

Galesburg City Council Regular Meeting
City Council Chambers
55 West Tompkins Street, Galesburg, Illinois
October 2, 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.

Reverend James Hailey gave the invocation.

Proclamation: National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Youth Commission Report

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to approve the minutes of the City Council's regular meeting from September 18, 2023, 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

Brent Zhorne addressed the Council regarding the resolution to fly the Respect for Life flag. He noted that he made the City Manager aware of his request last month via a letter and would like to see the flag flown during the month of October. He stated that coincidentally, another Galesburg resident made a similar request at the same time and she represents the Knox County Right to Life organization. He stated that he does not represent any organization, only himself. Mr. Zhorne stated that by extension however; he represents all people in our community who feel that life is sacred, precious, and in need of protection, especially the lives of the people who are most vulnerable in our community. The flag, which he has already supplied to City administration, is the result of the pro-life flag project, which was a grassroots initiative to come up with a flag that could be easily understood and universally recognized. The seven elements of the flag are each important and have special meaning to people who are pro-life.

Dominic Remmes addressed the Council on behalf of he and his wife, Jennifer, requesting that the Council approve the flying of the Respect of Life flag at City Hall for the month of October. They have been active members of Knox County Right to Life for many years and have worked to provide education to the community on life issues, particularly to youth. This includes the annual Festival for Life, which occurs every October, where nationally known speakers are invited to attend. He also noted that his wife has served as a volunteer for several years at the Women's Pregnancy Center, which provides the opportunity for young pregnant women in difficult life situations to receive assistance, with not only material supplies and education, but also ongoing friendship. Mr. Remmes stated that the Knox County Right to Life promotes respect for life in all stages, including the protection of the most vulnerable humans - preborn children. He stated that Thomas Jefferson brilliantly penned the Declaration of Independence, which in no uncertain terms stated that we are endowed with inalienable rights among those who have the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Life was the first of the rights claimed, and no humans were excluded from that claim, including the preborn, the disabled, the handicapped, and the elderly. Knox County Right to Life continues to fight for the right for life and flying a flag at City Hall is just one way to assist this cause.

Jerry Ryberg addressed the Council and questioned what the consequences of no abortions in America would be -- more misery, more poverty, fatherless kids, more social services, and of course higher taxes.

Amanda Larson addressed the Council regarding the right to life as well, however, she is not speaking about the flag although she does agree with what the Right to Life organization is saying when it comes to abortion. She stated that we need a change in our moral teachings, and that lawmakers teach that it is okay to have an abortion and that it is a person's right to decide whether a child is given the right to live or to be extinguished. Ms. Larson stated that according to the original law, the Ten Commandments, thou shalt not kill means in any form. She noted that she had two abortions before the age of 25, before she knew God and understood the depths of what she had done. She noted that she is not here to judge anyone for none of us can because only one person can judge. She hopes the City supports this cause.

Holly McDorman addressed the Council and stated that when she was in school, a teacher told her that she may not always be equal, but that she would always be fair. She strongly believes that the City needs to come up with a flag policy and stated that three months ago, she fought to have the Pride flag flown, even though the City had flown the flag for two years in a row. She noted that she can respect anybody who wants to fly a flag for their organization, but she believes that now is the time that the City needs to make a flag policy first, before a new flag is flown. She stated that if they don't set a policy now, they are setting a precedent for any flag. She did research on a lot of policies and one example is to fly special flags or banners, sister city flags, Heritage Month flags, or flags for Black History Month, Pride Month, Asian Pacific American History Month, National Hispanic Heritage Month, etc. She hoped that this would provide guidance for the Council to make a flag policy that might be inclusive, and asked that they consider a policy before they vote on flying another flag. She further stated that she did not fight for the Pride flag for nothing and she thinks the Council would be hypocrites if they did not consider a flag policy first.

Roxanne Flesher addressed the Council as the president of Knox County Right to Life. She stated that she is unashamedly pro-life and they would like to fly this flag because October is Respect Life month. This is something many churches have observed over the years and there is a church in town that flew the Respect Life flag this past weekend. She would like to see the flag flown because many do respect life - all stages of life. Their organization respects the lives of all people regardless of race and religion and she thinks the City would want to show that we are a city that respects people's lives, no matter their condition.

Dave Lindstrom addressed the Council and supports the flying of the Respect Life flag because of the 60 million lives that have been lost to abortion in the last several decades. He mourns the loss of the athletes, musicians, caretakers, doctors, lawyers, laborers, and carpenters that are not with us now because they have been sacrificed to abortion. He stated that this is something that the City needs to seriously think about and that it is not about one flag since anyone can fly a flag to promote a cause. This cause is sacred to our country, to ourselves, to our faith, and to all the things that are precious to us in this country.

Sallee Wade addressed the Council and stated that she has not seen this flag but that she does respect all life. Instead of saying respect life, she would like the resolution to say respect all life. She also noted that she believes pro-life is pro-choice and vice versa, and that if you take away choices from people, you take away a piece of their life. She would like to see a flag that did not have one particular logo, but instead possibly had a tree of life, so it isn't representing one group that has one goal that may keep others from having the choice that they need.

Jeannette Chernin addressed the Council and stated that 110 East North Street and 127 East North Street are in the exact same condition from the fire six months ago. She also stated that the property at 140 East North Street is empty, deteriorating, and has a hole in the roof. The property at 110 East North Street does not have electricity and with the cold temperatures eventually coming with winter, the pipes will end up freezing and bursting.

Ms. Chernin also stated that the taxable value of her home went up 30% and that she can see these three properties from her front porch. She does not think her home value is accurate. She also asked that the Community Center Task Force meetings be broadcast for those who cannot attend. She noted that every time the City moves the meeting, fewer people from the public come, and she doubts this is the objective of the meetings. She would also appreciate it if someone could let her know where the minutes from these meetings are published since this is an open meeting and the public has the right to view the minutes.

Jackie Smith-Esters addressed the Council and echoed what was said regarding the task force since she has been approached by many people that are wanting the meetings to be streamed, possibly on the City's Facebook page. She also stated that as far as the topic of the flag, the only thing that she is questioning or trying to understand is the process of how things get on the agenda. She was sure that when she sat at the dais, it took three Council Members or the Mayor to put something on the agenda. She believes that they need to be careful of allowing anyone to call the city manager and request items be put on the agenda.

Rhonda Callahan addressed the Council and stated that the City needs a policy and that the only flags that should be flown are the U.S. flag and the State of Illinois flag.

Darla Krejci addressed the Council and stated that when the Pride flag was being debated, Interim City Attorney Mangieri noted that if you approved a resolution or proclamation, then you were stating that you believed all these things. She does not feel that this current resolution takes it far enough by talking about the rights of every individual and believes that the list needs to be expanded upon if the Council truly represents and respects all life. They have to think about everyone, including the gay neighbor, transgender teenager, drag queens, drug addicts, the poor, Muslims, death row inmates, and migrants. Everyone should be on the list, not just the vulnerable, mothers and their unborn children.

Dan Leonard addressed the Council and stated that he has been involved with the Right to Life organization for many years. He noted that there are so many great minds we have never met, or never heard their thoughts, because they were never allowed to get to be here. There is an image of children's feet on the flag, which we all have in common. There are people who spoke and tried to make the argument about finances, or higher taxes, and it's sad that somebody doesn't see you as important enough to generate enough revenue that you can be dismissed. He added that the Knox County Right to Life is about respecting all life and the feet on the flag are not colored specifically to address one race or one culture. They're not about whether they're homosexual, heterosexual, asexual, they're about respecting human life through all stages. Galesburg wants to be a welcoming community and at the root of all this is humanity.

Champ Coleman addressed the Council and stated he doesn't know much about this topic but knows it is a dangerous and religious one. As a proud father of two daughters, if an unfortunate situation happened, he would have to look at the situation and make a parent's difficult decision at that point in time for his family and child. His opinion on the flag is that when the City discussed the Pride flag they had to hire another law firm. Nothing has yet been done about a flag policy, and therefore he feels that this flag should be flown, as well as all flag requests for the next year.

Bruce Weik addressed the Council and stated that he has heard the term pro-life being thrown around readily this evening, but he's not quite sure what it means. He assumes these people are against capital punishment, one of the most measurable things where human life is being taken for revenge. He would assume everyone is anti-war, meaning less than pro-life. He also stated that he has an issue about remote attendance and questioned what guarantees are in place to prove that it is the correct person on the phone and that they are making the vote and not acting under duress. He believes these are all legitimate questions that the Council should pursue since he believes it will come up in the future.

Reverend Andrew Jowers addressed the Council and thanked Council Member Davis for an issue he had in front of his house, which is now taken care of. He also noted that he attended the ribbon cutting for the new Hawthorne Pool renovation, which is quite an accomplishment. He also recently wrote an article for the newspaper titled *"Morality in Ethical Behavior, Equitable Policy is Key to Success."* He stated that there was quite a diverse group of people who came

out to celebrate the reopening, and he applauded Elizabeth Varner and her team for their hard work. He stated that for those Council Members who were unable to attend, they should ask themselves why they didn't show up. He questioned what situations made it so they didn't show up to a Galesburg community event such as this where the City has invested millions. He wondered why they didn't feel that it was important enough to show up as a person who sits on this Council.

CONSENT AGENDA #2023-19

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

23-2055

Approve Resolution 23-50 ceding the City's 2023 private activity bonding authority to the Quad Cities Regional Economic Development Authority (QCREDA).

23-3028

Approve the bid from 9 to 5 Computer for the purchase of uninterruptible power supply equipment in the amount of \$74,015.48.

23-3029

Approve the bid from Truck Centers, Inc. for the purchase of three 2025 Freightliner Dump Trucks to be utilized by the Street Division in the amount of \$235,354 including trades.

23-3030

Approve the bid from Victory Lane Ford for the purchase of five 2024 Ford F350 pickup trucks to be utilized by the Street, Airport, Park and Forestry Divisions in the amount of \$194,460 including trades.

23-3031

Approve the bid from Victory Lane Ford for the purchase of two 2024 Ford F250 pickup trucks to be utilized by the Street and Park Divisions in the amount of \$78,516 including trades.

23-3032

Approve the bid from Victory Lane Ford for the purchase of a 2024 Ford F350 truck to be utilized by the Street Division in the amount of \$35,458 including a trade.

23-3033

Approve the bid from D & T Demolition in the amount of \$119,300 for the demolition and cleanup of 91 West Simmons Street.

23-8018

Approve bills in the amount of \$952,431.20 and advance checks in the amount of \$681,318.01.

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Dennis, to approve Consent Agenda 2023-19.

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.

Council Member Hix moved, seconded by Council member Dennis, to take agenda item 23-2056 out of its current order for discussion.

Roll Call #4:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-2056

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to approve Resolution 23-51 declaring the month of October as Respect Life Month and to fly the Respect Life flag at City Hall.

Council Member Davis stated that she has been researching the wording of the resolution and the Respect Life month concept is not a national or internationally recognized holiday or time period. She stated it is actually from the Catholic Church, which directly associates it with religion. The Right to Life group, as an organization, is a right wing group that is political and openly endorses right wing extremist candidates. She suggested that it is inappropriate for a governmental body to endorse and embrace this request due to its direct and open religious and political affiliations.

Council Member Acerra stated that it is her understanding that the Right to Life group is actually a secular organization and that you do not have to be religious to be a member. She also understands that the local group has members from many churches, but that many are not necessarily religiously affiliated. She also noted that it needs to be kept in mind that this is not just about abortion and that the idea of respecting life is also to consider items such as the family of the young woman in England who are being told that they're going to pull life support and end her life. She knows that the group advocates in cases such as that and not just the unborn, but it's also about disabled individuals and those near the end of life. She considers this to be a broader concern than just that of abortion.

Council Member White stated that we should have a flag code and feels that without one, no flag should be flown. He believes this opens up too many issues and the City could be sued. He noted that we do not have a nativity scene on our square because it represents religion. He understands that anyone can belong to the Knox County Right to Life organization, and added that if he wears a suit coat, he is usually wearing a pin with a pair of feet on it. He knows in his heart and soul that this is about God, religion, and the right to live religiously. He supports the

organization but does have his own beliefs. They have spent millions on making laws and it still is mostly conservatives, who usually want smaller government, although they are making a law to tell a woman what to do with her body.

Council Member White stated that he listened to a gentleman talk about life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and as an African American, it is insulting. He stated that he lives in a nation where his life doesn't matter. When they said black lives matter, automatically the police and everybody else said blue lives matter. People did not hear them and they were dismissed. No one said it was right and that their lives do matter, but instead had to come up with a counter. African Americans have had no liberty or the pursuit of happiness. He reiterated that he does not think any flag should be flown.

Council Member White also stated that there is another problem in which he was always led to believe that it took three Council Members or the Mayor to put some on a City Council agenda. He guesses that's not true and has been proven today. He now understands that all he needs to do is request something, and if it's important to his community, to the people of color, it will get approved. He is concerned that other flag requests will come before the City, such as the Confederate flag. He believes this is causing more problems and is going to create more division. He added that he is a believer in Christ and he will let God make the judgment on people that have an abortion. He has two daughters and he thanks the women that made them possible to be in his life. He stated that he cannot vote for this resolution because of the ramifications and all the other problems it can cause.

Council Member Cheesman stated that he believes without question that this is a difficult topic and respects everyone who has spoken. There are many contrary views when talking about an issue like this and he concurs with Council Member White in the fact that the City needs to have a flag policy, but because we do not have one currently, this is in Council's hands. He would ask that the Administration begin working immediately on a policy so that this situation does not continue. He stated that like many topics, they are very complicated in that people have views that are in competition with one another. He will be voting yes for this and is trying to not look at what the issue is, similarly to the Pride flag, which he supported. In this situation, there are a number of things that he supports about this, but also a number of things that he has disagreements with.

Council Member Cheesman stated that this isn't about the topic, but that the City opened up this opportunity for people to ask for flags to be flown, and if Council has said yes to one, it's only fair to say yes to another. He feels that this is more about the whole fairness aspect of it and that the City has allowed one flag to fly and we have set a precedent. He believes that the American flag and the state flag should be the only flags flown in the future.

Council Member White stated that he was told that no City Council Member asked to put this item on the agenda. He asked for clarification from Interim City Manager Schlaf.

Mr. Schlaf stated that Council Member White is correct and that the decision to place this item on the agenda was his own. He did know that there were other Council Members who were supportive, but that the specific request to add it to the agenda was his alone.

Mayor Schwartzman stated that not everybody was in the room when the Council discussed and voted on the Pride flag in June. Listening to legal counsel at that time, there were concerns from Council Members of legal ramifications of flying that flag. Two issues that were presented by previous legal counsel was one regarding the protection the City had because the Pride flag had previously flown and Council had previously read both a proclamation and approved a resolution. He was told the Council at that time had set a precedent and returned to the same basic position and asked if the City was in that same position today.

Interim City Attorney Jason Jording stated that he reached out to Judge Mangieri to make sure that they were in agreement and that there are two issues to note at this time, which is whether this is a public forum or government speech. If it is a public forum issue, the free speech clause dictates. If it's a public forum, the Supreme Court has said that a government body may not exclude private speech based on religious viewpoint. This would be impermissible viewpoint discrimination. He noted that because of the way Galesburg has done this in the past, and is consistent with Judge Mangieri's opinion, the Council made what is called government speech, which was a position adopted by the City Council. Government speech is not bound by the free speech clause. He stated that with this request, the only option was to say yes or give it to the Council. If it's government speech, the people who decide what the government says or does not say are the policymakers, which is the City Council. The Council will have the ability to approve a flag ordinance in the future.

Mayor Schwartzman stated that the state of Illinois still permits abortion to occur and asked if the judgment of this body is to speak in favor of this resolution, and contradict state law, would that put the City in jeopardy of being discriminated against by the state. Mr. Jording stated he could not speak as to what the state would do, but what the resolution states is not unlawful and is not creating a legal prohibition in contravention of state law.

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Hix, to call the question on agenda item 23-2056.

Roll Call #5:

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

Nays: Council Members White and Davis, 2.

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

Vote to approve declaring the month of October as Respect Life Month and to fly the Respect Life flag at City Hall.

Roll Call #6:

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

Nays: Council Members White and Davis, 2.

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

PASSAGE OF ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

23-1019

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to approve Ordinance 23-3707 on final reading to adjust various rates and fees collected by the City.

Roll Call #7:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-1020

Council Member Acerra moved, seconded by Council Member Cheesman, to approve Ordinance 23-3708 on final reading approving the Tax Increment Redevelopment Plan and Project for the Grand Avenue TIF 6 Redevelopment Plan. Cristen Hardin, PGAV consultant, addressed the Council with information on each TIF item and was prepared to answer any questions.

Council Member Hix moved, seconded by Council Member White, to amend the Ordinance to strike the words “combination “blighted area” and” from 1(b).

Roll Call #8:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

Roll Call #9:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-1021

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to approve Ordinance 23-3709 on final reading designating the Grand Avenue Tax Increment Financing (TIF 6) Redevelopment Project Area.

Roll Call #10:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-1022

Council Member Davis moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to approve Ordinance 23-3710 on final reading adopting tax increment financing for the Grand Avenue Tax Increment Financing (TIF 6) Redevelopment Project Area.

Roll Call #11:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-1023

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Davis, to approve Ordinance 23-3711 on final reading annexing property located at 695 Knox Highway 10.

Roll Call #12:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-1024

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to approve Ordinance 23-3712 on final reading directing the sale of the property located at 905 Maple Avenue.

Council Member White inquired when the Task Force had been asked to present their findings to the City Council. Elizabeth Varner, Parks & Recreation Department Director, stated that the group hopes to present at the first meeting in December.

Council Member White stated that the City Council created the task force and should give them the ability to view any and all available sites until their mission is completed.

Council Member White moved, seconded by Council Member Davis, to defer agenda item 23-1024 to the December 4, 2023, City Council Meeting.

Roll Call #13:

Ayes: Council Members White and Davis, 2.

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

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion failed.

Steve Gugliotta, Community Development Department Director, stated that the appraisal for this building should be completed this week or next. He also noted that this is a sealed bid process and would require a development plan.

Council Member Hix stated that he is in favor of moving forward and that there is a set budget of \$2.5 million budget for a community center. Council Members have seen the estimates from Churchill and if chosen, the \$2.5 million would be spent to rehab only part of the building and

there would be no funds left. He added that he has been open about being against Churchill, but not against a community center.

Roll Call #14:

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

Nays: Council Members White and Davis, 2.

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-1026

Council Member Acerra moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to approve Ordinance 23-3713 on final 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.

Mayor Schwartzman asked who decides which member can be remote at a given meeting since the ordinance specifically says only one person can attend. Interim City Attorney Jording stated that the decision to allow remote attendance would fall with the Council, and if there is more than one request, Council would know in advance. The City Clerk will continue to keep track of Council Member attendance.

Council Member White expressed a concern over attending Executive Sessions remotely and the possibility of other individuals being present. Mr. Jording stated that there is nothing unlawful about someone sitting next to a Council Member for regular meetings, but that with respect to Executive Session meetings, the first line of defense is the Council itself and whether they allow someone to participate remotely.

Council Member Acerra stated that she believes Council honors and respects one another and does not think anyone would not allow a person to participate remotely. She noted that she suggested this ordinance and has the support of Council Member Davis and perhaps others. She added that this was written to mirror what was done during the pandemic and is not unusual throughout the state.

Council Member Acerra moved, seconded by Council Member Hix, to call the question on agenda item 23-1026.

Roll Call #15:

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

Nays: Council Members White and Davis, 2.

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

Roll Call #16:

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

Nays: Council Member White, 1.

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-2057

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to approve Resolution 23-52 amending the Economic Development Incentives Policy to include more of the downtown area.

Roll Call #17:

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**23-3034**

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Hix, to approve the bid from Howe Overhead Door for the salt building overhead door replacement.

Roll Call #18:

Ayes: None

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

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion failed.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

A. Trick or Treat hours will be 5-8 p.m. on Tuesday, October 31st.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS (AGREEMENTS, APPROVALS, ETC.)**23-4101**

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Hix, to approve an Employment Agreement for Eric Hanson as City Manager for the City of Galesburg.

Roll Call #19:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Dennis, Miller, White, Acerra, Davis, Cheesman, and Mayor Schwartzman, 8.

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-6008

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to approve the appointment of Debbie Clague to the Community Center Task Force.

Roll Call #20:

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.

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

TOWN BUSINESS

23-9020

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

Fund Title	Amount
Town Fund	\$865.73
General Assistance Fund	\$12,233.00
IMRF Fund	
Social Security/Medicare Fund	
Liability Fund	
Audit Fund	
Total	\$13,098.73

Roll Call #21:

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

CLOSING COMMENTS

Council Member Miller left the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Council Member White stated that he had hip surgery this year and didn't miss a meeting. It is important for him to be here and if he was still working, he would not have taken the job of a Council Member. Once he signed up to be on Council, it was his duty to be present. He stated that for him to skip a meeting is a disservice to constituents. He added that he does not believe the flag issue will stop with a flag code and that it is still going to create problems and division. He noted that he is a Christian, but believes this was wrong.

Council Member Miller returned to the meeting at 8:12 p.m.

Council Member White further stated that he appreciated the proclamation that was made today and noted that his brother-in-law is handicapped and lives in Walsh Terrace. Going to work each day is one of the high points of his day, as well as cutting grass. He added that there are people here in America that have their agendas and it is only about them and not about

everybody. With the flag tonight, the City has started down a slippery slope that could have consequences and ramifications. Personal agendas are self-centered and that some should be looking in the mirror. He stated that one of these days, if others are not in control, someone is going to do the same thing to you; they will think about themselves and not you. He hopes others get off their high horse and make sure they think about other people. His motto is that it is not about him, but about what he can do for someone else.

Council Member White left the meeting at 8:13 p.m.

Council Member Acerra thanked the Mayor and City for recognizing and making an official proclamation for National Disability Employment Awareness Month. She also made the request for another proclamation so that both entities can have one. She also encouraged any employers to consider working with these organizations. She noted that Thrive has moved to more of an in-placement service and their employees work at a job site. Bridgeway has the ability to do outsourcing but believes they do a little bit of both.

Council Member Acerra also wanted to comment regarding the idea that one shouldn't be employed if they are on the City Council. She stated that it can be a challenge at times and that she travels with her job but tries to get to as many events as possible. Even within the city, there may be multiple events at the same time and choices have to be made. She stated that certainly when you're working, that is your first obligation. Nonetheless, she does her very best to get to every event, and she would like to think that our City would value people such as herself and other Council Members who have employment during the day. She closed by saying that she thinks it adds to the color of their experience and that they can then bring that to their service to the City.

Council Member Davis stated that she thinks Council Member White's comment was more a reflection of his own experience with time management and she agrees that it is difficult when having a job. She noted that for this reason, it gives her all that much more appreciation for those on the Council who work and those who attend other community engagements. She reiterated that she voted no on the flag resolution because she does not want to send a message to anyone in Galesburg with a uterus that the City wants to control their private medical decisions. She feels that this is the root of what tonight was about and she stands behind that 100%.

Council Member White returned to the meeting at 8:17 p.m.

Council Member Cheesman congratulated Mr. Hanson and his family. He also agrees with many of the comments said regarding National Disability Employment Awareness Month and the wonderful work the organizations do in our community. He added that many on the City Council and the Mayor try to support all events as much as possible, and if they miss something it is not because they aren't supportive of it. Several events this weekend he attended included the NAACP Gala, which is a terrific and noble event. Also, there was an event with the Knox County Sheriff's Department raising money for their canine unit and public safety.

Council Member Cheesman stated that he is glad to see that the City is going to move toward a flag policy and that Council has dropped the ball on this. The approach that is being used now in his opinion is untenable and the Council will never be able to take care of the requests without some type of division or disagreement. He noted that when a member says that they are supporting something, it is not automatically that they are against something else. His vote tonight was simply a fairness vote because the City had already allowed it and not a lack of concern for women.

Council Member Hix welcomed Mr. and Mrs. Hanson and their family and is looking forward to working with him. He also stated that he works for himself and is fortunate that he is in real estate. However, that can be a double-edged sword when many times in the middle of an afternoon he doesn't have any appointments but on Saturday and Sunday when everybody else who has an eight to five job is off, he is working the entire weekend.

Council Member Dennis also congratulated Eric Hanson and his family and agreed that a flag policy is needed.

Council Member Miller welcomed the Hanson family and is excited to start working with Eric. He reiterated that he has visited each City department and it makes it easier to have the knowledge to vote on items, such as the trucks on the agenda tonight. He also reminded everyone to be careful on the roads during harvest season.

Mayor Schwartzman stated that due to a lot of turnover in Administration, a flag policy hasn't been a top priority. He is glad that the direction is to move quickly and expediently with the policy because of the realization of how important it is. He added that it's important because tonight he doesn't think there were any winners. Abortion is one of the most divisive issues that we have in our country today and that the issue was brought to the City Council, which is not where it belongs. His hope is that a flag ordinance will clarify what types of flags will be flown and we can move forward.

The Mayor reiterated what's already been said which was a unanimous vote for Mr. Hansen to come here in a few months. This is a very important vote and we are very fortunate to have someone of his caliber who will be leading our city. He wanted to recognize that this Council worked together as a united body to screen Mr. Hansen and then ultimately recruit him and bring him here. He also noted that the Hawthorne pool reopened, which is a \$4 million commitment that this Council and previous Councils have made. City staff spent a lot of time on this project as well and it was a wonderful ribbon cutting ceremony and he thanked Elizabeth Varner for organizing it. There are many people who frequent the pool and hopefully new people will start as well in the near future. Galesburg is unique to have the type of nautical facilities in a city of our size and we should boast that and recruit others.

Mayor Schwartzman also reported that he was happy to attend the NAACP Gala over the weekend and believes there were 280 people at the event; the largest attendance they have ever had. There were dignitaries from across the state and it was a beautiful gathering of people from different political and moral persuasions, especially as it relates to the issues that were

discussed tonight. He added that we are all united and supportive of each other and that is all positive.

He closed by saying that he is aware that some people's assessments of their homes are coming in the mail and they are getting sticker shock because they're seeing large increases. This is a very important issue to him and he would like to direct the city to look into that issue and ensure that the assessments were done properly.

There being no further business, Council Member White moved, seconded by Council Member Dennis, to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:28 p.m.

Roll Call #22:

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