

Galesburg City Council Regular Meeting
City Council Chambers
55 West Tompkins Street, Galesburg, Illinois
June 19, 2023
6:00 p.m.

Called to order by Mayor Peter Schwartzman at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call #1: Present: Mayor Peter Schwartzman, Council Members Bradley Hix, Wayne Dennis, Evan Miller, Dwight White, Heather Acerra, Sarah Davis, and Steve Cheesman, 8. Also Present: Acting City Manager Steve Gugliotta, Interim City Attorney Paul Mangieri, and City Clerk Kelli Bennewitz.

Mayor Schwartzman declared a quorum present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Proclamation: Juneteenth

Presentation: Youth Commission

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

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to approve the minutes of the City Council's regular meeting from June 5, 2023.

Roll Call #2:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to approve the minutes of the City Council's special meeting from June 12, 2023.

Roll Call #3:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Dennis, Miller, White, Acerra, and Cheesman, 6.

Nays: None

Absent: None

Abstain: Council Member Davis, 1.

Chairman declared the motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Amanda Larson addressed the Council and stated that her grandson is a type 1 diabetic and has done a lot of research on the disease. For many, with the disease, eating healthy or organic is very expensive. She stated that she knew in the past that community gardens had been planted in town and asked about the possibility of getting support for donations from these gardens.

Jeanette Chernin addressed the Council and thanked the Mayor, Steve Gugliotta, and Council Members Dennis and Acerra for taking an interest in the dilapidated buildings she has brought forward to the Council. She noted that the burned houses on North Street still have no barrier around them to protect the public. She stated that 110 East North is extremely dilapidated, and it was confirmed that there is water service but no electricity.

Ms. Chernin announced that there were three great Juneteenth events over the weekend and she thanked the Mayor, Council Member White and others for attending. She pointed out that Juneteenth is not just a black holiday but a date in history when everyone became free. She has served on the NAACP board for nine years but was still able to learn a lot over the weekend.

John Peterson addressed the Council and stated that two years ago the Galesburg Youth Athletic Club hosted a “Gloves Not Guns” program, which included guest speakers, catered lunches, t-shirts, diplomas, and a closing ceremony. Several Council Members and City staff attended and worked together to make it a success. He is hopeful that the City Council and Mayor can work together and do the same for meetings now.

Jessica Columbie-Harris addressed the Council and announced that she would like to run for Mayor in two years to help with corruption in the Police Department and residents with drug addiction. She also believes that sidewalks around town are in dire need of repair.

CONSENT AGENDA #2023-12

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

23-3018

Approve the bid from Gunther Construction, a Division of UCM, in the amount of \$123,857.93 for miscellaneous sidewalk replacement at various locations within the City.

23-3019

Approve the bid from Gunther Construction, a Division of UCM, in the amount of \$48,444.45 for the replacement of driveway pavement at Central Fire Station.

23-6003

Approve the appointment of Jaclyn Smith-Esters to the Youth Commission, term expiring December 2024.

23-8011

Approve bills in the amount of \$3,321,733.23 and advance checks in the amount of \$210,974.46.

Council Member White reported that the sidewalk in front of 558 West South Street is in need of repair and would request that the project get moved up on the Street Division’s schedule. He noted that he has sent pictures to staff but was told that it likely wouldn’t get completed until next year.

Council Member Cheesman stated that during his Council Member Orientation the backlog of repairs needed was discussed and the lack of staff to work on these maintenance items. His hope is that the City Council can talk about this issue in the near future and possibly add staff to work on these projects.

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Davis, to approve Consent Agenda 2023-12.

Roll Call #4:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried by omnibus vote.

PASSAGE OF ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

23-1014

Council Member Acerra moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to approve Special Ordinance 23-618 on final reading proposing an amendment to Special Service Area One to provide for a ten-year extension of the \$1.50 tax and authorizes staff to establish a date for a public hearing for the proposed amendment.

Roll Call #5:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-2043

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member White, to approve Resolution 23-40 authorizing discounted pricing to Galesburg Township's General Assistance office for the purchase of both single and punch passes for fixed route public transportation.

Roll Call #6:

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

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS (AGREEMENTS, APPROVALS, ETC.)

23-4056

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to approve an amendment to the 2023 Classification and Salary Schedule for exempt employees by adding the

position of City Attorney and removing the positions of Assistant Public Works Director and Assistant City Manager/Director of Public Works.

Roll Call #7:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-4057

Council Member Davis moved, seconded by Council Member White, to approve an Urban Agriculture grant in the amount of \$25,000 for Greenlords Pharms LLC.

Roll Call #8:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-4058

Council Member White moved, seconded by Council Member Davis, to approve an Urban Agriculture grant in the amount of \$25,000 for Galesburg Fruit Orchard Project.

Mark Rasmussen addressed the Council and stated that he has planted over ten orchards (500 trees) in the last ten years and is thankful for the volunteer help he receives. He explained that with this help, fruit is never left to rot or cause a problem in the neighborhood. He is also looking forward to being able to expand educational opportunities in the schools and to work with students in building skills. Mr. Rasmussen noted that he keeps his properties well maintained, clean, and has many volunteers who help with harvesting.

Roll Call #9:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

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

TOWN BUSINESS

23-9013

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

Fund Title	Amount
Town Fund	\$8,856.76
General Assistance Fund	\$4,478.74

IMRF Fund	\$2,958.56
Social Security/Medicare Fund	\$2,440.81
Liability Fund	
Audit Fund	\$8,000.00
Total	\$26,934.87

Roll Call #10:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

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

CLOSING COMMENTS

Mayor Schwartzman reminded the Council that they now have a three-minute limit for Closing Comments.

Council Member Acerra expressed her appreciation for all the Juneteenth events and while attending, she met Galesburg native Sherrell Wallace who makes t-shirts with the logo “Living Inside Out.” She appreciates that Ms. Wallace is living her values.

Council Member Davis appreciated the proclamation and Jeanette Chernin’s comments. She hopes people consider supporting black owned businesses by making purchases from them.

Council Member Davis read lines from the song *Pride* by Jake Edwards:

*How many more have to die
So I can have my pride?
How many more have to die
So I can have my pride?*

*1969
Standing on the front line
They raid of safest spaces
And expect us to resign
But we fought for our rights
For many days and many nights
And now we march in the daylight
To continue the fight*

*1981
Another war has begun
They used our bodies like bullets*

*A disease as the gun
Our freedom has a cost*

*We need to honor those we've lost
And never take for granted
The boundaries that they crossed*

Council Member Cheesman stated that he was glad the City was able to help Mark Rasmussen and Demarkius Medley with Urban Ag Grants. He was also able to attend some of the Juneteenth events and found them very impactful and hopes that on holidays like these, everyone reflects on the past and the future. He also noted that growing up and living here, he's had a chance to visit with all kinds of people. One thing that is very consistent is how much people care and take pride in living in Galesburg. He believes that the Council owes it to everyone to make positive impacts - repairing streets and sidewalks, furthering development downtown, increasing tourism, youth, etc. He hopes the entire community can partner together to make this happen.

Council Member Hix expressed his appreciation for City staff, who don't often get thanks. He noted that Steve Gugliotta has done an excellent job, as well as Elizabeth Varner and the golf professional, Bryan Luedtke, who is an excellent teacher. He also thanked Aaron Gavin, Don Miles, Gloria Osborn, Kelli Bennewitz, and Ericka Gugliotta, for also being available to answer questions.

Council Member Dennis stated that he was able to attend the Juneteenth event at Carl Sandburg College. He also thanked Dave Selkirk, Golf Commission Chairperson, for his information on Bunker Links Golf Course.

Council Member Miller expressed his sympathy for the loss of fellow employee Ron Noble. Mr. Noble was very instrumental in setting up the American flags during the holidays in town, as well as his commitment to Railroad Days.

Council Member White thanked everyone who had a chance to attend the Juneteenth celebration at Carl Sandburg College. He especially enjoyed the Q&A session with Pastor Tony Franklin and hopes that something similar could be done at the City. He added that he knows one day Juneteenth will be a holiday for the City.

Council Member White stated that there is a flag that says "DON'T TREAD ON ME," and there was a great man who said "Give me liberty, or give me death." These are both about freedoms but he wondered how free people were back then and read General Order No. 3, dated June 19, 1865, *"The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a Proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired labor. The freedmen are advised to remain quietly at their present homes and work for wages. They are informed that they will not be allowed to collect at military posts and that they will not be supported in idleness either there or elsewhere."*

Mayor Schwartzman recognized that the City was able to give two significant grants tonight and that he has been involved with local food initiatives statewide, serving on the board of directors for the Illinois Stewardship Alliance. He noted that it is very unusual for a City to support these types of initiatives and that it's something we can all be thankful for. He reported that the City has awarded three of these grants and is thankful for all the work that went into the process, including from Ken Springer.

The Mayor stated that he attended all the Juneteenth events over the weekend and learned a lot and had a chance to meet Ross Wilburn, who is an African American born in Galesburg, served as Mayor of Iowa City, and currently serves in the Iowa State House of Representatives. Mr. Wilburn relayed to the Mayor that there were African Americans from Galesburg who fought in the Civil War, including one of his relatives. The Mayor will be sharing more of his story on his Facebook page.

Mayor Schwartzman was pleased to announce that he feels there was a shift in how the meeting tonight was conducted, including the new rules for Public Comment and Closing Comments. He appreciates everyone who spoke and reminded people to keep their cool during these hot summer months.

The Mayor reminded everyone that the Council will hold a Work Session next Monday, June 26th. He also noted that on July 2nd, the community will celebrate Lipanda Day, and that the Railroad Days Festival will start this week.

There being no further business, Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to adjourn the regular meeting at 6:59 p.m.

Roll Call #11:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

Peter D. Mayor Schwartzman, Mayor

Kelli R. Bennewitz, City Clerk