

Galesburg City Council Regular Meeting
City Council Chambers
55 West Tompkins Street, Galesburg, Illinois
March 2, 2026
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, Chuck Reynolds, Dwight White, Heather Acerra, Greg Saul, and Steve Cheesman, 8. 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.

Council Member Saul moved, seconded by Council Member Reynolds, to approve the minutes of the City Council's regular meeting from February 16, 2026.

Roll Call #2:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dave Selkirk, Golf Commission, updated the Council on Bunker Links. The golf shop is currently open, and the course will open as soon as the frost clears. He noted that 2025 was one of the best years on record, with 31,000 rounds played. Planned projects for 2026 include work on the bridge at hole #3 and the culvert at hole #6. Mr. Selkirk also reminded the public that phase two of the brick program is underway and that there is no increase in the cost of season passes for 2026.

Darla Krejci addressed the Council with two board members of her nonprofit, AGES Community, and volunteers from this past year's Walk of the Dead Haunted Trail. She presented the City with its share of the ticket revenue, with 2025 marking the ninth year of cooperation with the City of Galesburg for this event. She reported that over 1,100 people enjoyed the haunted trail across the eight nights of operation. Thanks to their satisfied customers, they were voted a top 10 favorite Haunted House on Hauntedillinois.com for the fourth year in a row.

Krejci stated that this partnership began through her work with the City's nature programs and her founding of the nonprofit, AGES Community. In addition to sharing the event's proceeds,

their volunteers cut and maintain trails around the Nature Center, and the City in turn, uses its portion of the revenue to fund no-cost and low-cost nature programs and make improvements to the Nature Center area. These programs include Second Saturday and Nature at Night programs, Summer Nature in Your Neighborhood program, Little Sprouts, and a newly established nature preschool. She also noted some improvements made this past fall, which included installation of a water line near the Nature Center for easier garden maintenance and paving a trail from the parking lot up to the Nature Center, significantly improving handicapped accessibility for programs. Ms. Krejci presented the City with a check in the amount of \$6,724.89 and also noted that they purchased and delivered \$500 worth of prizes for May's Fishing Derby. With this year's contribution, they have presented the City with a running total of \$53,166.77 and \$3,000 worth of Fishing Derby prizes over the past nine years.

Krejci welcomed any interested volunteers to reach out to them through their Facebook page, and also noted that they always appreciate volunteers for trail cleanup and maintenance, which will happen the first two weekends in May.

CONSENT AGENDA #2026-05

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

26-2007

Approve Resolution 26-06 reserving the City's 2026 private activating bonding authority.

26-3005

Approve the bid from Legacy Corporation of Illinois in the amount of \$27,400 to remove the existing wood waste from the oversize brush drop off site located on Pickard Road.

26-5000

Receive the 2025 Annual Fire and Police Commission Report.

26-5001

Receive the December 31, 2025, Quarterly Investment Schedule.

26-8003

Approve bills in the amount of \$501,655.48 and advance checks in the amount of \$908,875.88.

Council Member Cheesman moved, seconded by Council Member Saul, to approve Consent Agenda 2026-05.

Roll Call #3:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried by omnibus vote.

PASSAGE OF ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

26-1003

Ordinance on first reading amending Section 94.48 of Chapter 94 of the Galesburg Municipal Code regarding emergency demolitions.

City Manager Hanson reiterated that the intent of this ordinance is to use this process sparingly, reserved only for extreme cases like the immediate danger of a wall collapsing or a substantially compromised structure posing outside threats. Crucially, any action must be reviewed and signed off by multiple individuals from many City Departments. This ensures a thorough evaluation before demolition, or in some cases, stabilization is performed—similar to the recent fire downtown where the City stabilized a wall rather than demolishing the entire building.

City Attorney Alcorn stated his agreement that this amended ordinance provides a much more workable formula for emergency demolitions. The City rarely uses this authority, reserving it for unusual, emergency situations, as the City normally follows State Statute for standard demolition procedures. The new language is designed to make it easier for those making on-the-spot judgment calls to do so with confidence.

BIDS, PETITIONS, AND COMMUNICATIONS

26-3006

Council Member Cheesman moved, seconded by Council Member White, to approve the proposal from Henley Group LLC in the amount of \$323,000 for the design and installation of a splash pad at Cooke Park.

Roll Call #4:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

Council Member Cheesman thanked Ms. Pacheco and Ms. Jackson for their dedication and work on Cooke Park and noted that the project is a wonderful example of community and government participation and cooperation. He extended his appreciation to everybody involved, including all the great citizens who worked on the project.

26-3007

Council Member White moved, seconded by Council Member Reynolds, to approve the bid from SHI in the amount of \$82,402.71 for the purchase of network backup and recovery system equipment.

Roll Call #5:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

City Manager Hanson acknowledged the significant \$31,000 raised for Cooke Park and noted that this was the result of extensive fundraising efforts. He specifically thanked the group led by Ms. Pacheco and Ms. Jackson for driving the project, noting that this donation was important in bringing the project to fruition.

He also highlighted the recent success of the Orpheum Theatre and noted a time a few years prior when the conversation regarding the Orpheum was much different. This past Friday evening's show drew over 800 attendees and credited this success to the continued support from the Council and to the Director, Andrew Driscoll. He added that Mr. Driscoll has done a phenomenal job bringing quality events to the community and that the continued investment in the facility is seen as a good investment that reflects well on the community.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS (AGREEMENTS, APPROVALS, ETC.)

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

TOWN BUSINESS

26-9004

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

Fund Title	Amount
Town Fund	\$11,093.91
General Assistance Fund	\$3,266.07
IMRF Fund	\$4,265.17
Social Security/Medicare Fund	
Liability Fund	
Audit Fund	
Total	\$18,625.15

Roll Call #6:

Ayes: Trustees Mangieri, Hunigan, Reynolds, 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 Hunigan addressed two major house fires that occurred in Galesburg in February. One was on February 8th on Duffield Avenue, which was a two-story home, owned by a father and son. The blaze left the structure very unstable, requiring emergency demolition. The other fire took place on February 21st on East Berrien Street and resulted in one fatality and an injury to a firefighter. The response involved all three fire stations and 13 on-duty personnel. Council Member Hunigan deferred further comments on fires to Fire Chief Hovind.

Fire Chief Hovind emphasized the critical importance of smoke detectors, noting a dramatic shift in fire safety, specifically that the time to escape a house fire has decreased from 17 minutes to three minutes over the past 40 years. This is primarily due to modern home furnishings being made of highly flammable petroleum byproducts like plastics, polyesters, and polyurethane foam, rather than older materials such as wood, cotton, and wool.

He stated that installing smoke detectors is the most important action for protecting families and that as of January 1, 2023, Illinois law requires all smoke detectors in single and multifamily homes, for both new installations and replacements, to have a 10-year, non-removable, sealed battery. He added that smoke detectors must be replaced every 10 years and should be tested semi-annually. Detectors are required on every level of the home and within 15 feet of every bedroom.

Chief Hovind announced that the Galesburg Fire Department, in partnership with the American Red Cross, installs smoke detectors for residents upon request. Last year, over 200 alarms were installed, and a home safety check is also provided if requested. The Department will soon host a "Sound the Alarm" smoke detector drive in partnership with the Red Cross on April 18, from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. This is a volunteer event, and information will be posted on the Fire Department's website page for anyone wishing to join and help install smoke detectors on April 18th.

Council Member Reynolds announced he will host an open house for the Third Ward on March 12th, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., at Faith United Methodist Church. He invited anyone interested to attend in order to ask questions, get to know him, or express concerns.

Council Member White highlighted that March is Women's History Month and acknowledged several women, including those who were instrumental in the Cooke Park project. He also then encouraged the audience to research the following women:

- Minnie M. Cox: An American teacher who was appointed the first black postmaster in Mississippi in the early 1900s.
- Joan Trumpauer: A prominent American civil rights activist and Freedom Rider who challenged segregation in the 1960s by participating in over 30 sit-ins, born in Arlington, Virginia, in 1941.
- The Black Angels: A group of approximately 300 black nurses who risked their lives to care for tuberculosis patients at Staten Island's Sea View Hospital during a mid-20th-century epidemic, eventually playing a critical role in testing the cure for the disease.

Council Member White acknowledged the women working for the City, including the City Clerk, Assistant City Manager, and the Finance Director, thanking them for their excellent service.

Council Member Acerra thanked everyone for their remarks about Women's History Month. She also expressed appreciation for the comments regarding public safety, acknowledging the significant issue of fires. She also mentioned that an announcement was made today about an enhancement to the City's safety protocols, specifically, a new communication system. She invited Fire Chief Hovind to explain.

Chief Hovind stated that the Department has implemented a system called IPAWS, the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System. This system, operated through the National Weather Service and FEMA, ensures that any wireless alert issued by the National Weather Service is immediately sent to all phones in Knox County. A key feature of IPAWS is the ability to target alerts geographically. For instance, in the event of a specific disaster, such as a chemical spill from a train, they can precisely define the affected area. This allows the City to send specific instructions only to the people in that designated location. This service is provided free of charge, and no one needs to sign up for it; individuals will receive these alerts automatically and immediately.

Council Member Saul thanked Dave Selkirk and Bunker Links staff regarding the Golf Course's success. He attributed this, and the success of events like the Galesburg Balloon Race he organizes, to the hard work and dedication of the people involved. He emphasized that people will attend well-run, well-organized events and visit quality places like the golf course and Cooke Park because of these efforts. He also offered his condolences to the people in Austin, Texas, following the deaths of two individuals there, noting the sadness of the event.

Council Member Cheesman thanked the City's public safety personnel, including Chiefs Hovind and Legate, for their dangerous work in keeping the community safe, noting his personal understanding of the risks through his son's experience as a firefighter, paramedic, and SWAT team member. Regarding Women's History Month, he agreed that while all history should be celebrated, dedicated months like Black History, Hispanic History, and Women's History are important to recognize the immense and often untold contributions of these groups, without whom many of the country's advancements would not have been possible.

Council Member Cheesman commended the variety of community events and activities, specifically praising the Orpheum Theatre, Discovery Depot, and Civic Arts Center, as well as fundraising efforts by groups like the AGES Community organization. He also noted the upcoming High School special education basketball game supporting Special Olympians. He congratulated the successful winter seasons of the High School's basketball and wrestling teams, noting the life skills gained. He concluded by expressing pride in the community, emphasizing that the people are the town's greatest asset due to their contributions.

Council Member Mangieri also expressed her gratitude to Ms. Pacheco and Ms. Jackson for their work on Cooke Park, noting that the neighborhood is very special to her, as she grew up there. She looks forward to bringing her children to the park, and since her parents still live nearby, visits will be easy. She is eagerly anticipating the first day the splash pad opens.

She also added that she recently held a chat session with the general public on February 26th. These sessions occur on the fourth Thursday of every month and will continue in March and April. She encouraged everyone to stop by and share their ideas. She appreciated everyone who attended on the 26th and the discussion that was held on the various interesting topics.

Mayor Schwartzman commended the City of Galesburg on significant accomplishments and reiterated thanks to Mr. Selkirk for his service on the Golf Commission and for the Golf Course's continued success. He also mentioned that the High School girls' basketball team recently played a hard-fought game at home against a formidable opponent, Washington. He was impressed by the large and respectful crowd that supported both teams, noting the passion and camaraderie among the players. Older patrons who have followed Galesburg sports for decades remarked that the atmosphere was reminiscent of past successful seasons. Despite the loss, the young girls' team had an amazing season, as did the boys' team, and there is great potential for the future. Additionally, the Knox College women's basketball team was recognized for making it to the conference tournament.

The Mayor reflected on the nature of sports rivalry, noting that while there is fierce competition, there is also mutual respect. This concept of unity and respect was then broadened to the community, emphasizing the importance of sticking together in Galesburg. In a world with increasing tension and hostility, the hope is that Galesburg residents will continue to see each other as friends, family, and neighbors, and remain united regardless of circumstances.

Council Member White added that the Carl Sandburg College men's and women's teams both reached the semifinals in their region.

There being no further business, Council Member White moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to adjourn the regular meeting at 6:39 p.m.

Roll Call #7:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

Peter D. Schwartzman, Mayor

Kelli R. Bennewitz, City Clerk