

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION
CITY COUNCIL OF CREST HILL
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS
February 23, 2026

The February 23, 2026, the City Council work session was called to order by Mayor Raymond R. Soliman at 7:11 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 Jamie Malloy, Alderman Scott Dyke, Alderman Angelo Deserio, Alderwoman Claudia Gazal, Alderperson Tina Oberlin, Alderman Mark Cipiti, Alderman Joe Kubal.

Council Members Absent were: Alderman Nate Albert.

Also Present were: City Administrator Blaine Wing, City Engineer Ron Wiedeman, Public Works Director Gary Richardson, Police Chief Ed Clark.

Mayor Soliman stated that he received a text from Alderman Nate Albert who is unable to attend, so he is excused.

Mayor Soliman also stated that Alderman Darrell Jefferson is unable to attend the meeting due to health reasons, so Alderman Jefferson will be attending remotely. Mayor Soliman asked Council if anyone had any objections and no objections were voiced. The remote connection to Alderman Jefferson was already established by City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall.

MAYOR

1. OM Lucky Brothers 2 Inc.-Shell Liquor License-251 Caton Farm Road

Mayor Soliman explained that he had met with representatives from Lucky Brothers on February 10th, along with Deputy Liquor Commissioner Dave Stengle and Police Chief Ed Clark. "Everything is in order with their application," Mayor Soliman stated, noting that while beer and wine licenses are at the discretion of the Mayor, the ability to sell hard liquor requires City Council approval.

Representatives from Lucky Brothers, including Shamir Mohani and Jaswinder Sahi, gave a brief presentation. Shamir Mohani explained, "We are the owners of the new Shell station on Broadway and Caton Farm that we just built a few months ago. We are seeking here the permission to sell packaged liquor at the facility." He detailed that the liquor would be displayed on the floor in locked cabinets with sliding glass doors, ensuring it would be "under the watch all the time, it'll just not be open to grab." Small liquor bottles would also be kept behind the counter.

Mr. Mohani mentioned their experience with other stations: "We currently have other stations in Chicagoland area, the other Quick Runs that we built. We have liquor in all those facilities as well. The closest one here is the Quick Run in Lemont on Archer Avenue, near I-355." When Mayor Soliman asked about their broader operations, he confirmed they have about 16 locations throughout the country, including Florida, Mesa, Arizona, Ohio, Northwest Indiana, and the Chicagoland area.

The hours of operation were discussed, with the representatives confirming they would be open from 5 AM to 11 PM daily. Alderwoman Claudia Gazal expressed, "We are happy that you are finally open. Best of Luck!"

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote for approval of the OM Lucky Brothers 2 Inc.-Shell Liquor License-251 Caton Farm Road.

AYES: Ald. Dyke, Deserio, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Kubal.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Nate Albert.

Mayor Soliman informed the representatives that the actual vote would be next Monday night, March 2nd, at the City Council meeting. There is still some paperwork that is needed prior to the final vote. Mayor Soliman asked them to let the Council know the date of the grand opening when ready. Mayor Soliman also offered them the opportunity to do a business promotion at future televised meetings.

CLERK

There were no agenda items.

TREASURER

There were no agenda items.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

1. Façade Improvement Grant (After-the-Fact Wall Sign) for Sopranos Pizza & Catering (20641 Renwick Rd)

Mayor Soliman noted that he didn't see anyone present from Sopranos. Alderwoman Gazal stated that Sopranos called her to say they wouldn't be here tonight and she let City Administrator Blaine Wing know. Community & Economic Development Consultant Ron Metzner presented this item in place of Community & Economic Development Director Dan Ritter, who was ill.

Mr. Metzner explained that the City has had a facade improvement grant program in place for several years, with just short of \$13,000 allocated for fiscal year 26. He stated, "The overall goal of the program is to stimulate high quality exterior building improvements on existing commercial buildings that not only improve the community's appearance but also support successful businesses."

Consultant Ron Metzner provided background on the previous grant approval for the Feather Fork restaurant, which was never distributed because the business closed and is now rebranding. Sopranos took over the space previously occupied by Burger City last fall and installed a new wall sign before learning about the grant program. They then applied for the grant after the fact.

"Other than it being after the fact, it does meet the criteria of the grant," Metzner noted. "The grant program does have a provision that after the fact, grant awards can be approved by the City Council. That's not the preferred course of action, but it is certainly something that can happen under the structure of the program."

Soprano spent just under \$2,200 on their new sign and would be eligible for a grant of just under \$1,100. Alderwoman Gazal made mention that Sopranos heard about the sign grant program from the owner of Feathered Fork restaurant.

Alderman Mark Cipiti raised a concern about setting precedent: "How would future situations similar to this be handled as far as if someone put us, you said we haven't given money stored this program in a long time, but I'm sure there's been signs made... How do you draw the line on what is too late to apply versus after the fact could be 2 years, 3 years?" Consultant Metzner acknowledged it was a legitimate concern and suggested that the City needs to actively promote the program better. City Attorney Mike Stiff suggested amending the policy to set a specific lookback period for after-the-fact applications.

Alderwoman Gazal stated: "I agree with you. We need to amend the ordinance because what is the purpose of offering something when the businesses are not aware of it? But on the question from Alderman Cipiti, if Dan knew from the beginning that this sign was not allowed or would not qualify, why we made this guy go over for 2 months?" She expressed frustration that the business owner had been filling out paperwork and exchanging emails for two months, saying it would be "really frustrating for any business, not just particular Sopranos that we made them go through this whole process of filling out the application, and then we're going to say, oh, well, our ordinance is not clear so we're not going to grant you this."

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote to approve the Façade Improvement Grant (After-the-Fact Wall Sign) for Sopranos Pizza & Catering (20641 Renwick Rd).

AYES: Ald. Gazal, Jefferson, Deserio, Dyke, Kubal, Cipiti, Oberlin.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Nate Albert.

Mayor Soliman stated that the actual vote would be next Monday night, March 2nd, at the City Council meeting.

2. Plan Commission Recommendations on Rezoning, Preliminary and Final Planned Unit Development and Plat of Subdivision Approvals for Seasons at Crest Hill Apartment Community Project

Mayor Soliman introduced the plan commission recommendations on Fiduciary Real Estate Development's preliminary and final planned unit development (PUD) Special use, rezoning, and preliminary and final plat of subdivision application – Case # PUD-26-1-2-1, noting that representatives from Fiduciary Real Estate Development Company were present. Community & Economic Development Consultant Ron Metzner provided opening comments, clarifying the purpose of the meeting was to consider special approvals including re-subdivision of the property, rezoning from B3 commercial to R3 multifamily, approval of preliminary and final PUD (planned unit development), and various PUD waivers.

Consultant Metzner noted that the plan commission had conducted a public hearing with approximately 30 members of the public attending, where seven people spoke raising concerns about increased traffic, impact on local schools and water system,

concerns about the type of people who would be attracted to the project, and how many might walk through the adjacent neighborhood. Despite these concerns, the planning commission recommended unanimous but conditional approval with seven conditions attached.

Consultant Metzner also mentioned that School District 88A's superintendent did not receive the public notice until after the public hearing, and that he, the mayor, and other city officials had met with the superintendent last Friday to discuss the project's scope and potential impacts. It was noted that the superintendent was in attendance at the meeting.

Tony DeRosa, Vice President of Fiduciary Real Estate Development, began his presentation by thanking the council for the opportunity to present. "We were last before you back on November 17th for our concept review. What you're going to see tonight is very familiar to what I shared with you back on November 17th, not a lot has changed."

Mr. DeRosa provided an overview of his company, noting they've been developing and owning commercial real estate since 1985, with over 9,000 market rate apartments and a portfolio valued at over \$2.1 billion. He emphasized their track record: "Twenty times our projects have won property of the year award. Eight times we've won new construction of the year, and 6 times our regional managers have been recognized as being the best in the business."

The presentation detailed the proposed development of approximately 16 acres of vacant B3 business service district zoned property, explaining that "the significant decline in commercial demand accelerated by the rise of e-commerce and of remote working has truly diminished the viability of new commercial development at this location." The project would include 260 multi-family units across 18- and 20-unit buildings, with 120 one-bedrooms, 120 two-bedrooms, and 20 three-bedrooms.

Mr. DeRosa addressed several key aspects of the development:

- High efficiency building systems including Energy Star appliances, low flow plumbing fixtures, LED lighting, and durable fiber cement siding
- Native landscaping to minimize irrigation demand and EV charging stations
- A smoke-free community with low VOC paints
- Market rate rents are projected between \$1,500 to \$2,700 per month
- Estimated property tax increment of just shy of \$900,000
- Estimated economic benefit from additional consumer spending totaling over \$24 million over 10 years
- Estimated impact fees of \$2.1 million

Mr. DeRosa also addressed public comments from the February 12th planning commission meeting:

- Regarding increased traffic: "There's a perception that every morning at 8 o'clock and every day at 5 o'clock when everybody is going to work and coming home that there's going to be a parade of dozens of cars going in and out of our project. Well, quite simply that is not true."

- About residents using McGilvray Drive to Borio Drive: Their traffic consultant noted there would be no reason for anyone to utilize Borio Drive as it would be more inconvenient than using closer access points.
- Regarding the type of people who would live there: "First of all, we disagree with that statement wholeheartedly. People that are going to live here are not bad people, they're good people. Just because they're going to rent doesn't make them bad."

Alderman Gazal began an extensive line of questioning, prefacing her comments: "I don't know if this is entitled with this today. So, from what I'm getting, you have an issue with having more kids in the school, correct?" She lived in the subdivision next to the proposed development and wear "many hats in that area," including being an elected official and president of the homeowners association.

Alderman Gazal raised numerous concerns and questions:

- About the detention pond maintenance fees: Mr. DeRosa confirmed their property would contribute a set amount annually to the association for pond maintenance, saying "we are paying our share."
- About the 20 three-bedroom apartments and concerns about multiple families living in one unit: Mr. DeRosa explained they would follow City occupancy codes and track all residents through lease applications. Mr. DeRosa also commented that this project has less three-bedroom units than their usual.
- About traffic concerns, particularly at the entrance that abuts Ontario and Ryan: Alderman Gazal suggested adding a speed bump at that intersection to discourage cut-through traffic. Both sides are open to ideas.
- About potential compensation for wear and tear on private streets: Mr. DeRosa declined to offer compensation but noted they would be repaving all perimeter roads.
- About fencing: Mr. DeRosa confirmed they would replace the existing wood fence with a white 6-foot vinyl privacy fence extending the entire length of the property line.
- About windows and balconies facing residential properties: Gazal expressed concern about privacy issues with balconies overlooking residents' backyards. Mr. DeRosa spoke of the tree berm at the far north end of the bordering neighborhood acting as a buffer.
- About the handling of section-8: Mr. DeRosa states that Fiduciary is a market-rate, multifamily developer, we are not a tax credit low-income housing developer.

Alderman Tina Oberlin asked about smoking enforcement in the smoke-free environment. Mr. DeRosa explained people could smoke inside their apartments or outside, and violations would be detected through smell or observation by staff.

Alderman Oberlin also wanted more specifics about the roads being re-done. She referenced the slide in the presentation with the red, yellow and blue roads. Mr. DeRosa stated the red and yellow roads are private and they are going to take the top couple inches off and put an overlay on them because they need attention. Mr. DeRosa also said they would do that for the blue City roads as well. Going forward,

Mr. DeRosa also stated that Seasons of Crest Hill would pay a portion for road maintenance on the private roads through the entire association.

Alderman Darrell Jefferson wanted to know why the school district was notified late and also asked what the screening process would be at the Seasons of Crest Hill. Mr. DeRosa stated that Fiduciary was given a list of approximately one hundred different properties that needed to be noticed. He stated, "We delivered those to the USPS office in Milwaukee on January 27th. As we learned after the fact there were a couple that arrived late." After Mr. DeRosa talked about the different tracking features of USPS, he stated, "What USPS does once we put it in their hands, we don't control." When speaking of the screening process, Mr. DeRosa stated that, "We do credit and criminal, sex offender background checks, finance references, housing/landlord references so we know who's moving in there. We're doing our homework. We don't just let anybody that wants to fill out an application move in. We're actually pretty stringent."

Alderman Jefferson stated, "I don't want any particular ethnic groups to be redlined or canceled out because of their ethnicity and not because of their financial worth." Mr. DeRosa assured him: "We can't discriminate. We don't discriminate. We would never. The law doesn't allow us to. We have no interest in doing that."

Mayor Soliman asked about access points and confirmed there would be two access points to Renwick Road and one to Weber from Ryan. He shared his observations from visiting the Bluffs development in Romeoville: "I will tell you that you could have heard a pin drop as my wife and I drove through there twice, once during the daylight hours and once at night...the area within the boundaries of that subdivision is well maintained. They were all clean."

Alderwoman Gazal stated, "When you buy a home against an empty lot or an empty property, you take the risk. This property is a B-3 and this is what you can get under a B-3: outdoor storage, small equipment rentals, hotels, fueling stations, retail sales (like strip malls, you can have all the garbage behind the strip mall backing up into the apartments). I think, after all, this is the best thing right now. We spend our time calling people in the department constantly to clean up garbage because all we get is garbage right now, people use it as a dumpster, we have mattresses, they even have landscaping. If you go right now, they still have some trees on the opposite side of the property so in the end, this is going to be the best thing that backs up into residential. Just because you guys are managing it and the type of homes that don't even look like apartments. They are going to be competing with our townhomes in my subdivision. I'm glad that this is going to be a good project, so I'm all for it, as long as you put in the speed bump."

Resident Stuart Soifer stated that this would be a great place to move his mother. He then had a question about the businesses in the strip mall on Renwick Road (with Bricks and Minifigs among other businesses). "Didn't they know they were part of an association that was supposed to maintain the [private] road?" City Engineer Ron Wiedeman replied that about two and a half years ago the business owners were contacted by himself and City Attorney Mike Stiff and an association was put together by some (not all) of the business owners. They were maintaining the lights, the snow plowing back there, they were doing some basic stuff. We could get them to fill a pothole every once in a while, but it was difficult. They do know

that they are a part of it and this is going to help. Now, you're going to have somebody there that's going to keep it going so this will help that area.

Dr. Phil Robb, Superintendent of Richland School District 88A, then addressed the council. He corrected the record from the planning commission meeting, stating: "The first time the district received information on this project was following the Planning Commission meeting when the public hearing notice was delivered to the district office on February 17th." He requested a continuance "until the district has had the opportunity to fully evaluate enrollment impacts and potential site contribution considerations before any final action is taken."

This sparked extensive discussion about school impacts. Robb expressed concerns that the developer's estimate of 10-14 school-age residents per 100 units might be low, citing that at a similar development behind Toyota, they were seeing upwards of 40 students versus the originally estimated 10. He emphasized the need to verify projections, noting the difference between their estimated 18 students and potentially 35-40 students could create a gap of \$400,000 in operational costs.

Alderman Gazal questioned why the school district wasn't planning for future growth, mentioning concerns about students using false addresses to attend the district. Alderman Deserio stated that this topic has been brought before the Council multiple times prior to this meeting, so why didn't the school district look into the impact on their own. A heated exchange followed about communication failures, with City Administrator Blaine Wing and Consultant Ron Metzner acknowledging that the City should have notified the school district earlier in the process.

Michelle Cipiti, Richland School Board President and wife of Alderman Mark Cipiti, addressed several points that had been raised, expressing what she perceived as "finger pointing" and "blaming" the school. She emphasized: "It's not about chairs or seats. It's about busing. It's about special educational classrooms. It's about hiring teachers. It's about the political climate right now."

Tony DeRosa made final comments expressing urgency: "We need some additional time and reports. And this turns into reports. And I think at the end of the day there's a very good chance there won't be an agreement of whatever the findings are... We have this property under contract. We have not purchased it yet and we will not purchase it unless we get our approvals. We have a short fuse on this."

After extensive debate about whether to delay the project for school district review, Mayor Soliman stated: "I think this is something that we need to act on. We need to act on it just as our process was when we were going through all of this. We need to act on this tonight, and we need to act on this next Monday on March 2nd."

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote to approve the Plan Commission recommendations on Fiduciary Real Estate Development's preliminary and final planned unit development (PUD) Special use, rezoning, and preliminary and final plat of subdivision application – Case # PUD-26-1-2-1.

AYES: Ald. Gazal, Jefferson, Deserio, Dyke, Kubal, Oberlin.

NAYES: Ald. Cipiti.

ABSENT: Ald. Nate Albert.

The item will be placed on the March 2, 2026, agenda.

3. Plan Commission Recommendations on Preliminary and Final Plat of Subdivision and Variations for QuikTrip Project at 1610 Plainfield Road

Community & Economic Development Consultant Ron Metzner introduced this case, clarifying it was not a planned unit development but focused on special zoning approvals for three proposed driveways wider than normally allowed and various sign variations. The property would be subdivided into three lots: a northern stormwater detention lot, an eastern lot for the QuikTrip convenience center and fueling pumps, and a western vacant pad site for future retail or quick-serve restaurant use.

Ali Bukhres from QuikTrip Corporation presented the project, noting this had been in development since summer 2024. He explained the need for driveway variations: "It's really for delivery trucks and emergency vehicles to be able to access our lot. As you see the unique nature of the shape of the lot is just whenever those vehicles do come in, it's just going to be a little bit. They need a little more room to make those turning movements."

The presentation showed the landscape plan, monument signage, delivery truck turning movements, store design with QuikTrip signage, floor plan with three registers and full kitchen with fryers, eight single-stall restrooms, and canopy design. Mr. Bukhres noted: "We believe that this signed package is nothing really more intense than what other similar uses in the area have or presented and were granted their variances."

Alderman Mark Cipiti pointed out an error in the packet showing the wrong date for the plan commission hearing and questioned the address discrepancies between 1610 and 1618 Plainfield Road. Address should be 1610. These errors were noted for correction.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote for Plan Commission recommendations on preliminary and final plat of subdivision and variations for QuikTrip project at 1610 Plainfield Road.

AYES: Ald. Deserio, Dyke, Kubal, Oberlin.

NAYES: Ald. Gazal, Cipiti.

ABSENT: Ald. Nate Albert.

NOT RESPONDING: Ald. Jefferson.

Mayor Soliman declared the motion would move forward with 4-2 support, noting that even if it came to a 4-4 tie, his vote would be yes. He emphasized: "We need to get moving on that property for economic growth in this city."

1. Resolution Approving an Amendment to the Construction Agreement by and between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois and Fer-Pal Construction, Ltd. for CIPP Water Main Rehabilitation, Phase 1 Improvement.

City Engineer Ron Wiedeman presented what he called a "mid-project balancing order" for the water main rehabilitation project. He explained several issues that had arisen during the first phase, including the need to replace valves and fire hydrants that weren't working, but noted "The biggest one that we have is a conflict with the Nicor gas line."

During the design process, Nicor had stated there would be zero conflict, but exploratory digs revealed a large 16-inch transmission main in the same trench as the water main. "We had to do extra excavation. We do a lot of hand digging," Engineer Wiedeman explained, referencing a gas explosion that had occurred on this transmission line last year.

The total change order came to just over \$107,000. Engineer Wiedeman emphasized he was bringing this to council early, with four more blocks to go, seeking approval to continue the project. He noted the amount had been included in the 2027 budget.

City Attorney Mike Stiff mentioned he had minor amendments to the ordinance that weren't substantive and would pass them out for review.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote for a resolution approving an amendment to the construction agreement by and between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois and Fer-Pal Construction, Ltd. for CIPP Water Main Rehabilitation, Phase 1 Improvement change order.

AYES: Ald. Oberlin, Cipiti, Kubal, Dyke, Deserio, Gazal, Jefferson.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Nate Albert.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

1. Approval of the Purchase of a New Morbark BVR16 Brush Chipper in the Amount of \$79,324.70

Public Works Director Gary Richardson explained the request to purchase a new 16-inch brush chipper to replace their 34-year-old chipper, giving "big kudos to our mechanical team, Brian and Matt, for keeping this piece of equipment running this long."

The urgency was emphasized: "I am hoping that we can receive the chipper before the summer is over, but the time is what is of the essence right now to get our chipper into queue."

Alderman Tina Oberlin pointed out an error in the delivery address, noting it showed 1610 Plainfield Road (the QuikTrip location) rather than the correct city

facility address. Director Richardson acknowledged the mistake and promised to correct it.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote for the approval of the purchase of a new Morbark BVR16 brush chipper in the amount of \$79,324.70.

AYES: Ald. Kubal, Cipiti, Oberlin, Gazal, Jefferson, Deserio, Dyke.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Nate Albert.

2. Approval of the Purchase of a New Caterpillar 926-14A Small Wheel Loader in the Amount of \$22,000.00

Public Works Director Gary Richardson explained this front-end loader would be for the new West Plant facility to move sludge. The equipment would take 14-16 weeks to deliver, hence the need for early approval.

Alderman Mark Cipiti asked if they had similar equipment currently. Director Richardson confirmed they have one that "runs all 3 plants," explaining they're constantly driving it from place to place. The new loader would stay at the west plant while the existing one would remain at the main garage for loading salt onto trucks.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote for the approval of the purchase of a new Caterpillar 926-14A small wheel loader in the amount of \$222,000.00.

AYES: Ald. Dyke, Deserio, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Kubal.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Nate Albert.

3. Approval of an Ordinance Declaring Certain Personal Property in the City of Crest Hill to be Surplus

Director Richardson final item was to surplus equipment and vehicles sitting in the public works and police yard. The list included three police interceptors and various public works equipment including pumps. He planned to auction them through GovDeals.

Alderwoman Gazal asked about vehicles found at an old building. City Administrator Wing explained those trucks still had police radios that needed to be removed before auction, and they plan to do quarterly surplus sales to avoid over-insuring equipment and to return money to the city.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote for the approval of an ordinance declaring certain personal property in the City of Crest Hill to be surplus.

AYES: Ald. Gazal, Jefferson, Deserio, Dyke, Kubal, Cipiti, Oberlin.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Nate Albert.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR

1. Ordinance Amendment Public Works Department

City Administrator Blaine Wing presented this item alongside Gary Richardson, explaining it would create a true Public Works Department with divisions underneath (water, wastewater, fleet, streets, and buildings and grounds) rather than having each as separate departments. The reorganization would include three superintendent positions as requested by Public Works Director Gary Richardson.

City Attorney Mike Stiff explained the new streamlined format would mirror the Assistant City Administrator position, with each position tracking how it's hired, salary structure, and job duties deferring to written job descriptions. He acknowledged this was "too monumental of task to try to do it all at once" for all city positions, so they were "chipping away at it one position at a time."

Mayor Soliman called for an informal vote for the ordinance approving an amendment to chapter 2.50 public works department and chapter 2.52 streets department and chapter 2.54 water and wastewater.

AYES: Ald. Oberlin, Cipiti, Kubal, Dyke, Deserio, Jefferson, Gazal.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Nate Albert.

2. Recruiting Services Proposal

City Administrator Blaine Wing requested approval to engage Laurie's firm to fill the three superintendent positions. He had negotiated a package deal: instead of \$19,000 per position (\$57,000 total), the firm would charge \$27,450 total (\$9,150 per position) by posting once for "superintendent" and filling all three positions. The 10% discount Wing had previously negotiated would continue to apply.

Administrator Wing emphasized urgency: "Gary needs help and the public Works department needs help sooner than later."

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote for the recommendation of the proposal to hire LocalGov Staffing Solutions for a total cost of \$27,450 to advertise for the three superintendent positions.

AYES: Ald. Oberlin, Cipiti, Kubal, Dyke, Deserio, Jefferson, Gazal.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Nate Albert.

3. Ordinance Amendment Assistant City Administrator/HR Director

City Administrator Blaine Wing presented the ordinance amendment to create an Assistant City Administrator/HR Director position. He explained this would update the current "Assistant to the Finance Director HR" position, with City Attorney Mike Stiff having drafted the necessary language.

Administrator Wing detailed that the new format would simplify the code by stating the position, who it reports to, that salary is set by city council, and referring to a separate job description rather than listing all duties in the code itself. The position would supervise 2-3 department directors and serve as Administrator Wing's "right hand," with initial focus on HR before taking on departments like Economic Development, Technology, and Finance.

Alderwoman Gazal questioned whether it was normal to put "Administrator/HR" versus "HR/Administrator." Administrator Wing explained it's typically alphabetical but in this case the Assistant City Administrator position is higher than the director position.

Mayor Soliman pointed out discrepancies between page references, which City Attorney Mike Stiff clarified: the current Chapter 2.3 for Employee Relations Manager/Assistant to Finance Director would be amended and replaced entirely with the new Assistant City Administrator/Human Resources Director position.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote for the ordinance amendment Assistant City Administrator/HR Director position and updated job description.

AYES: Ald. Kubal, Dyke, Deserio, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Nate Albert.

4. Labor & Employment Legal Services Discussion

City Administrator Blaine Wing reported on the labor and employment legal services search. Of nine firms that submitted materials, seven were interviewed by Administrator Wing, the Police Chief, and the HR consultant. Two firms were eliminated for not meeting requirements like providing hourly rates. Administrator Wing recommended the Council interview the top two firms, noting one charges the same as the current firm while the other charges \$25 more per hour at the partner level but comparable rates for associates and paralegals.

Discussion ensued about scheduling. Alderman Scott Dyke preferred 7 o'clock meeting times, stating "we made an ordinance or a resolution that to change the meetings to 7." After debate about whether to interview two or five firms and timing concerns due to upcoming union negotiations, the Council settled on interviewing two firms at a special work session.

Alderman Scott Dyke expressed concern about posting a 5:00 PM city council meeting when residents might show up and have to wait through closed session interviews. After extensive discussion involving multiple Council members and staff about the planning, they agreed to a 5:00 pm special work session for interviews followed by the regular 7:00 pm City Council meeting.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote to interview the top two firms at a 5:00 pm work session meeting.

AYES: Ald. Dyke, Deserio, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Kubal.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Nate Albert.

5. Electric Aggregation Program

City Administrator Blaine Wing presented communication from NIMEC's representative Ed Hoover regarding electric aggregation program letters. The same process used three years ago would send targeted letters to approximately 500 households on March 17th. Two types of letters would be sent: opt-out letters for those wanting to leave ComEd for the aggregation program and drop letters for those wanting to leave the aggregation program.

The Council agreed to have the NIMEC representative attend the March 2nd meeting to answer questions.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No Members of the public came forward to address the Council.

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

The meeting adjourned at 10:34 p.m.

Approved this 2nd day of March, 2026.

As presented _____

As amended _____

CHRISTINE VERSHAY-HALL, CITY CLERK

RAYMOND R. SOLIMAN, MAYOR