

Galesburg City Council Regular Meeting
City Council Chambers
55 West Tompkins Street, Galesburg, Illinois
June 16, 2025
6:00 p.m.

Called to order by Mayor Schwartzman at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call #1: Present: Mayor Peter Schwartzman, Council Members Bradley Hix, Wendel Hunigan, Evan Miller, Dwight White, Greg Saul, and Steve Cheesman, 7. Absent: Council Member Heather Acerra, 1. 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.

Semenya McCord gave the invocation.

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

Roll Call #2:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Hunigan, Miller, White, Saul, and Cheesman, 6.

Nays: None

Absent: Council Member Acerra, 1.

Chairman declared the motion carried.

Council Member White moved, seconded by Council Member Saul, to approve the minutes of the City Council's executive session meeting from May 5, 2025.

Roll Call #3:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Hunigan, Miller, White, Saul, and Cheesman, 6.

Nays: None

Absent: Council Member Acerra, 1.

Chairman declared the motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Amanda Larson addressed the Council stating that she came to advocate for those suffering in the City who are homeless. She has begun reaching out to them, spending time, and getting to know their stories, believing no one should face homelessness alone. She believes that contrary to common assumptions, many homeless individuals are not simply drug addicts, lazy, or unwilling to work. For some, drug addiction is a coping mechanism for past trauma like abuse or abandonment, requiring support and guidance rather than judgment. While housing over 300 people seems daunting due to cost, she believes it is reachable if citizens unite as a community. She urged everyone to extend a meal, offer a blanket, and talk with people. She asked the

Council to speak up for these individuals and commended the Mayor and City Manager for their efforts and encouraged the rest to follow their lead.

Mindy Knapp addressed the Council, expressing gratitude to the City Manager and Mayor for meeting with her to discuss her vision for a gateway project. She believes this initiative will significantly aid in fundraising efforts to facilitate a trip to Washington D.C. at the end of the month. She added that she, along with Charlie Little, is also involved with Hope House. She shared an experience from earlier that evening, where she assisted with serving a meal at Hope House. On behalf of the organization, she presented the Mayor with a meal.

Ms. Knapp spoke about Hope House's commendable community work and noted that she and another volunteer picked up 30 meals to deliver to the library this evening. Knapp then directly addressed a negative situation where she observed individuals speaking poorly of her group. She emphasized that the different groups within the City need to stop this behavior and noted the seriousness of the challenges facing the community, stressing that unity is crucial.

Council Member Cheesman addressed the public comment session and urged speakers to concentrate on relevant issues and refrain from making accusations against individuals not present to defend themselves. He expressed that he feels it fosters a more positive and productive environment for moving forward.

Pastor James Haley extended an invitation to residents to attend the Juneteenth Celebration at St. James Church, located at 900 South Third Street in Monmouth. This year marks Monmouth's inaugural Juneteenth Celebration, which will take place on Thursday, June 19th, from 2-8 p.m. The event will feature games and speakers, including Council Member Hunigan, who will share the history of Juneteenth. Additionally, Reverend Dr. Cyrus Burns, of Ward Chapel AME Church in Peoria, Illinois, will speak. Pastor Haley concluded by wishing everyone a happy Father's Day.

Bianca Crose, a lifelong Galesburg resident, addressed the Council to advocate for more pickleball courts. She shared her family's love for the game, highlighting its appeal to all ages, from young children to grandparents and retirees. She noted how the courts are frequently full, with players of all ages laughing, rallying, and making new friends. She emphasized pickleball's accessibility, being easy to learn with minimal and inexpensive equipment, making it a free activity after initial setup. As a nurse, she underscored the health benefits, noting that pickleball gets the heart pumping, improves coordination, and provides a low-impact workout, perfect for seniors. Ms. Crose noted the community-building aspect of pickleball, describing it as a social game that sparks connections and conversation. She specifically mentioned its positive impact on teenagers, offering an alternative to excessive phone and social media use. She urged the Council to consider adding more courts at Rotary Park or another location.

Sallee Wade addressed the Council, outlining the urgent need for a community center to host diverse programs for all ages, particularly youth. She also advocated for a Boys and Girls Club offering educational afternoon and summer programs. She also stated that there is a significant noise pollution issue, specifically in her ward, stemming from fireworks. She noted that many

residents are unaware of the associated fines and she plans to submit a Neighborhood Watch Program proposal in order to foster a “neighbors watching out for neighbors” approach. She stressed the severe impact of this noise on infants, pets, veterans recovering from PTSD, and individuals with drug and alcohol recovery issues. She also commended Council Member Cheesman for organizing a community forum at the library, which she plans to attend, and suggested that other Council Members consider holding similar periodic forums to engage with residents.

CONSENT AGENDA #2025-12

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

25-3018

Approve the bid from Vermeer Sales & Service of Central Illinois, Inc., in the amount of \$51,149 with trades for the purchase of a nearly new Vermeer SC802 stump grinder for the Forestry Division.

25-3019

Approve the bid from J.C. Dillon, Inc., in the amount of \$126,719 for the replacement of galvanized water service lines.

25-3020

Approve the demolition and clean-up of seven properties:

1. 946 South Pearl Street
2. 494 Clark Street
3. 84 Division Street
4. 793 South Seminary Street
5. 404 West Brooks Street
6. 362 West Fourth Street
7. 694 US Highway 150 East

25-4044

Approve waiving normal purchasing policies and approve the product pricing for 2025 provided by Core & Main for various water main meters, handheld readers and radio units to be utilized by the Water Division.

25-8011

Approve bills in the amount of \$1,288,873.49 and advance checks in the amount of \$599,761.41.

Council Member Cheesman moved, seconded by Council Member Saul, to approve Consent Agenda 2025-12.

Roll Call #4:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Hunigan, Miller, White, Saul, and Cheesman, 6.

Nays: None
Absent: Council Member Acerra, 1.
Chairman declared the motion carried by omnibus vote.

PASSAGE OF ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

25-1009

Ordinance on first reading approving a 99-year lease agreement between the City of Galesburg and the National Railroad Hall of Fame, Inc., for an area of approximately 25,066 square feet, more or less, of municipal property at Colton Park, 225 South Seminary Street.

Council Member Hunigan inquired about the funding for the museum and if the City will be providing assistance. City Manager Hanson stated that while he doesn't know the exact total budget, it's estimated to be in the \$7 million range. The City has a request for \$1 million in construction support in the Capital Fund, which will require Council approval. He also noted that over the past 20 years, approximately \$752,000 has been spent on this project for property acquisition, studies, and other related support. He noted that construction is estimated to begin in 2026.

25-1010

Ordinance on first reading authorizing the sale of a strip of land south of 40 East Simmons Street, which is a portion of Parcel Identification Number 99-15-206-002.

25-1011

Ordinance on first reading approving an intergovernmental agreement with Galesburg Community Unit School District No. 205 for the purchase of two parcels on Clark Street, which are adjacent to Bateman Park (645 Maple Avenue).

Council member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Saul, to suspend the rules and move agenda item 25-1011 to final reading.

Roll Call #5:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Hunigan, Miller, White, Saul, and Cheesman, 6.

Nays: None

Absent: Council Member Acerra, 1.

Chairman declared the motion carried.

Council Member White moved, seconded by Council Member Miller to approve Ordinance 25-3754 on final reading approving an intergovernmental agreement with Galesburg Community School District No. 205 for the purchase of two parcels on Clark Street, which are adjacent to Bateman Park (645 Maple Avenue).

Roll Call #6:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Hunigan, Miller, White, Saul, and Cheesman, 6.

Nays: None

Absent: Council Member Acerra, 1.

Chairman declared the motion carried.

25-2019

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Hunigan, to approve Resolution 25-17 modifying the moratorium on the acceptance, processing, and approval of new applications for solar energy systems.

City Manager Hanson stated that the “Solar for All” program, a state initiative, has both a time limit and a funding cap. Unity Solar Group approached City staff about the urgency for residents to utilize this program due to its time-sensitive nature. Modifications to the solar and wind ordinances are expected to go before Planning and Zoning tomorrow night. Following a public hearing, these modifications should come before the Council in July. He noted that the existing ordinance was partly established to address large solar farms and concerns about companies potentially exploiting homeowners, although the City has no reason to believe this company making this request falls into that category. The City Manager stated that the City does not generally recommend certain vendors and reminded Council that waiving this moratorium for one entity would set a precedent for all.

Mayor Schwartzman also clarified that an individual or company wishing to install solar panels must obtain the necessary permits from the Community Development Department. If their project aligns with the program's requirements, they may receive approval. Otherwise, they will remain subject to the moratorium.

Council Member Hunigan inquired about the moratorium and why it was initially proposed. City Manager Hanson stated that there were concerns regarding these programs, and while the City cannot directly address specific contracts, feedback was received that some residents faced substantial administrative fees and haven't seen the promised savings. It also appears that necessary prep work may not have been fully completed or permitted in some instances. He added that the renewable energy sector presents numerous opportunities, and unfortunately, also possibilities for exploitation.

Council Member Hix stated that this resolution is essentially for a 30-day timeframe, and asked that if Council rejects this, the ordinance would be ready for presentation in July regardless, with safeguards in place. The City Manager noted that this is a time issue and that the state's program has a limited funding pool and had already enrolled 30 individuals before the moratorium.

Roll Call #7:

Ayes: Council Members Hunigan, Miller, White, Saul, and Cheesman, 5.

Nays: Council Member Hix, 1.

Absent: Council Member Acerra, 1.

Chairman declared the motion carried.

BIDS, PETITIONS, AND COMMUNICATIONS

25-3021

Council Member Saul moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to approve the bid from A.C. Pavement Striping Company in the amount of \$255,992.20 for the 2025 cape seal project.

Roll Call #8:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Hunigan, Miller, White, Saul, and Cheesman, 6.

Nays: None

Absent: Council Member Acerra, 1.

Chairman declared the motion carried.

25-3022

Council Member Cheesman moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to approve the bid from Gunther Construction, a Division of UCM, Inc., in the amount of \$382,331.28 for the 2025 annual seal coating contract.

Roll Call #9:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Hunigan, Miller, White, Saul, and Cheesman, 6.

Nays: None

Absent: Council Member Acerra, 1.

Chairman declared the motion carried.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

City Manager Hanson reported that he sent Council the links to the various Juneteenth activities that are going on in the City, and noted the cyber safe seminar tomorrow night that is in conjunction with F&M Bank. There will also be a local authors showcase program on Thursday at the Public Library. He also took the opportunity to formally recognize the City's new Police Chief, Kevin Legate. He knows he's going to do a great job, and hopes everyone will join in supporting him.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS (AGREEMENTS, APPROVALS, ETC.)**25-4045**

Council Member Cheesman moved, seconded by Council Member White, to approve an employment agreement with City Manager Hanson through 2029.

Council Member Cheesman expressed the necessity of this contract extension and highlighted the collaborative effort with the City Manager, praising his excellent work in developing a fair agreement that offers him security. He noted City Manager Hanson's recent relocation with his family and commended his outstanding performance since joining the City. He is surprised that such an agreement had not been implemented previously, stating that similar contracts are standard for positions of this nature across various professions. He stated that he fully endorses the agreement.

Council Member Hix expressed that hiring City Manager Hanson was the best decision made during his tenure, and commended him on a phenomenal job and expressed his daily appreciation.

Roll Call #10:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Hunigan, Miller, White, Saul, and Cheesman, 6.

Nays: None

Absent: Council Member Acerra, 1.

Chairman declared the motion carried.

25-4046

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member White, to approve a Community Transportation Electrification Plan, prepared by Ameren Illinois, which outlines strategies to support the development of electric transportation infrastructure.

Roll Call #11:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Hunigan, Miller, White, Saul, and Cheesman, 6.

Nays: None

Absent: Council Member Acerra, 1.

Chairman declared the motion carried.

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

TOWN BUSINESS

25-9015

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

Fund Title	Amount
Town Fund	\$13,818.04
General Assistance Fund	\$4,662.36
IMRF Fund	\$4,173.22
Social Security/Medicare Fund	
Liability Fund	
Audit Fund	
Total	\$22,653.62

Roll Call #12:

Ayes: Trustees Hix, Hunigan, Miller, White, Saul, and Cheesman, 6.

Nays: None

Absent: Trustee Acerra, 1.

Chairman declared the motion carried.

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

CLOSING COMMENTS

Council Member Hunigan announced that Cornucopia Natural Market and Deli, Galesburg's downtown supermarket, has received a \$50,000 grant from the State of Illinois. This grant aims to revitalize food deserts within our community by enabling Cornucopia to update outdated equipment in their store. He also extended congratulations to Michael Spinks for Skate Palace on Knox Street. For Juneteenth, Mr. Spinks opened the skating rink to the community, offering free skating, food, and beverages to over 100 children who attended. The Skate Palace has become a significant asset to Galesburg and Spinks revitalized a facility that had been unused for a decade, transforming it into a community jewel. He emphasized the need to congratulate and support Mr. Spinks for his contributions to the community.

Council Member Miller addressed a recent issue of illegal dumping in the county, where approximately four pickup loads of tree debris were left at the entrance of a field. He urged City residents not to dispose of their waste in the county, emphasizing the burden it imposes on farmers and rural residents. He encouraged residents to take pride in their community and not damage others' property. He also mentioned his discussions with the City Manager about organizing a town meeting in his ward within the next couple of months.

Council Member White requested prayers for Melissa Hortman and her husband's family during this challenging time, and also for the nation.

Council Member Saul extended Happy Father's Day wishes to all fathers. He also praised Michael Spinks, noting that his foster daughter frequently requests to go skating there on Friday nights. He mentioned Mr. Spinks' generosity, stating that he regularly provides free pizza to the kids. Additionally, he offered congratulations to the new Police Chief and expressed appreciation to the City Manager for his hard work, wishing his contract could have been for longer.

Council Member Cheesman addressed a previous statement he made during public comment, emphasizing the delicacy of some situations and the importance of credibility. He cautioned that while Council Members are "fair game," individuals not present to defend themselves should be considered. He shared a positive experience similar to Council Member Hunigan where the Gale Scholars attended a successful skate party, highlighting the hard work of Mr. Spinks and his mother. He praised local businesses for their community service, citing Melton Jewelers and Chuck Melton's 50 years in business as an example of downtown contributions. He also noted the Saturday morning Juneteenth celebration downtown, commending organizers for promoting this significant event. He announced his upcoming town hall meeting at the Library from 6-7 p.m. on Tuesday, June 17th. He plans to discuss Council achievements and future goals, his decision-making process, and, most importantly, open the floor for citizen opinions, ideas, and criticisms.

Mayor Schwartzman stated that he is glad for Council Member Cheesman's initiative in organizing a meeting and Council Member Miller's consideration of future similar events, emphasizing the importance of these types of engagements in the community. He acknowledged the challenge of multiple events occurring on the same evening, but believes it is a positive reflection of the community's vibrancy, especially during the summer. He also

extended congratulations to Chief Legate for his commendable start and assured him of the Council's full support.

Lastly, Mayor Schwartzman highlighted the upcoming Juneteenth celebration on Thursday, June 19th. He explained the historical significance of this date, marking General Granger's arrival in Galveston in 1865, and noted its recent designation as a federal holiday. He encouraged community participation in the celebrations, noting Reverend Haley's mention of Council Member Hunigan as a speaker. The Mayor remarked on the community's extended celebration of Juneteenth over several weeks, rather than just a single day, as a wonderful testament to its importance. He also shared his experience meeting the pageant winners on Saturday morning. He echoed Ms. Wade's sentiment about the profound impact such opportunities have on young people, empowering them to lead and be recognized for their contributions and potential.

There being no further business, Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member White, to adjourn the regular meeting at 6:57 p.m.

Roll Call #13:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Hunigan, Miller, White, Saul, and Cheesman, 6.

Nays: None

Absent: Council Member Acerra, 1.

Chairman declared the motion carried.

Peter D. Mayor Schwartzman, Mayor

Kelli R. Bennewitz, City Clerk