MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION
CITY COUNCIL OF CREST HILL
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS
September 14, 2026

The September 14, 2026, City Council work session was called to order by Mayor Raymond R. Soliman at 7:02 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, Alderman Darrell Jefferson, Alderwoman Claudia Gazal, Alderperson Tina Oberlin, Alderman Mark Cipiti, Alderman Nate Albert, and Alderman Joe Kubal.

Also Present were: City Administrator Blaine Wing, Assistant City Administrator & HR Director Ashley Monroe, Finance Director Glenn Gehrke, Public Works Director Gary Richardson, City Engineer Ron Wiedeman, and City Attorney Mike Stiff.

Mayor Soliman noted that, with Council's concurrence, the meeting would deviate from the printed agenda order to first address the Engineering Department items, as a guest presenter was in attendance.

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

1. Crest Hill Commons Playground and Turf Discussion
   City Engineer Ron Wiedeman introduced Pete Hall, Executive Director of the Lockport Township Park District, who presented playground equipment and safety surfacing options for the new Crest Hill Commons. City Engineer Wiedeman noted that the Council's direction was needed on both the playground equipment selection and the type of safety surface to be installed for the playground.

   Pete Hall presented two playground equipment options for Council's consideration. The first option, sourced from NuToys, was described as a more traditional playground structure featuring musical elements—including chimes and drums—intended to complement the adjacent band shell. The structure includes multiple slides (including a wide scoop slide for younger children), climbing features, an integrated fabric shade canopy, and multiple swings. This option was priced at $219,000 for equipment and installation. The second option was a themed playground from Little Tikes "World of Eric Carle" product line, based on *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* children's book. This playground incorporates caterpillar and butterfly motifs, fruit-shaped play elements, a center basket swing, a spinner, and multiple slides. Pete Hall noted that this concept is new to the market—the closest known installation is located in Japan—and that the manufacturer has secured the licensing, ensuring parts availability for the foreseeable future. Standard structural components are consistent with those found on traditional playgrounds, with the themed panels being the unique elements. This option was priced at $220,000 for equipment and installation—a difference of only $1,000 from the first option.

Council members expressed strong interest in the themed playground option. City Engineer Wiedeman emphasized that one of the guiding principles in the selection process was to create a destination playground that would stand apart from standard equipment found at other parks. The proximity of the library next door was cited as a compelling reason to select the literary-themed option. Pete Hall confirmed that the anticipated installation window would be late April or May of the following year, following completion of the initial site construction contract.

Alderman Albert raised the question about shade coverage for parents and guardians near the playground. Pete Hall noted that a smaller cantilever shade structure could potentially be incorporated near the playground within the available grass buffer area, and City Engineer Wiedeman confirmed that broader shade and landscaping elements would be addressed during an upcoming landscaping discussion later in the month.

City Engineer Wiedeman explained that the original plan had been to use a rubberized safety surface; however, costs for rubberized surfaces have increased significantly, and experience has shown that they crack, are difficult to patch, and do not hold up well over time. Pete Hall presented turf surfacing as the preferred alternative, noting that the Park District has had positive results with it on recent projects. The recommended product is ForeverLawn's "Playground Grass Ultra," which features an anti-static yarn to reduce static shock—an issue experienced with other turf products. The turf is installed over a stone base with a rubber pad of appropriate thickness for the fall zone requirements, and sections are joined using a Velcro-style system underneath. Leftover rolls are retained for future patching. Pete Hall noted a life expectancy of approximately ten years, with the product still being relatively new. Multiple color options were presented. Pete Hall recommended using a solid green surface in conjunction with the themed playground, reasoning that the equipment itself already features a wide array of colors and a nature-inspired aesthetic. Council agreed with this recommendation, favoring the green surface.

Alderperson Oberlin asked if pets will be allowed on the turf surface. If not, she additionally asked if signs were going to be posted prohibiting pets on the turf surface. City Engineer Wiedeman will look into incorporating that into the final landscaping plan, and agreed to coordinate that with the design team.

City Engineer Wiedeman noted that under the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between the City and the Park District, costs for the playground and turf would be split 50/50. The equipment had been sourced through Sourcewell cooperative purchasing. Council was asked to provide direction to proceed with procurement so that the order could be placed and equipment held for spring installation.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote on the "World of Eric Carle" themed playground equipment and solid green turf surfacing.

AYES: Ald. Gazal, Jefferson, Deserio, Dyke, Kubal, Albert, Cipiti, Oberlin.
NAYES: None.
ABSENT: None.

Pete Hall also provided a brief update, in response to a question from Alderwoman Gazal, that the previously ordered gazebo had been placed and was expected to be delivered and installed yet this year.

2. A Resolution Approving a Professional Service Agreement for Design Services for the Burry Circle Dr. Watermain Replacement and Roadway Rehabilitation Improvement by and between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois and V3 Companies for a Cost of $135,655.00

City Engineer Ron Wiedeman presented the proposed design services agreement with V3 Companies for the Burry Circle Drive Watermain Replacement and Roadway Rehabilitation project. He explained that the design scope covers the full length of Burry Circle Drive, running from Theodore Street around to Marlboro Lane. The first construction contract, anticipated for bid the following summer, would cover the segment from Theodore Street to the first bend at Marlboro Lane.

City Engineer Wiedeman noted that this corridor experienced a significant water main break the prior spring that affected nearly all of Ward 1, making it a high-priority infrastructure need. The segment had also proven extremely difficult to work with during recent tie-in work on Inner Circle Drive, as the pipe repeatedly failed during connection attempts. Burry Circle is identified as one of the top ten priority water main replacement locations.

In response to a question from Alderperson Oberlin, City Engineer Wiedeman confirmed that the water main at the Marlboro Lane end ties into an existing main on Marlboro, and that Marlboro itself may be a candidate for a future replacement list.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote on the resolution approving a professional service agreement for design services for the Burry Circle Dr. Watermain Replacement and Roadway Rehabilitation Improvement by and between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois and V3 Companies for a cost of $135,655.00.

AYES: Ald. Dyke, Deserio, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal.
NAYES: None.
ABSENT: None.

4. A Resolution Approving a Professional Service Agreement for Design Services for the Greengold Watermain Replacement and Roadway Rehabilitation Improvement by and between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois and Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd for a cost of $159,925.00

City Engineer Wiedeman presented the design services agreement with Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd. for the Greengold Watermain

Replacement and Roadway Rehabilitation project. He noted that this project covers the full Greengold section and that it, along with the Burry Circle project, represents items nine and ten on the City's current priority water main replacement list. He added that the City has now completed all ten locations from its original three-year-old replacement priority list and is beginning a new list. Christopher B. Burke Engineering would produce construction-ready plans for a 2027 bid package.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote on the resolution approving a professional service agreement for design services for the Greengold Watermain Improvement by and between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois and Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd for a cost of $159,925.00.

AYES: Ald. Kubal, Albert, Cipti, Oberlin, Gazal, Jefferson, Deserio, Dyke.
NAYES: None.
ABSENT: None.

3. <u>A Resolution Approving a Professional Service Agreement for Preliminary Engineering Services Part A for the Intersection of Weber Road and Division Street (Section No 26-00062-00-CH) by and between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois and Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd for a Cost of $329,987.00</u>

City Engineer Wiedeman presented the proposed Phase 1 preliminary engineering services agreement with Christopher B. Burke Engineering for the Weber Road and Division Street intersection improvement project. He explained that the City has been awarded federal funding (via CMAP) for the Phase 2 construction component in FY 2031, and that completion of Phase 1 is a prerequisite to accessing those funds. Per CMAP guidelines, the municipality must fund Phase 1; Phases 2 and 3 are eligible for federal reimbursement at an 80/20 ratio.

The proposed scope of Phase 1 Part A includes environmental studies, survey and topographic work, traffic analysis, right-of-way coordination, and all other preliminary engineering. The proposed geometric improvement calls for dual left-turn lanes, a through lane, and a right-turn lane at the intersection, with all widening occurring to the south. The project is designed as a complete streets corridor with bike lanes on both sides. City Engineer Wiedeman noted that the prior Division Street work was designed to avoid disturbance of the existing pavement, and that the City had already secured an additional approximately 15 feet of right-of-way on the south side through a prior agreement with USCD.

In response to a question from Alderman Albert about whether dual southbound left-turn lanes would be warranted and also if this work will affect the future proposed signal to the south, City Engineer Wiedeman explained that the traffic analysis to be conducted under this contract will determine final lane configurations. He noted that the widening will be completed now so that, if dual lefts are not immediately warranted, a future restripe would be all that is needed—avoiding the need to reconstruct the intersection later. City Engineer Wiedeman also confirmed that Christopher

B. Burke Engineering is simultaneously conducting the traffic review for a proposed USCD signal to the south of the intersection, and that both projects are being coordinated with Will County to ensure continuity and consistency, including any potential deceleration lane requirements. The Phase 1 cost of $329,987 is budgeted from Motor Fuel Tax (MFT) funds, with no impact to the General Fund.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote approving a professional service agreement for preliminary engineering service Part A for the intersection of Weber Road and Division Street (Section No 26-00062-00-CH) by and between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois and Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd for a cost of $329,987.00.

AYES: Ald. Kubal, Albert, Cipti, Oberlin, Gazal, Jefferson, Deserio, Dyke.
NAYES: None.
ABSENT: None.

5. A Resolution Approving Amendment No 1 to the July 6, 2026, for a 2027 Financial Plan for Water and Sewer Utility Update by and between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois and Burns & McDonnell.

City Engineer Wiedeman presented Amendment No. 1 to the previously approved professional services agreement with Burns & McDonnell for the 2027 Water and Sewer Utility Financial Plan Update (rate study). He explained that as staff discussions progressed following the original contract approval, two significant additional items were identified for inclusion in the study.

The first and primary addition is an analysis of how future rate increases could be restructured to distribute costs differently between residential customers and higher-volume commercial or industrial water users. The intent is to shift a greater portion of the cost burden associated with new water infrastructure—including the Grand Prairie water main—toward larger users, thereby reducing the impact on residential ratepayers who have experienced substantial rate increases in recent years.

The second addition is a feasibility analysis of senior citizen and veteran rate discount programs, similar to programs offered by surrounding communities, to determine whether such discounts are financially sustainable given the City's infrastructure obligations.

City Engineer Wiedeman noted that the amendment does not change the project schedule, which remains on track for completion by the end of November 2026. The original agreement was approved at $27,700; the amendment adds approximately $32,000, bringing the total to approximately $59,700.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote to approve amendment No 1 to the July 6, 2026, for a 2027 financial plan for water and sewer utility update by and between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois and Burns & McDonnell.

AYES: Ald. Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Deserio, Jefferson, Gazal.
NAYES: None.
ABSENT: None.

Additionally, City Engineer Wiedeman noted that construction field staff had recently staked out the rough layout of the Crest Hill Commons, including the parking lot, playground area, and sidewalks, and invited Council members to visit the site for a visual reference.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

1. Approval of the Purchase of the Renewal of Wonderware Support Software in the Amount of $24,390.00 from Concentric Integration

   Public Works Director Gary Richardson presented the annual renewal of the Wonderware software contract, which is used for the City's wastewater treatment facilities. This is a routine annual renewal covering the period from 2026 into 2027.

   Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote for approval of the purchase of the renewal of Wonderware Support Software in the amount of $24,390.00 from Concentric Integration.

   AYES: Ald. Dyke, Deserio, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Albert, Kubal.
   NAYES: None.
   ABSENT: Ald. Cipiti.

2. Approval of the Purchase of a New Kubota Utility Vehicle, through the Sourcewell Cooperative Purchasing Contracts 112624-KBA and 082923-KBA, in the Amount of $36,347.89

   Public Works Director Richardson reported that the West Water Treatment Plant is approximately six months from going live, with asphalt and concrete work substantially complete. In preparation for facility maintenance and winter operations, he requested approval to purchase a new Kubota utility vehicle equipped with a plow attachment. He noted that the new plant's design prevents standard trucks from accessing certain areas, making this vehicle necessary for plowing, grass cutting, and general facility upkeep—similar to a unit already in use at the East Plant. The vehicle was sourced through Sourcewell cooperative purchasing and had been budgeted for the current fiscal year.

   Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote for approval of the purchase of a new Kubota utility vehicle, through the Sourcewell Cooperative Purchasing Contracts 112624-KBA and 082923-KBA, in the amount of $36,347.89.

   AYES: Ald. Oberlin, Albert, Kubal, Gazal, Jefferson, Deserio, Dyke.
   NAYES: None.
   ABSENT: Ald. Cipiti.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

There were no agenda items.

MAYOR

There were no agenda items.

CLERK

There were no agenda items.

TREASURER

There were no agenda items.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR

1. Elected Officials Compensation Discussion

   City Administrator Blaine Wing presented an updated compensation comparison spreadsheet, noting that the version in the agenda packet contained some incomplete items that had since been corrected. He framed the discussion around a series of options developed from comments made at the prior work session, and requested that Council conduct straw polls on each option so that staff could finalize calculations and draft ordinance language accordingly. City Administrator Wing clarified that the compensation options were organized into three categories: council member (alderperson) positions, officer positions (Mayor, City Clerk, City Treasurer), and scheduling/implementation considerations.

   Option 1 — Status Quo (No Change)

   City Administrator Wing described Option 1 as maintaining current compensation levels with no adjustment for Council members. Mayor Soliman asked if any Council member wished to maintain the status quo. No Council member expressed support, and Option 1 was eliminated from further consideration.

   Option 2 — Mayor's Proposal ($8,000 Annual / $666.67 Monthly Stipend)

   Mayor Soliman read a prepared statement setting forth his position on elected official compensation. He expressed agreement that alderperson compensation—unchanged since 2005—warranted a modest increase, and proposed raising it to $8,000 per year, representing an increase of $1,700. He stated his view that the office of Mayor, City Clerk, and City Treasurer are all adequately compensated at current levels and that no increases to those positions are warranted at this time. Mayor Soliman also stated his opposition to a Consumer Price Index (CPI) or Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) component for any elected official position, characterizing such an approach as growing too quickly. He indicated he would not support any compensation proposal beyond the $8,000 figure for alderpersons.

   Several Council members challenged the Mayor’s proposal. Alderwoman Gazal noted the disparity between the benefits and resources afforded to the Mayor versus those available to Council members, including gas stipends, City phones, and staff support. She noted that Council members have been giving their heart and soul for the City of Crest Hill. Alderman Cipiti stated that when the comparable study with other municipalities was presented, it showed that the Crest Hill Council compensation is much less than the other municipalities, as well as the elected officials' compensation. He stated that no one would stay in a position for twenty-one years without a pay raise, with no added benefits. Alderman Cipiti also stated that he would like all Council members to be given a City cell phone so their personal phones can be kept separate from City business. Alderman Cipiti stated directly that he considered the Mayor's proposal "a slap in the face" and characterized the Mayor's comments as "political grandstanding" reflecting a lack of respect for the work performed by the Council. Alderperson Oberlin expressed that Council members give substantial time and effort to the City beyond formal meetings and should be compensated for a raise since it's been twenty-one years and the Council people are on the lower end of the comparable study with other area municipalities. She also stated that one Christmas day, she received ninety (90) text messages from one resident, showing that there are a lot of situations that Council deals with. Alderman Albert stated that there was no sense in taking so much time talking about the Mayor's option since there didn't seem to be any support for it. Alderman Dyke stated that he doesn't have any need for a City phone. Alderman Albert stated that he wasn't so concerned about the amount of the monthly stipend, but that he would rather see a deduction in pay for any missed meetings, rather than an excused meeting exemption. Alderman Dyke noted that he thought that an implementation for 2027 and then look at it again in two years. He stated that he agreed with Alderman Albert about the deduction in pay for missed meetings made sense. He further stated that perhaps allow for one missed meeting in each category (Council meeting, work session meeting and committee meeting) per year.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote for option 2, the Mayor's Proposal for Alderpeople of $8,000 Annual, no CPI or COLA with staggered initiation (2027/2029).

AYES: None.
NAYES: Ald. Dyke, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Kubal.
ABSTAIN: Ald. Deserio, Jefferson, Albert.

Option 3 — City Administrator's Proposal ($900/Month Stipend, ~$10,800 Annually)
City Administrator Wing presented his own recommendation, a flat monthly stipend of $900 (approximately $10,800 annually), designed to bring Alderperson compensation to approximately the 50th percentile among comparable municipalities. The current maximum payout under the existing per-meeting structure was noted to be approximately $6,950 annually. Under the proposed stipend model, the monthly amount would cover all elected official meetings and duties—including phone calls, event attendance, and committee work. Deductions were proposed for missed meetings: $250 per missed City Council meeting, $100 per missed work

session, and $50 per missed committee or liaison meeting, with no provision for excused absences.

Discussion arose regarding the Open Meetings Act implications for committee meetings and whether committee attendance should generate additional compensation or only serve as a deduction basis. Alderwoman Gazal expressed personal reservations about receiving pay for every committee meeting attended, noting the logistical complications of fully complying with the Open Meetings Act for working committees such as events planning or communications. As long as Council does get a pay increase, she doesn't feel that she needs to get additional pay for committee meetings. City Attorney Michael Stiff noted that he is researching whether the City's committees are considered standing committees subject to the Open Meetings Act, or ad hoc committees, and that the answer would affect the compensation framework. City Administrator Wing noted that going forward, all committee meetings would be required to comply with the Open Meetings Act, including proper posting and minute-taking.

Finance Director Glenn Gehrke clarified that the deduction structure functions as an incentive for attendance rather than a strict per-meeting pay model. Even if a Council member missed all scheduled meetings in a month, the deductions ($700 total) would not fully offset the $900 stipend, leaving a $200 floor to account for duties performed outside of formal meetings.

Alderman Kubal suggested a phased approach in which the first group of newly elected officials (effective May 1, 2027) would start at a lower amount ($900), with the rate increasing ($1,000) when the second group was seated in 2029 ($1000). This was discussed but ultimately the Council focused on selecting a single, uniform rate for the stipend amount.

Alderman Dyke suggested a middle-ground amount of $9,400, representing a compromise between the Mayor's proposal and the City Administrator's proposal. However, after further discussion, the majority of the Council indicated a preference for $12,000 annually ($1,000/month), which Alderwoman Gazal and Alderman Jefferson both characterized as the figure previously agreed upon at the last work session.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote for option 3, the City Administrator's Proposal for Alderpeople ($900/Month Stipend, ~$10,800 Annually) with deductions for missed meetings.

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

Option 4 — Delay All Increases Until May 1, 2029
City Administrator Wing described Option 4 as an approach where no compensation adjustment would take effect until May 1, 2029, ensuring all Council members begin receiving the new rate simultaneously regardless of when their terms began.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote for option 4.

AYES: None.
NAYES: Ald. Gazal, Jefferson, Dyke, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal.
ABSTAIN: Ald. Deserio.

Option 5 — $1,000/Month Stipend ($12,000 Annually)
City Administrator Wing presented Option 5, which reflected discussion from the prior work session in which one or more Council members had suggested a $1,000 per month stipend ($12,000 annually). He noted that the implementation schedule and missed-meeting deduction structure had not been fully resolved at the prior session and required clarification.

Council members discussed the comparative data, with Alderman Cipiti and Alderperson Oberlin noting that a $10,800 annual salary would still be lower than three comparable municipalities currently listed in the study, and that two of those communities (Lockport and Shorewood) already have annual CPI increases built in, meaning Crest Hill would continue to fall behind if no escalation mechanism were added. The comparable municipality data listed in the study showed: New Lenox at $7,200, Lockport at $9,600, Frankfort at $11,000, Mokena at $7,500, Shorewood at approximately $11,400, Channahon at $12,000, and Minooka at $18,600.

Council reached consensus that the Option 3 deduction structure ($250/$100/$50 for missed meetings) would be incorporated into Option 5, with one allowable missed meeting of each type before deductions would apply. Alderman Albert expressed a preference for no excused absences, noting that deductions under the stipend model still result in some compensation being paid even if all meetings are missed. After discussion, Council agreed to allow one missed meeting of each type per year (one council meeting, one work session, one committee or liaison meeting) before the deduction schedule would apply.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote for option 5; $1,000/Month Stipend ($12,000 Annually), deduction structure of $250/$100/$50 for missed meetings after one allowable missed meeting of each type before deductions would apply.

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

Option 6 — Annual CPI or 2% COLA Adjustment for Council members
City Administrator Wing presented Option 6, which would incorporate an annual cost of living adjustment tied to either the CPI or a flat 2%, similar to the approach used for City employees. City Attorney Stiff noted that while no legal challenges to COLA provisions in comparable communities have been identified, a legal argument could be made that such increases take effect during a sitting term, which the statute prohibits. He

acknowledged the counter-argument that a vote taken today for future application may be defensible, but cautioned it is not ironclad.

Alderman Cipiti expressed support, noting that without a built-in escalator, the Council would be likely to fall behind comparable municipalities again within a few years. Alderwoman Gazal, Alderman Albert, and others expressed opposition, with Alderman Albert noting that a COLA applied to an elected position—rather than an individual employee—would compound indefinitely. Alderman Jefferson stated that a cost impact study should be completed to see the impact on the City finances.

Alderwoman Gazal stated that votes are being made for Council members of the future. She doesn't understand an abstain vote from one of the Council members. She wants to know if he will not get the raise or is he opposed to the raise? Alderwoman Gazal wants to know the reason that this person keeps voting as abstained. Alderman Dyke explained that he was for a middle amount (between the Mayor and the Administrator's amounts) for the raise. He stated that he would change his vote to no if that was better. Alderwoman Gazal stated that she was not talking about his (Alderman Dyke's) abstain vote, but another Council member. There was no response from the Council member who has voted abstained.

Council agreed that the COLA or CPI question would be revisited, along with compensation for the Mayor, City Clerk, and City Treasurer, prior to the 2029 election cycle. City Administrator Wing committed to building a tickler into the City's scheduling software so that a compensation discussion would automatically appear on the work session agenda between July and August 2028.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote for option 6; Annual CPI or 2% COLA.

AYES: None.
NAYES: Ald. Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Jefferson, Gazal.
ABSTAIN: Ald. Deserio.

City Administrator Wing noted that the spreadsheet also included options for CPI or COLA adjustments to the Mayor, City Clerk, and City Treasurer positions, but that these positions are not up for election imminently. Given the Council's vote against Option 6 and the discussion that followed, it was agreed that these items would be tabled and revisited as part of the 2028 compensation review.

2. <u>Employee Attendance at Conference</u>
City Administrator Wing presented a proposed policy framework for employee attendance at professional training, conferences, and association meetings. He recommended that Council continue to approve conference-related expenditures through the annual budget process rather than requiring individual Council approval for each event, provided that expenditures remain within approved departmental budgets and comply with the City's

travel expense ordinance and personnel policies. Under the proposed approach, department directors and the City Administrator would approve employee attendance in the ordinary course, with only requests that exceed budgetary or reimbursement limits requiring Council action.

Alderman Dyke raised the question of why Council votes annually on attendance at the Illinois Municipal League (IML) conference when it is a budgeted item, while other staff conferences proceed without Council approval. City Administrator Wing concurred that the IML vote was a historical practice that would not need to continue under the proposed framework. Council indicated agreement that the IML and similar budgeted events for elected officials should be treated consistently with staff conference attendance.

Alderman Dyke further requested that Council receive copies of expense reimbursement reports submitted by department heads following conference attendance, drawing a parallel to the disclosure of Council members' conference expenses.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote for employee expense reports being submitted to Council after each conference.

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

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
There were no agenda items.

POLICE DEPARTMENT
There were no agenda items.

PUBLIC COMMENTS
Resident Stuart Soifer thanked all Council members for their volunteer commitment to the City. Mr. Soifer stated that the Council actions do concern him also as a resident. He expressed his view that elected officials are not paid enough and that the deduction structure for missed meetings may not fully account for the work that Council members must do outside of formal meetings—such as reviewing materials and responding to constituent inquiries—even when unable to attend in person. He also raised a concern that the comparative data presented during the compensation discussion included municipalities with significantly different tax bases (such as Lockport, Joliet, and Shorewood), and suggested that a more meaningful comparison would include cities with similar property values and retail activity to Crest Hill.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(29): Discussion between internal or external auditors and the City's audit committee, finance committee, or equivalent body concerning internal control weaknesses, potential fraud risk areas, known or suspected fraud, and fraud interviews conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards.

Alderwoman Gazal made a motion to go into executive session for 5ILCS 120/2(c)(29). Seconded by Alderman Cipiti. Roll call: Ayes: Dyke, Deserio, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal. Nayes: None. Absent: None. MOTION CARRIED.

Executive session: 9:28 p.m.

City Attorney Mike Stiff stated that since the topic was one in which he excused himself, he is going to do the same thing tonight. Alderperson Oberlin stated, “As goes for me,” that she will also excuse herself from executive session. City Attorney Stiff stated that Jason Blumenthal is present for this topic for the Counsel to the City.

Alderman Jefferson made a motion to reconvene from the executive session for 5ILCS 120/2(c)(29). Seconded by Alderman Deserio. Roll call: Ayes: Gazal, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Deserio, Jefferson. Nayes: None. Absent: Oberlin. MOTION CARRIED.

Reconvened: 10:30 p.m.

ADJOURMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

Approved this____day of________________, 2026.
As presented____________
As amended___________

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CHRISTINE VERSHAY-HALL, CITY CLERK

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RAYMOND R. SOLIMAN, MAYOR