

Galesburg City Council Regular Meeting
City Council Chambers
55 West Tompkins Street, Galesburg, Illinois
January 21, 2025
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 (via telephone), Sarah Carrington, and Steve Cheesman, 8. Also Present: City Manager Eric Hanson, City Attorney Dan Alcorn, and City Clerk Kelli Bennewitz.

Mayor Schwartzman declared a quorum present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Jeremie Kilgore, The Ascent Church, gave the invocation.

A motion was made by Council Member Dennis, seconded by Council Member Miller, to allow Council Member Acerra to participate in the meeting remotely due to her employment. The motion carried by voice vote.

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Cheesman, to approve the minutes of the City Council's regular meeting from January 6, 2025.

Roll Call #2:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Reverend Jowers addressed the Council and wished them, the staff, and residents, a Happy New Year. He wanted to talk about the community in light of the celebration yesterday of our new President and his administration and stated that he is looking forward to it and is excited about the prospects of building community. In that light, he noted that yesterday was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr's birthday and he is aware that over 900 streets across the country have been named after Dr. King and he thinks it would be fitting for us to chart a new course and for Galesburg to make a statement by doing the same.

He added that there are some big challenges facing all of us in terms of some of the executive orders that have come down from the new President and we are going to have to make some choices in terms of the direction for our City. He is happy to cross lines of barriers and move

Galesburg forward in a positive direction for all citizens of Galesburg and is happy he can participate in democracy.

Robert Cain addressed the Council and stated that many people are concerned with the South Street underpass and are wondering what is happening. He also reported that they have done a lot of work at the skating rink but that there is a slum hotel near there that will likely catch fire eventually with people finding shelter from the cold. He stated that he is still wondering about a community center.

Bruce Cook addressed the Council and stated that at the last meeting, the subject of helping the homeless was raised and that it likely would take a multidimensional approach to address. He wanted to offer his unsolicited advice based on personal experience and added that you cannot assume to eradicate homelessness. The homeless have always been and will always be a part of human society. You will never be able to help all the homeless and will even find that some don't want help. If the Council can understand and accept this, it will keep them from feeling any remorse about those they cannot help, and give more focus to help those that they can now.

Mr. Cook stated that he knows what it's like to be homeless and added that in his early adulthood, he spent 10 years in a state of homelessness and knows what it's like to forage in dumpsters looking for food. He was in the cycle of not being able to get a job because he didn't have an address, yet unable to get an address because he didn't have a job. He also spent hours reading at the library just to have something to do. He stated that by the power and grace of God, he overcame the limitations of his psychological disability and was befriended by a family who accepted him as one of their own and didn't judge him or question his decision to remain homeless. He told the Council a story of a time when a man at a public pool told him that they didn't allow bums to use the showers, though at the time, he was working 60 hours a week and paid taxes to fund that facility and pay the wages of those who worked there. He hopes that as deliberations are made about what can and should be done in Galesburg, the Council doesn't follow the pattern of failed programs in other cities, but instead builds something different and creative so that years from now, cities all over the country will look to Galesburg to model their programs after.

CONSENT AGENDA #2025-02

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

25-2001

Approve an MFT Maintenance Resolution for the 2025 Intermittent Resurfacing project in the amount of \$800,000.

25-4003

Approve Consultant Engineering Services for material testing for asphalt and concrete for calendar year 2025 with Bruner, Cooper & Zuck.

25-4004

Approve a vendor show special event on May 10, 2025, at Lake Storey Park, hosted by Good Note Store.

25-4005

Approve the membership renewal with the Western Illinois Regional Council (WIRC) with an annual membership fee of \$17,085.

25-4006

Approve the release of the utility easement at 1922 North Henderson Street.

25-8001

Approve bills in the amount of \$429,896.33 and advance checks in the amount of \$215,309.68.

Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to approve Consent Agenda 2025-02.

Roll Call #3:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried by omnibus vote.

PASSAGE OF ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

25-1000

Ordinance on first reading amending an existing site lease agreement for an area of approximately 5,625 square feet of municipal property in Kiwanis Park for use as a telecommunications tower site.

25-1001

Ordinance on first reading approving an amendment to Section 113.043 (A) of Chapter 113 of the Galesburg Municipal Code regarding the limitation on the number of Class A-1 liquor licenses.

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Dennis, to suspend the rules and place agenda item 25-1001 on final reading.

Roll Call #4:

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

Nays: Council Member Carrington, 1.

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Dennis, to approve Ordinance 25-3745 on final reading approving an amendment to Section 113.043 (A) of Chapter 113 of the Galesburg Municipal Code regarding the limitation on the number of Class A-1 liquor licenses.

Roll Call #5:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

25-2002

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Dennis, to approve Resolution 25-02 for the support and commitment of local funds in the amount of \$168,399 for a Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program application. This application will be for planning study at the South Street railroad underpass.

Roll Call #6:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

25-2003

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member White, to approve Resolution 25-03 authorizing the execution of a service agreement with the lowest responsible bidder for energy aggregation.

Roll Call #7:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

BIDS, PETITIONS, AND COMMUNICATIONS

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

City Manager Hansen wanted to extend his appreciation to the City employees, many who work in the cold weather all day long, especially those who have been on a water main break in the frigid temperatures. He wanted to give them a special shout out to them for tackling that project this afternoon, and to the rest of the employees that do so many things, no matter the weather.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS (AGREEMENTS, APPROVALS, ETC.)

25-4007

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Cheesman, to approve a five-year agreement submitted by Herr Petroleum for the City's supply of gasoline and diesel fuel.

Roll Call #8:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

25-4008

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Carrington, to approve the 2025 Classification and Salary Schedule for Exempt employees.

Roll Call #9:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

25-4009

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Carrington, to approve the budgeted fiscal year 2025 other postemployment benefits (OPEB) contributions to the City's OPEB Trust.

Roll Call #10:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

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

TOWN BUSINESS

25-9001

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

Fund Title	Amount
Town Fund	\$11,220.02
General Assistance Fund	\$4,987.60
IMRF Fund	
Social Security/Medicare Fund	
Liability Fund	
Audit Fund	
Total	\$16,207.62

Roll Call #11:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

Trustee Carrington moved, seconded by Trustee Cheesman, to resume as the City Council. The motion carried.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Council Member Dennis stated that there was a water main break near him on the corner of Silver and Summit Streets late at night and the Water Division was out there until the next morning. He commended them for being out in the frigid weather.

Council Member White attended the MLK breakfast yesterday and expressed his appreciation to everyone who showed up and supported it. It's an annual fundraiser that is used for scholarships for youth and non-traditional students and added that there was a great turnout and a great speaker. He also wanted to congratulate Mr. Gavin for his promotion to Public Works Director and noted that the few times they have worked together, he has done a great job and is a great asset to the City.

Council Member White thanked Mr. Cook for his words and added that there aren't a lot of people in this room who have ever been homeless. Sometimes the people that have never been someplace don't understand where someone else has been, how to deal with it and what causes people to be there. He stated that he had a conversation with somebody about not only the struggles of being homeless, but why, and that's the important thing that he would love to see the City Council and everybody understand — why a person is homeless, how they got there, and why some of them will stay there and don't ask for help. Council Member White also added that we are starting a brand-new year, and he hopes that we all move forward with compassion, love, mercy, and grace. Dr. King's birthday was yesterday, and he gave his life helping, and so he hopes everyone can be loving, helpful and empathetic this year.

Council Member Acerra also expressed her gratitude and empathy for those who have to work outside in public service, especially postal carriers, and those who work for our City. She also thanked her fellow Council Members for allowing her to call in to the meeting. She travels for her job, but she tries to work her schedule so that she doesn't miss any meetings, but appreciates the accommodation in this rare instance.

Council Member Carrington stated that we live in a country where the person with the highest authority denounced the humanity of gender and queer people, while one of his friends performed a Nazi salute on national television. She expressed that if anyone is looking for support and community right now, or if they don't feel safe contacting their City Council Member, she wanted to announce that she is available. She added that she is an unapologetically queer, that she cares for them, and that they are seen, loved deeply, and they matter.

Council Member Cheesman stated that he helped serve at the MLK breakfast and added that every day, all anyone wants is to be treated with dignity and have an equal chance at opportunities. He agrees that being empathetic and trying to put ourselves in the shoes of people that have challenges is something we must do in order to help. He thanked Mr. Cook for his comments as well. He added that he visited the warming center today, one of the coldest

days of the year, and thanked the City Manager and those individuals who coordinated that effort, especially increasing the amount of hours that it's open and allowing for more amenities. He asked some of the people who use it, as well as the supervisor, what they could use at the warming center. The list includes pillows, wash rags, dish rags, towels, toiletries, and non-perishable food. He indicated that while we can't end homelessness, we can make it better and be more understanding and helpful to those that are going through it.

Council Member Cheesman also announced that the City has been awarded a \$25 million grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation from the "Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity" (RAISE) Program. Funds will be utilized to install rail track and switching at the Galesburg Business Park property in support of the construction of a large agricultural terminal on the site. When the project is completed, regionally-produced agricultural commodities will be loaded into rail containers onsite and then shipped via BNSF. He added that Mr. Springer, City Manager Hansen, other staff members and our legislators have been doing things that help our community and we are seeing those things beginning to pile upon our community in terms of economic advancements and opportunities. He noted that like the rest, he appreciates all the work our City employees are doing in tough conditions.

Council Member Hix stated that he had a situation in his Ward where the top of a tree had snapped off. He made a quick call to the City Manager and they were already taking care of it and cutting it down in less than an hour. The biggest issue was that it was on the terrace and that it could have fallen on a car or a person. He added that as has been mentioned by most here tonight, we have a lot of people who work for the City, including firefighters, police officers, and public works employees, who are out there every single day, regardless of what the weather is, and he thanked everyone for their dedication.

Mayor Schwartzman stated his appreciation for Council Member Cheesman's update on the warming shelter and the needs there, and feels that this Council, over several years, has continued to invest in it with community partners. He believes the more attention we can pay and support the initiative, as well as other humane efforts, the more it indicates a manifestation of this community that Reverend Jowers spoke of. He also stated that we need to recognize everyone who lives within our City as a member of our community, and we need to treat them with utmost respect, no matter their situation.

The Mayor stated that this is the coldest period of the year climatologically, and we need to know our neighbors and check on them. He encouraged everyone that if they haven't seen their neighbor in a while, to knock on their door and see how they're doing, see if they need water, toiletries, and if they have heat. He believes these simple things can go a long way to ensure that we all feel safe and feel part of a larger community. He also thanked all the City staff who worked tirelessly in this freezing weather.

There being no further business, Council Member Dennis moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to adjourn the meeting at 6:38 p.m.

Roll Call #12:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

Peter D. Mayor Schwartzman, Mayor

Kelli R. Bennewitz, City Clerk