

Galesburg City Council Regular Meeting
City Council Chambers
55 West Tompkins Street, Galesburg, Illinois
September 5, 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 James Kelly, and City Clerk Kelli Bennewitz.

Mayor Schwartzman declared a quorum present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Bonnie Ericson gave the invocation.

Proclamation: United Way Months
Diaper Need Awareness Week

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Dennis, to approve the minutes of the City Council's regular meeting from August 21, 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.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Linda Miller, Ward Six, addressed the Council and thanked the Mayor for his appointment of John Schlaf as Interim City Manager. She also wanted the Council to know that Mark Rothert, the Interim Public Works Director who the Council terminated on their first night as new elected officials, is now the City Manager in East Moline. She reminded them that they increased the salary for that position and have yet to hire a Public Works Director or City Manager. Furthermore, she hopes they are happy with the direction they have sent the City, which is an expensive and hostile work environment. She wondered how they were going to fix it.

Holly McDorman, Ward Six, addressed the Council and stated that she does not understand why the new Council has an issue with Public Comment when there has never been a problem with it before. She reminded them that as elected officials, the public's work is their work, and they need to be heard and not ignored.

She stated that three months ago this Council changed Public Comment in terms of how it will be brought forward and when, and now they are demanding more silence in an underhanded way to lessen accessibility and mute conversation. It is their job to listen to the public.

Elvira Hunigan addressed the Council regarding the freedom of speech, which is a fundamental part of democracy. She stated that some Council Members want to move Public Comment to the end of the meeting after recently changing the time limit from five minutes to three minutes. She understands that some City business takes a long time but that listening to the public is a duty of the Council, and they should leave it at the same place on the agenda.

Sallee Wade addressed the Council and noted that it takes courage and integrity to come forward and speak in front of the Council. She reminded them that we are all in this together and that she is encouraged and hopeful but that Council needs to listen to people. She hopes that members break with their cohorts when it's needed and that they practice diversity of input, creativity, sustainability and forgiveness.

Mike Spinks addressed the Council and stated that he knows they have tough jobs. He has always heard that Galesburg has nothing for kids to do here despite efforts from Anthony Law, Joey Range, Discover Depot, and now his business. He believes that there needs to be more City involvement in these initiatives and would like to propose a partnership with the City. He gave copies of his proposal to City Clerk Bennewitz for distribution to the Council. He added that the City needs to back those who received grants and the smaller entrepreneurs in the community.

John Peterson addressed the Council proposing that the City add a championship level disc golf course at Lake Storey. It is a sport that is growing and one that has been taking place at Kiwanis Park with a non-City league for many years. He feels that having a course at Lake Storey would immediately improve revenues for the City and that if a tournament were held locally, similarly to what is done in Peoria, the course would pay for itself. He would approximate a course like this would cost \$25,000. He quoted the Master Park & Recreation Plan regarding bringing in tourism and population growth, which could be accomplished with this plan. He is also not in favor of moving Public Comment.

Jeanette Chernin addressed Council and stated that she doesn't understand the rationalization of moving Public Comment since it was moved three months ago, unless it is simply because they do not want to hear from the public. It is their job to listen to them and with only three minutes to speak, they deserve to be heard. She reminded them that each of them are immediately replaceable and that someone else wants their seat. They need to make up their minds about the Public Comment and stick with the consequences.

Reverend Hailey addressed the Council and asked why it is that during election time, they all want the public to listen and vote for them, but now they don't want to listen to the public. He doesn't understand why they don't want to listen and hopes the City stops going down this road.

Bruce Weik addressed the Council and stated that he is not in total agreement with having Public Comment at the beginning of the meeting since things can get off track but feels that moving it to the end is stupid. He recommends that they offer Public Comment to each agenda item in order to hear what the public has to say on each of those topics, which shouldn't take up any more time. If it's moved to the end, Council will still have to stay and listen to them.

Ted Hoffman addressed the Council and asked if there are any other leases that the City has where the tenant pays one dollar and the City pays for all the utilities. He doesn't think that is a procedure that the City wants to start following.

Champ Coleman stated that he agrees that the one dollar lease is stupid and would rather begin asking for \$10,000, similar to other nonprofits or external agencies. They help a larger number of people than any of the other agencies. He also noted that they donate back to the community, unlike others.

Diane Crock addressed the Council and stated that she is not in favor of the lease either, which has been held over their head for a long time. She noted that whenever there is a homeless person at the Library, Public Safety Building, or other location, she and Champ Coleman are the first ones they call for help. They have busy lives and have plenty of other things to do and reiterated that not having a lease isn't personal to her but would hurt others.

Council Member Davis left the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

Ms. Crock read the definition of a hostile work environment and explained that she had tried to talk to Council Members regarding the lease but no one gave her a chance to give her opinion. She again reiterated that denying the lease won't harm her.

Darla Krejci addressed the Council and asked that Public Comment stay at the beginning of the meeting. She stated that she and others have been called the Mayor's minions and noted that there is a core of diverse commenters who represent a section of the community that is marginalized.

Council Member Davis returned to the meeting at 6:42 p.m.

Ms. Krejci stated that possibly the Mayor is their minion and that really all Council Members should be that way -- working for everyone in the community and not just those who voted for them. She further stated that the four new Council Members had a total of 1,524 votes, with 1,205 votes cast for their opponents; a slim willing margin.

Council Member Hix left the meeting at 6:43 p.m.

She noted that out of the approximately 17,000 registered voters, an estimated 15,700 didn't vote for them. She reminded the Council that they represent all the people and asked that they leave Public Comment at the beginning of the agenda.

Council Member Hix returned to the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

Jackie Smith-Esters hopes to hear from Council Members on why they want to move Public Comment. She also stated that the soft cap of \$2.3 million that has been given for a community center with the remaining bond money going towards roads will only have an effect on certain neighborhoods. A community center will be seen by the entire community. She asked that the City Council think about the Community Center Task Force and the job that has been given to them and realize that \$2.3 million is not enough for a center.

CONSENT AGENDA #2023-17

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

23-4090

Approve a housing rehabilitation grant application agreement with Western Illinois Regional Council in an amount not to exceed \$1,200.

23-5009

Receive the June 20, 2023, Investment Schedule.

23-8016

Approve bills in the amount of \$1,116,477.10 and advance checks in the amount of \$1,188,988.21.

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to approve Consent Agenda 2023-17.

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

23-1016

Ordinance on first reading authorizing the annual sale of retired, confiscated or abandoned property.

23-1017

Ordinance on first reading amending Traffic Appendix X of Chapter 77 of the Galesburg Municipal Code to revise the parking time limits on school days on Fremont Street and Hawkinson Avenue from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Council Member White asked that before the vote at the next meeting, Council Members visit GHS in the morning to experience the traffic situation first hand.

Council Member Acerra asked for context from staff on the recommended ordinance change. Police Chief Idle stated that the current parking restrictions have been in place for 30+ years and this is simply a change to match the new school hours. Safety is the main focus for the Police Department, and they continue to have a Community Service Officer at the school in the a.m. and p.m.

23-1018

Ordinance on first reading amending Section 30.15(B) of Chapter 30 of the Galesburg Municipal Code amend the order of business and place Public Comment after Miscellaneous Business on City Council agendas.

Council Member Miller stated that he asked for this ordinance to be placed on the agenda. He noted that at a previous meeting, the president of Graham Hospital and other executives attended to discuss an item relating to their new hospital, jobs, and economic development in our community, but had to sit through a four-hour meeting before their item was approved. There are other businesses who have visited Galesburg and left because of what is happening at meetings. For these reasons he is asking that Public Comment be moved to the end of the meeting, after City business has been discussed.

23-2050

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to approve Resolution 23-47 authorizing the appointment of John H. Schlaf as Interim City Manager for the City of Galesburg.

Roll Call #4:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Abstain: Council Member White, 1.

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-2051

Council Member Davis moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to approve Resolution 23-48 authorizing the purchase of 215 North Academy Street in the amount of \$813.00 from the Knox County Trustee.

Community Development Director Steve Gugliotta reported that this 9,000 square foot building has been vacant and without water since 2012. He also noted that the third floor was shut down due to building issues and that a demolition process was started three years ago. At that time, the owner did minor repairs and was able to avoid demolition. Property taxes have not been paid on the house for three years as well.

Director Gugliotta also explained that the Knox County Trustee purchases and sells properties on behalf of all the taxing bodies.

Roll Call #5:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, White, Acerra, Davis, and Cheesman, 6.
Nays: Council Members Dennis and Miller, 2.
Absent: None
Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-2052

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to approve a Supplemental Motor Fuel Tax Resolution in the amount of \$49,945.05 for the McClure Street Reconstruction project.

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

Interim City Manager Wayne Carl reported that Mike Doi has been hired as the City's new Public Works Director and will begin his duties on September 18, 2023.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS (AGREEMENTS, APPROVALS, ETC.)

23-4091

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Davis, to approve the donation of retired extrication equipment to the East Galesburg Fire Department.

Roll Call #7:

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

23-4092

Council Member Hix moved, seconded by Council Member White, to approve a 12-month carbon free rate agreement with Constellation as the electricity supplier for City electric accounts at a rate of \$0.07126/kWh.

The Mayor thanked Wayne Carl and Tifani Miller for their work on this agreement and noted that it is something that not all municipalities have taken advantage of.

Roll Call #8:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Dennis, Miller, White, Acerra, Davis, and Cheesman, 7.
Nays: None
Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-4093

Council Member Davis moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to approve an indemnity agreement with the owner of 138 East Main Street for work associated with the demolition of the buildings located at 140-144 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.

23-4094

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to approve an indemnity agreement with the owner of 156 East Main Street for work associated with the demolition of the buildings located at 140-144 East Main Street.

Roll Call #10:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-4095

Council Member Acerra moved, seconded by Council Member Davis, to approve a one-year lease agreement with the Galesburg Downtown Depot for approximately 1,500 square feet within 120 East Main Street. The Mayor noted that the City still reserves the right to sell the building with one month's notice.

Roll Call #11:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-6007

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Davis, to approve the appointment of DeMarkius Medley to the Community Center Task Force.

Council Member Cheesman noted that he was disappointed at the Task Force meeting and hopes that they are given the ability to do the work they have been tasked with doing. He added that during Public Comment at these meetings, citizens have been critical of members' motives and providing character assassination, which he feels is over the line. Constructive criticism is not being offered.

Council Member White stated that unfortunately, the Council has already given the Task Force limits, such as the \$2.3 million limit for the project. They should be able to do their work by

determining the need in the community and come back with a plan for the Council to review. This hamstring has already caused controversy and anger. He knows there are already people on the Task Force who do not want a community center.

Council Member Cheesman stated that the up front information was given to the Task Force that they did not have an unlimited budget for a community center. He reiterated that none of this allows members of the community to tear apart someone's character or ethics. He understands that everyone has a difference of opinion but that he hopes everyone will work together and build upon what they have in common but within the parameters given.

Council Member Dennis stated that he has heard all the Council Members say they want a community center but that they need to be mindful of the cost. Regardless, any proposals will come back to the Council for a vote.

Council Member Hix stated that he has talked to many in his Ward, as well as the public, and has found many that want to spend funds on both a community center and road repair. He is in favor of splitting the bond funds for both but is not in agreement with those who want a \$7 to \$10 million community center. He feels that the City needs to take care of the pensions for the Firefighters and Police Officers, as well as spend funds on parks. The feedback he has received is that all these issues need to be addressed by the Council but not at an unlimited amount.

Council Member Acerra stated that there is a very vocal group of citizens who want a community center, with a lot of priorities for it as well, and there are also members of the public who do not want a center at all. She is in favor of something modest and is glad the Task Force is attempting a needs analysis to look at the greatest needs that could be affected by the least amount of money. She stressed that prioritization is needed, form follows function and that programs need to be defined before a building is addressed.

Council Member White stated that data has been collected about a community center over the years but no one wants to look at it. He firmly believes that there is no reason to reproduce what is already there, especially a location, which was studied for a year with five sites proposed. He noted that none of those sites could be renovated for \$2.5 million. He understands that members keep saying they want a center; however, they don't want to spend the money needed even after looking at all the studies.

Council Member White added that he agrees roads need to be done, but it is not at the top of everyone's priority list. People need a community center, but he has found that several on the Task Force have failed to provide their definition of a community center. He reminded them that people are watching and that they will eventually have to answer to the public.

Council Member Dennis asked Council Member White if he knew how many in his Ward were in favor of a community center, specifically based on the community survey that was done.

Council Member White left the meeting at 7:49 p.m.

Council Member Hix stated that he asked unbiased questions about a community center and roads on social media and the response was split. He noted that he does not have a hidden agenda but does want to support and represent his Ward.

Council Member White returned to the meeting at 7:52 p.m.

Roll Call #12:

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 Davis, to sit as the Town Board. The motion carried.

TOWN BUSINESS

23-9018

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

Fund Title	Amount
Town Fund	\$8,597.59
General Assistance Fund	\$9,908.43
IMRF Fund	
Social Security/Medicare Fund	
Liability Fund	
Audit Fund	
Total	\$18,506.02

Roll Call #13:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

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

CLOSING COMMENTS

Council Member Hix thanked Wayne Carl for his service over the last several months. He also thanked Aaron Gavin, Airport Manager, for the tour at the Airport to highlight several projects.

Council Member Hix left the meeting at 7:56 p.m.

Council Member Dennis also thanked Mr. Gavin for the tour and added that he was able to take a plane ride. He also apologized to Council Member White and stated that he considers him a friend.

Council Member Miller thanked Wayne Carl for working with him and answering many questions over the last couple of months. He also thanked Aaron Gavin for the Airport tour. He also noted that he has now met with each Department Director and appreciates the information and tour they have provided, which helps him vote on City business.

Council Member Hix returned to the meeting at 7:57 p.m.

Council Member White stated that he will miss Mr. Carl who he believes is a man of great character. He noted that he also toured the Airport and was really influenced and learned a lot. He has always said that Galesburg has three airports, one in the Quad Cities and one in Peoria, but the greatest one is right here in Galesburg, and he would like to see it move forward. He also wanted to say that he believes the new Council had preconceived notions and an agenda of items they wanted to change the day they walked in. He doesn't think he will ever be able to deal with the fact they had preconceived notions.

Council Member Acerra stated that she has enjoyed working with Mr. Carl. She also wanted to address Council Member White's comment about preconceived notions. She noted that she had a meeting with the Mayor and shared with him four pages of ideas for improving the City, as well as concerns and thoughts on enhancement. She stated that she did have some thoughts that she really wanted to put forth and discuss with all members of the Council.

Council Member Acerra added that the tour of Jet Air was fantastic and that she would like to plug them as another career opportunity in Galesburg. Airline mechanics make a lot of money, and it's a fantastic job, especially if people are interested in working with their hands and have some technical skills. She also appreciated John Peterson coming and talking about Disc Golf, which is a growing sport, as well as pickleball. She also thanked Leanne Porter and stated that the work the Diaper Bank does is terrific. She lives near where a fire happened in their neighborhood on North Street and there was a young woman who lost everything and that organization was there to help. She added that there are some really wonderful people in this community and urged them to keep doing the work that they're doing, which is appreciated by all.

Council Member Davis also thanked Wayne Carl for being a great asset to the City and hopes he enjoys his retirement. She also thanked Steve Gugliotta and Aaron Gavin for stepping up through this transition. She also thanked John Schlaf and is looking forward to working with him.

Council Member Steve Cheesman also thanked Wayne Carl. He also stated that the tour at the Airport was fantastic and agreed with Council Member Acerra that working there would be a great vocational job. He also apologized to Council Member White and hopes in the future

everyone can be mannerly, work together and compromise with each other. This project is a high priority to him, and he hopes everyone can find ways to move forward.

Mayor Schwartzman thanked Wayne Carl for stepping up when needed for the City. He also stated that he is looking forward to working with John Schlaf, who has a great passion and service for Galesburg. He thanked Jim Kelly for being at the meeting and serving as the Interim City Attorney as well.

The Mayor also stated that we should be listening to the young people in our community (under the age of 30), who are passionate about Galesburg. They are the future of our community but will move if they are not listened to. Their needs should resonate with everyone.

He also reported that he had the privilege of riding in Fire Truck #57 in the Labor Day Parade, with an amazing seat on the ladder, which gave him the opportunity to see everyone who attended the parade. We have a vibrant community, who showed much respect for the firefighters and other laborers, which is so well deserved. He also noted that our parade has been in existence since 1892.

The Mayor stated that there have been a lot of figures thrown out for a community center. The previous Council bonded \$5.3 million, and also set aside \$1 million from ARPA funds for the community center. Staff has recently been told that there may be another million dollars in federal money coming to the City of a center as well, and hope we should know within the next couple of months if that comes to fruition. There are also additional potential dollars coming from state sources. He wanted to note that one thing that has not been included in these counts is the philanthropy of this community.

Mayor Schwartzman thanked Aaron Gavin for the tour of the Airport as well and encouraged the public to attend the annual Stearman Fly-In. He also reminded everyone that the Stearman Museum is still in the works.

Council Member White added that Larry Findahl, who lives at Moon Towers, let him know that he talked to other residents, and they are split on wanting the warming shelter back again.

Council Member Acerra moved, seconded by Council Member White, to adjourn into executive session at 8:12 p.m. for the purposes of discussing approval of the executive session meeting for August 21, 2023, 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(21); Litigation 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11) and Personnel, 5 ILCS/2(c)(1).

Roll Call #14:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

During the Executive Session, Council Member Hix moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to adjourn the Executive Session at 9:39 p.m.

Roll Call #15:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

There being no further business, Council Member Davis moved, seconded by Council Member Dennis, to adjourn the regular meeting at 9:39 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