

Galesburg City Council Regular Meeting
City Council Chambers
55 West Tompkins Street, Galesburg, Illinois
October 16, 2023
6:00 p.m.

Called to order by Deputy Mayor Wayne Dennis at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call #1: Present: Council Members Bradley Hix, Wayne Dennis, Evan Miller, Dwight White, Heather Acerra, Sarah Davis, and Steve Cheesman, 7. Absent: Mayor Peter Schwartzman, 1. Also Present: Interim City Manager John Schlaf, Attorney James Kelly, and Deputy City Clerk Ericka Gugliotta.

Deputy Mayor Dennis declared a quorum present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Semenya McCord gave the invocation.

Proclamation: Manufacturing Month
Physical Therapy Month

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Hix, to approve the minutes of the City Council's regular meeting from October 2, 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

Faye Schultz addressed the Council about houses and abandoned property. Most homes in her neighborhood are well maintained whereas some have issues such as gutters missing or yards that are terribly overgrown. She has researched the reason why this happens and typically it is due to the home being a rental property, the owner being deceased, or the owner is mentally or physically incapacitated. Schulz stated to fix this problem the city needs to have stricter codes enforced for homeowners. Homes that are in disrepair should result in an immediate fine, and fines should increase if violations are not fixed. All residents should be able to live where homes are maintained.

Jerry Ryberg stated that he left out information regarding pro-life at the previous City Council meeting. Ryberg stated that someone mentioned 30 million abortions at the last meeting.

Ryberg added that what that means is 30 million unwanted children are not with us then, and are not with us now as unsuccessful needy adults. Ryberg believes that the Republican controlled states that have outlawed abortion will see more poverty, more crime, and higher taxes. Ryberg hopes that the next general election on November 5th will be good for democracy.

Dylan, Knox College Student, stated that she recently became aware that the City was going to pass a flag ordinance that would only allow government or military flags be flown on City property. She believes this ordinance is in response to the previous city council allowing the LGBTQ+ flag to be flown during pride month. Dylan stated that she is very disheartened to know that this flag could be removed. Dylan has faced bullying and harassment and others in the Queer community have faced much worse. When she sees the pride flag flown, she feels safe, dignity, respect, and can live as herself without fear. Dylan asks that the city does not ban flying the flag that supports the most vulnerable people in the community.

Linda Miller thanked the city for the Hawthorne Pool and hopes that everyone comes out to see the vision that the city accomplished. At first, it wasn't the city councils' vision, and they were told it was a lost cause. Once the council started to listen to the Save Hawthorne Pool group and see all the petitions to save it, they started to see that vision and moved forward with the renovation. The council stopped playing sides and voted unanimously to move forward with the renovation. Miller stated that the council is again not seeing the vision for the community center. Miller feels the council is disregarding the Farnsworth study by only allocating \$2.5 million for the center and is now reallocating the rest of the bond money for road repair. Miller asked that the council listen to the public before spending the money that was earmarked for the community center.

Jeanette Chernin echoed the comments from Faye Schulz regarding more strict housing codes. Chernin addressed her concern about 110 E. North Street not having any electricity with people living in the home with winter coming. Chernin stated she emailed the city council requesting that the Black Lives Matter or the Black Panther flag be flown during black history month in February before they pass the Flag ordinance.

Darla Krejci also addressed Flag policy. The council is about to pass a very restrictive flag ordinance that will result in the Pride Flag no longer being flown on City owned property. She believes this policy was delayed on purpose until after the Respect for Life flag has been flown. This was done in deliberate retaliation for flying the Pride Flag. Some believe that not flying the flag of a marginalized group means that you don't see them. She disagrees, the council sees them but doesn't want to. Krejci noted Council Member Accera stated, that some feel that the Pride Flag is insulting to their religion. Krejci added that as this ordinance is written, employees, representatives and volunteers cannot fly a flag over city owned or leased property. That will prohibit the flag from being flown at the Visitors and Tourism Center or let volunteers display flags on their vehicles. Krejci asks that the council read the ordinance before it's passed.

Jackie Smith-Esters asked that the council consider using the company called Hera Registry. They collect outstanding fines from blighted properties at no cost to the City. They keep a percentage of what is collected, and the rest comes back to the city. Smith-Esters added that she hopes the two ordinances on the agenda stay on first reading and would like more clarification on the bond money being spent on roads.

CONSENT AGENDA #2023-20

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

23-2058

Approve Resolution 23-53 accepting a grant from the Illinois Housing Development Authority's Strong Communities Program Round 2.

23-2059

Approve MFT resolution for purchase of salt, hot mix, asphalt, concrete, CA-6 gravel, and high-performance patching mixture for the 2024 calendar year.

23-4102

Approve the agreement to provide certain computer services to the Galesburg Board of Elections.

23-4103

Approve the agreement to provide certain computer services to the Town of the city of Galesburg.

23-6009

Approve the appointment of Madison Springer to the Youth Commission, term expiring December 2024.

23-8019

Approve bills in the amount of \$1,655,763.06 and advance checks in the amount of \$116,718.27.

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Davis, to approve Consent Agenda 2023-20.

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

23-1027

Ordinance of first reading amending Chapter 37 of the Galesburg Municipal Code regarding the display of flags on City property and uniforms.

23-1028

Ordinance on first reading authorizing the General Obligation Bonds, Series 2023 proceeds to be used for various projects.

23-2060

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Hix, to approve Resolution 23-54 determining the 2023 Property Tax Levy, which is not more than 105 percent and therefore will not require a truth in taxation public hearing. The tax levy request will not exceed \$10,193,306. Roll Call #4:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

BIDS, PETITIONS, AND COMMUNICATIONS**CITY MANAGER'S REPORT****MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS (AGREEMENTS, APPROVALS, ETC.)****23-4104**

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Hix, to approve a grant agreement with the Knox County Housing Authority in an amount not to exceed \$60,000 for operation of an overnight winter shelter. The hours of operation will be from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m., Monday through Sunday, bus passes will be available for those needing transportation to the shelter.

Roll Call #5:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-4105

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to approve amending the agreement with the IAFF Local 55, incorporating Fire Battalion Chiefs in the collective bargaining agreement.

Council Member Hix moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to amend the agreement to update the pay rates for sworn personnel in the bargaining unit from the 2021 rates to the 2023 rates and to remove a line in the job description for Battalion Chiefs.

Roll Call #6:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

Roll Call #7:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-4106

Council Member Hix moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to waive normal purchasing policies and approve a three-year agreement with Amilia in the amount of \$17,964 plus a 1% service fee estimated at \$6,000 per year, to provide Parks and Recreation software and support.

Roll Call #8:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

23-4107

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

1. 435 North Broad Street (detached garage)
2. 340 North Broad Street (residence)
3. 861 East South Street (residence)
4. 246 South Whitesboro Street (residence and detached garage)
5. 326 South Chambers Street (residence and detached garage)
6. 163 West Mary Street (residence and detached garage)
7. 272 North Broad Street (residence)
8. 484 North Cherry Street (residence)
9. 1970 East Main Street (commercial building)

Roll Call #9:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

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

TOWN BUSINESS

23-9021

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

Fund Title	Amount
Town Fund	\$11,613.46
General Assistance Fund	\$5,108.60
IMRF Fund	\$3,286.06
Social Security/Medicare Fund	\$2,465.22
Liability Fund	\$143.26
Audit Fund	
Total	\$22,616.60

Roll Call #10:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

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

CLOSING COMMENTS

Council Member White commended the students who were in attendance for the Manufacturing Month proclamation and encouraged others to speak to our youth about getting involved in the trades as an alternative to college. White asked the public to read the council packet and stay informed.

Council Member Accera expressed her support for manufacturing and vocational careers for youth and commended the educators and the community for their efforts. She expressed her excitement for all the new businesses that want to come to Galesburg and encouraged the programs that teach these skills to keep going. Accera clarified her comments regarding the Pride Flag and that some members find it insulting. She added she does not feel that way but that it's a very controversial issue. She has received a tremendous number of calls on both sides of the

issue. Accera expressed that she appreciated tonight's meeting and hopes that we keep supporting our youth.

Council Member Davis thanked the public who were in attendance for the proclamations. Davis stated that she agrees with what was said during public comment and the Right to Life Flag was retaliatory. Davis added that she doesn't anticipate the flag ordinance to change to be more inclusive. However, she will always have a pride flag flown and have a place where people feel safe, loved, included, and celebrated.

Council Member Cheesman stated that vocational education must be of the highest priority and the council should do what they can to help with that. Cheesman listed the names Ryan Crane, Mary Vega, Kim Sibley, Dotty Bess, Jeff Kern, Cindy Barshinger, and the late David Wilson and the list goes on of ordinary citizens that make extraordinary differences in our community. These individuals don't look to be recognized or for credit. They do things like cleaning up the community and helping their neighbors and volunteering. These types of people are why our community is such a great place.

Council Member Hix stated the Hispanic Latino Student Association of Carl Sandburg College recently had an event to honor the Box Car families. There will be another event on October 30th in honor of them, more details will be available soon. Hix stated that the recent study performed by the Farnsworth group shows that roads are the number one priority for citizens. He has spoken to many people in his ward as well as people in different wards and the vast majority agree. Hix added he will be voting for the allocation of \$1.9 million of bond funds to be used for street improvements at the next meeting.

Council Member Miller also addressed the concern of homes in disrepair. There is a home in his ward on Pearl Street that has been in very poor condition for 10 years. He hopes that these dangerous homes can be demolished. Miller added that there are several sidewalks that need repair. There are many areas that need to be worked on to make our city beautiful.

Council Member White invited his colleagues to attend the movie called Mully at the Orpheum Theatre on Saturday October 21st at 1:00 pm.

Council Member Hix announced an event at the Galesburg Area Vocational Center they will be hosting a Manufacturing & Trades Showcase on October 26th from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. and encouraged people to attend.

There being no further business, Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member White, to adjourn the regular meeting at 7:08 p.m.

Roll Call #11:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

Wayne Dennis, Deputy Mayor

Ericka Gugliotta, Deputy City Clerk