

Galesburg City Council Regular Meeting
City Council Chambers
55 West Tompkins Street, Galesburg, Illinois
November 3, 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 Angelica Mangieri, Wendel Hunigan, Evan Miller, Dwight White, Heather Acerra, Greg Saul, and Steve Cheesman, 8. Assistant City Manager Cathy St. George, City Attorney Dan Alcorn, and City Clerk Kelli Bennewitz.

Mayor Schwartzman declared a quorum present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Reverend James Hailey, Allen Chapel AME, gave the invocation.

Council Member White moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to approve the minutes of the City Council's regular meeting from October 20, 2025.

Roll Call #2:

Ayes: Council Members Mangieri, Hunigan, Miller, White, Acerra, Saul, and Cheesman, 7.

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Noah Selkirk, identifying himself as an "auditor", addressed the Council regarding his experience with FOIA requests and expressed his frustration with receiving everything except what he wanted. Selkirk recounted a specific incident where his initial FOIA request on behalf of someone else was denied because he was told the records didn't exist. He has a concern for other citizens' lack of understanding of FOIA law. He stated that he received a FOIA request where sensitive information was not redacted.

Pastor James A. Hailey of Allen Chapel AME extended an invitation to the City for two upcoming events. First, on Veterans Day, November 11th, Allen Chapel, located at 153 East Tompkins Street, will host a free fish fry for all veterans. Non-veterans accompanying veterans are asked to provide a donation. The event will run from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Secondly, on November 16th at 3 p.m., Allen Chapel AME, the oldest African American church in the city, established in 1853 will celebrate its anniversary. Reverend Antonio Franklin and the Full Gospel Church, among others, will be special guests, and the entire City is invited to attend.

CONSENT AGENDA #2025-21

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

25-5007

Receive the Municipal Compliance Report for the Galesburg Firefighters' Pension Fund for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2024.

25-5008

Receive the Municipal Compliance Report for the Galesburg Police Pension Fund for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2024.

25-5009

Receive the Quarterly Investment Schedule as of September 30, 2025.

25-8020

Approve bills in the amount of \$392,717.40 and advance checks in the amount of \$1,426,154.51.

Council Member Mangieri moved, seconded by Council Member Cheesman, to approve Consent Agenda 2025-21.

Roll Call #3:

Ayes: Council Members Mangieri, Hunigan, Miller, White, Acerra, Saul, and Cheesman, 7.

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried by omnibus vote.

PASSAGE OF ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

25-1017

Council Member Saul moved, seconded by Council Member Mangieri, to approve Ordinance 25-3761 on final reading adjusting various rates and fees collected by the City, effective January 1, 2026.

Roll Call #4:

Ayes: Council Members Mangieri, Hunigan, Miller, White, Acerra, Saul, and Cheesman, 7.

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

25-1018

Special Ordinance on first reading approving the 2025 Property Tax Levy in the amount of \$10,871,732, which is an increase of 4.00 percent compared to the 2024 tax levy extension.

25-1019

Special Ordinance on first reading approve the 2025 levy for the Special Service Area #1 at a flat rate of \$1 per \$100 equalized assessed value.

25-2033

Council Member Saul moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to approve Resolution 25-28 authorizing the purchase of the property located at 566 Hawthorne Court in the amount of \$813 from the Knox County Trustee.

Roll Call #5:

Ayes: Council Members Mangieri, Hunigan, Miller, White, Acerra, Saul, and Cheesman, 7.

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

25-2034

Council Member Miller moved, seconded by Council Member White, to approve Resolution 25-29 authorizing the purchase of the property located at 1217 South Pearl Street in the amount of \$10,000.

Roll Call #6:

Ayes: Council Members Mangieri, Hunigan, Miller, White, Acerra, Saul, and Cheesman, 7.

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

Council Member Miller noted that the property is in Ward Three and has had numerous complaints, emphasizing the need for demolition. Council Member Cheesman agreed, noting its closeness to HT Custer Park and possibility for future development.

BIDS, PETITIONS, AND COMMUNICATIONS

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

- A. The 2026 Budget is available for inspection in the City Clerk's on the City's website.
- B. Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Update

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS (AGREEMENTS, APPROVALS, ETC.)

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

TOWN BUSINESS

25-9025

Trustee White moved, seconded by Trustee Saul, to approve the minutes from the October 14, 2025, Special Meeting.

Roll Call #7:

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

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

25-9026

Trustee Acerra moved, seconded by Trustee Mangieri, to approve Resolution 25-02 determining the 2025 Property Tax Levy, which is not more than 105 percent and therefore will not require a truth in taxation public hearing. The tax levy request will not exceed \$531,000.

Roll Call #8:

Ayes: Trustees Mangieri, Hunigan, Miller, White, Acerra, Saul, and Cheesman, 7.
Nays: None
Absent: None
Chairman declared the motion carried.

25-9027

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

Fund Title	Amount
Town Fund	\$11,261.45
General Assistance Fund	\$11,475.48
IMRF Fund	\$4,079.16
Social Security/Medicare Fund	
Liability Fund	
Audit Fund	
Total	\$26,816.09

Roll Call #9:

Ayes: Trustees Mangieri, Hunigan, Miller, White, Acerra, Saul, and Cheesman, 7.
Nays: None
Absent: None
Chairman declared the motion carried.

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

CLOSING COMMENTS

Council Member Miller stated he had just finished harvesting late today but that he was happy to be back, mentioning that the Mayor had ridden in the combine with him, providing updates on missed meetings and developments.

Council Member White expressed his gratitude for the City's long-overdue attention to the intersection of Tompkins Street and Henderson Street, commending the hard work done. He

also acknowledged November 11th as Veterans Day, speaking as a Vietnam veteran himself, and emphasized that young people who experience combat are forever changed. He urged the community to support veterans, many of whom struggle with homelessness or other life challenges not of their own choosing, but due to circumstances. He added that veterans volunteer to fight for their country, and it's the community's responsibility to care for them when they return, as they all carry some form of PTSD.

Council Member Acerra supported Council Member White's comments on veterans, and added that employers should consider hiring them due to their transferable skills, which can help with their transition back into civilian life. She reported that the City has made significant efforts to address concerns regarding the solar project in Castlebury. The Council imposed a moratorium on developments and approved a new renewable energy ordinance to strengthen local oversight. The City's legal counsel explored options to restrict the project, which was delayed for over six months as City staff worked with the developer to correct the site plan while meeting state requirements. The City also contacted state legislators and the state authority overseeing solar project permits but received no indication of intervention.

Council Member Acerra stated that a recent development at the late-night veto session on Halloween saw the state legislature pass laws, expected to be signed by the governor, which will significantly impact downstate authority. While these laws have some positive aspects regarding energy restrictions, they also impose extra fees and make it more difficult for municipalities to slow down energy-related developments, including solar. Governments will only have 60 days to act on renewable energy permits before automatic approval applies, severely limiting local control. She wanted to stress that she believes the City did everything possible and will continue to advocate for our citizens, but many issues are decided at the state level.

She also noted that another critical issue is the motor fuel tax and transit redistribution. Despite complaints about our roads and the intended use of fuel tax for maintenance, a new rule passed in this session which will redistribute these funds. Approximately 85% will go to the Chicago metro area and the Chicago Transit Authority, with only 15% allocated to the rest of downstate. Additionally, toll taxes were significantly raised, with these funds being directed to pensions rather than road maintenance.

Council Member Acerra wanted to reiterate that while the Council appreciates residents holding them accountable, many decisions that affect the City are made at the state level. She encouraged citizens to reach out to legislators and consider forming or joining a regional organization to advocate for downstate interests.

Council Member Saul commended Council Member Hunigan and all the volunteers for their recent work at Cooke Park. He also mentioned the upcoming Veterans Day and mentioned attending a ceremony on Sunday for Kyle Worley, commemorating the 20th anniversary of his passing while serving.

Council Member Cheesman thanked Assistant City Manager St. George for stepping in for City Manager Hanson and doing an excellent job on short notice. He also expressed deep

admiration and credit for all those who have served our country, acknowledging the nation's problems but emphasizing the many things to be grateful for. He shared a story about a friend returning from a missionary trip to South America who realized how much our country offers, attributing this to the service of men and women fighting for our freedoms. He specifically thanked Council Member White and mentioned his own father, a 96-year-old veteran who served in Korea, for their service.

Council Member Cheesman stated that he recognized the challenging times we are in particularly concerning food shortages and insecurity. He praised the numerous organizations, restaurants, grocery stores, and local food pantries for stepping up to help those in need, stressing the importance of this continued support. He also reminded the community about various grants available through the City to assist residents with housing, specifically low-interest loans or grants for home repairs, and encouraged citizens to contact the Community Development Department for more information.

He emphasized the Council's collaborative environment, which respects differing views while seeking consensus. He stated that the Council tries to make the best decisions for the City using input from citizens, experts, and staff. However, he admitted frustration with being overruled by higher government, citing the solar project. While no one on the Council opposes solar, staff and Council Members wish they had more local control over its implementation to address specific challenges.

Lastly, Council Member Cheesman highlighted the Council's ongoing awareness of taxes, noting the lowering of the property tax rate in the last couple of years, reaching the lowest rate since 2008.

Council Member Mangieri reported on her recent bus ride and plans to take more trips on different lines. This is to experience transferring between routes, especially while managing items like groceries. She noted that her initial experience was positive and that the bus driver was professional and able to answer all of her questions. She also noted that she personally works with a grassroots initiative called Community Grow, which focuses on combating food insecurity in Galesburg. She is aware of the SNAP benefit pauses and has been following the discussions among local organizations. She strongly encouraged everyone to find an organization to support by donating food, funds, or time. Donating time is particularly helpful as food banks and feeding programs are expecting an increase in visitors and will need more volunteers to ensure smooth operations. Anyone interested in how they can help can reach out to her via email if they would like recommendations on local organizations that might align with their interests in the community.

Council Member Hunigan shared his recent, first-time experience using Galesburg's public transit system, noting that he has lived in the city for over 50 years without ever riding a bus. His hope was to better understand the state of public transportation specifically regarding its reliability, speed, comfort, and how it compares to similar communities.

He accepted an invitation from a regular bus user for a four-hour tour of Galesburg's routes,

beginning near the high school and included stops at Target, Carl Sandburg College, Walmart, and downtown. They enjoyed lunch at 156 East Main and shopped at Wordsmith Book Shop. His assessment of the bus ride was very favorable in terms of its reliability and frequency, comfortability, and affordability at 60 cents a ride. He also noted that the employees were professional and very helpful.

Council Member Hunigan stated that the day after the tour, he met with Kraig Boynton, Transit Manager. He learned that Transit has 35 employees (20 full-time) and a budget of \$3 million. There has been no rate increase since the 1990s and approximately 104,000 people use the bus service annually, an increase since 2024. Some challenges for Transit include an aging fleet that is costly to maintain, as well as the need for increased financial assistance from state and federal government sources. He also noted that the number of agencies served by the bus system has increased tremendously over the past 10 years. Council Member Hunigan added that he specifically asked about the policy for carrying multiple bags and Boynton clarified that passengers can bring as many bags as they want, but they are allowed to only make one trip from the door with their bags when they get on the bus.

Mayor Schwartzman commented that the increasing spirit of cooperation was making the closing comments more informative. He also stated that with Veterans Day approaching, he emphasized the importance of honoring veterans not just on November 11th, but every day. He recognized that many veterans in the community are struggling, often due to their service, and stressed the community's responsibility to care for them. He shared that both of his grandfathers volunteered and served—one in World War I and one in World War II—and expressed his respect and admiration for their service. He mentioned upcoming events, including the fish fry at Allen Chapel AME and a ceremony at Walmart, scheduled to start at 9:00 a.m.

Regarding community concerns about food, the Mayor shared that he attended a recent meeting called by a local minister, which included many concerned parties and nonprofits working on food security in our community. He acknowledged the tremendous volunteer effort dedicated to ensuring everyone is fed. He specifically praised the school district for its commitment, noting that Galesburg's public school system provides free breakfast and lunch for all children. He encouraged citizens to contribute and volunteer, stating that a collective effort can ensure no one goes hungry.

Mayor Schwartzman welcomed the new and returning students in attendance, and encouraged them to be active participants in the community. He thanked the volunteers for the recent event at Cooke Park, pointing out that the City's website now features a photograph from Saturday's tree-planting. He added that though he was unable to attend, it was great to see so many young people volunteering for the planting early that morning.

There being no further business, Council Member Saul moved, seconded by Council Member White, to adjourn the regular meeting at 6:43 p.m.

Roll Call #10:

Ayes: Council Members Mangieri, Hunigan, Miller, White, Acerra, Saul, and Cheesman, 7.

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

Peter D. Mayor Schwartzman, Mayor

Kelli R. Bennewitz, City Clerk