

Galesburg City Council Regular Meeting
City Council Chambers
55 West Tompkins Street, Galesburg, Illinois
August 7, 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: Interim City Manager Wayne Carl, 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.

Presentation of a Lifesaving Award to Police Officer Myra Duran

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to approve the minutes of the City Council's regular meeting from July 17, 2023.

Roll Call #2:

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

David Selkirk thanked the Council and staff for the new railing on the stairs in Council Chambers.

Andrea Bejarano-Robinson addressed the Council and thanked them for the proclamation for Disability Pride Month at the last meeting. She also expressed her appreciation for the railing in Council Chambers and hopes that the City continues to bring all their buildings up to code.

Deanna Trout, founder and executive director for the Hygiene Pantry, addressed the Council. She stated that she has been attending Council meetings for several months and had hopes of having a one-stop shop at the Churchill building, similar to the Jamison Center in Monmouth. She noted that this could be a benefit for her 1,200 pantry guests, both individuals and families. In taking a survey last month, she noted that out of 304 guests, 59 had no vehicle, 56 have experienced homelessness, and 21 do not have running water. She feels that a community

center would be worth so much more than \$2.5 million to the residents, and she still believes that Churchill can be used for these resources.

David Amor addressed the Council and stated that he is against selling the Churchill building until the value is known for the property, land and contents. He feels the Council would be irresponsible in selling until knowing the appraised value and that any bid for the property needs to be close to what it is worth. He asked that the Council wait on any vote until an appraisal and that they be good stewards of public resources.

Amanda Larson addressed the Council regarding Council Member Cheesman's comments about trash and litter at the last meeting. She enjoys walking and ends up picking up trash while doing so and would love to have everyone walk in their neighborhood at least once a week to do the same.

Bernie Cowan addressed the Council and stated that the perception was that the Churchill building was going to be the community center. This was especially true after the bond funds were secured and the sales tax increase approved. With the election, that direction was reversed, and it is now being reported that it will not be the site. He feels that the current bidder was methodically planned for this appropriate time. He wondered how the bidder was found and what discussions took place in advance.

Jim Jacobs addressed the Council and stated that he was not at the last work session, however he has watched the video several times. He stated that Council Member Cheesman stated that people in his ward are against Churchill, as well as those in Council Member Acerra's ward. At that meeting, Council Member White alluded to the fact that over the past two years, prior to the election, there were scores of people who attended meetings who were for Churchill as the community center.

He stated that much of this discussion, and comments about transparency, started with comments made by Tony Franklin, who he finds to be very conscious of finances and frugality. He questioned the Mayor if there has been any other tax increases since he's been in office, other than the quarter penny on the dollar that was passed to secure the bonding.

The Mayor noted the Council passed a significant Hotel/Motel tax increase during the last administration, as well as the Utility Tax. He stated that there may be some smaller ones as well.

Jeannette Chernin addressed the Council and thanked everyone who attended the NAACP picnic. They were able to give away 175 backpacks, fed 300–400 people, and had 20–24 exhibitors. She also wanted to make Council and staff aware that 110 East North Street is still in the same state as it has been since the April 3rd fire. Ms. Chernin further stated that she has been coming to Council meetings for many years, prior to Mayor Schwartzman taking office, and she is very confused by the deal with Costa and hopes that it can be cleared up. She also hoped that Council would consider keeping the building since there could be schools in the future who need a temporary location.

Holly McDorman addressed the Council regarding what she thought was progress forward for a community center, but since the election is heading backwards. She knows there are a lot of people waiting for a community center and many of them don't know how long they have, but that it could save their lives. The Council needs to keep moving forward and not sell the Churchill building to anyone who comes along. She noted that the Churchill site was approved by the previous Council.

Darla Krejci addressed the Council and stated that as an appointee to the Community Center Task Force, she believes the sale of Churchill should be delayed since there could potentially be a \$1 million grant for a community center available. The way this grant was written, it was for the rehabilitation of Churchill becoming the community center. She asked that Council wait on the sale until it's clear if the grant can be considered for another location. Ms. Krejci also stated that the sale should wait until the Task Force has had a chance to meet and more is known on what the contents are of the building.

She noted that at the last meeting, it was mentioned that there is a new community center being built in West Davenport for \$2.8 million. They have just broken ground on the project and it is slated to have a gym, kitchen, restrooms and storage. The size of the building will be 4,500 square feet, about the size of McDonald's. She doesn't think this is what residents have in mind for Galesburg and that the project needs to be looked at more before it is capped at \$2.5 million, or before the Churchill building and its equipment is sold.

Gabriel Wynkoop addressed the Council and stated that he likes that people are talking about Churchill, and he believes that if the building is sold, it should be to someone who is local, lives in the community, and has an investment in improving the community and helping it thrive. He feels that Galesburg could thrive if it had the right kind of community center, such as a maker space. He added that Churchill is already set up for education and that much of the equipment in the building, such as the industrial and commercial kitchen equipment, would be expensive to purchase new. He noted that his business, Sprinkle and Spoon, would love to rent that kitchen in order to expand their manufacturing capacity and start selling to grocery stores.

Tom Simkins addressed the Council and stated his appreciation for all the work that Chris and Gina did in his neighborhood of North Academy Street in getting the petitions out regarding saving the green space at the Churchill site. He feels that this has been beautifully answered with the bid tonight by dividing that part off and believes it's the most valuable piece of the property. He noted that it seems odd that only one bid was received and no one else stepped forward over the last two months to offer another. He believes the school district got rid of the building for a reason and that most of the conversation he hears around town is that Churchill is not the right location.

Mr. Simkins stated that he thinks the task force needs to get to work and find better options that are more centrally located. He feels that the Council needs to consider this offer because there might not be another one, and right now, the City is paying quite a bit to maintain the property. He urged them to put it back on the tax rolls and work with the developer that already has some good projects in our town. There have been instances where buildings have gone to

people outside of town, such as the Cottonwood Nursing Home, and it becomes a nightmare. He doesn't think there are too many churches that are actually looking for space at this time, and he would support a vote from the Council at their next meeting to approve the sale.

Pastor Antonio Franklin addressed the Council and stated transparency and trust is the key to what is happening right now. He just returned from a conference, and shared some words from one of the keynote speakers, who is a notable leadership person in the nation. The speaker stated that transparency, plus empathy, plus consistency, equals trust, and that we are all wired to trust. But when that trust is betrayed, it's hard to get it back. We must be transparent and share the truth, professionally, and personally. He says when communication decreases, uncertainty increases.

Pastor Franklin further stated that this lack of trust is so apparent because there are inconsistencies on how things are being done, and the public keeps finding out new things every day about a very basic process. The Council needs to do something and do it right, and he believes it needs to take place today and hopes that the Council will vote no to the sale of the property.

Champ Coleman addressed the Council and stated that before the City gets interested in getting rid of Churchill so quickly, they need to take a look at each other. He has spoken to most of the Council Members multiple times and the only thing he sees right now is that they are lacking integrity, honesty, and ethics. He has had a conversation with four Council Members, and they have stated that they are not in a rush to do anything with Churchill; however, within 24 hours there is a bid on the property.

He further stated that he had heard that Costa was going into the building, and then the next day there was an email from Costa stating the same thing. He has no problem with the developer that wants the property, but he questions that if it wasn't safe for our kids, why is it all of a sudden safe for a church and a private school. He feels that no one has given a valid reason why there's a rush and added that if it is because of the \$100,000 being offered, he could come up with that amount quickly. He also hopes the City waits to sell the property until it's known if the grant can be used on another property. He assumes there are other motives and that residents should be hearing what's going on and believes there are people lying.

Barbie Ford addressed the Council and stated that she was here to speak for the children. She understands that kids were moved out of Churchill because it's allegedly not safe. The community has been talking about bringing the youth a community center her entire life. She doesn't know what the Council has in mind, if there is a better place, or if the City plans to build from scratch, but she doesn't feel that is a good use of money. She stated that Churchill is a beautiful place and argues that it is centrally located, easy to get to, and is perfect for multi-use. She implored the Council to put off the vote, do their research and due diligence, and to act for the children of this community.

Bruce Weik stated that he hoped everyone read his column on Sunday where he wrote about the word stench in relation to smoke coming down from Canada. When he walked into the

Council Chambers, he could smell a stench. He can't imagine that they would have a hard time trying to do something for our children and that his guess is that they are trying to do it for themselves and their friends. He stated that all of a sudden there are churches that want to move into Churchill, which is also set up for kids. Both of his children went to Churchill, and it is designed for children and has a full gymnasium.

Jackie Smith-Esters addressed the Council and added that she believes that Churchill is the place to go because we need that square footage. She noted that the poverty rate in Galesburg is 21.3%, which is double the state average. The median income is \$38,000, which is gross income. She doesn't understand why the Council doesn't want to do better or raise the median income. She noted that the worst city, Harvey, Illinois, has a higher median income than Galesburg. She wants to improve our city and hopes the Council does too. There is a task force that hasn't looked at buildings yet, but the Council is already determining where they are or aren't going to look. She stated that there has been two years of research on where to put a community center, and it was determined that Churchill was the place. Furthermore, she noted that none of the Council Members are talking to social service organizations and that those are the people that are on the ground walking and talking to our community members.

Diane Crock stated that the biggest question for her is who is the City helping. She asked who was hiding the secrets and who's in charge of all of this. There are two groups of people, one who is for the community and one who has egos. She feels that the Council believes they are the smartest and knows what is best for people, though they have never asked real questions. When they do, it's more about the center, not the community. There is a group of people who have decided that they are going to do it with or without the Council because they are hindering the community. She stated that she is part of the solution, not part of the problem.

Chris Deligiannis addressed the Council and stated that he has gotten involved with the potential sale of Churchill but admitted that he doesn't have all the answers. As a community, he thinks we can find answers together. He noted that he has had the opportunity to reconnect with people who he grew up with, meet new people by going door to door, and going to the NAACP picnic. He is proud of this community and has hope, but feels we are making it difficult for ourselves. He believes there is a lot that can be done in this community and with the people in the room. Other communities see Galesburg fighting, but right now he believes we are fighting with ourselves. He loves this community and the people here and hopes that everyone can work together.

Nancy Eberhardt addressed the Council and wanted to offer one idea for getting everyone back on track since emotions are running high. She feels that one thing that could be done would be to slow down and not move so fast. There are many things happening too quickly for people to process and understand them. She believes that if the Council moves more slowly on the Churchill property, giving people time to consider all the new ideas, it would alleviate a lot of the issues with mistrust.

Kay Bell addressed the Council and stated that with the new larger library coming soon, and all the City parks available, it should free up funding to be used for roads. She feels that the

Council is spending too much time focusing on a community center and that staffing and upkeep of the building needs to be looked at so that the best for the community is done.

Reverend Jowers addressed the Council and stated that he likes the green space and agrees that it should be held on to regardless of a development on the property. He stated that he was at Bunker Links with two young men, and he felt uncomfortable for them because he felt that people were staring at them, never having seen black folks. The group also went to a restaurant for lunch, something that many people take for granted. He is coming to believe that with all the school shootings, America really does not love children. They will not ban assault weapons and kids are dying in schools. He stated that we have been fortunate that there has not been a school shooting in Galesburg, but that the tension is there.

Reverend Jowers further stated that as a City, we do not hear the voice of the youth and at the NAACP picnic, there were no black teenagers or young men in attendance. He quoted Jeremiah 17:9 and stated that whatever Council is doing behind the scenes, whether they are positive or negative, God sees.

CONSENT AGENDA #2023-15

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

23-4069

Approve the disposal of one paratransit vehicle and one fixed route vehicle that are beyond their useful life.

23-4070

Approve the submission of a one-time grant application to Western Illinois Area Agency On aging for Title III funding for use in fiscal year 2023.

23-6005

Approve the appointment of Dakota Taylor to the Community Relations Commission, term expiring February 2026.

23-5007

Receive the Fiscal Year 2022 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report.

23-8014

Approve bills in the amount of \$1,622,401.10 and advance checks in the amount of \$1,053,403.71.

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Davis, to approve Consent Agenda 2023-15.

Roll Call #3:

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

23-1015

Ordinance on first reading authorizing the use of a portion of the Series 2023 General Obligation Bonds proceeds to be used for the Irwin Street storm sewer and street reconstruction in the amount of \$550,000.

23-1016

Ordinance on first reading authorizing the sale of a portion of the property at 905 Maple Avenue in the amount of \$100,000. The City would retain the east-west drive and all the green spaces east, west, and south of the building. Interim City Manager Wayne Carl reported that he did receive clarification from Senator Durbin's office that the grant for a community center can be used at any location.

Council Member White left the meeting at 7:03 p.m.

Interim City Manager Carl reported that the Council approved going out for bids for this project at their June 5th meeting. At that time, information was sent to developers the City knew developed properties, which was approximately 20 individuals. Only one bid was received and later rejected by the Council.

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

Mr. Carl also explained that staff was made aware of the letter that Costa Catholic Academy distributed to parents indicating that they would be operating from the Churchill building this fall. He understands that this has caused confusion and staff contacted Costa representatives to provide clarity. The Peoria diocese office for Costa had previously contacted the City to request a tour of the Churchill building, and staff provided the tour, along with the information that if Costa decided to pursue locating in the building, details would need to be discussed and an agreement approved by City Council.

He noted that Costa representatives indicated that they would get back to City staff regarding any further pursuit of the location. There were no further discussions between Costa representatives and staff, and Costa did not submit an offer for utilizing space at Churchill. Upon being made aware of the Costa letter to parents, staff contacted the representatives and they indicated that there had been a miscommunication on their part, and that the letter should not have been sent. If Council approves the agreement tonight, and the Galesburg School District waives the right of first refusal, the building would become the property of the developer. He also noted that he talked to the developer today, and he also had not had any prior conversations with Costa about the building.

Mayor Schwartzman stated that he too had a conversation with a Costa representative and would reiterate and agree with what Mr. Carl reported.

Council Member Cheesman stated that he respects many of the views that have been shared and there are a lot of things that have been said that he takes to heart. He is trying to use common sense and reasonableness to come up with a compromise. He also understands that some may or may not agree with his ideas. He reiterated that bid packets were sent out to 20 organizations and only one bid for the building was submitted. This property has been for sale for two months and he feels that if the school district had seen value, they would not have sold it to the City for \$1. He noted that he has likely spent more time in that building than anyone else, having taught there for many years and also as a student there, and believes there hasn't been a lot done to the building since the 1970s. It has sat empty for the last 10 months and cost the City approximately \$90,000.

Council Member Cheesman stated that the developer interested in the property has said that he would allow the City to have the green space, which so many said was important, including the Council. He feels that this is a bid that the City should really consider taking right now. He repeated that he wants a community center, and hopefully the new task force can start working on it soon, including the cost. He added that people will have to keep in mind that everyone's needs are not going to be met and that the City will have to prioritize and have parameters.

Council Member Miller explained that he toured Churchill on Friday and the basketball court has significant damage, which would require a new floor. The City has a \$70 million total budget and past proposals for a community center were upwards of \$7.3 million. He believes that this building would cost a fortune and that the City does not need to operate it or be in the daycare business. The Council runs a city government and cannot take care of everything, including the upkeep and the manpower that it would take for such a facility.

Council Member Hix asked for clarification on the bid process and how the current offer was submitted. Interim City Manager Carl reported that from time to time, individuals contact the City about available properties and encourage them to bid if interested in the buildings in our community. The Churchill building is available, just like any other property that the City has available and Mr. Benedict had contacted staff and said he was considering making an offer on the property. It is unclear why he didn't make an offer when it was up for bid previously.

The Mayor inquired about the number of tours recently given in the building. Community Development Director Steve Gugliotta stated that he has given approximately six, although most were not interested in the property. It was also clarified that there is not a comprehensive list of the current contents of the building.

Council Member White stated that the Council received a letter from Quinn Adamowski, who is a regional advocacy manager for Landmarks Illinois. He specializes in these issues and is advocating to look into the building. The meaning of fiscal responsibility for him would be to find out what the building and its contents are worth before it is sold. He believes citizens feel the same way and doesn't understand the reason there is refusal to assess the value of the

property. He can vote for it if it's assessed at the right property price, which makes common sense to him, and noted that he didn't buy his house until he found out what it was worth. Council Member White stated that he knew before the Council fired Mr. Smith who was going to have this property. He also knows that there is another person on the Council who knew it at the time too. For this reason, he doesn't want anybody to open up their mouth and talk about transparency.

Based on Council Member Cheesman's statement, the Mayor noted that District 205 did not unload this building onto the City but instead saw it as a partnership, one taxing body to another. That is why they gave the building to the City for \$1. As far as the value of the building, he stated that he was doing some traveling this week at his own expense, and went to Chicago and met quite a few people. Council Member White was able to join him on that trip, and he would be happy to take any one of the Council Members as well. One thing he learned about the building is that when he sat in a room of economic wizards and explained that the City has an 87,000 square foot building on 12 acres that was used as a school a year ago, and the only bid was \$100,000, they were perplexed. They looked at the overhead of the building via Google, which has mostly a flat roof, and stated that they could provide power and energy for that building with solar on the roof. He noted that a future occupant of the property would never have to spend a dime on energy. The Mayor stated that he is working on getting this in writing, but he has also done calculations and he trusts them.

The Mayor stated that the Council, as stewards of our property, could actually keep the building as is and put solar on it and actually make money. There is a lot of potential for this land and building and he does not support the current bid. For the reasons that have been articulated, he would recommend an appraisal be done. Council should know what the contents are, and at one time was told that there was high functioning industrial, commercial kitchen equipment in there. He believes it would be wise for the Council to delay a vote, and feels there needs to be an actual development plan. He would also hope that Council would have some restrictions on the property since there are none at this time other than the zoning laws that apply to any property. Mayor Schwartzman further stated that he has no suspicions of the current bidder, and that he works with this gentleman on almost a weekly basis.

Council Member Davis stated she is aware people occasionally express concern about how little she speaks and added that sometimes she is listening and that she sometimes feels like there is much more to add or say. She noted that she does echo the things that the Mayor has said, and that she has personally had conversations with the bidder on this property. She loves the vision that he talks about, his goals for the community, and his track record of investing in the community and serving Galesburg. However, she does feel like the circumstances surrounding this process, especially the lack of appraisal and the rush felt by the community, makes her very hesitant about moving forward with accepting the bid at this time.

Council Member Acerra stated that when she ran for office, she was very clear that she did not think Churchill was the appropriate location for a community center. She has heard rumors that the arrangement with Costa is because she is Catholic, and appreciated that Mr. Carl clarified this information. She added that with regard to honesty and integrity, she has been totally

honest to the fact that she does not think Churchill is the right place. She does feel strongly about things such as having maker spaces for youth and STEM programs. She would like to see something progressive that meets our needs but is more modest.

BIDS, PETITIONS, AND COMMUNICATIONS

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

- A. IDOT announced that pavement patching on Interstate 74 between the U.S. 34 interchange (exit 46) to the Illinois 17 interchange (exit 32) at Woodhull begins August 9th.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS (AGREEMENTS, APPROVALS, ETC.)

23-4071

Council Member Davis moved, seconded by Council Member Cheesman, to extend the independent auditing services for the City's annual financial audit for the fiscal year ending 12/31/24 through 12/31/28.

Roll Call #4:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

Ken Springer, Knox County Area Partnership for Economic Development Director, introduced the owners of both businesses to the Council for each Minority and/or Woman Owned Business Startup Assistance grant.

23-4072

Council Member Davis moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to approve a Minority and/or Woman Owned Business Startup Assistance Program grant for Pho Lover in the amount of \$10,000.

Roll Call #5:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-4073

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Davis, to approve a Minority and/or Woman Owned Business Startup Assistance Program grant for Country Square Treasures in the amount of \$10,000.

Roll Call #6:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

Council Members thanked the business owners for their confidence in doing business in the City of Galesburg.

23-4074

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to approve an agreement for professional services in the amount of \$105,000 for preparation of bid documents for Phase 2 (HVAC system, boiler system, and ceiling replacement) at the Hawthorne Municipal Pool.

Roll Call #7:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-4075

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to approve a five-year facility use agreement between District #205 and the City of Galesburg. The Mayor noted that the tennis courts at the High School were recently resurfaced, as well as at Bateman Park.

Roll Call #8:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-4076

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to approve the demolition process on properties at the following locations:

1. 451 North Cherry Street (residence and detached garage)
2. 476 Peck Street (residence and accessory structure)
3. 61 North Elm Street (residence)
4. 950 South Henderson Street (garage)
5. 917 West Third Street (mobile home and accessory structure)
6. 348 East Third Street (residence)
7. 100 South Whitesboro Street (residence)

To begin this process, homeowners will be contacted, but the soonest a property could possibly be set for demolition would be six months to one year.

Roll Call #9:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-4077

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to approve the purchase of services from Lexipol in the amount of \$25,506.55 for Illinois police policy manuals, policy updates, daily training bulletins, and accreditation preparation.

Roll Call #10:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-4078

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Dennis, to approve the purchase of playground equipment in the amount of \$60,226.27 for Lancaster Park from GameTime as part of the 2023 Illinois Parks and Recreation Association Statewide Training and Funding Initiative.

Roll Call #11:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-4079

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to approve a quote submitted by Hein Construction Co., Inc., in the amount of \$12,376.12 for the sidewalk replacement on Academy Street between Simmons Street and Main Street.

Roll Call #12:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-4080

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to waive normal purchasing policies and approve the bid from Drake Scruggs in the amount of \$141,301 for a Versalift aerial and service body for the Traffic Division.

Roll Call #13:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-4081

Council Member White moved, seconded by Council Member Davis, to initiate the process to have an appraisal of the Churchill property located at 905 Maple Avenue.

Steve Gugliotta, Director of Community Development, stated that the earliest the appraisal could be done would be 30 days. If approved, the appraisal would not include the contents of the building.

Mayor Schwartzman stated that he was in contact with Quinn Adamowski about one year ago in reference to the Hawthorne Pool. In light of the sale of Churchill, he contacted him to get his take on the property, which is the letter he provided to the Council today. In discussions with him regarding the projects with a building and landscape of this size, there are certain aspects that he would look at pertaining to the value of the property. The Mayor noted that he could ask Mr. Adamowski to attend the next meeting, or anyone is welcome to contact him directly to find out information on an appropriate bid. He noted that it isn't expected that a bidder would buy at full appraisal, but there is an expectation that it comes within a certain range.

Council Member Acerra inquired as to why there was not an appraisal done prior to the building put up for sale. The Mayor stated that he chose to do it at this point because it is his understanding that the sale was done in a way that it wasn't required at that time the request for bids were sent. That process was more to garner interest and see what kinds of bids the City would get. In that process, he thought it wasn't necessary to have an appraisal at that point. Now, based on his personal expectation of what the value is worth, he suspects the contents of the building are worth more than the bid and is therefore calling for an appraisal. He noted that the public is also in favor of an appraisal, and they are his constituents. He feels it is worthy of waiting 30 days to know the value and believes the City probably should have done an appraisal when we received the property.

Council Member Acerra stated that when the City was discussing buying the former Rescue Mission property, she asked if an appraisal had been done and was told that one would not be helpful because it was a matter of who was willing to pay for the expense to tear it down, and the assessment of what it was worth was going to be difficult. She asked what an appraisal really represents, especially as it relates to this property, since it has already been agreed to keep the green space. The City put the bid out to 19 entities, including businesses, hospitals, and real estate developers, and received very little interest due to what we already know is the considerable amount of investment to get the building up to a workable state.

Council Member Hix stated that he is a licensed real estate agent, not an appraiser, but that he works with appraisers. If someone were to sell their house on North Broad Street, and had a contract for the purchase and getting a loan, the bank would require an appraisal. An appraiser would look at the square footage, the condition of the house, and they would compare that to other houses, generally in the same area. The only property that he can think of that would be close to a comparable for Churchill would be Nielsen School.

Council Member White stated that most understand what an appraisal is if they have bought a house. He noted that the Council just approved \$141,000 for a piece of equipment that goes on the back of a truck, but somehow thinks it is okay to give a whole building away for \$100,000. He doesn't understand why an appraisal shouldn't be done so that the City knows what the building is worth, and could even be an advantage to the buyer. He stated that he has one vote

and one voice but thinks the public should have an opportunity to know what this building is worth. If the City does give it away, that is called a “sweetheart deal”. He asked that someone explain to him why they do not want to have an appraisal.

Council Member Cheesman noted that he sees this as a unique piece of property where it is unclear what it would be appraised for - to build it out, use for a school, or demolish it. If it was appraised at a million dollars, the City would not get that amount and the building would therefore sit empty forever. The City had one bid that came in and now another potential one in two months. It seems clear that people are not interested, and he doesn't know what an appraisal is going to do to help the City with the selling of it.

The Mayor stated that he added this item to the agenda for the Council to consider. They heard from many people that an appraisal may be necessary or prudent. He spoke to Council Member Acerra's point about the property on the southeast side of town, the former Rescue Mission, and noted that the City was the buyer in that situation, which is different. The City was going to buy the property and it may not have been in the City's best interest to appraise it because the assumption was it was worth a lot more than an appraisal may show. The Churchill property belongs to the community and they are asking for an appraisal.

Director Gugliotta stated that in a residential situation, it would be a lot easier to find comparables, and the appraiser he talked to did state that this property would be difficult to place a value on because it is unique. He would be able to provide us a range and what it might be worth. Ultimately, what the value is going to be and what people offer will be based on the market.

The Mayor stated that based on his trip to Chicago, he is aware of an entity that is interested in the property but does not know what their bid would be. He also feels like this property is unique, and the City should do its due diligence to hold on to it, at least for a couple of weeks or a month, to assure that we have communicated its potential to every potential bidder.

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

TOWN BUSINESS

23-9016

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	\$1,500.00
General Assistance Fund	\$10,804.33
IMRF Fund	
Social Security/Medicare Fund	\$2,401.70
Liability Fund	
Audit Fund	
Total	\$14,706.03

Roll Call #15:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

Trustee White moved, seconded by Trustee Dennis, to resume as the City Council. The motion carried.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Council Member Hix thanked Greg and Jackie Saul, who have been hosting the Balloon Festival for many years. They continue to do a great job, and it is a pleasure to see the balloons flying through our community.

Council Member Dennis stated that he loves the new railing but thinks the podium should be moved four feet back so people don't walk into it.

Council Member Miller thanked Chief Idle for setting up a ride along with a police officer this last Friday and stated it was very eye-opening. He also noted that he has visited every department in the City since being elected, except the three fire stations, and felt it was something he needed to do as a Council Member. He also thanked the NAACP for the great cookout on Saturday.

Council Member White stated that he enjoyed the NAACP cookout, which he has done for many years. He was glad to see 99% of the Council there, as well as Elizabeth Varner, City Clerk Bennewitz and Fire Chief Hovind, who he thanked for helping him every year and wanted him to know how grateful he is for being his friend. He stated that he didn't get to go to a Balloon Race or to Park Plaza, but he did go out and watch the resurfacing of the tennis courts. He added that they did a great job, and were experts, but were from Missouri. He is dismayed that we don't have anyone local who could have done that job, and it would have been nice to have the City spend that money in Galesburg. He added that we should have a company here that can do that, maybe some young men or young women.

Council Member White is thankful for the houses being torn down on West Third and knows someone who will be really happy about it since she's been contacting him for a year regarding that property. Regarding the community center, when Council decided not to have an appraisal for a couple of thousand dollars, he believes people will be back next week and will say something. They're going to say they don't understand and ask why they didn't approve the \$2,000. He noted that they could have appeased them and when they come to the next meeting, Council Members will say they have city business to do and don't have time to worry about what they are saying. We can all scratch our heads and look down at the ground, but they should have at least given them something and not just keep telling them that they are in charge. Give the public the right to know that they are being heard. He added that he just read that Harry Truman is quoted as saying an efficient government is a dictatorship.

Council Member Acerra stated that we all need to remind ourselves what a terrific town we have and that not everybody understands the opportunities that exist for our young people to stay in town. She would like to make a point of discussing an employer when she has time in her closing comments to highlight the opportunities for careers that we have in our town. She had the pleasure of having a tour of Pegasus Manufacturing who is doing incredible things. They are manufacturing for many major companies such as Apple, John Deere, and Caterpillar, and they make highly specialized parts and use extremely advanced technology. They chose to make Galesburg their home, and their equipment is so unique, and their operations are so advanced that they decided to start manufacturing their own CNC machines.

She reported that they have another company now called Jupiter that makes the machines on which they can do this type of tooling. She wanted to emphasize that manufacturing isn't what a lot of people think of from the old days of Maytag. Manufacturing today is very clean and very advanced, and people have to have skills beyond just sitting at a conveyor belt and moving widget from widget. She wanted to give a sense of what kind of income could be made at Pegasus -- their advanced open CNC programming position has a salary of \$85,000. They have other starting positions at \$22 to \$30 an hour. She thinks that people need to recognize that there's a lot going on in the trades and that they are a very good career that we should support.

Council Member White left the meeting at 8:19 p.m.

Council Member Davis thanked Council Member Acerra for sharing and stated that several Council Members have toured Jupiter and Pegasus, but that it had been a while since she had heard their names.

Council Member White returned to the meeting at 8:21 p.m.

She thanked everyone who chose to come to the meeting and participate and understands there is sometimes anxiety about public speaking and making their voices heard and desires for the community known. It takes carving out a chunk of their time and also an effort to be knowledgeable about the goings-on of our City. It is really meaningful to her to see so many faces at the beginning of the meeting for public comment and see many of them who have remained all the way through this meeting. She also noted that she really loved tonight's

invocation by Ms. McCord, who did a beautiful job reminding everyone of the golden rule. No matter whether people are coming from a religious perspective or not, that's something that we can stand behind and work together on as human beings, and it was a fantastic reminder.

Council Member Cheesman complemented Council Member White on being a master griller at the NAACP picnic. He added that he enjoyed talking with him, watching, learning and picking his brain. He reminded everyone who came tonight, stops him on the street, or emails or calls him, they won't always agree on everything. But he knows that everyone has a lot more in common than they don't. Everyone has to continue to communicate and to try to find common ground and understand that everyone will have to compromise on things. He knows we have a lot of challenges ahead but that if we stay the course, continue communication, try to respect one another and look for things that we can build off with each other, we will get to where we need to go.

Mayor Schwartzman asked a follow-up question related to the appraisal of the contents of the Churchill building. He understands that it would not be an easy task and probably not something that the City would pay someone to do. He asked how the City would respond to a request to have some estimated value of the contents.

Interim City Manager Carl stated that he heard people mention the kitchen and stated that the City could probably get experts in to look and give a ballpark idea of the worth. He will look to see if he can line somebody up that would know the value of those items.

The Mayor stated that we started the meeting on a really high note with the invocation and also the life-saving award for Officer Duran. He added that there have been many things that have happened since the last time there was a normal Council Meeting, such as the American Legion baseball tournament in our City. He added that this doesn't happen but maybe every 12 years. We also had National Night Out, but he wasn't able to attend this year. He heard it went well and gave his congrats to Chief Idle and all the officers. The NAACP cookout occurred last weekend and he thanked the Council Members and staff who were there. He also reported that The Great Balloon Race was remarkable, despite the heat, which curtailed some flying. He also reported that the Orpheum Theater just put on a magical show, and the list goes on and on. He acknowledged the information that Elizabeth Varner puts together for them at every meeting, which is chock-full of great resources. He gave credit to the Parks & Recreation Department for all their amazing work, but with that being said, as was mentioned by a couple of people earlier in the meeting, there are some people who will never see these things. They don't have \$5 to spend on the transportation. We have to keep our entire community in mind if we're going to move forward.

There being no further business, Council Member White moved, seconded by Council Member Dennis, to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:27 p.m.

Roll Call #16:

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