

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION
CITY COUNCIL OF CREST HILL
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS
June 10, 2024

The June 10, 2024, City Council work session was called to order by Mayor Raymond R. Soliman at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 20600 City Center Blvd. Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois.

The following Council members were present: Mayor Raymond Soliman, City Treasurer Glen Conklin, Alderman Scott Dyke, Alderman Darrell Jefferson, Alderwoman Claudia Gazal, Alderperson Tina Oberlin, Alderman Mark Cipiti, Alderman Nate Albert, Alderman Joe Kubal.

Also Present were: Interim Administrator Tony Graff, City Engineer Ron Wiedeman, Interim Finance Director Carron Johnson, Interim Community Development Director Ron Mentzer, Interim Human Resource Manager Dave Strahl, City Attorney Mike Stiff.

Absent were: Interim Public Works Director Mike Eulitz, Police Chief Ed Clark, Building Commissioner Don Seeman, Interim City Planner Maura Rigoni.

TOPIC: Ward I Alderman Vacancy Recommendation

Mayor Raymond Soliman commented that with the vacancy of Ward I Alderman seat he feels Angelo Deserio would make a good candidate to the vacancy. He commented that Angelo is more than qualified to fill the seat. Angelo has served on the Plan Commission Board for the last four (4) years and is a good steppingstone.

Angelo Deserio approached the podium and introduced himself. He commented that he has served on the Plan Commission, he has helped with Lidice Clean-up, Family Picnic, Child ID Events, and has cleaned up around city properties and he feels he would be a valuable asset to fill the vacancy in Ward I. He stated that it would be a pleasure to fill Alderman John Vershay's seat and work with the constituents of the city.

Alderwoman Gazal asked why Mr. Deserio had never come to a Council meeting. Angelo commented that he has worked thirty-five years in the construction industry and had twelve-to-thirteen-hour days but always watched every meeting that was posted. He also commented that he had open heart surgery and was recovering for six months and followed the meetings on YouTube and follows all the Crest Hill Facebook pages.

Alderwoman Gazal also commented that she does a lot to promote businesses in Crest Hill and she did not care about the negativity Mr. Deserio made during Covid about a restaurant on Facebook. Angelo commented it was not against the business, it was directed at the employees, and it was the only negative comment he had made. He stated he supports every one of Crest Hill's businesses and has never voted down a new business application on the Plan Commission if they had met all the requirements of the Plan Commission. During Covid he supported the businesses, and the attitude of the employees is what he mentioned on Facebook. He stated that he placed an \$80.00 order at a restaurant in Crest Hill and instead of the employee bringing him his carryout order the employee was too busy playing video games and that is what was aggravating. Alderwoman Gazal commented that she was not going to get into it, but she seen the post, and it is what it is.

Alderwoman Gazal commented that she had questions for the mayor. She asked him if he could explain to the Council why Angelo Deserio was his choice out of the three applicants. Mayor Soliman commented that he opened the agenda topic with why Angelo Deserio was the most qualified choice to fill the seat. Mayor Soliman commented that all three (3) applicants were interviewed.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote for the appointment of Angelo Deserio on June 17, 2024, for the Ward I Alderman vacancy.

AYES: Ald. Albert, Kubal.

NAYES: Ald. Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti.

ABSTAIN: Ald. Dyke.

ABSENT: None.

Alderman Kubal commented that he was very impressed with Angelo's background with the Planning Commission and thanked him for applying. He also commented that he believes Angelo Deserio would fit in with the Council great.

Mayor Soliman commented that by law there is sixty (60) days that he must make an appointment from the date of death, and this is day forty-three (43) and June 17, 2024, will be day fifty (50). He then asked Angelo to attend the June 17, 2024, City Council meeting for an official vote and thanked him for his interest in the City of Crest Hill.

Alderman Cipiti asked Attorney Stiff if the first appointment is turned down would there be an extension for a second appointment. Attorney Stiff commented that the mayor would have another extension of thirty (30) days after the official vote on June 17, 2024, to bring another appointment to the Council.

Alderwoman Gazal commented that this is nothing against Angelo Deserio, but it is about the process of the mayor, and she commented that she knows the feeling since the mayor had voted against her in the past. She also commented that it is not revenge but it is about the way he does not want to share information of who applied. Angelo commented that he has no animosity towards anyone and appreciates the opportunity to stand before the Council today.

Alderman Oberlin commented that she echoes Alderwoman Gazal's sentiments because she also was in the same position and the mayor voted no against her because of the process and that is why she is voting no on the same principles, not personal principles.

TOPIC: Resolution approving an Agreement for Professional Engineering Services for 2024 Sanitary Sewer Cleaning and Televising Bid and Oversight Services (From Rich Projects to Oakland Avenue) by and Between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois and Robinson Engineering, Ltd. For the amount of \$26,750.00.

City Engineer Ron Wiedeman commented that he would like to have the city back on a standardized televising lining program. Between 2008-2013, the city completed a sewer investigation that included approximately 40% of the sanitary sewer in the city, which was mostly Ward I. The reason for this is that the critical infrastructure is in good condition, which will help the city's overall cost.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote for the approval in the amount of \$26,750.00.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

TOPIC: Award the contract to Austin Tyler Construction, Inc. in the amount of \$92,665.00 for the Public Works Facility Rear Yard Re-Grading Improvement.

City Engineer Ron Wiedeman commented that the reason this contract is being done is because there are IEPA potential issues from the salt building that is behind Public Works. As of now, when it rains or snows the salt drains into our storm sewer system which gets into the ditch and that is a violation. This project is to correct that from happening.

Alderman Cipiti asked if this was a problem on the day it was built. Engineer Wiedeman commented that it was not recognized at that time. Engineer Wiedeman commented that he would like to have this fixed before IEPA returns.

Alderman Jefferson asked how long the Public Works building has been there. Engineer Wiedeman commented that he believes it opened in August of 2020 and the salt building went up right after that.

Alderman Cipiti asked if there is any place else the salt building could have been placed on that property. Engineer Wiedeman commented that it could have been placed in a different location or the drainage modified but it is there now.

Alderman Jefferson commented that his concern is more regarding where the salt was draining to and was it draining where if left untreated it could be harmful to the residents. Engineer Wiedeman commented that Public Works was catching as much salt as possible but were still getting violations for going into the creek, which was not an amount that would affect anyone. Alderman Jefferson asked if over the years this has been draining into an area when it gets filtrated again it may go into drinking water. Engineer Wiedeman commented that it is not going into water where we are pumping out of. He also commented that we are getting this corrected by going into our sanitary district where it can be treated and safely released as treated sewage water. This is the same salt that is used to treat the streets during winter months.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote for the contract amount of \$92,665.00.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

TOPIC: Resolution approving an Agreement for Weber Road Traffic Signals Improvement (Ryan and McGilvery) by and Between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois and Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd. for an amount of \$128,000.00.

City Engineer Ron Wiedeman commented that he has received the variance from Will County to move the signals. The next step is the design, and this proposal is for the design which will include moving the existing traffic signals, closing off the center of Weber Road, and include the extension of the roadway lighting past McGilvery.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote for the Weber Road traffic signal improvements in the amount of \$128,000.00.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

TOPIC: Self-Storage Facility Borio-SWC of Borio Drive and Renwick Extension.

Interim Community Development Director Ron Mentzer commented that this is a request from A&D Storage which is a self-storage facility that was approved unanimously by the City Council on August 7, 2023. There has been no action on behalf of the applicant and potential developer to submit the final design documents to move the project forward. They have submitted a written request to allow the special use for the project to be extended another year to give them more time to complete the design documents necessary to move the project forward. The Ordinance #1959 that was approved did include a lot of documents to show the type of product and project that would be developed with a handful of conditions.

Interim Director Mentzer commented that from a staff perspective they are not proposing any modifications to what was approved and agreed upon and the staff believes some level of extension would be acceptable. Staff are recommending it be extended for a six (6) month period to complete design documents and get them under construction before the weather turns.

Alderman Cipiti asked if this extension would be a guarantee that the project would be started or completed. Interim Director Mentzer commented that it would give time to allow them to get their final documents reviewed and approved and then pull the permit to start construction before the six (6) month period. Alderman Cipiti asked what if they did not do this in the six (6) month time extension. Interim Director Mentzer commented that the special use approval further extended by the City Council would automatically go away.

The request from A&D Storage is for one year but staff is recommending a six (6) month extension.

Alderwoman Gazal asked why this is on the agenda again; are we moving forward or extending this, so they do not lose what they have so far.

Steve Gulden, a representative for A&D Storage, approached the podium. He stated that they are looking for a one-year extension. One reason the extension is needed is because of the economy and with an extension they are hoping for the economy to calm down and this would not be for any changes just strictly to extend the time. Alderwoman Gazal commented that the extension is to buy more time. Rudy Dixon, a representative, commented that yes, it is basically because they need more time.

Alderwoman Gazal asked with the possible extension is there a possibility that you might sell this again. It was commented that there is that possibility since the economy is so tough now, but they need more time. Alderwoman Gazal thanked them for being honest.

Alderperson Oberlin asked why staff is only recommending six (6) months. Interim Director commented that there has been no action on behalf of the property owner to move

the project forward and there has been two separate developers approach the city regarding the property, but the fact of the matter is a special use permit is hanging out there. The six months gives them many opportunities to move the project forward this year. Interim Director Mentzer also commented that he does not foresee the interest rates changing too much anytime soon.

Attorney Stiff commented that the staff is recommending six (6) months with the opportunity to come back in six months and do the same thing again. He also commented that the Council has the authority to extend it if they wish or to not extend it at all.

Alderwoman Gazal commented that she feels we are not being business friendly if the Council does not extend it to build or to sell.

Alderman Oberlin commented that why would we give six (6) months if they are requesting twelve (12) months. Steve Gulden commented that he thinks six months extension and then coming back in six months for another extension is good since the election will have a lot to do with inflation and the economy.

Alderwoman Gazal asked if they sell the property in six months and if someone else wants to do the same storage facility will the Council be able to go over all the facts with the new owners? Interim Director Mentzer commented that if the new owners would comply with the detail approval that has already been granted by the City Council they will only have to go through an administrative review process to show that all their design documents meet what was already approved by the City Council. The only reason it will come back is if they make any modifications that change the scope and nature of the project.

Alderman Albert commented that twelve (12) months is fine with him. It is an empty field now and he has presented a plan that the Council has agreed to move forward with.

Alderman Cipiti commented that he is fine with twelve (12) month extension.

Alderman Kubal commented that he is fine with a twelve (12) month extension.

Alderman Dyke commented that he feels we have extended twelve (12) months with others and that would be fine with him.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote for a twelve (12) month extension.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

TOPIC: Presentation by Interim Human Resource Director Dave Strahl – Employee Evaluation New Format.

Interim Human Resource Manager Dave Strahl commented that he has put together an overall comprehensive evaluation program with instructions for the evaluators. The core of the program recommended is where you would have regular conversation with the employee every three months and the annual review would be a summary of the quarterly reviews and the employee would have no surprises.

There are three evaluation forms:

Department Director/Management Employee Form: This form is designed to evaluate the performance of employees who supervise the departments and are responsible for managing the department.

Supervisory Employee Form: This form is designed to evaluate the performance of employees that supervise other employees as a front-line supervisor.

Non-Supervisory Employee Form: This form is designed to evaluate the performance of most front-line employees for more task development and task completion.

Alderson Oberlin asked if they will be doing these evaluations within a computer program that records things or when one of these forms are filled out where would they be filed so that they do not come up missing. Interim Manager Strahl commented that this is in an excel format but from a human resource standpoint if the quarterly forms remained in the department that would be fine, but the annual evaluations are critical and would need to be placed in the employee files.

He also commented that he does not have confidence that the management team has had experience in an evaluation program, and to make this program successful management will need to be trained. There will be a burden of additional work but if you do not make the investment in your human capital then you cannot hold them accountable.

Alderson Oberlin commented that she agrees with everything Interim Manager Strahl stated and that there is training needed on this program and people will need to be disciplined in the application of this program. She also commented that the outcome of the program also needs to be secured to have the trail of the documentation to justify anything you do if there are issues you need to reference.

Alderman Cipiti asked if these evaluations would be on paper because he feels it should be electronically kept so no evaluations are laying around. Alderman Cipiti also asked if the quarterly evaluations is more so that the employee and supervisor can discuss things that may need improvement. Interim Manager Strahl commented that the quarterly evaluation is designed primarily to go over goals and objectives, performance issues or an opportunity to cure or discuss within a timeframe so you have the paper pattern to use at the annual evaluation to show how they progressed or not progressed.

Alderson Gazal asked if it is normal to have fifty-five pages for an evaluation. It was stated that there are three different evaluation forms within those fifty-five pages, and the longest evaluation is only seventeen pages.

Alderman Jefferson commented that he is not sure the City of Crest Hill can implement this program because of the current atmosphere that exist. He also commented that he has seen these before and most are done electronically. He also stated that the atmosphere here in the city is when something is new, the employees do not like it and do not want to follow that and that is the problem he feels we will have and implementation from the supervisory employees. Alderman Cipiti also commented that it is an excellent program put together but his main concern is making sure this stays alive after the Interim employee is gone.

Interim Manager Strahl commented that it is not his program, it is the City of Crest Hill's program and if you do not have the mentality to evaluate people and make sure they are meeting those standards then you should not be here. He also stated that he agrees about the mentality that is in the city but that does not mean that mentality cannot change.

Alderwoman Gazal asked if there is a way to add this program into the employee handbook or make a resolution that it must be followed. Interim Manager Strahl commented that the handbook already has a section regarding annual reviews but does not state what the annual reviews are.

Alderwoman Gazal commented that if we change the handbook to add the quarterly evaluations can an employee sign off that they read and acknowledge the new procedure.

City Treasurer Glen Conklin commented that this is a great evaluation tool which will help the employees know where they are at which is important. He also commented that he feels it is simple enough to implement.

Alderman Dyke commented that he knows in the past how long it takes to get an evaluation to the Council and questioned how long it would take for a supervisor to go over this with an employee since at his work their evaluation is only two pages and takes twenty-five minutes and these evaluations are seventeen pages. Interim Manager Strahl commented that when he evaluates employees, he does not set a timeframe on the evaluation since it is the employees time, and he wants to make sure it is thorough and comprehensive as possible. He also commented in the beginning it will take longer but once they are familiar with the program going forward it should not be as long.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote to implement the employee evaluation format.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

Attorney Stiff asked if the Council would want to bring back the proposed handbook changes to another work session along with a resolution before we have it at a City Council meeting for a vote. Interim Manager Strahl commented that a number of things in the personal handbook need evaluated and he has started a list and spoke to Interim Administrator Graff, and he would suggest not waiting to implement this program since it is operational and valuable to start. Attorney Stiff asked if they would like to make a resolution instead and incorporate this into the handbook later. Interim Administrator commented that once the Council approves the format, we would just add it into the appendix. Attorney Stiff commented that the current evaluation in the handbook currently mentions a self-evaluation which needs to be phased out and you cannot add documents on there when it does not match up.

Attorney Stiff commented that we can make a resolution that adopts the program as a policy, but we cannot just put it at the end of the handbook without changing the handbook to go along with it.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There were no Public Comments.

MAYOR UPDATES:

Mayor Soliman commented that he received an email from the city attorney regarding the Grand Prairie Water Commission vote for next week and is putting together the ordinance for the members representing the commission going forward after the formation. The individuals on there now are the mayor, and the alternate who is Alderman Nate Albert, and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is City Engineer Ron Wiedeman, and the alternate is Interim Public Works Director Mike Eulitz.

Mayor Soliman asked if anyone would like to be part of the representation at the Mayor's Meeting in his absence. These meetings are once a month in Shorewood on the first Thursday of each month.

Alderman Gazal asked if Alderman Albert did not want to do it no longer. Alderman Albert commented that he would open it up to see if anyone else would want to do it since it is a time commitment.

Alderman Oberlin commented that she read that the representatives need to change every two years. Attorney Stiff commented that it is a two-year term. Attorney Stiff commented that if the mayor is the delegate and if he does not run for re-election or not get elected you must change before the two-year term is up. Treasurer Conklin commented that Alderman Albert could serve five consecutive two-year terms if he wanted to.

Alderman Albert commented that he certainly can stay on as the alternate but wanted to open it up to anyone who may want to take it over, but he can stay on as the alternate.

Alderman Oberlin commented that if Alderman Albert did not want to continue or if it had to be someone else, she would take the alternate position. Alderman Albert commented that he would continue being the mayor's alternate for another two-year term.

COMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES:

There were no committee/liaison updates.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES:

Interim Administrator Tony Graff had no updates but commented that an executive session is needed.

Alderman Gazal commented that she keeps asking about the microphones for the chamber and does not understand what is taking so long.

Interim Administrator Graff commented that he has a proposal, and it is set to go on the June 24, 2024, work session to have LVS go over the proposal with everyone.

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

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

On roll call, the vote was:

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

There being seven (7) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

Executive Session 8:24 p.m.

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

On roll call, the vote was:

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

There being seven (7) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

Reconvened at 9:22 p.m.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:23 pm.

Approved this _____ day of _____, 2024

As presented _____

As amended _____

CHRISTINE VERSHAY-HALL, CITY CLERK

RAYMOND R. SOLIMAN, MAYOR