

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
CITY COUNCIL OF CREST HILL
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS
February 2, 2026

1. OPENING OF MEETING

The regular meeting of the City of Crest Hill was called to order by Mayor Raymond R. Soliman at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 20600 City Center Boulevard, Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited in unison.

3. ROLL CALL

Roll call indicated the following present: Mayor Raymond Soliman, City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall, City Treasurer Jamie Malloy, Alderman Scott Dyke, Alderman Angelo Deserio, Alderwoman Claudia Gazal, Alderperson Tina Oberlin, Alderman Mark Cipiti, Alderman Nate Albert and Alderman Joe Kubal.

Also present were: City Administrator Blaine Wing, Police Chief Ed Clark, Finance Director Glenn Gehrke, City Engineer Ron Wiedeman, and City Attorney Mike Stiff.

Absent was: Alderman Darrell Jefferson.

Mayor Ray Soliman explained that he received a text message from Alderman Darrell Jefferson and he is unable to attend today's meeting. Alderman Jefferson is excused.

4. CITIZEN/SPECIAL REQUEST/PUBLIC HEARINGS

4A. Public Hearing for the Alternative Water Source Distribution System Improvements-Amended PEID-Larkin Avenue

Alderperson Oberlin made a motion to open the Public Hearing for the Alternative Water Source Distribution System Improvements-Amended PEID-Larkin Avenue. Seconded by Alderwoman Gazal. Roll Call: Ayes: Dyke, Deserio, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal. Nayes: None. Absent: Jefferson. MOTION CARRIED.

City Engineer Ron Wiedeman stated, "This is for the Lake Michigan water supply through the Grand Prairie. The PID is because we are adding to our project plan with the IEPA for funding; adding Larkin Avenue water main that would be included in our lining Phase 4 extension."

The presentation outlined the current projects already approved, including the Caton Farm Road reinforcement water main (currently under construction), various phases of water main lining on Broadway, Theodore, and US Route 30, and receiving stations with a 3.5-million-gallon storage

tank. The amendment would add the Larkin Avenue water main to Phase 4 lining extension.

City Engineer Wiedeman described the specific area of the Larkin Avenue project, noting plans to reconfigure water services in the area behind businesses to improve service, particularly between Burger King and Popeyes where recent issues had occurred. He clarified that construction impacts would be temporary (noise, dust, soil erosion, and traffic disruption) and that various environmental agencies had determined the project would have no significant impact on protected resources.

Alderwoman Gazal asked if the construction would impact traffic near Popeyes where backups frequently occur. City Engineer Wiedeman explained that most work would be behind buildings with minimal impact on Larkin Avenue traffic. He noted that Burger King and Jiffy Lube would remain open during construction with temporary water service.

No members of the public approached the podium to comment on the project. The comment period would remain open until February 17, 2026.

Alderperson Oberlin made a motion to close the Public Hearing for the Alternative Water Source Distribution System Improvements-Amended PEID-Larkin Avenue. Seconded by Alderwoman Gazal. Roll Call: Ayes: Deserio, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke. Nayes: None. Absent: Jefferson. MOTION CARRIED.

5. **PUBLIC COMMENT FOR AGENDA ITEMS ONLY:**

Resident Linda Dyke spoke about the January 26, 2026, work session meeting and the item about new microphones in Council chambers. There were a couple of things that bothered her. Ms. Dyke said, “Stuart [Soifer] spoke that [City Administrator] Blaine [Wing] brought to him on Friday something about his proposal, so he had to rush it into sales. Didn’t his proposal come in prior to that? Did he know about the other person’s proposal?” Also, Resident Dyke spoke with Mr. Tom Burns from Forte today for 25 minutes and was impressed with the presentation he gave over the phone. She asked Mr. Burns if he was, “called on Friday to tell what the other proposal was, if you wanted to re-vamp your proposal?” Mr. Burns responded, “No.” Resident Dyke explained that she did some research and found that is called, “proposal rigging.” She also offered the suggestion of bringing both companies to present their proposals in front of the Council.

Mr. Stuart Soifer stated, “Let me re-comment, I would go back and check the minutes because that is not what I said.” Resident Linda Dyke stated, “I have it on my phone.” Mr. Soifer stated again, “That’s not what I said. Check the recording, what’s not what I said.” He explained that his bid had been submitted months earlier, and he had only learned about moving forward when City Administrator Wing contacted him. Mr. Soifer emphasized he never saw Forte’s proposal until the public packet was released.

City Administrator Blaine Wing explained the proper process was followed. He stated that vendors did not see each other's proposals until they were made public in the Council packet. He clarified that he had contacted vendors to check if their pricing had changed due to market volatility, but no pricing information was shared between vendors.

6. **CONSENT AGENDA:**

Mayor Ray Soliman asked if any of the Council members wished to have any items removed from the consent agenda for more discussion.

Alderman Cipiti requested to remove item 6C (Approve the Minutes from the Work Session Meeting Held on January 26, 2026) from the consent agenda.

Alderman Dyke requested to remove item 6H (Resolution Approving an Agreement with ACP CreativIT, LLC for Audio Upgrades to the City Council Chambers in the Amount of \$29,854.00) from the consent agenda.

Mayor Soliman proceeded to read the consent agenda items:

- 6A. Approve the Minutes of the Work Session Meeting Held on January 12, 2026.
- 6B. Approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting Held on January 19, 2026.
- 6C. Approve the Minutes from the Work Session Meeting Held on January 26, 2026. (REMOVED for Discussion)
- 6D. Award the Contract to P.T. Ferro Construction Company for the Division Roadway Reconstruction Improvement in the Amount of \$2,023,482.72.
- 6E. Approve a Resolution Approving an Amendment to the Construction Agreement by and between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois and M & J Underground, Inc. for Caton Farm Road Water Main Extension. ***Resolution #1379***
- 6F. Approve an Ordinance Approving Final Plat of Subdivision, Special Use Permit, and Variations to the Crest Hill Zoning Ordinance and Crest Hill Code of Ordinances with Respect to Certain Real Property Located at 1812 N Larkin Ave in Crest Hill, Illinois (Application of Extra Space Storage LLC). ***Ordinance #2047***
- 6G. Approve a Resolution Designating Glenn Gehrke as the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) Authorized Agent for the City of Crest Hill. ***Resolution #1380***
- 6H. Approve a Resolution Approving an Agreement by and between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois, and ACP CreativIT, LLC for Audio Upgrades to the City Council Chambers in the Amount of \$29,854.00. (REMOVED for Discussion)

- 6I. Approve a Resolution for a Professional Services Agreement for a PFAS Treatment Equipment and Pilot Testing Study by and between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois and Strand and Associates, Inc. in the Amount of \$10,000.00. ***Resolution #1382***
- 6J. Approval of the Regular and Overtime Payroll from January 12, 2026, through January 25, 2026, in the Amount of \$295,291.66.
- 6K. Approval of Additional Comp Time Buy Back in the Amount of \$10,820.63.
- 6L. Approval of the List of Bills Issued through February 2, 2026, in the Amount of \$626,650.18.

Mayor Soliman asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda items excluding items **6C, and 6H**.

Alderman Albert made a motion to Approve the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Alderwoman Gazal. Roll Call: Ayes: Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Deserio, Gazal. Nayes: None. Absent: Jefferson. MOTION CARRIED.

Mayor Soliman commented that they would now discuss the items that were removed from the consent agenda.

- 6C. Approval of the Minutes from the Work Session Meeting Held on January 26, 2026.

Alderman Mark Cipiti asked for a new version of the minutes, regarding item 1 under the City Administrator; Discussion of Known Storm Drainage Issue Areas in Crest Hill, specifically the one at Jasmine Creek. Alderman Cipiti stated that there was quite a bit of discussion surrounding that topic by the Council, but much of it did not make the minutes.

Alderman Cipiti asked about software that transcribes what was said in the meeting and transform it to minutes, but City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall stated that software is not totally accurate and still needs someone to go through the minutes and correct them. When editing of the transcription was brought up, City Clerk Vershay-Hall referred to the City Attorney Mike Stiff. City Attorney Stiff said, "Minutes vary across municipalities. Some Boards and Councils want it to be just a general overview, not every comment made by every person with attribution. Others are more detailed. Crest Hill is one of the more detailed minutes that I see, but it's still not ever supposed to be verbatim. You might as well get a court reporter here and transcribe it." City Attorney Stiff agreed with City Clerk Vershay-Hall about the talk-to-text software, stating that a human is still needed to go through it because it tends to be inaccurate.

Alderwoman Gazal stated that when she doesn't see something in the meeting minutes that she thinks should be in there, she will reach out to the City Clerk and suggest adding the omitted information or discussion.

City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall asked the Council if they wanted to table this topic for now, have some information added to the minutes and put it back on the agenda in two weeks for approval. Alderman Cipiti agreed to the suggestion.

Alderman Cipiti made a motion to Table Consent Agenda Item 6C for the Approval of the Minutes from the Work Session Meeting Held on January 26, 2026. Seconded by Alderperson Oberlin. Roll Call: Ayes: Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Dyke. Nays: Albert, Deserio. Abstained: Kubal. Absent: Jefferson. MOTION CARRIED.

6H. Approve a Resolution Approving an Agreement by and between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois, and ACP CreativIT, LLC for Audio Upgrades to the City Council Chambers in the Amount of \$29,854.00.

Alderman Dyke expressed concern that the two audio upgrade proposals received were hugely different approaches to solving the audio problems. He made a motion to tabling this item for now, hiring a firm to assess the system and create specifications so all bidders would be proposing the same solution.

Alderwoman Gazal seconded the motion and asked to have discussions so there are no accusations, and everything can be transparent.

When Mayor Soliman asked for a motion and after the motion was made, Alderman Cipiti asked what the vote was for. Alderman Dyke explained that the vote was for someone to come in and produce a set of specs of what was needed by the Council so that the bidding companies would be bidding on the same thing. Alderman Cipiti then asked what the two companies were told prior to sending in their proposals in this instance. City Administrator Blaine Wing explained that since we had an existing sound system, not a new sound system, this was managed as a proposal process rather than a formal bid because they weren't starting from nothing. He noted that both vendors assessed the situation and offered different approaches to solve the audio problems, one proposing to reuse existing equipment (ACP CreativIT at approximately \$30,000) and another proposing to replace most equipment (Forte at approximately \$80,000). City Administrator Wing recommended the lower-cost solution as he believed both would effectively improve the audio.

Alderman Desario asked if both vendors could submit similar bids to allow for direct comparison. City Administrator Wing explained that he had asked both vendors to provide options using existing equipment and replacing everything, but each vendor only provided one approach.

Alderwoman Gazal suggested inviting both vendors to a meeting to present their solutions and answer questions, noting that the Council had waited three years for microphone improvements and could wait another week for more information.

Alderman Dyke made a motion to Table Consent Agenda Item 6H to Approve a Resolution Approving an Agreement by and between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois, and ACP CreativIT, LLC for Audio Upgrades to the City Council Chambers in the Amount of \$29,854.00. Seconded by Alderwoman Gazal. Roll Call: Ayes: Dyke, Gazal, Cipiti. Nayes: Albert, Kubal, Deserio, Oberlin. Absent: Jefferson. MOTION FAILED.

Alderman Albert made a motion to Approve a Resolution Approving an Agreement by and between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois, and ACP CreativIT, LLC for Audio Upgrades to the City Council Chambers in the Amount of \$29,854.00. Seconded by Alderperson Oberlin. Roll Call: Ayes: Kubal, Deserio, Oberlin, Albert. Nayes: Dyke, Gazal, Cipiti. Absent: Jefferson. MOTION CARRIED. Resolution #1381

City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall provided the resolution and ordinance numbers:

- 6E: Resolution 1379
- 6F: Ordinance 2047
- 6G: Resolution 1380
- 6H: Resolution 1381
- 6I: Resolution 1382

4. CITIZEN/SPECIAL REQUEST/PUBLIC HEARINGS

Mayor Ray Soliman stated that we are going to return to item 4 for Citizens/Special Request/Public Hearings. Matt Grzetic, the President of Crest Hill pony baseball for his second year, wanted to give an update regarding Crest Hill baseball and talk about an upcoming fundraiser. Mr. Grzetic stated that the Crest Hill baseball league is a recreational league for boys and girls aged 4-14, regardless of skill level or income level. There are scholarship programs that families can use, if needed. Mr. Grzetic and the league are trying to grow the league by attending more public events and connecting to the community. They want to grow the love of the game and better the community. Opening day is April 11th and he would like to see everyone out there. There is a fund raiser at Lock & Mule on Wednesday from 5:00 to 9:00PM. 10% of all sales during that time will go to Crest Hill baseball. Any additional information on Crest Hill baseball can be found on the website www.cresthillbaseball.com.

7. REPORTS & COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENTS & ELECTED OFFICIALS

7A. MAYOR'S REPORT:

There were no items to report.

7B. CITY CLERK'S REPORT:

1. Approval of The Renwick Club HOA to use the Community Room for their Board Meeting

City Clerk Vershay-Hall presented a request from the Renwick Club HOA to use the community room on February 24, 2026, from 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM. She noted this required Council approval as the policy and procedures for room use were not yet in place.

Alderman Albert made a motion for the Approval of The Renwick Club HOA to use the Community Room for their Board Meeting on February 24, 2026 from 6:00PM to 10:00PM. Seconded by Alderman Deserio. Roll Call: Ayes: Dyke, Deserio, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal. Absent: Jefferson. MOTION CARRIED.

7C. CITY TREASURER'S REPORT:

There were no items to report.

7D. CITY ATTORNEY:

City Attorney Mike Stiff announced he would have a draft community room policy in next week's work session packet. He noted he had received an email from Mike Alisia, the broker from Allegiant Insurance, with insurance suggestions that have been added to the draft policy. City Attorney Stiff said he wanted Council to look at these changes.

7E. CITY ADMINISTRATOR:

1. Recommendation for Approval of New Finance & Negotiation Prep Committees

City Administrator Blaine Wing recommended establishing two committees: a Finance Committee and a Negotiation Preparation Committee. He explained that both would be timely as the city prepares for union negotiations and was in budget season. He emphasized that the full City Council would still have final approval authority over policies, budgets, and collective bargaining agreements.

The proposed Finance Committee would consist of Aldermen Scott Dyke and Angelo Deserio, while the Negotiation Preparation Committee would include Aldermen Mark Cipiti and Darrell Jefferson.

Alderwoman Gazal questioned whether this changed the normal procedure where the Mayor makes committee appointments. Mayor Soliman responded that he fully supported the City Administrator's recommendations and noted that the City Administrator runs day-to-day operations.

Alderman Oberlin expressed concern that the committees might make decisions without input from the full City Council. City Administrator Wing clarified that the committees would provide recommendations, but the full Council would make final decisions. Alderman Oberlin then stated, "I would like for the full Council to be aware of whatever, and not have anything left out because when people elect two people from each ward to vote in the City on these kinds of things, I want to make sure we have the ability to know all the things." City Administrator Wing said that he understood.

Alderman Albert asked if the Negotiations Committee have direct access to the Labor Attorney or would everything still go through the City Administrator. City Administrator Wing stated that everything would still go through the City Administrator's office, but if one of the liaisons had a specific question about a contract, "any Council member would have access to that labor attorney or the firm to ask a question." Alderman Albert asked, "If I were to ask one of our staff members a question, they are already being paid by the City to do their day-to-day job, but if I call an attorney, that's when the clock starts ticking as an outside consultant. That's my question that they will have full access." City Administrator answered, "That's how we are set up now unless Council changes how that works."

Mayor Soliman asked City Attorney Mike Stiff if these items should be two separate votes or voted together. City Attorney Stiff recommended separate voting in case there is a divergence of opinion on one.

Alderwoman Gazal made a motion for the Approval of Recommendation of the City Administrator to Form a Finance Committee of Alderman Scott Dyke and Alderman Angelo Deserio. Seconded by Alderman Albert. Roll Call: Ayes: Deserio, Gazal, Oberlin (with provisions she stated), Cipiti, Albert, Kubal. Nays: None. Abstains: Dyke. Absent: Jefferson. MOTION CARRIED.

Alderwoman Gazal made a motion for the Approval of Recommendation of the City Administrator to Form a Negotiation Preparation Committee of Alderman Mark Cipiti and Alderman Darrell Jefferson. Seconded by Alderman Dyke. Roll Call: Ayes: Dyke, Gazal, Oberlin (with same provisions she stated), Cipiti. Nays: Albert, Kubal. Abstains: Deserio. Absent: Jefferson. MOTION CARRIED.

7F. PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT:

There were no items to report.

7G. CITY ENGINEER:
There were no items to report.

7H. FINANCE:
There were no items to report.

7H. POLICE DEPARTMENT:
There were no items to report.

7J. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:
There were no items to report.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:
There was no unfinished business.

9. NEW BUSINESS:
There was no new business.

10. COMMITTEE/LIAISON REPORTS:
Alderwoman Gazal reported that plans are being finalized with the City Administrator for an Easter event scheduled for Saturday, March 28, 2026, from 12:00 to 2:00 PM for children up to age 12. She noted that more details would be shared with residents in the next couple of weeks.

Alderman Deserio questioned whether the event had been properly approved by the Council and where funding would come from. Mayor Soliman stated that it was brought up at the last City Council meeting. Alderwoman Gazal responded that the city has an events budget and mentioned they were also accepting donations. City Administrator Blaine Wing clarified that the current budget includes \$10,000 for events with no specific parameters.

11. CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS:
Alderperson Oberlin wished everyone a happy Valentine's Day.

Alderwoman Gazal thanked Public Works staff for their hard work during recent snow and water main breaks.

Alderman Desario noted that Woodstock's groundhog did not see his shadow, predicting an early spring.

Alderman Dyke stated that his upcoming 40th wedding anniversary is on Sunday.

Mayor Soliman thanked Public Works, the Police Department, and administrators for their excellent response to recent snow and a serious water main break that was resolved in a timely manner without requiring a boil order.

12. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Resident Stuart Soifer spoke of technical audio information for clarification for Alderman Cipiti, "One of the things about audio recording systems is that the most important thing is 'garbage-in, garbage-out.' As soon as the audio system is upgraded, the audio recordings that the Clerk uses to transcribe minutes, any AI used for it, will be better because the most important is what comes into the recording system. That could have been what some of the deficiencies are in what they were doing or what the AI interpreted. If the AI can't figure out something, it's going to skip it and do everything else for it...The upgrade and fix in the audio system will hopefully fix the minute recordings also, and then the transcriptions."

13. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business before the Council, and no action needed from an executive session, a motion for adjournment was in order.

Alderman Dyke made a motion to adjourn at 8:05 p.m. Seconded by Alderman Deserio. Roll Call: Ayes: Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Deserio. Nayes: None. Absent: Jefferson. MOTION CARRIED.

Approved this _____ day of _____, 2026.,
As presented _____
As amended _____

CHRISTINE VERSHAY-HALL, CITY CLERK

RAYMOND R. SOLIMAN, MAYOR