

Galesburg City Council Regular Meeting
City Council Chambers
55 West Tompkins Street, Galesburg, Illinois
March 4, 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.

Pastor Tony Franklin gave the invocation.

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to approve the minutes of the City Council's regular meeting from February 19, 2024.

Roll Call #2:

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 approve the minutes of the City Council's executive session meeting from November 6, 2023.

Roll Call #3:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

David Selkirk, Golf Commission chairman, addressed the Council and announced that this is Bunker Links 100th year anniversary -- their Centennial Anniversary. He plans to attend the next few Council meetings and provide some history about the golf course. He started by noting that in 1906, the City Council purchased 78 acres north of what is now Lincoln Park, with plans to enlarge the park. But in 1923, they decided to make it a golf course instead and initially named it the Lincoln Park Course. The City employed Dwight C. Bunker to build the course, which remains the same today. The nine-hole course opened in 1924 to 30 people, and on the second day they had 50 golfers. The cost ranged from 25 cents to 50 cents and soon after, memberships were sold for \$12.

Mr. Selkirk stated that the City decided to name the course after Mr. Bunker, who at the time was serving as the manager at the course. He noted that Mr. D.C. Bunker had four rules - (1) if you're playing slow, let the other group play through, (2) no person will be allowed to play with less than three clubs, and one of those had to be a putter, (3) the putter was the only club that could be on the green, and (4) players or groups could not use each other's clubs.

Amanda Larson addressed the Council and stated that she shaved her head for a purpose and those who are familiar with the Bible, the Old Testament, may know that when the people of Israel were in mourning they shaved their heads. Because of what is going on with Israel and Palestine, she chose to shave her head. She further stated that in the Old Testament, the prophet Ezekiel prophesied about what is happening today and that God has made her a watchman. She is supposed to pray for our nation, our city, the Council, and let everyone know and warn them that what's happening in Israel could come here. She added that we need to repent and turn our hearts back to God.

Kim Skaggs addressed the Council regarding the community garden. While she believes it is a wonderful idea, she is concerned about traffic. They hardly have any stop signs or yield signs in the neighborhood and her husband is legally blind. She has been trying for the last couple of years to work with the City's traffic division, as well as Council Member White, to get stop signs. If there is going to be a garden, then there will be more traffic. She feels that it needs to be thought through to make sure no one gets hurt. She is not willing to put her husband at risk for a garden.

Reverend Andrew Jowers addressed the Council and stated that it was good to be back in front of them and part of democracy. He added that four years ago he attended a meeting and talked about environmental justice, which hooked him up with the Mayor and led him to work with him on his mayoral campaign. He has been spending a lot of time at the McKnight housing complex and interacting with families. It breaks his heart for many to see the social situations and living conditions that they find themselves in, and in terms of environmental justice, there is a debate when it comes to affordable housing and where people should go.

Reverend Jowers stated that if the Council is familiar with the McKnight complex, there is a big creek that runs through it, with all kinds of insects, standing water, and probably snakes. When it rains, it also causes issues. They also have to deal with the rumble of the trains all the time. He reminded them that we all live in nice homes and that these people are really struggling. He advised them, the County Board and any public entity or governmental body, to walk through some of these housing projects, which is a kind of warehousing of people that don't necessarily have the means of education. He encouraged the Council to get out where the people are and walk the streets. It's not just about coming and sitting on this Council, but getting out in the community where the people are.

Linda Baldwin addressed the Council and wanted to remind everyone that the Public Comment time of three minutes is vital to the democratic process. She feels that some of the Council, including some of the media, believe it's a burden, or even a nuisance. To hear people in the community give their opinions about what they care about the most is the lifeblood of our

democracy, our representative government. She stated that what makes us a vital healthy democracy is when our government nurtures the voice of all the people, no matter if most of the people don't speak that voice aloud. It's the very fact that the Council will still nurture that voice, spoken or not, that creates a trust between everyone.

Pastor Antonio Franklin addressed the Council and stated he listened to the last meeting from home when Jim Jacobs shared his passion for the 54th Massachusetts regiment. He feels that this group has been significant in the history of our nation and that our community should recognize them. He noted that he came from West Virginia and had a similar situation where Katherine Johnson, from the movie *Hidden Figures* grew up, and he didn't know about her until he saw that film. He believes that we need to do something to recognize and memorialize this group of men.

Pastor Franklin stated that on another subject, he wanted to address the hate crimes in the community. When he moved here in 1995, his car was egged. When he looked down the side of the street, his car was the only one that this was done to in his neighborhood. He also stated that in 1996 he was working at Knox College and attended his first Railroad Days. He and his family took the rail yard train ride around the community and he remembers coming to the old Ice House, and a racial slur was written on the building. What happened at the Skate Palace is more of the same and he wondered if anybody cared. At that time, he was on the City's Human Relations Commission and they put together a Graffiti Task Force to combat the problem. When this happens, it makes people feel unwelcome and it really hurts people on the inside. He can imagine what it's doing to our young people. He implored the City to address all these issues, because it's not over. There's still a lot of hate in this community, unfortunately, and we need to show more love to everyone.

Stephane Massamba, African Student Association president for Carl Sandburg College, invited the Council to attend the ASA Women's Day Celebration on Sunday, March 10th, 5:30 p.m. at The Vault. He gave City Clerk Bennewitz flyers for the Council with information on attending the event, which will feature music, dancing, and aspects of Congolese culture.

CONSENT AGENDA #2024-04

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

24-2005

Approve Resolution 24-04 authorizing the submission of the Section 5311 and the Downstate Public Transit Operating Assistance Grant applications for the period July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025, and Resolution 24-05 authorizing the acceptance of Special Warranty 5333(b) and Certificates and Assurances.

24-3004

Approve the bid from Birkey's Farm Store in the amount of \$50,176 with trade for the purchase of a new Case IH Farmall 105A tractor to be utilized by the Airport Division.

24-4013

Approve Microsoft Licensing and Software Assurance three-year contract with Connection in the amount of \$44,020.17.

24-4014

Approve Bruner Cooper & Zuck, Inc. and Geotechnics for consultant engineering services for material testing for asphalt and concrete for calendar year 2024.

24-4015

Approve an agreement with Northern Illinois University Center for Governmental Studies for strategic planning services in an estimated amount of \$19,900-\$22,500. This would include all professional and analytical fees, project expenses, including mileage and travel, for all phases of the project.

24-5003

Receive the 2023 Annual Fire and Police Commission Report.

24-8003

Approve bills in the amount of \$397,014.60 and advance checks in the amount of \$1,327,895.60.

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to approve Consent Agenda 2024-04.

Roll Call #4:

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**24-1001**

Ordinance on first reading authorizing the submission of the Section 5311 and Downstate Public Transit Operating Assistance Grant Applications for the period July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025.

BIDS, PETITIONS, AND COMMUNICATIONS**24-3005**

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to approve the bid from Monroe Truck Equipment in the amount of \$60,266 for the purchase of seven Boss DXT V-Plow snow plows for the Street, Park, Forestry and Airport Divisions.

Roll Call #5:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

24-3006

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Davis, to approve the bid from Hawkins, Inc. at a cost of \$0.708 per pound for phosphate inhibitor.

Roll Call #6:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

24-3007

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to approve the bid from JIMAX Landscape LLC in the amount of \$28,300 to remove the existing wood waste from the oversize brush drop off site located on Pickard Road.

Roll Call #7:

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 Hansen recognized Tim Fey, who has been the City's Water Superintendent since 2019. He also is one of the longest serving employees in the history of the City with nearly 35 years in the Water Department, having started in 1989. Tim will retire on March 15 after a long and distinguished career and we all wish him well.

He also gave recognition to Aaron Gavin, City Engineer, and his team, for receiving a \$250,000 Safe Routes to School grant to improve sidewalks in and around the Lombard Middle School area. The City will contribute approximately \$100,000 in matching funds. This was all done in house, without any outside consultants or fees.

The City Manager also gave credit to the City's Finance Department, who did an excellent job for the 28th straight year and has been awarded by the Government Finance Officers Association for Excellence in Financial Reporting. He noted that it is no small feat to get that recognition and that it isn't awarded to all cities. He added that Bobbi Chockley and her team have done a great job and that 28 years straight is no small feat as well.

Mayor Schwartzman asked for an update on the East Main Street building. City Manager Hansen stated that staff is actively working with the owner and most importantly, the insurance company. They've had two or three structural engineers through the property and at this time the City is waiting for a decision on moving forward. He noted that unfortunately the process of working with the insurance company and the owner takes time, but staff is working diligently to

stay in touch with them. He added that we expect some kind of guidance from them soon and he reassured the public that it is not our intention to leave Main Street closed much longer and that we obviously want to get a resolution soon.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS (AGREEMENTS, APPROVALS, ETC.)

24-4016

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to approve an amendment to the lease agreement with Community Power Group for a two-year extension beginning March 18, 2024, for a solar garden located on the unutilized space on the airport property.

Roll Call #8:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

24-4017

Council Member Cheesman moved, seconded by Council Member White, to approve an Urban Agriculture Grant in the amount of \$25,000 for the Lipanda Foundation, who will lease three vacant lots located at the corner of Avenue B and West First Street.

Roll Call #9:

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

Nays: Council Member Miller, 1.

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

24-4018

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Dennis, to approve a service contract between the City of Galesburg Public Transportation and Knox College to provide students, faculty and staff unlimited fixed route rides March 2024 through February 2025.

Roll Call #10:

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

TOWN BUSINESS

24-9003

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

Fund Title	Amount
Town Fund	\$1,730.77
General Assistance Fund	\$5,566.49
IMRF Fund	\$1,176.17
Social Security/Medicare Fund	\$5,364.49
Liability Fund	\$4,735.55
Audit Fund	
Total	\$13,837.92

Roll Call #11:

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

CLOSING COMMENTS

Council Member Evan Miller left the meeting at 6:37 p.m.

Council Member Dwight White thanked Jeannette Chernin for passing along information to the Council on the names he listed at the last meeting. One of those individuals, her mother, was a founder of Second Baptist Church. He announced that it is now Women's History Month and he wanted to propose a trivia question, "who taught at Johns Hopkins and did not have a medical degree?" He further announced the following women and encouraged the public to look them up - Mary Jane Patterson, Vivian "Millie" Bailey and Clara B. Williams. He also added that he will definitely be at The Vault for the ASA Women's Day Celebration and was there last year. He also wished the Lipanda Foundation much success with their farm and is looking forward to participating.

Council Member Miller returned to the meeting at 6:39 p.m.

Council Member Acerra stated that she did go look at the lots that the Lipanda Foundation will be using and they look really nice, flat, a sunny location, and seems like a good location for growing vegetables. That being said, she noted that the resident who spoke and has concerns about the traffic should keep the City staff informed if it becomes necessary for more signage.

She also remarked that it's getting warmer and she's happy and heartened to see children actually riding bikes and getting exercise. She also knows it could be a hazard as well and wanted to ask everybody to pay particular attention to kids on bicycles, as well as more motorcycles. Other positive things Council Member Acerra wanted to mention was kudos to the emergency personnel and others who responded to the fire on Main Street. She is also aware there are a couple of cats that are still missing, but encouraged people to keep their eyes out.

She also added that it was really fun to see the fifth and seventh grade band concert and that we have a strong tradition of a great band culture in our town, which is another thing to see the community come out for at the lovely new High School.

Council Member Davis also reminded everyone to be safe, especially as this weather gets so lovely and a lot of people are outdoors more. Bikers and pedestrians need to be aware of the surrounding traffic, and in some places we don't have sufficient sidewalks and people are walking in the street. She wanted everyone to be aware, safe and enjoy the weather as it gets nicer out and wished everyone a happy spring.

Council Member Cheesman stated that when citizens come to meetings and address the Council, he believes it's safe to say that they all listen very carefully to what's being said and try to address the issues. He wanted people to know that they are heard but it is part of the City's policy or protocol that they don't engage in conversation but instead let the public comment. He also noted that on the Consent Agenda was an approval for strategic planning services. He is looking forward to getting together and working on a solid, positive, and in depth, strategic planning session coming up later in the year. He thinks with the help of all the citizens, and working here with his other colleagues, that the Council will come together with a number of really significant things and make plans to move forward. And then most importantly, making those plans come to fruition and not allow them to sit on a shelf or in a drawer.

Council Member Hix thanked his oldest brother for attending the meeting tonight and visiting from Texas. He added that he's really looking forward to the 100th anniversary of the golf course and hopes that he and his cousin, Dave, will try to play 100 rounds in honor of the 100th anniversary.

Council Member Dennis congratulated Council Member Acerra on her second place win at Dancing with the Stars in the Quad Cities.

Council Member Miller thanked City staff for taking care of a hazard in his ward today, which he was made aware of on Sunday. He also thanked the residents in his ward for letting him know when there's a problem, what their concerns are, and what they think about items on the agenda. He also thanked Ms. Skaggs for voicing her concerns about her husband and the signage. Council Member Miller noted that he voted no for the garden because he would like to see some basic guidelines so that these gardens don't become a nuisance or a weed patch. He also thanked City staff for their work on the Safe Routes to School grant near Lombard.

Mayor Schwartzman stated that he is looking forward to the 100th anniversary of Bunker Links and that it's very important for Galesburg. He thanked Mr. Selkirk for attending and is looking forward to the second chapter of his story. It is an amazing course, has a long history, and has been voted one of the top 25 municipal courses in the United States. He also noted that the closure of the library occurred last week and that normally that would be a very sad day, but the beauty of it is that we're going to have an even better one opening very soon. One that will have a lot of new opportunities and new features, and he encouraged everyone to keep an eye

out for when that occurs and partake. The new library took a lot of work and bold vision from a lot of people in our community who made it happen.

The Mayor also wanted to echo Council Member Davis's comments about it being spring now. Since it's warm, people are outside, doing things, and they haven't been outside much in recent months, so he asked everyone to be careful whether they're walking, biking, driving. He also stated that he really appreciated City Manager Hanson's comments related to the workers and staff and added that Mr. Fey has done an amazing job and that he has worked with him for many years and will miss him. He also reiterated that the Finance Department has once again done incredible work and that put the City in good financial shape. We need to commend those who work in that area.

Lastly, the Mayor thanked Ms. Skaggs for coming forward and let her know that members of the Lipanda Foundation are here tonight and that they could hopefully connect. He thinks they have every intention of making sure that this garden is safe for everyone and he would echo Council Member Acerra's comments that we will ensure that it is a positive development and that the City will ensure that it is safe for people walking. Mayor Schwartzman stated that, as Mr. Franklin said at the beginning of this meeting, he hopes everyone can work together and share in the joys of what that means in our community.

There being no further business, Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to adjourn the regular meeting at 6:50 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.

Peter D. Mayor Schwartzman, Mayor

Kelli R. Bennewitz, City Clerk