

Galesburg City Council Regular Meeting
City Council Chambers
55 West Tompkins Street, Galesburg, Illinois
September 18, 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 John Schlaf, Interim City Attorney Jason Jording, and City Clerk Kelli Bennewitz.

Mayor Schwartzman declared a quorum present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Dave Scholl gave the invocation.

Presentations: Galesburg Tourism & Visitors Bureau
Downtown Community Partnership of Galesburg
Kiwanis Park Disc Golf League

A copy of the presentations, if provided, have been placed on file in the City Clerk's Office.

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Dennis, to approve the minutes of the City Council's regular meeting from September 5, 2023, and the September 11, 2023, Special Meeting.

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

Azaria Foshay and other members of the Carl Sandburg College Hispanic Latino Student Association addressed the Council about the importance of recognizing the history and contributions of Hispanic-Latino community members in the past and present. They also noted that the City had made markers last year and that they hope those can be placed and dedicated before October. There was also mention of encouraging the City to possibly rename streets after former Hispanic-Latino residents. Mayor Schwartzman asked for an update on the markers to be sent to the Council.

Reverend James Hailey addressed the Council and invited them and the community to the 2023 Illinois Council on Responsible Fatherhood's annual symposium on Saturday, September 30th, Noon-2 p.m. at the Galesburg Public Library.

The event is free and open to the public and will include speakers such as Mayor Schwartzman; Jared Hawkinson, Knox County Board Chairman; Ben Davis, Knox College Men's Basketball coach; Maureen A. Gorman, Fatherhood Educational Institute President; Tara Case, Director of Family Literacy for Regional Office of Education #33; Kang Hee Hong, Director of Workforce & Community Education; Morgan Johnson, Director of Recruitment at Carl Sandburg College, and himself. The intended audience is social workers, child welfare workers, family counselors, lawyers involved in matrimonial and family law, educators, politicians and policymakers, clergy, academics, child development experts, juvenile justice workers and interested members of the public. For information, please contact Jennifer Whiteside at 312-296-3666.

Carol Crouch addressed the Council regarding the proposed music venue and noted that she attends many of these types of musical events in Galva, Bishop Hill, and Cambridge. These communities have exciting venues which are near parks, trees, and playgrounds. She stated that Galesburg has many parks that would be able to offer these, as well as restrooms, places for food vendors, and parking lots.

Pastor Vince Marolla addressed the Council to talk about the Community Center Task Force and the racism that is overtly present. People will see on social media that there is a group of individuals who speak at Council meetings and have earned the nickname "the Mayor's minions." This term is dehumanizing and devalues the comments made by the people who identify with this group. The term suggests that these people speak with words, thoughts and experiences that are not their own, but have been given to them by others. He noted that this attitude of devaluing and dehumanizing is one of the pillars of racism.

He stated that any elected official who fails to call out this behavior for what it is, is a partner who is complicit. He added that those who say it's not racism, Pastors Campbell, Hailey, and Jowers appear to be identified with this group and he has not been. He has the same credentials, title, ministers in the community, and has spoken publicly about many of the same things as them. The only difference between them is their skin color.

Pastor Marolla reported that there is a recent memo that is being shared widely on social media outlining streets that could be fixed with some of the bond money. While it states that these roads are the most in need, the list has the appearance of being full of privilege. He noted that there is not one road being fixed in a minority neighborhood, Soangetaha Country Club is getting a road fixed, homes worth hundreds of thousands of dollars and a neighborhood where a member of the Community Center Task Force lives, a road by Lake Storey, and in "bird land," where a member of the City Council has family.

CONSENT AGENDA #2023-18

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

23-2053

Approve Resolution 23-48 designating authorized financial signers.

23-5010

Receive a petition to annex the properties located at 695 Knox Highway 10.

23-8017

Approve bills in the amount of \$1,459,947.86 and advance checks in the amount of \$190,054.19.

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to approve Consent Agenda 2023-18.

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.

Ken Springer, Knox County Area Partnership for Economic Development Director, introduced the owners of the three businesses to the Council for each Minority and/or Woman Owned Business Startup Assistance grant - Andrea Lopez, Bella Vida Hair Studio; Jonna Lee, Double Play; and Lauren Brown, Vibrant Life Coaching.

23-4097

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Davis, to approve a Minority and/or Woman Owned Business Startup Assistance Program Grant for up to \$10,000 for Bella Vida Hair Studio, LLC.

Roll Call #4:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-4098

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Dennis, to approve a Minority and/or Woman Owned Business Startup Assistance Program Grant for up to \$10,000 for Double Play, LLC.

Roll Call #5:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-4099

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Davis, to approve a Minority and/or Woman Owned Business Startup Assistance Program Grant for up to \$10,000 for Vibrant Life Coaching, LLC.

Roll Call #6:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

Mayor Schwartzman stated that there are not a lot of communities who are providing grants like these, and he's proud that Galesburg has a program.

PASSAGE OF ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS**23-1016**

Council Member Davis moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to approve Special Ordinance 23-619 on final reading authorizing the annual sale of retired, confiscated or abandoned property.

Roll Call #7:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-1017

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to approve Ordinance 23-3705 on final 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 what the parking restrictions were on Hawkinson Avenue now. Chief Idle stated he was unsure.

Roll Call #8:

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

Nays: Council Member White, 1.

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-1019

Ordinance on first reading adjusting various rates and fees collected by the City.

23-1020

Ordinance on first reading approving the Tax Increment Redevelopment Plan and Project for the Grand Avenue TIF 6 Redevelopment Plan.

23-1021

Ordinance on first reading designating the Grand Avenue Tax Increment Financing (TIF 6) Redevelopment Project Area.

23-1022

Ordinance on first reading adopting tax increment financing for the Grand Avenue Tax Increment Financing (TIF 6) Redevelopment Project Area.

Steve Gugliotta, Community Development Director, stated that once final approval at the next meeting, the tax will begin to be collected immediately.

23-1023

Ordinance on first reading annexing property located at 695 Knox Highway 10.

23-1024

Ordinance on first reading directing the sale of the property located at 905 Maple Avenue.

Interim City Manager Schlaf reported that the appraisal of this property should be complete within two to three weeks.

Council Member White stated that he would like to see this item tabled until the Community Center Task Force has completed their project and designated a location. Mayor Schwartzman noted that the Task Force plans to have a report to the Council by mid-November.

23-1025

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 Knox Street and Locust Street from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Council Member Davis moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to suspend the rules and place agenda item 23-1025 on final reading.

Roll Call #9:

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

Nays: Council Member White, 1.

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

Council Member White asked what the drop-off logistics were at Lombard. Interim City Manager Schlaf stated that the School District did not provide a schedule or drop off points in their request. Council Member Acerra clarified with staff that the District is only looking to amend the parking hours, not the logistics of drop off.

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to approve Ordinance 23-3706 on final reading amending Traffic Appendix X of Chapter 77 of the Galesburg Municipal Code to revise the parking time limits on school days on Knox Street and Locust Street from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Roll Call #10:

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

Nays: Council Member White, 1.

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-1026

Ordinance on first reading amending Chapter 30 of the Galesburg Municipal Code regarding the attendance of members of the City Council or other City Commissions via electronic means.

Council Members Miller, Acerra, and Davis stated that they are in favor of this ordinance since they sometimes have work obligations and would appreciate the flexibility of attending remotely. Discussion was held on removing the limitation for a member only being allowed to attend a meeting remotely if they have not done so in the three months prior to the meeting. A suggested amendment would include a limitation of attending remotely four times per calendar year.

23-2054

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to approve Resolution 23-49 approving a pre-annexation agreement providing for the sale of water to an outside customer at 604 Highway 150 East.

Roll Call #11:

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 Schlaf reported that the City has been awarded an IHDA Strong Communities Program Round 2 grant in the amount of \$562,000. He stated that his grant will allow for the reimbursement of expenses related to residential demolitions.

He also welcomed new Public Works Director, Michael Doi, to the City of Galesburg.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS (AGREEMENTS, APPROVALS, ETC.)

23-4096

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Dennis, to approve a facade grant in an amount not to exceed \$10,050, or 50% of the actual final projects costs, whichever is less, for Formal Wear of Galesburg, Inc. (Ducky's Formal Wear) at 31 North Kellogg 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.

23-4100

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to approve an amendment to the Cash Rent Agreement at the City's Business Park by extending the lease through January 1, 2025.

Roll Call #13:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

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

TOWN BUSINESS

23-9019

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	\$7,487.64
General Assistance Fund	\$7,283.61
IMRF Fund	\$3,286.07
Social Security/Medicare Fund	\$2,477.84
Liability Fund	
Audit Fund	
Total	\$20,535.16

Roll Call #14:

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 Miller, to resume as the City Council. The motion carried.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Council Member Acerra thanked Randy Newcomb, Kate Bullis, and Josh Fleming, for their presentations, all of which would bring visitors and grow our city.

Council Member Davis thanked the students from the CSC Hispanic Latino group for coming forward to talk about the history of their ancestors and families. It is great to hear the young people, and all residents in our community, come forward. She stated that this history and those who made these contributions to our community shouldn't go unrecognized.

Council Member Cheesman also expressed his appreciation for all those who presented or came forward tonight. He also stated that economic development should be a high priority for our community, as it is with him and others on the Council. He talks to a lot of businesses in Galesburg, which are top-notch, but they are having challenges of filling open jobs. He issued a challenge and a word of encouragement to those who are able to work, understanding that some aren't able to work for which he has compassion for. We need people to fill these positions responsibly, which would lead to a better life for many, provide self-worth, and help the economy. He feels this is the number one challenge for our community and society, and we are working on training and job recruitment in Galesburg to help move us forward. All of these are dependent on people to fill these jobs.

Council Member Hix thanked Randy Newcomb and Kate Bullis. He also stated that he wanted to back up the City staff, in particular to the comments made from someone without any direct knowledge regarding suggested roads that would be fixed. Aaron Gavin, the City Engineer, was asked to look at all the roads in the City to see which ones could be fixed with a budget of \$2.5 million. He looked at the quality, condition, and other scoring factors of the roads and never asked where Council Members, family members, or task force members lived. The thought that these roads have anything to do with political calculations is wrong. He added that Mr. Gavin does an amazing job for the City and the fact that his integrity has been questioned is ridiculous.

Council Member Dennis thanked Aaron Gavin as well. He also thinks having something in the vacant OT Johnson site is great. He also welcomed Mr. Doi to Galesburg.

Council Member Miller thanked everyone who presented tonight and is very excited about the progress of our City. He also thanked Ken Springer for bringing the three start-up grants to the Council for approval. He also agrees with Council Member Cheesman about job opportunities in our community. He, too, welcomed Mike Doi to the City of Galesburg.

Council Member White welcome Mr. Doi to our community and stated that he will find Galesburg to be a great community. On Sunday, he had the pleasure of attending an event at First Lutheran Church with Reverend Dr. Kenneth Wheeler, author of *US: The Resurrection of American Terror*. He wished that more Council Members could have attended. He invited the community to attend the upcoming NAACP Gala on September 30th, and also reported that he will be attending his third Illinois Municipal League conference in Chicago this week. It offers good information that he always finds enlightening.

Council Member White announced that if anyone would like to reach him to discuss an idea, whether he agrees or disagrees, they are welcome to contact him at 309-368-9114. He hopes the public also attends meetings and makes their voices heard.

Mayor Schwartzman stated it was recently brought to our attention that Commander Cole Pierce, a Galesburg native, died a year ago. He was born in Cottage Hospital and attended Silas Willard, Hitchcock Junior High School, and Galesburg High School. He then attended Knox College where he lettered on the baseball team and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Physics. He also played the French horn in the Knox-Galesburg Symphony. He joined the Navy Reserve Officer Candidate program and served his country in the United States Navy from 1961-1984, flying 257 combat missions in Vietnam. He was also a flight instructor in the Advanced Jet Training Program and received numerous medals and commendations during his career. Later, served as the Program Director on the F-14 Tomcat Research and Development Program. The Mayor stated that throughout his military career, he flew approximately 50 different aircraft types and completed over 500 aircraft carrier arrested landings. After his military career, Cole began his commercial aviation career for 13 years with Continental Airlines.

Mayor Schwartzman thanked the organizers of the Stearman Fly In, and although he wasn't able to attend, heard it was a great success again. He also welcomed Mike Doi to the City and is looking forward to working with him in this important position. He thanked Aaron Gavin for filling in as interim.

The Mayor stated that tonight there were three powerful, hopeful, and positive presentations. He thanked Kate Bullis for bringing her dream to fruition and for a possible disc golf course, which could do wonders for our community. He added his appreciation to Tessa Jones, and the work she does with the Tourism & Visitors Bureau.

Council Member Davis moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to adjourn into executive session at 8:02 p.m. for the purposes of discussing approval of the executive session meeting for September 11, 2023, 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(21) and Collective Negotiating 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2).

Roll Call #15:

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 Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to adjourn the Executive Session at 8:36 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.

There being no further business, Council Member Davis moved, seconded by Council Member Dennis, to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:37 p.m.

Roll Call #17:

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