

Galesburg City Council Regular Meeting  
City Council Chambers  
55 West Tompkins Street, Galesburg, Illinois  
January 5, 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, Dwight White, Heather Acerra, Greg Saul, and Steve Cheesman, 7. Assistant City Manager Cathy St. George, City Attorney Dan Alcorn, and City Clerk Kelli Bennewitz. Vacant: Council Member, Ward 3, following the resignation of Council Member Evan Miller, effective December 31, 2025.

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 Acerra, to approve the minutes of the City Council's regular meeting from December 15, 2025.

Roll Call #2:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Pastor Andrew Jowers, president of the United in the Community Alliance of Galesburg, addressed the Council, and expressed his excitement about attending the first Council meeting of the year after a period of absence during which he returned to school full-time. He referenced a *U.S. News and World Report* article on Galesburg that stated that the minority student population in District 205 was 50% and that 72% of these minority students were economically disadvantaged. Pastor Jowers stated he is committed to literacy and helping ensure that children in our community are literate. He publicly shared his email address, andyjowers@yahoo.com, inviting anyone who wishes to see children learn to contact him. He believes that everyone deserves a quality education, and that it would elevate the entire community. He also thanked former Council Member Miller for his service and commended the current Council Members for the significant time and effort their service requires.

### **CONSENT AGENDA #2026-01**

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

**26-4000**

Approve the property tax assessment freeze program for historic, owner-occupied residences.

**26-4001**

Approve a one-year contractual agreement with Assured Partners to provide risk management consulting and insurance brokerage services for the City in the amount of \$35,000 for 2026.

**26-8000**

Approve bills in the amount of \$542,685.95 and advance checks in the amount of \$2,779,522.97.

Council Member Acerra moved, seconded by Council Member White, to approve Consent Agenda 2026-01.

Roll Call #3:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried by omnibus vote.

## **PASSAGE OF ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS**

**26-1000**

Ordinance on first reading amending Appendix E of Chapter 76 of the Galesburg Municipal Code by designating stop intersections at Highland Avenue at North Street and Marston Avenue at North Street.

## **BIDS, PETITIONS, AND COMMUNICATIONS**

### **CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

- The December 2025 Traffic Advisory Committee Report is available for review.
- Applications are now being accepted for the City's local housing assistance repair program. Assistant City Manager St. George noted that the program, launched in 2022, has already supported over 100 home repair projects. Following the Council's approval in December, the program has been expanded to include single family renter-occupied homes and offers increased funding for eligible exterior and interior projects. Detailed information is available on the Community Development pages of the city's website, and a comprehensive press release regarding the program will be issued tomorrow.

## **MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS (AGREEMENTS, APPROVALS, ETC.)**

**26-4002**

Council Member Cheesman moved, seconded by Council Member White, to approve the initiation of the demolition process on the following properties:

- 334 N. Chambers Street (Residence)
- 900 Monmouth Boulevard (Residence & Detached Garage)
- 63 Sumner Street (Residence)
- 272 South Pearl Street (Residence & Garage)
- 742 Phillips Street (Detached Garage)
- 39 South Chambers Street (Duplex)
- 559 North Cherry Street (Residence & Detached Garage)

Roll Call #4:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

### **26-4003**

Council Member Saul moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to waive normal purchasing policies and approve a five-year lease agreement with Enterprise Fleet Management for fourteen vehicles at a cost of \$144,658.

Roll Call #5:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

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**

### **26-9000**

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

| <b>Fund Title</b>             | <b>Amount</b>      |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Town Fund                     | \$449.31           |
| General Assistance Fund       | \$9,063.10         |
| IMRF Fund                     |                    |
| Social Security/Medicare Fund | \$4,546.35         |
| Liability Fund                |                    |
| Audit Fund                    |                    |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>\$14,058.76</b> |

Roll Call #6:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

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

### **CLOSING COMMENTS**

Council Member White wished everyone a Happy New Year and a successful 2026. He also posed a trivia question to the community, asking if anyone knew the Galesburg resident who received a full scholarship to Harvard.

Council Member Acerra commended the City's excellent public safety personnel, especially in light of the recent fire on Lincoln Street. She also thanked staff's continuous efforts to find ways to optimize community experiences, specifically noting initiatives to help residents improve their homes with various grants and the potential program for individuals interested in restoring historic homes. She feels that these efforts represent a continued investment in the community. Council Member Acerra stated that she looks forward to serving for another year and wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Council Member Saul also thanked staff for broadening the program to include renters, allowing them to make repairs to their apartments. He also wished everyone a happy New Year and a belated Merry Christmas.

Council Member Cheesman addressed the City's housing efforts, also noting his support for the housing program and the difficult but necessary process of demolishing unsafe, neglected properties. He explained that unfortunately, these are individuals who have not done anything to their properties or taken the proper steps to try to repair it, and the City has to continue to make these areas safe as well as appealing.

Council Member Cheesman reiterated his appreciation for the community's volunteers and nonprofit organizations. He stated that these groups lend much to our community through a variety of essential services, including help for those in need, entertainment, and senior services. He specifically acknowledged organizations like the Orpheum Theater, Discovery Depot Children's Museum, Skate Palace, and the Civic Art Center. He also expressed his excitement for the new year, and acknowledged the Council's commitment to addressing various priorities, including the economy, infrastructure, beautification and improving citizen services, such as potentially establishing a community center. He urged residents with an idea, concern, or any issue to contact him directly as he feels that this is his most important job, serving as the essential link between the citizens and the City to help find solutions and answers to their situations.

Council Member Mangieri brought up the issue of food waste and scarcity, a focus of her work in the food justice and sustainability field. She shared her recent discovery of the “Too Good To Go” app, which helps prevent food from going to waste. The app allows businesses to sell surplus food at significantly reduced prices and she’s aware that Cornucopia and Pizza Ranch have already been using it for nearly a year. She encouraged citizens to suggest the app to their favorite local restaurants, grocery stores, and other businesses. Enrollment for businesses is free, with a minimal transaction fee on sales, but much lower than services like Door Dash. She noted that the effort to keep food out of landfills is critical because a July 2025 EPA report indicated that the Knox County landfill has only a few years of capacity remaining, requiring the County to start planning for expansion or a new location. She feels that saving food and directing it to people who need or want it is a positive outcome and asked the community for help in spreading the word to businesses.

Council Member Hunigan stated his support for the All Star Sports Academy, which includes the Skate Palace, managed by Michael Spinks. He believes this organization is rapidly filling the role of a de facto Boys and Girls Club for the community, a vital youth resource that has been missing for at least a decade. Boys and Girls Clubs provide safe, positive environments for youth after school and during summers, offering structured programs in academics, health and wellness, and leadership, while encouraging attendance at colleges and trade schools. He believes the All Star Sports Academy shares this mission of service to the poor and underprivileged, serving up to 75 children daily.

Council Member Hunigan stated that the Academy is centrally located on East Knox Street, near two large apartment complexes, making it accessible to many children on the east side of town. It operates as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization with an advisory board of 13 members representing diverse community segments. He noted that it is more than a skating rink, as it functions as a civic/community center for various youth activities. He added that the organization has already sought funding from various sources, including the Knox County Board, since the need to expand to meet community needs and ensure its survival. Without a dependable cash flow from private and public sources, sustaining its many services to participants is doubtful. He believes that if the community supports the YMCA, an organization with a nationwide presence, it should also support the All Star Sports Academy. This organization exists because one person saw a challenge and created a much-needed solution.

Mayor Schwartzman stated his optimism for Galesburg and is looking forward to 2026. He noted that several long-term initiatives, some started years ago, are anticipated to come to fruition within the next six to eight months. He encouraged residents to remain invested and engaged. He also cautioned everyone about the anticipation of more cold months ahead and reminded the public to be careful and thoughtful.

The Mayor also pointed out that Knox College's classes have just resumed, with many students now walking around the downtown area, and asked the community to be mindful of this as well.

Council Member White announced details for the upcoming MLK breakfast, stating that the event will take place on January 19th at 7:00 a.m. at Ascent Church. The guest speaker will be DeAndre Henderson, a former high school teacher who once taught at GHS North. Mr. Henderson is a vice principal in Rantoul, has been recognized as one of "40 Under 40" in Champaign, and is also his great-nephew. He encouraged everyone to attend and support the event, noting that it serves as a fundraiser to provide scholarships for young people.

There being no further business, Council Member Saul moved, seconded by Council Member Acerra, to adjourn the regular meeting at 6:29 p.m.

Roll Call #7:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Chairman declared the motion carried.

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Peter D. Mayor Schwartzman, Mayor

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Kelli R. Bennewitz, City Clerk