

Galesburg City Council Regular Meeting
City Council Chambers
55 West Tompkins Street, Galesburg, Illinois
August 4, 2025
6:00 p.m.

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

Roll Call #1: Present: Council Members Bradley Hix, Wendel Hunigan, Dwight White, Heather Acerra, Greg Saul, and Steve Cheesman, 6. Absent: Mayor Peter Schwartzman and Council Member Evan Miller, 2. City Manager Eric Hanson, City Attorney Tarryn Gardner, and City Clerk Kelli Bennewitz.

Deputy Mayor Cheesman declared a quorum present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Deputy Mayor Cheesman gave the invocation.

Council Member Acerra moved, seconded by Council Member Hix, to approve the minutes of the City Council's regular meeting from July 21, 2025.

Roll Call #2:

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

Nays: None

Absent: Council Member Miller, 1.

Chairman declared the motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Sue Hulett, a member of the pickleball focus group, addressed the Council to express gratitude for the City's decision to proceed with new outdoor pickleball courts at Rotary Park. She stated that this expansion will not only serve the growing local pickleball community but also enable Galesburg to host tournaments, attract visitors and generate revenue for the City. She highlighted the group's role as a sounding board for the City Council and City Manager and they appreciate the opportunity to participate in the process. She noted that they are disappointed about the time taken for groundbreaking, but they are optimistic that the project would move forward soon with completion next spring. The focus group strongly supports this investment, viewing it as beneficial for the entire community.

Teresa Rash addressed the Council and stated that Galesburg lacks affordable recreational options for youth and families. Currently, activities like golf, swimming, and tennis at Lakeside, or the YMCA, have a cost. The City could contribute to community well-being by resurfacing the Bateman pickleball courts and constructing new courts at Rotary Park. She feels that pickleball encourages intergenerational play, offers a space for children to interact with friends, and helps

the community connect. The proposed pickleball courts would be more than just a recreational facility; they would be a valuable community asset that would provide long-term benefits.

Jenni Atwell addressed the Council and stated that she moved to Galesburg eight years ago and teaches at King Elementary. Until recently, she struggled to find an active community here and noted that in Alabama, where she moved from, she was very active, with workout and sports friends. Pickleball has filled that void this summer for her and she has found a wonderful group where she has made new friends. She added that it's great to see so many young people, some who might not be part of traditional sports teams, playing pickleball and enjoying each other's company. She stated that she is grateful for the courts the City provides and thankful that the Council is considering and planning to build new ones.

Jennette Chernin invited the Council to the NAACP Community Cookout on Saturday, August 9th, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Kiwanis Park. The event will offer free lunch to everyone, typically served around 11:30 a.m. They will also be distributing 250 backpacks to K-12 students, an increase from 150 last year. Each backpack will contain school supplies, as District 205 is not providing them this year. She also acknowledged Council Member Acerra's hard work in her neighborhood, specifically concerning the house at 110 E. North Street. She noted that it looks no different from two years ago and that there has been minimal effort to address its condition. She hopes the Council has ideas on how to address this property.

Mindi Knapp addressed the issue of homelessness and was glad to see the pickleball focus group present at the meeting since it would provide an opportunity to discuss important ideas and resources. She feels that while their contributions are valuable, the community must prioritize helping the community, especially given the City's current financial needs. She stated that there are over 400 empty homes in Galesburg but that people are still living on the streets, and are being forced to remain unsheltered. She reiterated the need for more low-income, affordable housing, in addition to utility services assistance. She believes the City needs to focus on these pressing issues instead of pickleball courts.

CONSENT AGENDA #2025-15

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

25-5005

Receive the June 30, 2025, Investment Schedules.

25-8014

Approve bills in the amount of \$638,914.66 and advance checks in the amount of \$1,191,560.86.

Council Member Hix moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to approve Consent Agenda 2025-15.

Roll Call #3:

Ayes: Council Members Hix, Hunigan, White, Acerra, Saul, and Cheesman, 6.
Nays: None
Absent: Council Member Miller, 1.
Chairman declared the motion carried by omnibus vote.

PASSAGE OF ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

25-1014

Ordinance on first reading amending the zoning for land south of 40 East Simmons Street.

Council Member White moved, seconded by Council Member Hix, to suspend the rules and move agenda item 25-1014 to final reading.

Roll Call #4:

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

Council Member White moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to approve Ordinance 25-3759 on final reading amending the zoning for land south of 40 East Simmons Street.

Roll Call #5:

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

BIDS, PETITIONS, AND COMMUNICATIONS

25-3032

Council Member Saul moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to approve the bid from Sinacola, LLC, in the amount of \$88,594 for a bridge replacement at Bunker Links Golf Course.

Roll Call #6:

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

25-3033

Council Member Hunigan moved, seconded by Council Member White, to approve the annual renewal of CrowdStrike from SHI in the amount of \$35,867.41

Roll Call #7:

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

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

City Manager Hanson announced that tomorrow night, August 5th, National Night Out will be held in Standish Park, 5-7 p.m. Police Chief Legate and his team, along with other City staff, the Knox County Sheriff's office, GHAS, and others will be participating. He also wanted to acknowledge the outstanding work of the Fire Department with the MDA campaign. They have consistently performed, and last year finished second only to Chicago in Illinois. He gave special recognition to Firefighter TJ Scott, who leads this effort for the Department, and was recently appointed as one of only 12 district directors nationwide to lead the MDA "Fill the Boot" campaign. He reported that last year, the Department raised over \$30,000, and since 1997, have raised over \$651,000 for MDA efforts. This event will be happening soon, and there will be an update hosted by WGIL towards the end of the month or early September.

The City Manager noted that since it is road maintenance season, he asked Aaron Gavin, Public Works Director, to report on the ongoing road projects so that Council and the public can be informed.

Director Gavin reported that some upcoming street improvement projects will affect traffic flow but promise significant enhancements. The intermittent resurfacing project is set to begin later this week on Locust Street, between Knox and South Streets, near Lombard School. Initial work will involve replacing sidewalks and curbs. This project will also include South Chambers and Lincoln Park Drive, north of U.S. 34. The resurfacing is expected to occur in a couple of months, following the completion of most concrete work. He added that roads will largely remain open, but drivers should anticipate delays and watch for workers. Additionally, he announced that the seal coat project will start in the next couple of weeks in the southeast portion of the City and the Soangetaha neighborhood.

Director Gavin also noted that the Safe Routes to School project on Fifer Street near Silas Willard School is scheduled to begin in the next week. This grant-funded initiative, a collaboration with the School District, will take a few months to complete and will add new sidewalks leading to the school. He ended by letting everyone know that the work on Simmons Street is progressing well and remains on schedule. The project is expected to be mostly complete by the end of September, with hopes of reopening the road and intersections at that time.

Deputy Mayor Cheesman inquired about the road condition assessment instrument purchased last year and how it prioritizes necessary work. Director Gavin stated that the City hired a consultant to collect data on all City streets, sidewalks, and curb ramps. Staff received the road condition data and now have access to all of this information in one location through specialized software. This data allows the Department to develop five-year maintenance plans for City streets and make informed decisions on road work.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS (AGREEMENTS, APPROVALS, ETC.)

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

TOWN BUSINESS

25-9018

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

Fund Title	Amount
Town Fund	\$1,944.06
General Assistance Fund	\$6,264.79
IMRF Fund	
Social Security/Medicare Fund	\$4,028.79
Liability Fund	
Audit Fund	
Total	\$12,237.64

Roll Call #8:

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

Nays: None

Absent: Trustee Miller, 1.

Chairman declared the motion carried.

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

CLOSING COMMENTS

Council Member Saul expressed his appreciation for the new shelter at the Dale Kelley Tot Lot. He then noted the unfortunate weather for the Great Balloon Race this past weekend, and extended a thank you to Philip Welford at the Airport for allowing its use, and to Dave Lyons and the Knights of Columbus for providing their location for the event. He also announced the recent passing of Ruth Pecsí and shared that he grew up with her and her family at Trinity Lutheran Church. Council Member Saul added that you never had to wonder what was on Ruth's mind, because she was happy to tell you.

Council Member Hix congratulated Connor Perez, an 11-year-old golfer, who recently won the City's Junior All-Tournament for 10-12 year olds. This three-day tournament was held at Bunker Links, Lake Bracken, and Soangetaha. He expressed thanks for the opportunity to volunteer for the Great Balloon Race, specifically setting up balloons at the Airport, despite unfavorable weather. He noted the significant turnout, particularly before Friday night's rain. He is optimistic that Mother Nature will be more cooperative for next year's event.

Council Member Hunigan commended the community for the excellent turnout on July 24th, honoring Corporal Paul Eugene Hoots, a Galesburg native who died in the Korean War 75 years ago. His remains were escorted by the VFW, the Fire and Police Departments, the Rolling Thunder, Patriot Guard Riders, and many residents who lined the two-mile route to East Linwood Cemetery. The funeral procession was lined with 600 large American flags, thanks to many volunteers. Mayor Schwartzman also read a proclamation at the graveside service. He thanked Council Member Saul, volunteers, and sponsors for The Great Balloon Race, which has been held at Lake Storey since 2000. He also thanked Council Member Saul for the opportunity to participate and hopes there is better weather next year. He acknowledged the large attendance at the event, especially families and children, despite those conditions.

Council Member Hunigan also announced the upcoming NAACP Community Cookout on Saturday, August 9th, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Kiwanis Park. This event will feature free food, backpacks, free haircuts, and numerous games.

Council Member White congratulated and thanked Council Member Saul for a successful event despite the weather and expressed new respect for the effort involved in handling the balloons. He also thanked Director Gavin for the road work update and directed the public to the City's website's online resources, specifically the GIS maps, to find detailed information about the road projects. Council Member White also announced the last Cooke Park event tomorrow, Tuesday, August 5th, at 10 a.m. He encouraged attendees to bring their children, noting that pizza would be served.

Council Member Acerra shared that with the recent passing of her mother-in-law, they have inherited her dog, Bailey. This has led to more walks, prompting her to commend the City staff for their excellent maintenance of parks, downtown planters, and landscaping, specifically Full View Park. She stated that she will regret missing the NAACP picnic, an event she has enjoyed in previous years, but that as a board member of WTVF, she would be in Peoria on Saturday promoting the public television station. She emphasized the importance of supporting WTVF, as it serves the Galesburg viewing area and has recently faced funding cuts.

Council Member Acerra acknowledged and appreciated those who advocated for pickleball at tonight's meeting. As a supporter of health and wellness, she believes pickleball is a valuable intergenerational activity that encourages physical activity, helps children reduce screen time, and fosters community engagement.

Deputy Mayor Cheesman addressed several topics from the meeting, and noted the City's commitment to developing pickleball facilities. He also acknowledged that the homeless issue is a work in progress and reported that the City is collaborating with other groups to improve conditions. He encouraged individuals experiencing homelessness to utilize available resources, including the City and Knox County Housing Authority facility on Iowa Court, as well as the Rescue Mission. He also agreed that property upkeep is a high priority with the City and urged residents to maintain their properties for safety and aesthetic appeal.

Deputy Mayor Cheesman spoke about free activities for residents, noting the Heart & Soul project brainstorming session where over 200 free activities were identified in our community. While agreeing that some recreational items need to be improved upon, he encouraged people to take advantage of these activities. He also extended a compliment to Bryan Fuller, supervisor of the Street Department's asphalt division, and his crew for their poise, professionalism, and expertise in handling a recent challenging road repair situation. He praised City employees who demonstrate these qualities when interacting with the public during difficult circumstances. Lastly, Deputy Mayor Cheesman announced Carl Sandburg College's welcome ceremony for international students tomorrow, August 5th, led by individuals including Anthony Law, Assistant Director of Student Support. He encouraged the community to welcome these students and assist them in acclimating. He also noted the upcoming start of area schools and the arrival of new students, urging citizens to offer support. He especially thanked John Pratts, the ELA coordinator for the School District, who works with approximately 300 students and their families, assisting them with English as a second language.

There being no further business, Council Member White moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to adjourn the regular meeting at 6:49 p.m.

Roll Call #9:

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

Nays: None

Absent: Council Member Miller, 1.

Chairman declared the motion carried.

Peter D. Mayor Schwartzman, Mayor

Kelli R. Bennewitz, City Clerk