

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION
CITY COUNCIL OF CREST HILL
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS
June 24, 2024

The June 24, 2024, City Council work session was called to order by Mayor Raymond R. Soliman at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 20600 City Center Blvd. 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 Darrell Jefferson, Alderwoman Claudia Gazal, Alderperson Tina Oberlin, Alderman Mark Cipiti, Alderman Nate Albert.

Absent: Alderman Joe Kubal.

Also Present were: Interim Administrator Tony Graff, Police Chief Ed Clark, Interim Finance Director Carron Johnson, Interim Employee Relations Dave Strahl, City Attorney Mike Stiff.

Absent were: City Engineer Ron Wiedeman, Interim Public Works Director Mike Eulitz, Interim Community Development Director Ron Mentzer, Interim Planner Maura Rigoni, Building Commissioner Don Seeman.

TOPIC: City Council Chambers – Microphone Replacement Proposal

Interim City Administrator Tony Graff commented that he would like to table this topic to get a couple more proposals since this quote came in at a high rate. He also commented that this topic will be moved to the July 8, 2024, work session meeting.

Alderman Albert commented that it is not just about the microphone replacement, it is more about the design of the room and the sound within the room. These quotes should be more so about what we really need and not just the equipment quote.

Interim Administrator Graff commented that the companies that have come in and looked at the equipment have stated that with the way the ceilings are, and the tiles it gives the echoing effect and these companies do not believe they could reduce that. They do feel most of the problem is the microphones and goosenecks should help. Alderman Albert commented that he feels there are things that they can do to help absorb some of the echoing and noise issues.

Mayor Soliman commented that this will be tabled until July 8, 2024, work session.

TOPIC: Discussion of Non-Union Insurance Contribution Levels

Interim Human Resource Manager Dave Strahl commented that the non-union employees are currently contributing 10% and the police officers are contributing 13.5% for insurance. Interim Manager Strahl provided background information of what the rates are from surrounding communities and what the current rates are now and what they will be going to on July 1, 2024, which is the insurance year and when the rate changes take effect.

Alderman Gazal asked what the administration recommendation is. Interim Manager Strahl commented that he is not providing a recommendation, he knows that it has been 10% for a long time and the comparable are trending above that currently but at some point, it should be a topic for discussion. It is not critical right now, but it will be an opportunity to control costs going forward as insurance continues to go up on an annual basis.

Mayor Soliman asked if there are any questions from the Council and commented that at this time this is just informational.

Interim Administrator Graff commented that if we start changing benefit packages, we might need to explore what the representatives from both unions, even though it is non-union issue, it would be nice to get a personnel committee started with the employees, so they are educated what the cost is that the city is absorbing in reference to the benefits. He also commented that something should be approved by January or February of each year, so the employees have a good amount of notice.

Interim Manager Strahl commented that we do not get the projected rates until April, but we do get preliminary numbers in February which are locked down around April.

TOPIC: Ward 1 Alderman Vacancy Recommendation

Mayor Soliman brought before the Council Jennifer Methvin, who is a twenty-year resident of the City of Crest Hill. Mayor Soliman introduced Jennifer Methvin.

Jennifer Methvin approached the podium and introduced herself. Jennifer commented that she has been a homeowner for fifteen years and has raised three children in the community. She commented that Crest Hill is the 'City of Neighbors' and she wants to take that 'neighborhood' to the next level and focus on community wellness, common area beautification, programs for children especially during summer and breaks, and have careful use of the tax dollars to benefit our community. She also commented that she has been a registered nurse for sixteen years and is the Assistant Director of Nursing in Oaklawn.

Mayor Soliman asked if there were any questions from the Council.

Alderman Oberlin asked how she heard about the opening. Jennifer commented that she had heard about it through Facebook, but her husband is Charles Methvin, and he is on the school board and had people reaching out to him, as well. She stated that her husband's heart is in the school and wants to remain with the school board. We then figured that we have an opportunity where she could be of service, as well.

Alderman Jefferson asked if she has any idea or is aware of what the Council does and stated that they are there awfully late on Monday nights. Jennifer commented that Monday night is free for her, and she has met with the mayor and learned the basics and she looks forward to the opportunity to get her feet wet in this ten-month position and see if she would want to continue.

Mayor Soliman commented that Jennifer is the second candidate and is more than qualified for this position. He also commented that he was impressed by her enthusiasm and the passion that she had for this position.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote for the appointment of Jennifer Lynn Methvin to the Ward I Alderwoman seat for a ten-month period that will expire on May 5, 2025.

Alderman Jefferson commented that he did not get Jennifer Methvin's information but will concur with the rest of the Council.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Kubal.

Mayor Soliman commented that Alderman Kubal is excused from tonight's meeting.

Mayor Soliman commented that Monday, July 1, 2024, would be the night Jennifer will be sworn in and the official vote will be taken that night, as well.

Attorney Stiff commented that the mayor would appoint formally, have the official vote, and then she could be sworn in depending on the vote.

Mayor Soliman asked if the Council has any objections to having the appointment as the first item on the agenda. There were no objections from the Council.

TOPIC: Request to Replace damaged Squad Car

Police Chief Ed Clark commented that the 2022 Ford Explorer Hybrid Squad was damaged in a traffic crash and at the time the insurance stated that they could fix the vehicle and upon further examination they have declared the squad a total loss. He commented that the estimation for a new vehicle is about \$65,000.00 for a new hybrid and the insurance estimate is \$33,000.00 which we would be looking at an additional \$32,000.00.

Chief Clark is requesting the approval to order that vehicle now since there is a waiting time for the hybrid type vehicle.

Alderman Dyke asked if they looked into the Seizure Fund to get any additional funds. Chief Clark commented that he cannot use the Seizure Fund to purchase a vehicle due to restrictions.

Treasurer Conklin commented that this is not a budgeted item and would require a budget amendment.

Alderman Oberlin commented that to understand better the Seizure Fund could replace the canine squad because of the use of the vehicle for drug enforcement but not replace a regular squad car. Chief Clark commented that that is correct, because of the use of drug enforcement. Alderman Oberlin asked if it is possible to purchase a new canine squad and move the Canine existing squad to the newly purchased squad. Chief Clark commented that after talking to Dan Faulk with the State's Attorney's Office he believes the law would not look at it as a replacement and instead as us shuffling things around and would not like that very much.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote for the replacement of Squad #944.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Kubal.

Mayor Soliman commented that this will be on the agenda for Monday, July 1, 2024.

TOPIC: 111th IML Annual Conference

Mayor Soliman commented that the 111th IML Annual Conference is approaching. The conference will be September 19-21, 2024, at the Hyatt Regency in Chicago. The city will pay for the cost of the conference with up to \$100.00 a day and not to exceed \$300.00 for meals, mileage, and transportation.

Treasurer Conklin commented that the wording does not sound correct. He commented that it should be \$100.00 a day stipend that can be used for meals, mileage, and transportation. He commented that in the past the city has paid for the hotel with a \$100.00 day stipend, not to exceed \$300.00 in total. This would cover any fees associated with the hotel stay such as HBO charge, parking at the hotel or the fee if parked off-site, and food but no alcohol.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Kubal.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Stuart Soifer asked if the city has ever inquired about GAP Insurance and if not, he commented that it may be something to consider.

MAYOR UPDATES:

There were no mayor updates.

COMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES:

Alderman Dyke read what he wrote for the two ads with Heritage Corridor which is what will be read on the radio. These ads will be played on June 23rd, July 21st, July 26th, and August 23rd.

Alderman Gazal reminded everyone that Wednesday, June 26, 2024, is Meet at the Park for Touch a Truck and the Police Department. The Park is the Fields of Long Meadow located off Borio at 6:00 p.m. and everyone is welcome.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES:

Interim Administrator Graff commented that the entrance for the Clerk's Office window has a large crack that goes all the way up the window. It has been looked at by our Building Commissioner Don Seeman and he has contacted the glass company again. We will try to get a couple more quotes since the last quote was over \$7,500.00 per window and we want to know why this does this and what the problem is.

Alderman Gazal asked if it is still bullet proof, it was stated that they are looking to see if it will still be certified as bullet proof, but we are not sure.

Alderman Cipiti commented that this is the same problem at the Park District window, and this seems to be the craftsmanship of the installation and now time has passed to be covered by warranty. Interim Administrator Graff commented that he believes we may be able to make a case regarding craftsmanship.

Mayor Soliman commented that there are many complaints from both departments regarding not being able to hear with the speakers and maybe there is another solution with the speakers that are in there.

Mayor Soliman asked for a motion to go into executive session on 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1).

(#1) Motion by Alderperson Oberlin seconded by Alderman Dyke, to go into an executive session on 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1).

On roll call, the vote was:

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Kubal.

There being six (6) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

Executive Session 7:41 p.m.

(#2) Motion by Alderperson Oberlin seconded by Alderman Cipiti to reconvene from the executive session on 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1).

On roll call, the vote was:

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Kubal.

There being six (6) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

Reconvened at 8:16 p.m.

There being no further business before the Council, and no action needed from the executive session, the meeting is adjourned.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:16pm.

Approved this _____ day of _____, 2024.

As presented _____

As amended _____

CHRISTINE VERSHAY-HALL, CITY CLERK

RAYMOND R. SOLIMAN, MAYOR