

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION
CITY COUNCIL OF CREST HILL
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS
December 12, 2022

The December 12, 2022 City Council work session was called to order by Mayor Raymond R. Soliman at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 1610 Plainfield Road Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois.

The following Council members were present: Mayor Raymond Soliman, City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall, City Treasurer Glen Conklin, Alderman Scott Dyke, Alderman John Vershay, Alderwoman Claudia Gazal, Alderman Darrell Jefferson, Alderperson Tina Oberlin, Alderman Mark Cipiti, Alderman Nate Albert, Alderman Joe Kubal.

Also present were: Administrator Jim Marino, Director of Public Works Mark Siefert, City Attorney Mike Stiff.

Absent were: Assistant Public Works Director Blaine Kline, City Engineer Ron Wiedeman, Interim Planner Maura Rigoni, Police Chief Ed Clark, Finance Director Lisa Banovetz,

TOPIC: West Plant Change Order Discussion

Mayor Soliman presented the West Plant Change Order Discussion per the memo dated December 12, 2022. Director Siefert informed the Council that Mike Ott from Strand was present to answer any questions the Council might have. Vissering Construction came in with the low bid of \$51,770.00. Since that time we have been able to deduct 1.3 million from the cost. As a result, the project was awarded for \$50,640,000. Vissering was given their notice to proceed on December 1st. Council instructed staff to see if we could cut costs on the project. Strand and staff have worked together to cut some of the costs of the project. Deductive Bid Alternative No. 1 was selected and with multiple alternative manufacturers being selected. The total savings associated with the change's totals \$1,130,000.00. This brought the cost down to \$50,640,000.00. Table 1 shows the reductions that were made to the original bid. Director Siefert, Assistant Director Blaine Kline, went to Streater to meet with Vissering Construction to go over the numbers. All potential deductions were discussed. We have until December 15th to let Vissering know if we are purchasing 1 or 2 bar screens. The bar screen is what prevents garbage, or any solids that could potentially enter the system from coming in. Any solids that are collected are compacted in a dumpster and taken to a landfill. We currently have two bar screens at the East Plant in case one would quit working. If we go with one bar screen and it would quit functioning, we will have to man the plant 24/7 until it was again operational. With the interest rate we are getting, Director Siefert's recommendation is to get the 2nd bar screen. With two bar screens in place, they will switch off weekly and that will extend the life of the equipment. This is more beneficial than having one bar screen running continuously. Alderperson Oberlin asked what the life expectancy is of a bar screen that runs continuously. Mike Ott explained that it can last up to 20 years with proper maintenance. With two screens alternating you could potentially get 30 years out of the equipment. Alderperson Oberlin asked how many screens do we have at the East Plant. We have two. If one of the screens breaks, what is the down time. The approximate repair time is 2-4 weeks, depending on where the parts are coming from. If parts are coming from Florida it could take up to 5 months to get them. Director Siefert explained that the bar screen is one of the most important parts of the system as it protects the plant. Director Siefert explained that there are a lot of items that come through the sewers from the prison. Alderman Vershay asked why some of the

walkways are being eliminated. Director Siefert explained that they were in the plan as a convenience for the operators and will not pose a safety issue if they are removed. He went over what the walkways would have been used for and how we came up with an alternative. Alderman Vershay questioned the covers on the tanks. They were originally aluminum but have been changed to grates to reduce the costs. Alderman Oberlin asked if any of the proposed downsizing would hamper the operations of the plant. Director Siefert explained that they chose the most beneficial saving with the least amount of impact to the plant. One example is the need for an elevator. We were able to exchange that for a lift instead. This accounted for a savings of \$79,000.00. Another change we made was going from glass ductile pipe to ductile in certain areas. The glass ductile pipe will only be placed under areas that don't need to be dug up, such as concrete. Alderman Vershay questioned the strain on the pumps due to the change in piping. It is gravity flow, so it won't affect it as much. Alderman Vershay questioned the lift versus the elevator. The lift would only be for an employee who is in a wheelchair to access the second floor of the facility. Mr. Ott explained that there will still be two staircases to access the second floor. An elevator or lift is an ADA requirement. Alderman Cipiti questioned the filter bypass. Mr. Ott explained how this would work and its affect on the plant. Alderman Vershay questioned the removal of the walkways over the aerated tanks. Mr. Ott explained that the construction provides access to the tanks from every corner. The removal of the walkways will not impact the ability to access the tanks. Alderman Cipiti questioned the cost of the office furniture. We will be reusing as much of the existing office furniture as possible once we make the move to the new facility to save some money. We have areas where we can store the furniture until it is needed. Alderman Cipiti questioned the use of internet service. Mr. Ott explained that this is for the contractor and the City will be reimbursed for it. Alderman Vershay questioned the removal of lights from the Biosolids building. Director Siefert explained that this is due to us not hauling sludge at night. The building is basically a roof with open walls. The machinery we use to haul the sludge have lights on them.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote on the West Plant Change Order Discussion. All members present were in agreement.

TOPIC: IT Director Salary Change

Mayor Soliman presented the IT Director Salary Range per the memo dated December 12, 2022. Administrator Marino explained that before the position can be posted he needs to have a salary range in place. The survey that we have was provided to us from the City of Aurora. The average range is between \$98,000.00 to \$136,000.00. Administrator Marino felt that this range was a little bit high for us. We budgeted \$120,000.00. Alderwoman Gazal felt that it's hard to use the chart that was given to them since it doesn't include the length of employment time, etc. Alderman Dyke asked how much we paid the last IT Director. It was \$120,000.00. Alderman Cipiti asked when we hired the last Director, didn't we do a salary range then. We did. Alderwoman Gazal asked if we are looking for an increase in the salary. Administrator Marino explained that he is looking for a number to put in the job description that he would be publishing. Discussion followed on the salary range the other communities are using. Alderman Cipiti asked how close in size are the municipalities we got the information from. Alderwoman Gazal said that they are comparable in size. Administrator Marino explained that the chart shows the minimum, maximum and actual salary that is being paid. Alderman Kubal questioned the use of outside contractors. There are a number of communities that are using outside contractors instead of individuals. Alderman Cipiti commented that if you use an outside company, you will have 24/7 service. Alderwoman Gazal asked why the Administrator prefers an in house director versus an outside firm. You would have someone on site every day.

Alderwoman Gazal sided when we had an outside firm here before the IT Director you could get help from them on the phone 24/7. She feels that an in house director is going to cost us more than an outside company. Administrator Marino explained that we would have an IT person along with an IT company to be used for backup if needed. Treasurer Conklin thought that we paid the prior company roughly \$10,000.00 per month. The current company we are using started at \$20,000.00 per month but is down to \$15,000.00. This amount could go down further as we adjust the hours they are needed. Discussion followed on the benefits of an outside firm versus an in house Director. Alderman Vershay was concerned that an outside firm may not be familiar with the software that we use where an in house Director would know the system. Alderman Jefferson asked if the IT company will be paid a monthly payment or a retainer. It would be on a monthly basis. Alderman Jefferson asked if they would fill in and also help out with a larger project. They would. Administrator Marino explained that the in house person may not know everything related to the software. Alderman Oberlin is concerned that if we don't have a written agreement, a company may not agree to be our go to backup. We would secure a contract with a backup IT company for labor and material on a need be basis. Alderman Oberlin asked on top of the salary, what is the dollar amount of the benefits we provide. Administrator Marino said around \$25,000.00 which depends on the level of benefits. A person may not need the health benefits. Treasurer Conklin said that we have decent rates on our health insurance. Alderman Jefferson asked if the salary includes paid days off. It does. Treasurer Conklin said that we have a new company overseeing IT and we don't currently know how many hours per week we are going to need them in the office. Alderman Vershay asked if we have an update on how the new IT company is doing. Administrator Marino felt that they were monitoring the network and helping the staff that have needed assistance. Starting this week AIS will be here on Monday and Thursday. If there are issues that arise when they are not here, they are available by phone. Alderman Gazal asked if we adjusted the fees for the contract. Administrator Marino explained that once we have made a decision tonight, he would like to come back next month with an adjusted contract that would be more specific to our needs. If we get an in house director on board, we will not need an outside company as often. Alderman Vershay asked if the same staff from AIS come in all of the time. We have the same four techs that service the City. This was done so that we have more than one person that is familiar with our system. Alderman Cipiti said that in listening to the conversation, it would seem more cost effective to have the outside firm rather than a director in house as we don't need them on a daily basis. Alderman Vershay asked what we are paying the current company. We are paying them roughly \$15,000.00 per month for their services. This amount should go down over time. We may see a spike in the cost when we move into the City Center due to equipment being moved and installed. Alderman Gazal felt the pay for an IT Director should be between \$95,000.00 to \$110,000.00 since you have to add in all the other benefits. We have to look at everything that is involved as far as finances for this position. Alderman Oberlin asked who will oversee the person. Administrator Marino stated that he would oversee the person in house or be in contact with the IT company. Alderman Oberlin felt an outside company would be a better fit. Alderman Gazal felt using a company at this time is a good fit and then once we move into the new building we can revisit the IT position. Administrator Marino agreed that we don't have to make a decision right now, we can wait until we make the move. Alderman Oberlin agreed that we should stay the way we are right now, with AIS instead of going out for a new person/company. Administrator Marino said that we can go both ways. There is no urgency to fill the position now, we have AIS in place right now. Treasurer Conklin said that the main concern is not how many hours they work, but does the job get done. Alderman Albert felt that when we brought an in house director in, we were concerned with how much the prior company was

charging us. Treasurer Conklin explained that when the Director came in, he eliminated some cost cutting items that were not necessary. Discussion followed on off-site remote help. Alderman Kubal said with the job market being so tight right now, it may not be a good time to look for an IT Director. We can always go back and revisit this at a later date. Alderman Vershay thought that it would be good to have some one in house when we make the move into the new building. Alderman Jefferson felt that there is a need for both, someone in house and also a back up company. This could be done once we move into the City Center. Alderman Vershay asked if this position is one that is hard to fill. Administrator Marino said that there are a number of IT professionals, but not everyone is experienced in software and hardware that is specific to governments. Treasurer Conklin asked if there are any clearance issues. In order to work on the Police Department software and hardware you would need to have a certain level of clearance. The current IT company that we are utilizing has that clearance. They work for a number of municipalities.

Mayor commented that the general consensus is to continue the outside company. After 6 months we will then revisit the conversation on the IT Director.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There were no public comments.

MAYORS UPDATES:

Mayor Soliman announced that Will County has purchased the Children Learning Center on Cedarwood Drive. They plan to move the Will County Children's Advocacy Center to that building. The zoning is in place for the use. Alderman Albert asked if the property was tax exempt as a day care. It was not but will be since the County is purchasing it.

COMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES:

There were no committee/liaison updates.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES:

Administrator Marino had no further updates.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Mayor Soliman announced that there is a need for an executive session on 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) The appointment, employment, compensation of specific employees.

(#1) Motion by Tina Oberlin seconded by Darrell Jefferson, to go into an executive session on 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) The appointment, employment, compensation of specific employees.

On roll call, the vote was:

AYES: Ald. Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Vershay, Jefferson.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

There being eight (8) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

The executive session was called at 8:08 p.m.

(#2) Motion by Tina Oberlin seconded by Mark Cipiti, to reconvene from the executive session on 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) The appointment, employment, compensation of specific employees.

On roll call, the vote was:

AYES: Ald. Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Vershay, Jefferson.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

There being eight (8) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

The meeting was reconvened at 11:27 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:27 p.m.

Approved this _____ day of _____, 2022

As presented _____

As amended _____

CHRISTINE VERSHAY-HALL, CITY CLERK

RAYMOND R. SOLIMAN, MAYOR