

Galesburg City Council Regular Meeting
City Council Chambers
55 West Tompkins Street, Galesburg, Illinois
March 3, 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, and Steve Cheesman, 7. Absent: Council Member Sarah Carrington, 1. Also Present: City Manager Eric Hanson, City Attorney Brittany Miller, and City Clerk Kelli Bennewitz.

Mayor Schwartzman declared a quorum present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Pastor Antonio Franklin gave the invocation.

Council Member Cheesman moved, seconded by Council Member White, to approve the minutes of the City Council's regular meeting from February 17, 2025.

Roll Call #2:

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

Nays: None

Absent: Council Member Carrington, 1.

Abstain: Council Member Dennis, 1.

Chairman declared the motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Reverend Andrew Jowers addressed the Council and stated that he had three points he wanted to bring to them this evening. First, he wanted to express his gratitude for the resurfacing of Losey Street but added that standing water remains an issue that needs to be addressed. Second, he commended the NAACP and its partners for organizing the candidate forum at the public library, which had a strong public turnout and active engagement from most candidates in the upcoming election. Lastly, he encouraged all candidates to step outside their comfort zones and be more transparent and truthful. He urged everyone to vote for candidates who prioritize community, have a proven record of economic growth, affordable housing, support for the homeless, and uphold common decency.

Bruce Cook addressed the Council and stated that the proposal to name a street in Galesburg after Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., has raised questions about its purpose and if it is an act of solidarity with other cities, or an actual attempt to honor his legacy. He noted that he has no issue with naming something after Dr. King, but it is important to remember that Dr. King didn't seek recognition in the form of streets or buildings but instead valued his role as a reverend and

wished to be remembered for his commitment to loving and serving humanity. He added that our nation is in a dark time and our leaders seem intent on fueling division. Everyone needs to remember his message as well as the man, and learn from his teachings so that his life is not in vain.

CONSENT AGENDA #2025-05

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

25-3003

Approve the bid from The Sherwin Williams Company in the amount of \$31,199 for the purchase of a new Graco Linelazer self-propelled paint striper for the Street and Traffic Divisions.

25-4018

Approve waiving normal purchasing policies and approving the product pricing for 2025 as provided by Core & Main for water meters for resale to be purchased by the Water Division

25-5001

Receive the 2024 Annual Fire and Police Commission Report.

25-8004

Approve bills in the amount of \$406,927.36 and advance checks in the amount of \$1,591,149.85.

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member White, to approve Consent Agenda 2025-05.

Roll Call #3:

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

Nays: None

Absent: Council Member Carrington, 1.

Chairman declared the motion carried by omnibus vote.

PASSAGE OF ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

25-2007

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member White, to approve Resolution 25-06 naming the property at 652 West Second Street "Cooke Park."

Council Member White discussed an article he read called *The Story Behind Public Parks and Playgrounds in Galesburg*. The article highlighted the vision of men like Max Mack and the Custer family, who were instrumental in developing and expanding Galesburg's parks. He believes Cooke Park demonstrates the city's commitment to its youth.

Roll Call #4:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Dennis, Miller, White, Acerra, and Cheesman, 6.
Nays: None
Absent: Council Member Carrington, 1.
Chairman declared the motion carried.

BIDS, PETITIONS, AND COMMUNICATIONS

25-3004

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to approve the bid from legacy Corporation of Illinois in the amount of \$27,500 to remove the existing wood waste from the oversize brush drop off site located at Pickard Road. It was noted that the City used the wood chips and they will also be available to the public beginning March 14th.

Roll Call #5:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Dennis, Miller, White, Acerra, and Cheesman, 6.
Nays: None
Absent: Council Member Carrington, 1.
Chairman declared the motion carried.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS (AGREEMENTS, APPROVALS, ETC.)

25-4019

Council Member Hix moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to approve an engineering agreement for Phase I of the Airport Master Plan update project with the Illinois Department of Transportation.

Council Member Cheesman stated that this Master Plan project represents another opportunity to add economic potential and promise to our city, and believes that the work at the airport will serve the City well in the future. He also thanked Gayla Pacheco for all her work on the Cooke Park project.

Roll Call #6:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Dennis, Miller, White, Acerra, and Cheesman, 6.
Nays: None
Absent: Council Member Carrington, 1.
Chairman declared the motion carried.

25-4020

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

1. 1037 N. Seminary Street (garage)
2. 745 Ave B (residence & detached garage)
3. 1514 S. Seminary Street (residence)
4. 1916 E. Main Street (residence)
5. 1309 E. Main Street (residence & detached garage)
6. 714 Mulberry Street (residence & detached garage)

7. 794 E. Berrien Street (residence & detached garage)
8. 201 Blaine Avenue (residence)

Roll Call #7:

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

Nays: None

Absent: Council Member Carrington, 1.

Chairman declared the motion carried.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

City Manager Hanson expressed his appreciation to Gayla Pacheco, Stephanie Grimes, and all the contributors to the Cooke Park project. He highlighted his personal connection to the project, mentioning his wife's teaching experience at Cooke school. He is looking forward to the project's completion, acknowledging the grant funding received, as well as the ribbon-cutting ceremony in the near future.

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

TOWN BUSINESS

25-9005

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

Fund Title	Amount
Town Fund	\$303.02
General Assistance Fund	\$5,624.02
IMRF Fund	
Social Security/Medicare Fund	
Liability Fund	
Audit Fund	
Total	\$5,927.04

Roll Call #8:

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

Nays: None

Absent: Trustee Carrington, 1.

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 Dennis spoke in memory of Tommy Ronk, a musician who had owned a flower shop in Abingdon before moving to Galesburg and was known for his talent of playing Jerry Lee Lewis songs. He expressed that Mr. Ronk was a great and kind person who would be missed.

Council Member Miller expressed his gratitude to Gayla Pacheco for her work on the Cooke Park project and acknowledged the enjoyment he gets from observing children playing at H.T. Custer Park in his ward. He emphasized the numerous positive developments in Galesburg and encouraged a focus on future improvements, including attracting businesses, jobs, and addressing the housing shortage. He also thanked Chief Idle and City Manager Hanson for addressing concerns raised by his constituents.

Council Member White expressed that he is also a product of Cooke School and stated his fondness for the project and his memories. He also commended Mr. Cook's earlier words, stating that everyone should read and reflect on them when they are released in the minutes. Council Member White concluded by encouraging citizens to get involved in the city by visiting the website and clicking on "Get Notified" at the bottom of the homepage. This allows them to receive notifications about everything happening in the city, including City Council meeting packets, press releases, and grants.

Council Member Acerra thanked Gayla Pacheco and Stephanie Grimes for committing to the Cooke Park project and added that she loves city enhancements because they are not only wonderful resources for the community, but attract new people to buy and fix up homes. She is also excited about the airport's potential to offer the community economic growth and opportunities for recreation and investment. She noted that she was also saddened to hear of Tommy Rock's passing and expressed her condolences.

Council Member Acerra also stated that she has become a history buff and wanted to mention that on March 3, 1913, the first major US Women's Suffrage march took place in Washington, DC, right before Woodrow Wilson's inauguration. Women, approximately 5,000, marched for their right to vote and were physically attacked. Among those women was Ida B. Wells, a black woman and civil rights activist from Chicago. She defied racial lines by refusing to march in a segregated portion and instead marched with other Illinois women, and cemented her legacy as a unifier and fighter for justice.

Council Member Cheesman again thanked Stephanie Grimes and Gayla Pacheco for their work on the Cooke Park project and added that in life you learn who are the go-getters and get things done and they certainly meet that criteria. He also pointed out Mike Spinks in the audience and reported that the Gale Scholars Program has been actively involved in mentoring and networking and they are planning to visit Skate Palace in the near future. Additionally, he noted his appreciation for Pastor Franklin's comments about women.

Council Member Cheesman stated that he spoke with the CEO of the local VNA and he emphasized that they provide assistance to seniors, including meals, services, and companionship. However, they are running out of money due to delayed payments from the state. Council Member Cheesman acknowledged the efforts of Representative Dan Swanson and Senator Mike Halpin to help, but stated that the Department of Aging needs to step up and

assist. He stressed that the VNA provides critical services to seniors, who are a vital part of the community.

Council Member Cheesman also wanted to let citizens who use Bunker Links Golf Course know that they will now have to pay a state mandated 9% surcharge on golf carts, practice range balls, and lockers. This could result in up to 27% in additional charges for those who use the golf course and comes at a time when many golfers are strapped for money. The City has tried to make golfing as affordable as possible and though he does not agree with the added fee, unfortunately it's not something that the City can change. He feels that the state is overtaxing its citizens and believes this is one of the reasons we are close to leading the nation in the number of residents leaving.

Council Member Cheesman also mentioned the citizens of Canterbury Estates and the potential construction of a new solar farm near their neighborhood. He expressed that solar energy is a tremendous energy source for the future but also acknowledged the residents' concerns about the project's proximity to their neighborhood. He noted that this situation demonstrates how positive outcomes can result when people unite for a common cause and work hard in the right way. He plans to hold a meeting to help residents understand the project and provide a forum where City administration can be available to answer questions.

Council Member Hix thanked Aaron Gavin, Don Miles, and the City Manager for their work on the Airport Commission, specifically for updating the airport master plan. He noted that this idea had been discussed at a previous strategic planning session and that, since then, the City had been designated a regional airport. He also wished his brothers, who are in Colorado, a safe trip home.

Mayor Schwartzman commended the remarkable athletes in the community, highlighting the recent successes of the high school swimmers and divers at the State competition. He also acknowledged the girls' high school basketball team's achievements, including reaching sectionals and having two players receive all-conference honors.

In recognition of Women's History Month, the Mayor thanked Ms. Grimes and Ms. Pacheco for their exceptional work on Cooke Park, which he noted reflects their heritage and their family's ongoing commitment to the betterment of Galesburg.

The Mayor closed by stating that the most important woman to him is his mother, who usually watches the Council meeting from her home in Virginia. She celebrated a milestone birthday a couple of months ago, and he credits her for the person he is today. They talk almost daily, and he expressed his gratitude for her. He then thanked others for recognizing the women in their lives and encouraged them to continue doing so throughout Women's History Month.

There being no further business, Council Member White moved, seconded by Council Member White, to adjourn the meeting at 6:37 p.m.

Roll Call #9:

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

Nays: None
Absent: Council Member Carrington, 1.
Chairman declared the motion carried.

Peter D. Mayor Schwartzman, Mayor

Kelli R. Bennewitz, City Clerk