MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION
CITY COUNCIL OF CREST HILL
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS
November 9, 2026

The November 9, 2026, 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 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, Operations Superintendent John Robinson, City Engineer Ron Wiedeman, Community Development Director Dan Ritter, Police Chief Ed Clark, and City Attorney Mike Stiff.

MAYOR

1. CH Kindred Inc. DBA Kindred Gastropub Liquor License

   Mayor Soliman reported that CH Kindred Inc., doing business as Kindred Gastropub, had been approved for a Class H liquor license for the new restaurant at 20631 Renwick Road. The background review came back favorable. On October 30, Mayor Soliman, Police Chief Ed Clark, and Deputy Liquor Commissioner Dave Stangley met with the group. They reviewed the "do's and don'ts" and confirmed that all paperwork was in order. Mayor Soliman said the item was on the agenda as a meet-and-greet with the ownership group, which now includes new participants.

   Jeff Brown, owner and operator of Revenge Restaurants, spoke on behalf of the group, which is partnered with JH Hospitality (Jay and Harish). He described Kindred as a "food-forward menu in a bar setting," with scratch-made food, signature cocktails, weekend brunch, and menus rotated six times a year. He said the company has operated a similar establishment in Lisle for four years. The restaurant is located at Renwick Road and Weber Road. Mr. Brown stated the planned hours are 11:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. on weekdays and until 11:00 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. He said a soft opening was targeted for Tuesday, November 17th, with a full opening on Friday, November 20th. A grand opening date is to be determined.

   Alderwoman Gazal welcomed the owners and noted she had been sharing their social media posts on the Crest Hill business network. Other council members offered welcomes. Mayor Soliman said he was comfortable with the group and expected the restaurant to be an asset to the area, noting the nearby 55-and-older communities and the 260 upscale apartments under construction. He confirmed that the opening proceeds at the owners' pace once all required state and city paperwork is submitted. No formal action was taken.

DRAFT

CLERK
There were no agenda items.

TREASURER
There were no agenda items.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR

1. Events Committee 2026 Winterfest Update

City Administrator Blaine Wing reported that the Winterfest event was on track to receive at least $21,000 in donations and sponsorships, with $20,700 received to date. He asked the Council to authorize the Events Committee to spend those restricted funds. He also asked the Council to pull forward $4,490.43 from the general fund reserve. That amount is excess sponsor and donor money from last year that was moved into the reserve at fiscal year-end. It would be returned to the committee for reusable decorations, banners, and similar items.

Alderwoman Gazal, who co-chairs the committee with Alderman Jefferson, reviewed the updated flyer. The event runs from 1:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. New features include live reindeer from 1:30 to about 3:00 p.m., a holiday movie in partnership with the library, new inflatables, and an igloo. The parade was moved later in the program, followed by Santa and the lighting of the holiday lights and main tree. She and Alderman Jefferson stressed that sponsorship funds were solicited specifically for Winterfest and should be used for that event. They said the true question before the Council was moving last year's $4,490.43 from the general fund to the committee. Alderwoman Gazal questioned why Council approval was needed for an event already advertised and contracted.

Administrator Wing explained that, beginning with the current fiscal budget, Council asked that draft event budgets be brought forward for approval and final numbers presented after each event. He said donations are restricted to Winterfest but are received by the City, and the City Council is the body with authority to expend funds. The request was therefore to delegate that spending authority to the Events Committee. Alderman Jefferson said the committee's goal is a carryover balance each year. Alderwoman Gazal said the committee's goal, as in the prior year, is to use none of the $10,000 originally budgeted for cash flow. She noted the committee also pays for snowflakes and banners that serve the City long term. Administrator Wing confirmed that part of the $10,000 had been used for cash flow and that incoming sponsorships were replenishing it.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote to move last year's donations in the amount of $4,490.43 back from the general fund to the events fund.

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

DRAFT

City Attorney Mike Stiff asked whether year-end transfers to the general fund could be avoided in the future. Administrator Wing said that after an event concludes, any positive balance can be carried forward in the next budget as seed money. He noted that the finance director had agreed a dedicated line item for each event is the most appropriate mechanism. Administrator Wing also noted that the holiday light contest entry forms are due December 11 and that prizes and an awards presentation are planned.

2. Tarped Vehicles on Private Property

City Attorney Stiff summarized the memo in the packet. The City's existing ordinance prohibits tarped vehicles only on public streets and does not reach private property. Alderman Dyke had raised the issue after observing multiple tarped vehicles at properties in his neighborhood. Staff concluded that a blanket nuisance declaration carries legal risk without supporting data. Attorney Stiff noted that the City already treats unlicensed, unregistered, inoperable, or abandoned vehicles on private property as a nuisance. He recommended strengthening those provisions, modeled on the Village of Streator's ordinance, which is also a non-home-rule unit and has not been challenged. He also recommended following the notice procedures described at the end of the memo, including a 30-day notice, before towing from private property. He said courts give considerable deference to vehicle owners, and that officers may not look under tarps or into garages without an administrative search warrant.

Community Development Director Dan Ritter proposed a one-time permit for covered vehicles. Owners would identify the vehicle and provide registration. Covers would have to be fitted, weatherproof car covers, not tarps tied with rope or bungee cords. The number of covered vehicles would be limited. Director Ritter said this approach would be narrowly tailored, enforceable by visual inspection, and light on staff time. He suggested one or two vehicles per property, applied Citywide. Temporary permits, such as a 30-day permit, would cover exceptions like construction projects. He preferred a code-compliance approach, with notice letters to known owners and flexibility for those working toward compliance. Citations would be reserved for those who ignore the City.

Alderman Dyke said he supported using the Streator ordinance as a model. He said some properties have two or three tarped vehicles that become a nuisance, while he had no objection to a single licensed, operable, properly covered vehicle. Council members Cipiti, Gazal and Dyke asked about permit duration, limits, roll-out, and whether the ordinance would cover campers, boats, and trailers. Staff responded that the definition of "vehicle" would be drafted broadly to include trailers, campers, and similar equipment. Alderman Dyke suggested a five-year renewal, similar to antique plate renewals, and Director Ritter was open to a time limit that avoids annual renewals. Attorney Stiff said his office had found no challenges to the Streator ordinance but would research permitting-specific case law before bringing the ordinance back. Attorney Stiff asked for direction on the number of tarped vehicles to allow, with staff recommending one per property.

DRAFT

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote to direct staff to draft an ordinance that strengthens the existing abandoned vehicle provisions and adds a separate tarped-vehicle permit section.

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

Alderman Albert expressed reservations. He said violators could simply remove the tarp or move the vehicle for a short period, and he doubted the City had the manpower to enforce the ordinance.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

There were no agenda items.

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

1. Resolution Approving Professional Engineering Services for a City-Wide Multi-Use Path Study-Phase 2 by and between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois and Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd. for an Amount of $48,940.00

City Engineer Ron Wiedeman introduced the request for Phase 2 of the Citywide multi-use path study. Tim Gustafson, Transportation Planner with Christopher B. Burke Engineering, presented a summary of the draft Phase 1 plan. He reviewed demographics and commuting patterns and reported that about 6.2 percent of residents work from home. He described walking and biking activity drawn from Replica data, which is anonymized cell phone location data. Walking trips concentrate along Weber Road and Plainfield Road, and biking trips along forest preserve paths and arterials such as Renwick, Division, Caton Farm, and Weber. About one-third of residents live within a quarter mile of a trail. Mr. Gustafson also covered roadway jurisdiction, sidewalk coverage, and "level of traffic stress." Crash data for 2020 to 2024 showed that every pedestrian crash resulted in an injury. More than 70 percent of walking and biking crashes occurred on roads without sidewalks, and just over one-third occurred on Plainfield Road.

He outlined three facility types (shared use paths, neighborhood greenways, and intersection improvements) and presented draft recommended network and intersection maps. Two intersections were flagged for further study: Sweetbriar Avenue at Gaylord Road, and Plainfield Road at the ComEd right-of-way. Phase 2 would include public engagement (a website, an online survey, an interactive map, an in-person event in spring, and three virtual meetings). It would also include planning-level cost estimates, a funding strategy, and concept sketches, with adoption targeted for spring of next year. Mr. Gustafson noted that an adopted plan makes the City eligible for grant funding.

Alderperson Oberlin described near-misses involving cyclists and scooter riders on Route 30 and Weber Road. Alderman Albert urged coordination

DRAFT

with the Forest Preserve District regarding its former railroad spur property and its grade and Canadian National Railway crossing concerns. He also suggested a path within the easement along Weber Road between Caton Farm and Division. Alderwoman Gazal clarified that Will County had historically refused to allow sidewalks on certain roads. Director Ritter and Engineer Wiedeman explained that the plan positions the City to act when state or county projects or grant opportunities arise, and to require connections from developers. They noted that the Division and Weber intersection study will incorporate bike paths. Council members also discussed ComEd, Nicor, and pipeline easements as path corridors and connections to neighboring municipalities. Mr. Gustafson said the Stateville correctional population skews some census data, and staff added that future updates will address this.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote on approving a professional engineering services for a City-wide multi-use path study-phase 2 in the amount of $48,940.00.

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

2. Jasmine Ditch Drainage Investigation Update

City Engineer Ron Wiedeman noted that only one resident had attended the invited resident meeting. Jeff Lukowski, a water resources engineer with Christopher B. Burke Engineering, presented the findings. The Jasmine Ditch watershed is about 300 acres. Roughly half of it drains directly to the start of the ditch at Gaylord Road, which is the focus of recurring flooding. The consultant built a stormwater model using the topographic survey, detention basins, culverts, storm sewers, and overland flow paths. The model simulated 10-year and 100-year storms. Photographs of past flooding were used to calibrate it, and they indicated the culverts under Gaylord Road are not the cause. Water levels east and west of Gaylord were consistent.

Mr. Lukowski explained that natural topography, culvert elevations, and the flat ditch grade mean flooding at the property near 2102 Gaylord Road cannot be fully eliminated. It can, however, be reduced. Four options were presented, with rough order-of-magnitude costs:

1. Excavating the ditch immediately west of Gaylord and flattening it, expected to lower water levels 6 to 8 inches, at about $90,000.
2. Adding a large inlet at Sweetbriar and Webb to maximize use of the storm sewer, at about $85,000.
3. Excavating a small swale upstream of Gaylord, at about $105,000, excluding easement and legal costs.
4. Extending the 36-inch storm sewer farther downstream, at about $725,000.

Vegetation maintenance was recommended in all cases.

DRAFT

Mr. Wiedeman recommended pursuing the first three options. He called the swale and berm work a permanent but partial fix that would reduce the frequency of flooding. Combined, the work is estimated at just under $300,000 and would require final design from Burke, a bid, and inclusion in the 2028 budget. Responding to Mayor Soliman's question about what had changed, Mr. Lukowski and Mr. Wiedeman cited additional development and impervious surfaces, the replacement of a wide natural channel with storm sewers, and silting and vegetation in the downstream ditch. City Attorney Stiff noted the excavation work in option 1 requires access to property the City does not own, and that he is pursuing a possible condemnation action with an appraiser. Administrator Wing said staff would work with residents on easements for the swale work, and Attorney Stiff said the easement work would not be costly if residents cooperate.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote to proceed with design for options 1 and 3 .

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

Mr. Wiedeman then reviewed two detention areas west of Gaylord Road. Modeling shows the 10-year and 100-year storms are contained within the designed basins, though there is some berm erosion. The City has drainage easements but no access easements. For the property at upper right, he recommended obtaining an access easement so the City can repair its roadway-drainage outfall, then returning to council with costs. Administrator Wing reported the property owner and her husband were amenable.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote to work with property owners.

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

For the second property, where a 21-inch pipe crosses a fully built-out yard with no access, Engineer Wiedeman recommended that Burke study two options to redirect flow and reduce reliance on that pipe. One would route Gaylord drainage straight north to the ditch within City right-of-way. The other would route the cul-de-sac drainage through lots to the ditch.
Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote to work with Burke to look at options to redirect flow and reduce the reliance on the 21-inch pipe.

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

DRAFT

4.

1913 Oakland – Resident Water Billing Request

City Engineer Wiedeman reported that the resident at 1913 Oakland Avenue raised concerns after the Oakland Avenue Phase 1 project about a significantly higher water bill. Just under 50 residents received a City-letterhead letter saying parkway maintenance was passing from the contractor to residents. Engineer Wiedeman acknowledged the letter was convoluted and did not specifically mention watering. He said the process and letters had been redone, and the new main letter was in the packet.

Of the thirteen affected residents whose sod must be replaced because the contractor did not follow contract documents, only this resident showed an increase in water use over the prior two years. His bill rose from a typical $250 to $300 to over $900. The contractor failed to water the sod as specified, and the contractor is to return in the spring, with retainage held. Because the City cannot document how the water was used, Engineer Wiedeman recommended a partial credit of $435.13 for the sewer charge ($273.67) and a share of the excess water charge ($161.46), rather than a full refund. Council members said the proposal was fair, and several asked clarifying questions about the timeline and the City's awareness of the contractor's failure to water.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote approving a reimbursement to the resident at 1913 Oakland in the amount of $435.13.

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

3. Jasmine Ditch Drainage Maintenance Options; Presented by Operations Superintendent John Robinson

Operations Superintendent John Robinson reported that in August Public Works had a contractor, Thornton Equipment Company, mow the ditch. The cut cost $6,938, and Public Works made six trips to clear mowed reeds that were blocking culverts. The total cost, including staff time and equipment, was approximately $24,668. Two options were presented for ongoing maintenance:

1. A contractor cut and cleanup at about $22,564 per cut.
2. Purchase of a remote-controlled, tracked slope mower for $66,973, priced through the Sourcewell purchasing cooperative with a two-year or 400-hour warranty.

Superintendent Robinson explained that more frequent cutting reduces debris and culvert blockage. He said the machine fits on an existing trailer and could also be used at Ardaugh Pond, the Oakland Avenue slope, and other locations. Buildings and Grounds, supported by Streets, would operate it, using a two-person crew (an operator and a spotter), and training is simple.

DRAFT

Alderperson Oberlin noted that a monthly cutting schedule over a roughly seven-month season (April to October) would make contractor costs far exceed the purchase price. Alderman Cipiti preferred waiting to see the results of the ditch excavation before purchasing. Engineer Wiedeman said the first year's mowing frequency could not be known, but that a budget estimate would be needed in any case. Alderman Albert noted that there will be more uses for the slope mower around the City found in the future. Administrator Wing confirmed the competitively bid pricing and noted that ownership would avoid contractor scheduling delays.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote to purchase a slope lawn mower for the amount of $66,973 to have the equipment before the next season.

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

POLICE DEPARTMENT

1. Request to Place Additional "No Parking" Signs on Prestwick Drive
Police Chief Ed Clark reported that Pat Rowe, president of the Cambridge Crest HOA, relayed residents' concerns about congestion on Prestwick Drive just off Abbey Lane that could impede emergency vehicles. He provided photographs and an aerial map and recommended extending "No Parking" restrictions along the east side of Prestwick Drive to relieve the T-intersection. Alderman Albert suggested extending the restriction around the curve at the south end, and the Chief agreed. City Attorney Stiff asked whether the restriction was already in the special parking prohibitions in the code. Chief Clark said it was not, and an ordinance amendment would be required. In response to Alderwoman Gazal's question about why council approval was required, Attorney Stiff and Chief Clerk explained that parking restrictions must be adopted by ordinance, whereas stop signs do not. Attorney Stiff will draft the ordinance.

   Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote for approval of additional "No Parking" signs on Prestwick Drive.

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

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
There were no agenda items.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT
There were no agenda items.

PUBLIC COMMENTS
Resident Linda Dyke of Kelly Avenue thanked the City Attorney and staff for their work on the tarped vehicle ordinance and urged council members who had reservations to

DRAFT

reconsider. She raised concerns about vehicles parked on sidewalks, on Wilcox, and near Theodore Street at Car Luxe. She also asked whether K&D, on Theodore Street, had proper vehicle sales licenses and parking approvals since she saw cars with orange tags in their parking lot. Ms. Dyke also cited a camper on Hickory Street she said had been unmoved for four years and has flat tires. She said residents who maintain their properties should not have to look at these conditions.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. 5ILCS 120/2(c)(1): The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body or legal counsel for the public body, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee of the public body or against legal counsel for the public body to determine its validity.

   Alderperson Oberlin made a motion to go into executive session for 5ILCS 120/2(c)(1). Seconded by Alderman Deserio. Roll call: Ayes: Dyke, Deserio, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal. Nayes: None. Absent: None. MOTION CARRIED.

   Executive session: 9:47 p.m.

   Alderperson Oberlin made a motion to reconvene from the executive session for 5ILCS 120/2(c)(1). Seconded by Alderman Jefferson. Roll call: Ayes: Deserio, Jefferson, Gazal, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke. Nayes: None. Absent: None. MOTION CARRIED.

   Reconvened: 11:00 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 11:00 p.m.

Approved this____ day of_____, 2026.
As presented_____
As amended_____

_____
CHRISTINE VERSHAY-HALL, CITY CLERK

_____
RAYMOND R. SOLIMAN, MAYOR

DRAFT