

Galesburg City Council Regular Meeting
City Council Chambers
55 West Tompkins Street, Galesburg, Illinois
February 5, 2024
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: City Manager Eric Hanson, City Attorney Jason Jording, and City Clerk Kelli Bennewitz.

Mayor Schwartzman declared a quorum present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

A moment of silence was observed in lieu of an invocation.

Proclamation: Knox Proud & Founders Day Proclamation

Presentation: Youth Extra Effort Award presented to Alexandria Clark.

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Dennis, to approve the minutes of the City Council's regular meeting from January 16, 2024, 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

Linda Miller addressed the Council and thanked Elizabeth Varner for her leadership as the Parks & Recreation Department Director. She implored the City to carefully choose the next director and to look into future leadership for the department. The City has a very vibrant, active, and expanded recreation opportunities and they need to carefully consider the new leader.

Pam Gaither, Galesburg Area Chamber of Commerce director, addressed the Council and wanted to give an update on their recent membership surveys. In December 2023, the poll question was "do you think we have adequate, safe and secure parking in downtown Galesburg?" She stated that out of their 359 active Chamber members, they received 51 responses: 66.67% stated yes, 29.41% stated no, and 3.92% listed "Other". In January 2024, the poll question was "what kind of project would you like to see on the square in Galesburg?" Of those same Chamber members, they received 48 responses: 54.17% stated they would like

to see new construction, 25% want some sort of recreational facility, 4.17% want to see parking, and 16.67% stated "Other."

Ms. Gaither also reported that the Chamber of Commerce just got a new website on Friday as well, and they are hoping that anyone using it finds it easier to navigate. She also noted that after hearing from their members, they are excited to now offer a discounted health insurance premium option for small businesses who are members with the Chamber. Information is available on their website. She also welcomed Eric to the city manager position and is looking forward to the year ahead.

Ted Hoffman addressed the Council regarding the proposed community garden at the entrance to our community at East Main Street. One item of the proposal includes growing tunnels, which are also on Academy Street near Knox College and are currently blown over and causing a mess. He also asked about available parking, including handicap accessible, and access to the garden and its proximity to the highway. He stated that he is also concerned about accountability for the \$25,000, the upkeep, and if the property would be taxed since it was in essence being leased from the City. He asked Council to ask these questions before they approve the agenda item.

CONSENT AGENDA #2024-02

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

24-2002

Approve Resolution 24-02 adding Bobbi J. Chockley, Interim Finance Director and Information Systems, and Sharon Heiden, Interim Assistant Finance Director, as authorized bank signers.

24-4004

Approve an updated zoning map.

24-4005

Approve annual Google Workspace renewal from 66degrees in the amount of \$213,946.20.

24-4006

Approve the use of the Airport for a remote control fly-in special event, June 15 and 16, 2024.

24-4007

Approve a letter of commitment with the Illinois Department of Transportation for replacing the structure carrying Seminary Street over U.S. 34.

24-8001

Approve bills in the amount of \$797,362.88 and advance checks in the amount of \$1,035,967.33.

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Davis, to approve Consent Agenda 2024-02.

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

24-1000

Ordinance on first reading amending Section 113.043 (C) of Chapter 113 of the Galesburg Municipal Code regarding the limitation on the number of Class C-1 liquor licenses.

BIDS, PETITIONS, AND COMMUNICATIONS

24-3002

Council Member Acerra moved, seconded by Council Member Dennis, to approve the bid from Natare Corporation in the amount of \$147,365 for the replacement of outdoor pool liners in the five-foot lap pool and waterslide catch pool at Lakeside Water Park.

Roll Call #4:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

City Manager Hanson acknowledged Elizabeth Varner for her 33 years of service and is grateful for her tenure and wished her well in her second retirement. He also updated the Council on Project 350 and thanked former Fire Chief Tom Simkins and his team. In 2023, they planted 149 trees, and in the last two years have planted over 260 trees. He added that this has been a great collaboration and wanted to recognize them for an outstanding year 2023 and is looking forward to a number of exciting projects by this group in 2024.

The City Manager also acknowledged the City's third OSLAD grant that was received in the amount of \$500,000. He credited the Parks & Recreation Department staff and noted that this brings the City's total to over a million dollars in matching grant funds received over the last three years.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS (AGREEMENTS, APPROVALS, ETC.)

24-4008

Council Member Davis moved, seconded by Council Member White, to approve a \$25,000 Urban Agriculture Grant for the Lipanda Foundation.

Council Member Acerra stated that she loves the idea of gardening and making gardening more accessible but that she would be voting against this simply based on the location. She has heard from constituents that this particular location is on the farthest edge of town away from many of the residents who would like to be a part of it, many of whom don't have cars. She is aware that the City has spent approximately \$1.2 million to clean up this entrance of town and also has a concern that it is a dead end street, near the interstate with no place to turn a vehicle around. It is also her understanding that the location is not on a transit line, although there is a stop near HyVee. She added that she would be voting against this but it's not because she does not support the idea but simply because of the location. She would like to see the applicant work with staff to find another location, which would be more accessible, and one that might be more in the spirit of what they are trying to do in terms of bringing the community together.

City Manager Hanson stated that he was unclear as to why this site was included in the program other than the City owned the parcel and it was available at that time.

Council Member Dennis also stated that this location is in his Ward and that the City has worked for four years to get East Main Street cleaned up. He indicated that possibly the City could provide information for the City's lot on East Fifth Street, which is approximately four acres, as well as having adequate parking. He stated that he would be voting against this item for its location as well.

Council Member Cheesman stated he supports the idea of the garden but does feel there could be a better location with accessibility. He feels that it is appropriate for the City to go back and take a look at what is the best possible place that will meet all the criteria to ensure this has the best chance to be successful.

Council Member Hix was also in agreement with supporting the project in a different location.

Council Member White stated that whatever site is chosen needs to allow for good growing conditions. He also would like to see rules and regulations and a penalty if they do not take care of their property or their garden spot. The Mayor noted that thirteen years ago the Council approved an ordinance for community gardens.

Council Member Davis stated that most of the conversation has centered on the accessibility of this location, but she wanted to bring to light that there is a lot of other robust information as part of this application that demonstrates commitment, planning, foresight, leadership, and education. The applicants have advanced degrees and experience farming and have connected with the U of I Extension to intentionally learn about growing, farming and gardening in a different environment in Illinois. She agrees that these issues and questions for this location have not been addressed and thinks it is a good idea to open up a conversation about other potential locations.

Roll Call #5:

Ayes: Council Members White and Davis, 2.

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

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion failed.

24-4009

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

1. 55 Madison Street
2. 367 Lincoln Street
3. 286 Fulton Street
4. 624 East Losey Street
5. 1057 Emery Street
6. 1911 East Main Street

Roll Call #6:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

24-4010

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Davis, to approve the 2024 Classification and Salary Schedule for Exempt Salaried and Non-Represented Hourly Personnel. This reflects a 4% COLA increase and reinstates the position of Executive Assistant.

Roll Call #7:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

24-4011

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to approve an intergovernmental cooperation agreement with the Sangamon Mass Transit District for providing transit vehicle repairs outside the capabilities of the City's transit shop.

City Manager Hanson explained that the Sangamon Mass Transit District is approved by IDOT for these types of repairs and the City will be reimbursed accordingly. This agreement would remain in effect until June 2024 with a new one presented to coincide with the State's new fiscal year for future repairs.

Roll Call #8:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

24-4012

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Davis, to approve an agreement with Farnsworth Group in an amount not to exceed \$21,650 for construction administration services for Lancaster Park.

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

TOWN BUSINESS**24-9001**

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

Fund Title	Amount
Town Fund	\$174.66
General Assistance Fund	\$3,501.29
IMRF Fund	
Social Security/Medicare Fund	
Liability Fund	\$4,094.85
Audit Fund	
Total	\$7,770.80

Roll Call #10:

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 Dennis complimented the Street Division and their work on the snow removal.

Council Member Miller thanked Elizabeth Varner for all her work for the Parks & Recreation Department and her many hours of dedication.

Council Member White also thanked Elizabeth Varner and noted that she put in a lot of late nights and early mornings and he will miss her.

He also stated that someday we'll have no black history month or any other ethnic history month. Everything that Americans do, should be American history and it shouldn't be separated by your ethnicity, how much money you make, or where you live. He prays that one day everybody's history will be included but that we're in a nation where they're trying to eliminate race history and African Americans pride themselves on the things that they've done in America.

He stated that he was explaining to somebody that his roots are shallow like corn, about two or three inches deep, because he has no real history since he doesn't know where some of his family came from. He noted the movie *Hidden Figures*, a young African American man who invented a soap that helps cure melanoma, two female high school students who solve a two thousand-year-old math problem and encouraged everyone to look up who invented ranch dressing.

Council Member Acerra stated that the Lipanda Foundation put together a good application for the community garden and that she does support the spirit of what they want to do and hopes a better place can be found. She expressed her gratitude to Elizabeth Varner for all she did for the City. Council Member Acerra also complimented the City workers who put bright light bulbs in the historic district where she happens to live. She feels that it is much safer and wanted to express her appreciation for the enhanced safety and brightness of the streets.

Council Member Davis thanked Council Member White for his contributions and for sharing information about black history that most are not familiar with. She also reminded people to be safe since the days are getting longer and many people are outside with the nice weather.

Council Member Cheesman also thanked Council Member White for the information on the great contributions of the African American community and noted the movie *Hidden Figures* also. He also wants to see one group that looks to help our world no matter what the situation and noted the presentation of the Youth Extra Effort Award tonight. He understands that there are still challenges, but our youth are trying to make this world a better place. He has watched a number of these kids also excel in their extracurricular activities, whether it be in band, music or a club. He mentioned Kiarra Kilgore, GHS Girls Basketball, will be the all-time leading scorer in girls Silver Streaks basketball and that there are so many great young kids that strive for excellence and we need to continue to acknowledge them and support them.

Council Member Hix also thanked Elizabeth Varner and congratulated her and for all the work she's done for our city. He also welcomed Don Miles, who will be serving as director in the interim.

Mayor Schwartzman thanked Elizabeth Varner for her many years of service to our community, especially her willingness to come out of retirement and delivering an amazing amount of positive energy. He also announced that Judy Simkins retired this past week and he thanked her service, particularly her assistance on the OSLAD grant that was received last week.

He also reiterated the wonderful work that Street Division did to ensure that the roads were safe over the last month. He asked the community to report any potholes they see to the City now that the snow is gone.

Lastly, the Mayor stated that by the next meeting, the Super Bowl will have been played, and recently a press release was sent out regarding safety around the game. He hopes everyone enjoys it and has a great time, but is responsible during their celebrations.

There being no further business, Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to adjourn the regular meeting at 7:02 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.

Peter D. Mayor Schwartzman, Mayor

Kelli R. Bennewitz, City Clerk