchen. She stated that everyone knows there is

nothing for kids to do in Galesburg and that we all know we need to change that. It seems to her that going ahead with the feasibility study is the first step. We know it's going to be expensive, but we also know that we can get money for it. She noted projects such as the library and the Art Center, where they received millions of dollars. She reiterated that it makes sense to do the feasibility study, similar to what was done for the lake project. The community spoke up and decided they didn't want that project and the City didn't put money into it. She feels that this is a great opportunity to look at this building that is already there, could be repurposed, and that it might do great things for our community.

Mayor Schwartzman noted that there were two components to the Lake Story expansion project. Phase one was approved by the Council at a cost of \$50,000 to \$60,000. Then the second phase was the one that was debated hotly in this Council, and was initially proposed as a \$140,000 study.

City MANAGER'S REPORT

Council Member White inquired about what would happen without an interim Public Works Director. The City Manager stated that he would more than likely go back to the Department to see who the next senior person is and to see if they're willing to step up to serve as the acting Public Works Director. He noted that the previous person in the Department withdrew because they were not prepared to take on those responsibilities. He noted that his concern is that we may end up chasing some of the staff away if they don't want to assume this level of responsibility.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS (AGREEMENTS, APPROVALS, ETC.)

23-4026

Council Member White moved, seconded by Council Member Davis, to approve a professional services agreement with Farnsworth Group for Programming and Schematic Design for the Community Center in the amount of \$76,000.

Roll Call #14:

Ayes: Council Members White and Davis, 2.

Nays: Council Members Hix, Dennis, Miller, Acerra, and Cheesman, 5.

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion failed.

Council Member Cheesman stated that he believes in creating a robust community center. In running for the office of Council Member, he visited over 1,500 doors and overwhelmingly heard opposition to Churchill, not to a community center. He stated that he was elected as the Ward Seven Council Member and some of the items that he is going to make a decision on may go against his views, but not against his principles.

Council Member Cheesman stated that this project is a challenge and that a potential solution for that challenge is the Council's obligation and to possibly offer another alternative solution. He stated that he is working with other Council Members and will continue to work with

everyone in our community, and he plans to vet a plan, a framework, to work on the best opportunity to create a community center that will meet the needs of all of our citizens.

He would like to submit a proposal that will include creating a community task force made up of a cross-section of citizens, which would include nonprofits, youth, seniors, people from all parts of town, people who would be strong for Churchill, but would also be strong for one that was of less size. This task force would be charged with giving the Council recommendations in regard to the services that should be provided in a community center, without duplicating other services in our City. Also, where its location should be, who should be administrators and partnerships with nonprofits. He added that he believes much of this data will be collected by doing a needs assessment, but also use what information has already been gathered. He would also make a recommendation to keep the cost for this project in the \$2 million to \$5 million range, as was mentioned in the survey of what the majority of citizens want to spend on a community center.

Council Member Cheesman stated that the City could use these funds to help in other areas such as with our citizens, including tourism, business development, streets, sidewalks or whatever else that would enhance our community, and what it offers and services. It is his intention with this proposal to involve all the community, the appropriate stakeholders affected by it and have knowledge of the project in a cooperative, thorough effort to create a community center. He noted that he believes the community was promised this and believes it should occur. He plans to do everything he can to make sure that he works with the Council to see that a proposal like this goes forward and allows us to get an end product that everyone else will feel good about.

Council Member White stated that he has been on the Council for two years dealing with this project and he knows there are Council Members who are sitting here that did not want it from the beginning and don't want it now. He feels that they have gotten together and made sure that it's not going to happen. He stated that the people that are on the north side of town have access to the YMCA, have money, and have cars. He added that if he were to ask someone from the north side if they know how to ride the bus, he could guarantee they wouldn't know anything about it.

Council Member White added that if he were to ask someone from the Third Ward or the Fourth Ward, they would know about riding the bus because that's the life they have to live. He firmly believes that a community center is not going to make it at \$2 million or \$5 million. He noted that for the golf course, there was a \$9 million construction plan. There were plans for Hawthorne Center at approximately \$6 million, plans for the library at \$4 million. He noted that other locations for a community center were looked at with no parking, no gym, and only space for a little community center. He stated that Churchill came in at a mid-range cost of \$7 million.

He stated that there is already \$250,000 of kitchen equipment already at Churchill, a gym, auditorium, and classrooms. He stated that the 4,000 people in his Ward said yes to the community center and that they want and need it. He stated that his residents feel very disenfranchised and not part of the community. They feel they won't be asked to be part of this group because they don't have management skills, expertise, and they haven't run a business before. He noted that they run their houses every single day and manage their little bit of

money. He believes that these are the people who need this community center, the ones that don't make \$50,000 a year, don't have a YMCA membership, or have a car to drive. The people that need this are going to be on the south side of town, and he understands what their needs are. They need a place like Churchill. He stated that the Council needs to find out how we can make this work.

Mayor Schwartzman stated that he met with Council Member Cheesman last week and had a delightful conversation. He noted that he also met with Council Member Acerra. Council Member Cheesman brought the task force idea up to him at that meeting, and believes it is an excellent idea and feels it is a good step in the right direction. The Mayor noted that his concerns have been echoed already regarding the composition of the task force, which needs to be manageable and representative of all Galesburg. He noted the Heart & Soul project.

The Mayor's other concern is that the City needs to move with some expediency. He has been on the Council for 12 years and that reports and research sometimes take years or multiple years to come to fruition. He believes that we cannot afford years to move forward on this project and is therefore concerned about the timeline. He noted that he ultimately thinks this is a great idea and would want to get working on it as soon as possible. He noted that the City has a work session coming up later this month, which would be a great opportunity to flesh this out further and get moving. He expressed his appreciation to Mr. Cheesman for offering his thoughts on this and sharing his Ward's position. He also thanked Council Member White for his contribution to this cause as well. He added that everyone represents different Wards and we need to move forward collectively to find out what they wish to do.

Council Member Miller stated that he too has talked to the people in his Ward and is in favor of a community center on the south side of town.

Council Member Cheesman stated that one of the things that he hopes to do is to try to bring common ground and get people to work together. He understands that he is already being accused of taking sides or trying to play both sides, but that's not what he is attempting to do. He hopes to work with every type of person and get them involved in order to get the best information. He noted that his goal is to start a framework, but understands that it needs to be worked on in much more detail.

The City Manager suggested that if the Council was going to undertake a task force, they should probably get a facilitator or someone who knows how to navigate such a task force through a process to get it done in a timely manner and to keep it focused. He believes hiring a consultant to assist in that effort would be the best option.

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

TOWN BUSINESS

23-9009

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

Fund Title	Amount
Town Fund	\$1,340.68
General Assistance Fund	\$4,687.99
IMRF Fund	
Social Security/Medicare Fund	
Liability Fund	
Audit Fund	
Total	\$14,228.67

Roll Call #15:

Ayes: Trustees Hix, Dennis, Miller, White, Acerra, Davis, and Cheesman, 7.

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-9010

Ordinance on first reading amending the 2023 Township Budget and Appropriation Ordinance to transfer \$20,000 from the Town Fund to the Audit Fund and well as transfer \$10,000 from GL #602 to GL #616 for the new Connecting Galesburg Bus Pass Program.

Trustees Member White moved, seconded by Council Member Davis, to resume as the City Council. The motion carried.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Council Member White congratulated all the new City Council Members. He stated that he watched this election very closely, and it reminded him of going overseas and fighting for freedom for people to vote and have fair and free elections, not elections that were bought and paid for. He talked about the president of Vietnam who had his opponent assassinated so he could win the election. He stated that this was in a Third World country but that he watched our election be bought this year and was disheartened. He stated that he believes in playing fair, not lying to people and trying his best to be honest.

Council Member White stated that he started looking at where all of our parks and Lake Storey came from and found an article called *The Story Behind Public Parks and Playgrounds in Galesburg*, by Max Mack. The story of this article was dedicated to Mr. Max, whose public service during a half century constitutes a noble example of altruism. An altruistic person is when you act to promote someone else's welfare, even at a risk or cost of yourself. This article was dedicated to this man because he dedicated himself to someone else and was instrumental in putting several of the parks together during one of the biggest times of racism and segregation.

He stated that this Council has decided to take months, weeks and years to decide what we can do for the least of the people in our community. He knows there are people here that call

themselves Christians, and he calls himself a follower of Christ. He plans to fight hard for the people that don't have a voice or have the money to be able to spend like he saw spent on this past election.

Council Member White stated that this is what we call a representative government, and he represents the Fourth Ward. He will vote on what they ask him to vote for whether he likes it or not. He noted that he is not beholden to anybody. He represents the poor people, and the people in his Ward, the ones that don't have a voice.

Council Member White left the meeting at 8:22 p.m.

Council Member Acerra stated that she is very honored to serve and thanked everyone for attending tonight.

Council Member Davis thanked Elizabeth Varner for the information on Parks & Recreation and highlighted that there is a volunteer trail clearing to help maintain the Lakeside Nature Center on May 6th from 10 a.m. to noon and on May 13th from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. She also reported that there are currently 385 active anti-trans bills in legislatures across the country at the state and federal level. This is legislation that seeks to block transgender people from receiving basic health care, education, legal recognition, and the right to publicly exist. She stated that in short, that is an active attempt to commit genocide. She plans to continue to keep drawing attention to it because if we don't pay attention, then we will start losing loved ones left and right.

Council Member Cheesman expressed his thanks to Mr. Cox, Ms. Smith-Esters, and Mr. Wallace for their service to our Council. He also thanked the City Manager, City Clerk, and staff for the orientation session, as well as the reception tonight. He stated that it is an honor and a privilege to serve and represent the people and that he takes this job to heart and takes it seriously. He is looking forward to working with all of his colleagues and to find common ground to get things done for our City. He plans to represent all citizens and all of their concerns as he goes forward.

Council Member Hix congratulated everyone who won their elections, and he looks forward to moving Galesburg forward. He is very encouraged by some of the conversations that were had tonight. He added that he really likes Council Member Cheesman's idea about the community center taskforce.

Council Member White returned to the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

Council Member Dennis congratulated the new Council Members and thanked Council Member Cheesman for his work and idea on the community center. He also stated that he had the pleasure of attending a Police Officer Swearing In Ceremony earlier today.

Council Member Miller thanked all the voters in Ward Three for their vote and confidence.

Mayor Schwartzman expressed his appreciation to Graham Medical Center for attending the meeting and thanked them for their investment in our community. He noted that his comment related to spot zoning should not be construed as derogatory towards their entity or their

project. He noted that it is something that comes up from time to time and that he has heard the concern from other community members so he was glad to have an opportunity to educate the public on why it's not spot zoning.

The Mayor encouraged everyone to attend the National Day of Prayer this Thursday, May 4th, on the Public Square. The two sessions will be at noon and at 6pm. He thanked those who have organized that event. He stated that this meeting commences his third year as Mayor and that it has been an amazing ride. He has referred to a lot of the accomplishments that he believes the prior Council had achieved in the first two years of his term, and feels it is a reflection of what can be accomplished when the Council works together. He stated that as he has noted before, all those accomplishments were done with a unanimous vote of the prior Council and is a reflection of the incredible service of the City staff. He added that this is why what happened this evening completely blindsided him. He feels that it was a shame to in essence fire the interim Public Works Director. He felt it was malicious and not in keeping with past practices. He noted that he feels for Mr. Rothert, in particular his family.

Mayor Schwartzman stated that he believes what is not being understood by Council, but will be soon, is when those Council Members who voted in favor of Mr. Rothert's removal start to receive emails and calls from constituents. What that reflects on is how quickly this Council, of which he does not vote, would relieve someone of their duties without warning. Mr. Rothert had a job today and he will not have a job tomorrow. He has served on the Council for 12 years and he has never seen anything close to that. He asserted that it was heartless, not properly thought out, and will have far reaching ramifications.

The Mayor stated that at the next Council meeting in two weeks, there will be a public report that is shared with everyone about the morale of City workers. He does not feel that the action taken tonight is going to assist in improving the morale of employees. He added that the action tonight disturbs him.

He encouraged the Council that if there are agenda items that are being considered that they have questions about, they should give him and City Manager Smith the heads-up that there are reasons not to approve it and get his opinion as well as the City Manager's opinion. He stated that this was not done in this case and believes it was an egregious error.

The Mayor stated that he is looking forward to the next two years and that he has walked the community every weekend, and weather permitting, will likely continue forever. He has enjoyed meeting the wonderful people of Galesburg, hearing their ideas and complaints, and will be sharing those with the community. He stated that the Council will soon receive feedback on his first seven walks by the end of this week.

The Mayor further stated there are great people in this room today, although it is a small segment of the entire City population. There are incredible minds and hearts in this room, and rather than seeing each other as enemies, and as people who are out to get each other, which he believes there is evidence for, we need to call that out and work together.

He thanked Council Member Cheesman for thinking through the taskforce idea, and will be working to move it forward. He will be sharing all of his thoughts with the Council, the City Manager and his team to make sure it can be done in the most expedient way, with the best range of ideas that represent our community.

There being no further business, Council Member Dennis, seconded by Council Member Miller, to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:35 p.m.

Roll Call #16:

Ayes: Trustees Hix, Dennis, Miller, White, Acerra, Davis, and Cheesman, 7.

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

Peter D. Schwartzman, Mayor

Kelli R. Bennewitz, City Clerk