

Galesburg City Council Regular Meeting
City Council Chambers
55 West Tompkins Street, Galesburg, Illinois
July 7, 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.

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

Presentation: Baker Tilly Fiscal Year 2024 Audit

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member White, to approve the minutes of the City Council's regular meeting from June 16, 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.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Angie Hillier of Knoxville addressed the Council to express her support for Galesburg and the Fire Department, and noted her late father, Bill Munson, also did a lot to support the Department. She acknowledged the vote on the agenda to demolish the Maple Street Fire Station, and stated that the building was originally used for horse-drawn carriages. While understanding the possible necessity of the demolition, she inquired if there was any possibility of saving the structure. Ms. Hillier, also a Knoxville City Council Member, congratulated the Council on their surplus noted in the audit.

David Selkirk, Golf Commission chairman, announced that next week will be the Junior Golf event, noting that Galesburg is part of the Iowa section, which includes the Lake Bracken and Bunker Links golf courses. He stated that several years ago, they initiated efforts to engage our youth, as Iowa offers over 100 summer events and a point system for these golfers. Bunker's tournament, July 16-17, is also a points-system event. He anticipates 120 young participants who will play at Bunker Links on the first day, and on the second day, at Lake Bracken. These

participants come from various locations, including Missouri and Kansas City. He has coordinated with nearby motels to offer special pricing, since many will arrive a day or two early to play both courses, generating additional revenue for the City.

Mr. Selkirk also announced that Cathy Gibson got a grant for Hook a Kid on Golf, which was a program that Galesburg hosted many years ago. He also thanked Matt Miles and Patrick Hankins, for their care of the course.

Charles Little addressed the Council on Galesburg's progress in addressing homelessness, noting that he and two others recently attended the Alliance to End Homelessness Conference in Washington, D.C. They participated in numerous workshops to learn about writing grants, particularly in light of HUD's upcoming changes. They also studied how other shelters are successfully moving people off the streets, noting that lower-barrier shelters are more effective than Galesburg's current higher-barrier model. He added that during the trip, valuable connections were made, including with the head of Illinois's Office to End and Prevent Homelessness.

Mr. Little noted that Galesburg made history by sending three formerly homeless individuals to the conference, where most of the attendees were state workers, caseworkers, and shelter operators. He also stated that Illinois has a progressive approach to homelessness, unlike other states where arrests are made instead of offering help. He believes that by utilizing available assets, Galesburg can quickly resolve its homelessness issues.

Mindy Knapp addressed the Council, noting the significant presence from Galesburg at the conference in D.C. She emphasized Charlie Little's historical importance of being there and urged the Council to consider his ideas. She stated that he proposed a revival of "Hands Across America," suggesting an anniversary event, which received positive reception at the conference.

Champ Coleman addressed the Council, thanking Council Member Cheesman for defending his group against unfair attacks at the previous meeting. He highlighted the efforts of several people in assisting homeless and everyday community members, noting that their contributions are often unrecognized and that unwarranted attacks against them are unacceptable. He also clarified his comments regarding the trip to the D.C. conference, stating that he had pointed out that a person's prior convictions in criminal history could hinder donations. He stressed that this was not a criticism of any group, noting his willingness to collaborate with any organization.

Mr. Coleman also clarified Mindy Knapp's role, stating she is not affiliated with Hope House but, like any other community member, picks up meals to deliver to individuals. He urged Council Members to immediately address falsehoods during public comment.

Carol Erickson, addressed the Council also regarding the statements that Mindy Knapp made at the last Council meeting. She was concerned about the statements that were said about Champ Coleman and others. She talked to several people at Hope House and found her time there to be a very interesting experience, noting that she saw people appreciate the meals they received. She believes Galesburg has a lot of groups that are trying to help people in need and

most of them really care and are doing the best job that they can. She thinks we should support them, encourage them, and help anyway we can. She also thinks it would be nice if the City was able to get the Community Center/homeless shelter set up for the community.

Holly McDorman addressed the Council and stated that many in the community are aware that she had her car stolen on July 3rd. She thanked the Police Department and the community for all the work that they did, and was able to find her car within 48 hours. She added that this was not the first time they had property stolen where we live or had people go through their car or garage. Each time this has happened, she has reached out to the community and has gotten a lot of support. She likes to focus on the fact that there are people in Galesburg that are reaching out to those that they don't know personally and helping each other out.

CONSENT AGENDA #2025-13

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

25-2020

Approve an MFT Resolution for the City's share of \$66,870.35 for the Safe Routes to School project.

25-3023

Approve the bid from Fowler Enterprises, LLC, in the amount of \$55,700 for the demolition and clean-up of the former Maple Avenue Fire Station located at 647 Maple Avenue.

25-5004

Receive the Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report.

25-6003

Approve the appointment of Suzanne Hillier, term expiring April 2028, to the Public Transportation Advisory Commission.

25-8012

Approve bills in the amount of \$937,177.65 and advance checks in the amount of \$2,012,689.95.

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member White, to remove agenda item 25-3023 from the Consent Agenda.

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.

Council Member White moved, seconded by Council Member Cheesman, to approve Consent Agenda 2025-13, omitting agenda item 25-3023.

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.

Council Member Miller would like to explore alternatives to the building's demolition, stating that he believes it is structurally sound. He mentioned potential interest from individuals in redeveloping the property and emphasized the historical significance of the fire station, which once housed horse-drawn equipment.

25-3023

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Cheesman, to table agenda item 25-3023.

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.

PASSAGE OF ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

25-1009

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Saul, to approve Ordinance 25-3755 on final 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.

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.

25-1010

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member White, to approve Ordinance 25-3756 on final 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.

Roll Call #7:

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

Nays: None

Absent: Council Member Acerra, 1.

Chairman declared the motion carried.

25-1012

Ordinance on first reading amending Chapter 152 of the Galesburg Municipal Code relating to the regulation and development of solar energy systems within the City limits.

Council Member Cheesman expressed his gratitude to the City Manager, Steve Gugliotta, and staff for their efforts on this ordinance. He emphasized the importance of establishing mechanisms to safeguard all aspects related to solar energy, clarifying that the intention was not to oppose solar energy but to ensure proper protections were in place.

The Mayor also commended Steve Gugliotta and his staff for their thorough research into other communities' ordinances. They adapted existing regulations and created opportunities, including a variance process for unique properties. This process allows the Council to give due consideration to outlier properties.

Council Member White stated that he had expressed reservations regarding the proposed solar panel size and has questioned the effectiveness of a 100-square-foot ground-mounted panel in terms of its power generation capabilities. He hopes for further investigation into whether such a small size is practical, particularly if it avoids the need for a variance request for a larger panel.

25-1013

Ordinance on first reading amending Chapter 152 of the Galesburg Municipal Code relating to the regulation and development of wind energy systems within the City limits.

BIDS, PETITIONS, AND COMMUNICATIONS**25-3024**

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Saul, to approve the sale of the following City-owned properties:

ACCEPT HIGH BID:

Tract 1: Mark Rasmussen for \$351
Tract 2: Mark Rasmussen for \$301
Tract 3: Flacco Family Farms LLC for \$591
Tract 4: Mark Rasmussen for \$351
Tract 9: Karla Johnson for \$300
Tract 10: Marcus Kyser Sr. for \$500
Tract 11: Glass Specialty LLC for \$200
Tract 13: Rogue Shott for \$500

ACCEPT SOLE BID:

Tract 5: Shaina Scott for \$100
Tract 8: Shaina Scott for \$100
Tract 12: Shaina Scott for \$100

ACCEPT BEST BID:

Tract 6: Jeffery Anderson for \$100. (There was a higher bid placed by Mark Rasmussen; however, staff took into consideration that Mr. Anderson owns the adjoining property)

Tract 7: Karla Johnson for \$100. (There were two additional bids for the same amount. Staff took into consideration Ms. Johnson owns property nearby.)

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.

25-3025

Council Member Cheesman moved, seconded by Council Member Saul, to approve the bid from Valley Commercial Construction in the amount of \$328,000 for the renovation of the sleeping quarters at the Central Fire Station.

City Manager Hanson highlighted the long-overdue need for renovations, noting that this station hasn't been updated in nearly 49 years. He stated that the Department now has its first female firefighter, but currently, only the Fremont Street Station offers separate quarters for female personnel. These renovations are crucial for creating a more inclusive environment for current and future firefighters, as well as providing essential updates to facilities that serve as their "home away from home".

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.

25-3026

Council Member Saul moved, seconded by Council Member Cheesman, to approve the bid from PAFCO Truck Bodies, Inc., in the amount of \$16,983.25 for the purchase of a dump truck body for the Water Division.

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.

25-3027

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member Saul, to approve the bid from Drake Scruggs Equipment in the amount of \$67,220 for the purchase of a service truck body for the Water Division.

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.

25-3028

Council Member White moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to approve the bid from Gunther Construction, a division of UCM, Inc., in the amount of \$789,693.45 for the 2025 intermittent resurfacing project.

Roll Call #12:

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 commended Jennifer O'Hern and her team for their exceptional work, echoing the audit representative's sentiment that the City's greatest strength lies in its excellent staff. The achievement of unqualified opinions with no issues is a testament to their dedication, Ms. O'Hern's oversight, and their accomplishments. He also noted that the City is actively managing over \$42 million in grant funds. To effectively and efficiently manage these funds and navigate the audit process is a significant accomplishment.

The City Manager extended appreciation to staff who worked during the Fourth of July events, especially given the high temperatures. Public safety personnel work year-round, but events like Big Bang Boom and Railroad Days require numerous staff to work overtime. He specifically acknowledged the maintenance staff for their extensive extra hours over the past two weeks, which allowed the community to enjoy the various events.

Mayor Schwartzman stated that the mayor of North Muskegon, Michigan, came here on the train and spent the weekend for Railroad Days with her husband and her nephew, and had a great time. She was very excited to be here for the first time in Galesburg.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS (AGREEMENTS, APPROVALS, ETC.)

25-4047

Council Member Hix moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to approve a hangar land lease agreement for private hangars at the airport.

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.

Council Member Hix acknowledged that five members of the Airport Advisory Commission, including the chairman, were in attendance. He thanked the City Attorney for his work on the legal drafting and Aaron Gavin, Public Works Director and Airport Manager, for his contributions. Hix noted that the commission has been working on this for at least two years and he believes that the need for private hangars is clear and that this initiative allows individuals to create the necessary space, fostering economic development for our community.

Council Member Cheesman stated he thinks the dividends and the opportunities that the airport is now offering, and will offer in the future, are the sky's the limit.

Council Member White stated that he had an opportunity to fly in and out of the airport as a young man in the military, and he hopes he'll get a chance to fly from there again soon.

25-4048

Council Member Saul moved, seconded by Council Member White, to approve a 10-year intergovernmental agreement for routine maintenance of State routes.

Roll Call #14:

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

TOWN BUSINESS

25-9016

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

Fund Title	Amount
Town Fund	\$10,732.63
General Assistance Fund	\$8,217.56
IMRF Fund	
Social Security/Medicare Fund	
Liability Fund	
Audit Fund	
Total	\$18,950.19

Roll Call #15:

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

Nays: None

Absent: Trustee Acerra, 1.

Chairman declared the motion carried.

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

CLOSING COMMENTS

Council Member White thanked the City for their efforts to increase public engagement, noting the prominent placement of signing up for e-alerts on the City's website. He urged citizens to use these resources to stay informed about Council activities and to get involved. He also extended congratulations to Council Member Acerra on becoming a grandparent, and commended the City's strong financial performance and thanked all those contributing to its success.

Council Member Saul expressed his hope that residents have finished with fireworks, considering the impact on service members with PTSD and animals. He also wished a happy birthday to his wife for tomorrow.

Council Member Cheesman addressed the fireworks as well, particularly those in the early morning hours, and urged people to be responsible. He also reported on his recent town hall meeting, deeming it very fruitful due to the high attendance, numerous questions answered, and information exchanged. Council Member Cheesman cautioned residents about letters on City letterhead regarding service agreements with the Sanitary District and others, clarifying that these are not City-sponsored initiatives and any agreements entered are solely between the resident and the third party. He also extended his condolences and prayers to those affected by the severe flooding in Texas. He then commended Jennifer O'Hern for an excellent financial report.

Finally, he spoke about attending an American Legion Baseball ceremony over the past weekend where the program continues to honor Jason Maulden, a young man killed in a car accident 11 years ago. He is also pleased with the program's overall revitalization and positive use of HT Custer Park, allowing a redeveloped field to serve the community and their baseball program.

Council Member Hix wished Council Member Saul's wife, Jackie, a happy birthday. He will also be volunteering to crew for the Hot Air Balloon Rally on July 25-27, an event Council Member Saul has been involved with for 25 years. He also thanked the Finance Department for their work on the audit.

Council Member Hunigan extended his condolences to Mayor Schwartzman on the passing of his father. He described the Mayor's father as a dedicated husband and father, a scholar who taught for many years at Howard University in Washington, D.C., and a committed social activist.

Council Member Miller praised the recent fireworks display and feels that it is one of the best shows within 250 miles. He extended congratulations to Chief Legate and Cathy St. George on their appointments. He also expressed pride in the improvements made to the City's parks, particularly HT Custer Park in his ward, noting the joy of seeing children playing in the park.

Council Member Miller said that regarding the old fire station, he would love to restore it if he had the funds and described its unique brick floor and interesting history, noting it likely existed during the transition from horse-drawn to motorized fire equipment. He encouraged anyone interested in the building to contact the City Manager. Finally, he thanked all City employees for their excellent teamwork, which allows the City to accomplish much within budget.

Mayor Schwartzman wanted to highlight the things that have been said related to the finances, and that the City gets a high rating year after year, which is impressive. He addressed the surpluses that the City has had over the last few years, and the fact that Council has been able to inject a lot of money into the pensions and try to make them more solvent. He feels that if this continues for several more years, the City will have full solvency for the pensions. Also, as mentioned, the City has been able to put extra money into the parks, and last year, added additional dollars to improve our streets since it was a priority for the community.

He mentioned again that he got to meet the mayor of North Muskegon, who reached out to him as a courtesy, and he was able to pick her and her family up at the Amtrak Station. He noted that she texted him later and told him what a wonderful time she had, and she hopes to come back.

The Mayor stated that as mentioned, his father passed away last Tuesday, and that he had been fortunate to go to D.C. to be with him. He added that he is not wearing a tie tonight out of honor of his father, who he never saw in a tie. He also kept his hair a little funkier than usual in his honor. He stated that he didn't realize this, but a week before his death, his father went to the D.C. city council meeting and delivered a prepared statement about the tax system in Washington and how it is very unfair to the people there.

There being no further business, Council Member Saul moved, seconded by Council Member Miller, to adjourn the regular meeting at 7:18 p.m.

Roll Call #16:

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