

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
CITY COUNCIL OF CREST HILL
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS
March 16, 2026

1. OPENING OF MEETING

The regular meeting of the City of Crest Hill was called to order by Mayor Raymond R. Soliman at 7:01 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 20600 City Center Boulevard, Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited in unison.

Mayor Soliman took a moment to honor Judy Batusich, who recently passed away. Mayor Soliman noted that Ms. Batusich was the first female alderwoman elected to the City of Crest Hill City Council in 1977. In 1980, Judy Batusich was appointed Lockport Township Trustee and held that position for nine years. After that, she was elected Lockport Township Assessor. In 1996, Judy Batusich was elected Lockport Township Supervisor and held that position fifteen years until her retirement in 2011. Ms. Batusich was the person who brought the Lockport Township Senior Bus that is still in operation today to help seniors of Lockport Township get to and from their medical appointments and the grocery store. Judy Batusich was well known for the creation of Gale Gardens, which is also still in operation, for senior housing.

Mayor Soliman would like to thank Judy for her years of service, not only to the City of Crest Hill but to Lockport Township. Mayor Soliman wants to offer condolences to the Batusich and Gale families and asked for a moment of silence in the memory of Judy Batusich.

3. ROLL CALL

Roll call indicated the following present: Mayor Raymond Soliman, City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall, City Treasurer Jamie Malloy, Alderman Scott Dyke, 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, Police Chief Ed Clark, Finance Director Glenn Gehrke, City Engineer Ron Wiedeman, Community & Economic Development Director Dan Ritter, Public Works Director Gary Richardson, Assistant City Administrator/HR Director Ashley Monroe, and City Attorney Mike Stiff.

Absent was: Alderman Angelo Deserio.

Mayor Ray Soliman explained that he received a text message from Alderman Angelo Deserio and he is unable to attend today's meeting. Alderman Deserio is excused.

4. CITIZEN/SPECIAL REQUEST/PUBLIC HEARINGS

4A. Conduct a Public Meeting to Discuss Compliance Efforts under the State Requirements for Stormwater Quality (MS4's)

Aldersperson Oberlin made a motion to open the Public Meeting to Discuss Compliance Efforts under the State Requirements for Stormwater Quality (MS4's). Seconded by Alderwoman Gazal. Roll Call: Ayes: Dyke, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal. Nays: None. Absent: Deserio. MOTION CARRIED.

Public hearing opened at 7:06 pm.

Public Works Director Gary Richardson reported that the City is required to have a public meeting to discuss the City's compliance efforts under the state requirements for storm water quality. The City has to submit a report every year and renew their permit every five years. There are six categories that have responsibilities; public outreach, public involvement and participation, illicit discharge detection and elimination, construction site storm water runoff control, post construction storm water runoff control and pollution prevention, and good housekeeping for municipal operations.

Director Richardson proceeded to go over some frequently asked questions of the public works department. When asked what the new NPDES were, Director Richardson explained the IEPA issued a new permit on 08-01-2025 with additions and modifications that are required to be implemented as part of the City's program before 08-01-2026. The City is preparing a new storm water management plan that will summarize all program components. As for what NPDES stands for, it stands for National Pollution Discharge Elimination System. This is a system to assist municipalities with the regulations of storm water discharge. Municipalities use this system along with the decision about development and land use, as well as in public works operation, such as street sweeping and sewer cleaning. MS4 stands for municipal separate storm sewer system. This system is owned by a public entity including storm water sewers, ditches, creeks and flood plains. An illicit discharge is anything going into the storm system that is not entirely composed of storm water, such as fertilizer, yard care products, animal waste, car soaps and automotive fluids. Director Richardson ended with asking the public if they see something to say something. If a person witnesses a spill, a dumping of something, or illegal pollution, please call the public works department at 815-741-5108.

No one approached the podium to make public comments about this item.

Aldersperson Oberlin made a motion to close the Public Meeting to Discuss Compliance Efforts under the State Requirements for Stormwater Quality (MS4's). Seconded by Alderwoman Gazal. Roll Call: Ayes: Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke. Nays: None. Absent: Deserio. MOTION CARRIED.

Public hearing closed at 7:11 pm.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT FOR AGENDA ITEMS ONLY:

No one approached the podium to make public comments on the agenda items.

6. CONSENT AGENDA:

Mayor Ray Soliman asked if any of the Council members wished to have any items removed from the consent agenda for more discussion.

Alderman Jefferson requested to remove item 6A (Approve the Minutes from the Work Session Meeting Held on March 2, 2026) from the consent agenda.

Mayor Soliman proceeded to read the consent agenda items:

6A. Approve the Minutes from the Work Session Meeting Held on March 2, 2026. *(REMOVED for Discussion)*

6B. Approve the Minutes of the Work Session Meeting Held on March 9, 2026.

6C. Approval of the Regular and Overtime Payroll from February 23, 2026, through March 8, 2026, in the Amount of \$281,765.28.

6D. Approval of the List of Bills Issued through March 17, 2026, in the Amount of \$951,818.32

Mayor Soliman asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda items excluding item 6A.

Alderman Gazal made a motion to Approve the three Consent Agenda items. Seconded by Alderman Jefferson. Roll Call: Ayes: Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Jefferson, Gazal. Nays: None. Absent: Deserio. MOTION CARRIED.

Mayor Soliman commented that they would now discuss the item 6A that was removed from the consent agenda.

6A. Approval of the Minutes from the Work Session Meeting Held on March 2, 2026.

Alderman Jefferson stated that the report from the Treasurer at the City Council meeting on March 2nd wasn't complete, so he wanted to know how the minutes could be approved. Mayor Soliman stated that the minutes listed in 6A were for the work session that occurred prior to the City Council meeting on March 2nd. Alderman Jefferson withdrew his removal of item 6A.

Mayor Soliman asked for a motion to approve consent agenda item 6A, approve the minutes from the work session meeting held on March 2, 2026.

Aldermoman Gazal made a motion to Approve Consent Agenda Item 6A for the Approval of the Minutes from the Work Session Meeting Held on March 2, 2026. Seconded by Alderman Albert. Roll Call: Ayes: Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Jefferson, Gazal. Naves: None. Absent: Deserio. MOTION CARRIED.

7. REPORTS & COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENTS & ELECTED OFFICIALS

7A. MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Ray Soliman announced that there will be a veterans and police memorial meeting on Wednesday, April 1st, 2026, at 1:00 pm in the Crest Hill City Hall community room. This will be preparation for the City Memorial Day program, which will be held on Monday, May 25th at 2:00 pm. Mayor Soliman said that anyone willing and wanting to help, please join the meeting on April 1st at 1:00 pm.

Mayor Soliman stated that he would like to read a portion of a letter that he received from the Pace bus company, which is an improvement for the City of Crest Hill. Mayor Soliman stated that there are several people who use the public transportation throughout Crest Hill. For route 507, "Effective Monday, March 16, 2026: As part of a pilot project, Pace is improving weekday service on Route 507. Route 507 operates mainly along Plainfield Road between the Pace Transit Center in Joliet and the Louis Joliet Mall. The frequency of service on Weekdays will be improved to bring service back up to pre-COVID levels. Additionally, the hours of weekday service will be expanded. These adjustments will allow for enhanced transfer options to Metra and other Pace bus routes in downtown Joliet." Mayor Soliman stated that this is for informational purposes only.

Mayor Soliman stated lastly that the property tax rebate checks are in the mail for those who filled out the proper forms in December of 2025. Those people should be on the lookout for a green envelope from the City of Crest Hill. Mayor Soliman stated that this is the thirteenth year that the City has been giving out the property tax rebate checks.

7B. CITY CLERK'S REPORT:

City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall announced that the Citywide garage sale is going to be Thursday, May 14th through Sunday, May 17th. Those wanting to participate will need to get a permit from the Clerk's office, which is \$5. If a resident wants their address put on the list, the expiration for that is May 12th.

7C. CITY TREASURER'S REPORT:

There were no items to report.

7D. CITY ATTORNEY:

There were no items to report.

7E. CITY ADMINISTRATOR:

There were no items to report, but Council members had questions.

Alderwoman Gazal asked City Administrator Blaine Wing if the cars were removed from the old (city hall) building. Administrator Wing confirmed that the cars have been removed and will be included as part of the auction so the City can get either parts or we can repair them then sell them.

Alderwoman Gazal then asked for the status of the security cameras for the public works building. Administrator Wing stated that Finance Director Glenn Gehrke can talk about the grant. Director Gehrke stated that we did get the grant and installation is in progress. There have been gates that have already been installed along the security ID and asked the public works Director Gary Richardson for confirmation. Director Richardson confirmed that all the security cameras have been installed and they are waiting for the gates to work. There will also be some new installation on the front door with the security system. Director Richardson stated that the City is working with the LVS company and they are on schedule. LVS is working in the computer room now.

Alderman Cipiti asked for an update on the condemnation determination for the Jasmine Creek area storm drainage issue affecting the residents in ward 3 and ward 4 that was talked about in the January 29th work session meeting. City Administrator Wing stated that City Attorney Mike Stiff has begun the first step of that project. City Attorney Stiff stated that he has assembled all of the plats that are necessary to get to the appraiser. The list of plats goes to the appraiser tomorrow so he can review them and give us a quote as to what it will cost to appraise it. That appraisal is the first step. Once the appraisal is complete, City Attorney Stiff will come back to the City Council and will report on how the City goes about filing the condemnation suit. When Alderman Cipiti asked about a timeline of the project, City Attorney Stiff stated that it depends on if the owner of the property makes himself known after the case is filed. Papers have to be filed with the owner, who is apparently bankrupt. Attorney Stiff stated that if nobody files an appearance in the case, that it should be fairly quick once the court is satisfied that nobody is stepping up to say that they are the owners of the property and want compensation. Then it should be as simple as filing a motion and having the unknown owners and the known owners defaulted and then the City will get an order that would vest title in the City. If nobody responds to the public notice within thirty days, the court will be able to act fairly quickly. City Attorney Stiff stated that he hoped that this would happen within two or three months once the City is filed. Alderman Cipiti asked Attorney Stiff if he could keep the Council aware of the progress. City Attorney Stiff stated that the next step is to report to City Council how much the appraisal will be.

7F. PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT:

Public Works Director Gary Richardson announced that on Saturday, May 16th, 2026, the public works department is going to have their first annual Touch a Truck event from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm at the public works facility at 2090 Oakland Ave. They will be some invited guests and vehicles from the police department and from the Lockport fire department. Director Richardson also stated that they will be providing rain barrel pick-up for the residents who have pre-ordered rain barrels. The rain barrel pre-orders have just started so residents can call the public works department at 815-741-5108 to pre-order. Alderperson Oberlin asked if the rain barrel installation instructions will be given at the pick-up and she noted that she was able to install hers with some instructions. Director Richardson stated that instruction pamphlets on how to install the rain barrels will be provided when picked up.

7G. CITY ENGINEER:

City Engineer Ron Wiedeman stated that there are currently three water main projects out for bid that are due back in April.

City Engineer Wiedeman said the Division Street reconstruction project will be starting in the next two weeks, so there will be signs put up for traffic control shortly.

City Engineer Wiedeman also stated that the City will be finishing the lining project that's on Broadway from Ludwig to Chaney. That will be starting the first week of April.

The last project from last year is the front side of Hillcrest Shopping Center on Larkin, which will start in the next few weeks. These three projects anticipate a May completion date then the City will start this year's projects soon after.

Alderman Jefferson made mention that the signs on Weber Road for the Division Street project are already up.

7H. FINANCE:

Finance Director Glenn Gehrke stated that this Friday he'll be meeting with the finance committee to present the first draft of the budget as well as bringing up the budget with the work session meeting next Monday.

7H. POLICE DEPARTMENT:

Police Chief Ed Clark stated that the police department will provide extra patrols at the polling locations to ensure everything's running safely.

Secondly, Chief Clark stated the police department had their annual polar plunge and the wind was fun that day. It was a nice event, and everything went smoothly. The police department, who teamed up with Elwood PD and Westcom, raised over \$7,000, the most they have ever raised. Chief

Clark stated that he is very thankful to everybody who participated and donated.

7J. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

1. Approval of a Resolution Adopting the Official 2026 Zoning Map

Community & Economic Development Director Dan Ritter explained that this is a yearly resolution to meet the state statute to get an updated zoning map. Director Ritter stated that there were six special use cases that got updated on the zoning map so that the City can meet our March deadline. Director Ritter stated that the Plan Commission took a look at the zoning map also and they unanimously recommended approval.

Mayor Soliman asked for a motion to approve a resolution adopting the official 2026 zoning map.

Alderman Gazal made a motion for a Resolution Adopting the Official 2026 Zoning Map. Seconded by Alderman Dyke. Roll Call: Ayes: Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin. Nays: None. Absent: Deserio. MOTION CARRIED. Resolution #1397

Community & Economic Development Director Dan Ritter also wanted to thank everyone who attended the comprehensive plan city council and plan commission combined workshop kick-off meeting on March 9, 2026. The City received good feedback for the initial meeting. Director Ritter stated that the comprehensive plan website has been launched and can get access to that at www.cityofcresthill.com/compplan. He stated that there is a resident survey on the website and noted that there will be more information coming soon via Facebook, social media and a press release.

Director Ritter stated that the closing of the Quik Trip project is coming up on March 26th. They are waiting on clearance from ComEd before the demolition can start on the old city hall building.

Lastly, Director Ritter stated that the Route 66 signs are ordered and in production. The City has worked with the Heritage Corridor, and they are going to donate at least \$1,000, but potentially more depending on where their other projects come in and if there's available funds. He also wanted to thank Mayor Soliman for obtaining a \$10,000 donation from JADA, the Joliet Arsenal Development Authority, to be put toward the signs. Director Ritter said that there will be a website launch which will include some contest events to coincide with the 100-year anniversary of Route 66 events that the City is going to have this year.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Alderman Jefferson asked about an email that was mentioned earlier in the meeting, but he had a busy day and wasn't able to check email. He noticed that the minutes from the City Council meeting on March 2, 2026, weren't on the agenda and

wondered if that's what the email was about. City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall stated that there was an email sent out stating there was a naming error (work session meeting versus City Council meeting) in the file that was put on Municode so after consulting with the City Attorney, those minutes will be presented for approval at the next meeting in two weeks since it will be within the timeframe of required approval. Clerk Vershay-Hall also said that the minutes were sent in the email in case anyone had questions and there was also a hard copy of those minutes on his desk in an envelope which he can look at, if he would like.

9. NEW BUSINESS:

There was no new business.

10. COMMITTEE/LIAISON REPORTS:

Alderman Dyke stated that Friday morning at 9:00am there will be a finance committee meeting to go over budget items with Finance Director Glenn Gehrke and he was looking forward to it.

Alderman Jefferson stated that at the last meeting he reported that there were 3,500 eggs for the City Easter event, but it's actually 3,600 eggs. He didn't want anybody to think that he put those 100 eggs in his own basket.

Alderwoman Gazal reported that the City will be hosting an Easter event on Saturday, March 28, 2026, from 12:00pm to 2:00pm for ages twelve and under. There will be an egg hunt with 3,600 eggs. There will be professional pictures with the Easter bunny, face painting, petting zoo, crafts, games and prizes. Employees from Sumercé Colombian Coffee Roasters will be volunteering at a table where each child will get a ticket so they can pick a toy to bring home. Alderwoman Gazal wanted to confirm that this event so far has been zero cost to the taxpayers and wanted to thank the sponsors for their generosity in supporting the City. She said bring our kids, grandkids, families and there will be surprises for the adults as well.

11. CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Alderman Albert gave a reminder for the Crest Hill Lions Club Easter egg hunt will be held on Saturday, April 4th at Richland School for ages ten and under. The Easter bunny and Crest Hill Lion will be there for pictures. There will be free candy and eggs for the participants.

Alderman Cipiti thanked Police Chief Ed Clark and his staff for the wonderful efforts with the Polar Plunge and all the money raised for Special Olympics. Alderman Cipiti wanted to remind residents to go out and vote tomorrow. Lastly, he wanted to give his condolences to the Batusich and Gale families on the passing of Judy Batusich. Judy was a great asset to the community and a great asset to the entire township.

Aldersperson Oberlin extended her deepest sympathies for the loss of their lovely Judy. Aldersperson Oberlin went to school with Mike Gale. She also encouraged everyone to get out and vote tomorrow. Lastly, to all her Irish friends and her one-day Irish friends, have a happy and safe St. Paddy's day.

Alderwoman Gazal wanted to extend her condolences to Judy's family. She stated that Judy Batusich was her mentor when she first ran for office. Judy obviously lives in ward two and had an incredibly good talk with her that day and gave Alderwoman Gazal a lot of advice on what to do, what not to do and I consider her a friend. Alderwoman Gazal told Mayor Soliman that Judy brought the tornado sirens to Crest Hill.

Alderman Dyke wanted to extend his condolences to the Batusich family on their loss. He also wanted to remind everyone to go out and vote tomorrow. He wished everyone a happy St. Patrick's day and a happy and blessed Easter.

12. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Resident Linda Dyke stated that she spoke with a community service officer five months ago about a truck that has been sitting on the road in the same spot with junk all over around it. The truck had a flat tire and there's never been a tow sticker on it. Ms. Dyke wanted to know why nothing is being done about this.

Ms. Dyke spoke of a gentleman, in the same block as the above truck, working on cars. He has four cars in one driveway, four in the other and a trailer on the street with no truck hooked up to it. It was there in the morning and also there tonight when she came to the meeting.

Ms. Dyke also said that in the same block there is a house that has a front end of a car missing. It's been like that for nine months and still like that today. She mentioned a neighbor who saw Ms. Dyke out taking pictures and told her that she was tired of looking at it and wondered what was going on with it.

Linda Dyke also stated the house across the street had twenty cars on Friday, nineteen cars on Saturday and she didn't remember how many cars yesterday, but her neighbor sent her pictures. The cars were there tonight as well. A tent was put up between the garage and the house. Ms. Dyke was unclear what was going on but stated that there's something going on at that residence. She wanted to find out if all of these people live in these houses or find out what they're doing. Police Chief Ed Clark stated that the police did check that address. The tent was checked and nobody was in the tent at the time. The police were going to check with the building department regarding the tent. All the cars were legally parked, everything was noticeably quiet and nobody was there at the time the police stopped there. Linda Dyke's concern is that the block is looking unacceptable again. She stated that the weather is going to be getting warmed and people will want to be outside, but they don't want to see the junk. Police Chief Clark said that if Ms. Dyke gives him the addresses, he will address it. She said that she would give the information to Chief Clark and she thanked him for looking into it.

13. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

1. 5ILCS 120/2 (c)(2): Collective negotiating matters between the public body and its employees or their representative, or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees.

2. 5ILCS 120/2 (c)(11): Litigation, when an action against, affecting or on behalf of the particular public body has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal, or when the public body finds that an action is probate or imminent, in which case the basis for the finding shall be recorded and entered into the minutes of the closed meeting.

Mayor Soliman asked for a motion to go into executive session on 5ILCS 120/2 (c)(2) and 5ILCS 120/2 (c)(11).

Alderman Albert made a motion to go into executive session on 5ILCS 120/2(c)(2) and 5ILCS 120/2(c)(11) at 7:44 p.m. Seconded by Alderman Jefferson. Roll Call: Ayes: Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Jefferson. Nays: None. Absent: Deserio. MOTION CARRIED.

Mayor Soliman asked for a motion to reconvene from the executive session on 5ILCS 120/2(c)(2) and 5ILCS 120/2(c)(11).

Alderman Albert made a motion to reconvene from the executive session on 5ILCS 120/2(c)(2) and 5ILCS 120/2(c)(11) at 9:38 p.m. Seconded by Alderman Cipiti. Roll Call: Ayes: Kubal, Dyke, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert. Nays: None. Absent: Deserio. MOTION CARRIED.

14. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business before the Council, a motion for adjournment was in order.

Alderman Dyke made a motion to adjourn at 9:39 p.m. Seconded by Alderman Jefferson. Roll Call: Ayes: Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti. Nays: None. Absent: Deserio. MOTION CARRIED.

Approved this _____ day of _____, 2026.,
As presented _____
As amended _____

CHRISTINE VERSHAY-HALL, CITY CLERK

RAYMOND R. SOLIMAN, MAYOR