

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL WORK SESSION  
CITY COUNCIL OF CREST HILL  
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS  
June 4, 2024

The June 4, 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 Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall, City Treasurer Glen Conklin, Alderman Scott Dyke, Alderman Darrell Jefferson, Alderwoman Claudia Gazal, Alderperson Tina Oberlin, Alderman Mark Cipiti, Alderman Nate Albert.

Absent: Alderman Joe Kubal.

Also Present were: Interim Administrator Tony Graff, City Engineer Ron Wiedeman, Interim Public Works Director Mike Eulitz, City Attorney Mike Santschi.

Absent were: Interim Finance Director Carron Johnson, Police Chief Ed Clark, Interim Community Development Director Ron Mentzer, Interim Employee Relations Dave Strahl, Interim Planner Maura Rigoni, Building Commissioner Don Seeman.

**TOPIC: Presentation – Grand Prairie Water Commission**

Mayor Soliman commented that Chris Ulm from Strand & Associates and Allison Swisher from the City of Joliet will be in attendance tonight. He stated that Allison Swisher has been the lead of this project for two plus years and has done a fantastic job keeping everyone up to date.

Allison Swisher approached the podium and introduced herself commenting that she is the Director of Public Utilities for the City of Joliet and is acting as the Program Director for the Grand Prairie Water Commission. She has been working on this project for six years starting in 2018.

She started by saying how the groundwater sources in the region are in jeopardy since the aquifer is being depleted to the point of inoperability and water quality is deteriorating and the region can no longer rely on groundwater sources, and we needed to look at alternative sources. This is a regional problem and a regional solution and with regions working together there is greater power that a single community could not have done.

The first step in forming a water commission was passing the legislation to form the water commission that would meet the needs of our communities. She had gone to Springfield and was successful in passing the legislation in the fall of 2021.

The second step was execution of the preliminary agreement of formation of the water commission which was done in February of 2022. This was the document of the guiding principles and key terms for the formation of the water commission.

In August of 2022, the Grand Prairie Water Commission was announced which included the communities of Joliet, Romeoville, Crest Hill, Shorewood, Minooka, and Channahon. The mission of this commission is to provide a safe and reliable source of drinking water by 2030 to our communities.

Since 2022 the Mayors and Managers of the communities have been meeting monthly and the staff from the communities have been meeting twice a month to discuss many elements of the program.

In the commission there are four key documents:

- Intergovernmental Agreement to Establish Grand Prairie Water Commission
- Grand Prairie Water Commission Water Supply Agreement
- Bylaws of the Grand Prairie Water Commission
- Intergovernmental Agreement for Program Management (between GPWC and Joliet)

Intergovernmental Agreement – Is a document that upon execution of the communities establishing the commission. All these documents will be executed by June 26, 2024, which is the last community meeting held to approve these documents. This document establishes that the six communities mentioned are the charter members and additional members, if any, would require the approval of all members, boards, and Councils and be a unanimous vote. This also establishes the Board of Commissioners (BOC), and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) which is made up of staff delegates from each community who advises the Board of Commissioners. Each community will identify their delegate and that delegate has one equal vote on the Technical Advisory Committee. Also, a withdrawal of a member must be approved unanimously by the Board of Commissioners and by all Member Boards/Councils.

Grand Prairie Water Supply Agreement - This is the agreement between the Commission and the Communities for the provision of Lake Michigan water and it is a 100-year agreement and is not in effect until December 31, 2123. It also identifies how water is sold and purchased. One of the major key principles has been that many of the elements of the program are based on declared maximum day demand (DMDD) which is a value of the capacity that each community has within the system. Crest Hill proportion of the system is approximately eight percent of the overall of the 55.2 MGD capacity in the system.

There are several costs attributable to each member which are:

- Purchased Water Costs – Volume of water that you use and pay for.
- Operation & Maintenance Cost – Assessed by the volume of water utilized.
- Reserve Costs – Which is based on your demand.
- Commission Administration Costs – Cost that exists regardless of if one gallon of water is sold or a billion gallons sold.
- Capital Costs – Which is shared by each community's amount of the system.

There is an overall budget for the program which is \$1.45 Billion Dollars and within that amount it is split amongst the costs shared for everyone and then there is other costs that are allocated per each community. Crest Hills portion of the Commission Capital Cost is a

little over \$105,000,000.00 and that is the shared costs. For the costs that are specifically for Crest Hill would be the \$1.7 Million.

The Board of Commissioners approves the Commission Budget and Program Budget and Schedule and is anticipated to be done on an annual basis.

There are provisions related to Stateville, in Section 4.2(b)vi it relates to the return of capacity if Stateville were to close and Section 6.8(b) is related to late payments and how those would be treated by the Commission if Stateville is late in their water payment.

Bylaws of the Grand Prairie Water Commission – This governs the function and operation of the Commission and establishes the organizational structure and the ordinance that each community that approves will direct their commissioner to approve the bylaws at the first meeting of the Commission.

The bylaws identify officers of the Commission and there is a rotation that is established where every two years the officers change. The bylaws talk about the administrative staff and meetings that are subject to the Open Meetings Act.

Intergovernmental Agreement for Program Management (PMA) – This is an agreement that is between the commission and the City of Joliet for Joliet to manage the program. There is two services Joliet will be providing which are managing the program and helping administer the commission until the commission hires employees. Joliet has been managing this role since 2022 and is anticipated until 2031.

- Program Management Services – Will be provided by Joliet to manage the land acquisition, manage consultants and management team, oversee the governmental and public outreach and the legal services.
- Commission Management Services – which will be provided by City of Joliet to include management of Commission administration support, financial matters, human resources, public outreach, and operational support until Commission staff is hired.

City of Joliet will fulfill three roles which are Program Director, Program Finance Director, and Operation and Maintenance Liaison. Allison Swisher will be the Program Director, the Program Finance Director will be the City of Joliet Finance Director, and the City of Joliet Plan Operations Director will be the Operation and Maintenance Liaison.

There is a fee associated with the Program Management Agreement which is approximately \$2.9 Million Dollars which is a fixed fee which compensates the City of Joliet for the services being provided. Of that \$2.9 Million City of Joliet will pay approximately sixty percent of that cost.

Basis of Design is a document containing the rationale, principles, assumptions, to be used for the design for the Commission System and implementation of the Program. This also establishes a targeted water delivery date of May 1, 2030, and cannot be adjusted until the Board of Commissioners unanimously approves it.

There are over twenty-seven different projects that will be bid out to build the infrastructure. The connection facility is in Chicago and there is sixty-five miles of

transmission main to get from 85<sup>th</sup> and Kedvale in Chicago to the furthest point in Channahon, we have storage facilities, and pumping stations. The construction is starting in Chicago, but our area will not see construction until around 2026.

Alderman Albert asked if they could go into detail regarding if Stateville did close and what that process would like for the City of Crest Hill.

City Engineer Ron Wiedeman commented that if Stateville were to close this process would allow us to return an amount up to 1.22 which is what we declared that is our Stateville portion of our maximum daily demand.

Alderman Jefferson asked if there would be any time that Crest Hill would want an additional supply of water. Engineer Wiedeman commented that there was a study done of all Crest Hill that could be potentially developed or annexed and that is where the 4.18 came from.

Chris Ulm from Strand & Associates commented that they looked at every available parcel of land and they looked at the parcels of Stateville that could be residential in that number. He commented that after 2050 you will not see much change since there would be no more possible build out in Crest Hill after 2050.

Mayor Soliman commented that we were at a fifteen percent water loss when this first started, and Crest Hill has done an extraordinary amount of infrastructure improvements throughout the city and asked where we are at with the water loss. It was stated that we do not have the recent audit results. Engineer Wiedeman commented that the last thing he heard was that we were at twelve percent, but we are doing a new audit to see where we are at to encompass some of the projects we have completed.

Alderman Jefferson asked if the debt service is a fixed debt service or an adjustable rate. The funding strategy is made up of multiple sources and they are currently in the process of applying for a federal low interest loan program that will fund forty-nine percent of the program and later this year when we close on that we will lock in an interest rate for the next thirty-five years for that loan. Allison Swisher commented that the balance would then be fifty-one percent and made up of revenue bonds and SRF loans which will be issued over the next six years and when the program is complete, and we have all the bills paid and debt issued each member community will receive a payment table that will be fixed until 2065.

Mayor Soliman commented that the numbers for all the communities that are listed are without any funding from the Federal Government, State Government, or any grants which we will receive. Allison Swisher commented that the funding was not factored into the funding strategy so whatever funding is received will help with the bottom line and today we have received \$7 Million.

Alderman Cipiti asked if there is any way to give your best guess of what a water bill would be in terms of comparing to their current bill. Allison commented that each community will do an analysis based on their system and improvement and there are many variables that go into what the rate is and then it will be voted on and approved.

Alderman Cipiti asked with the switch to Lake Michigan Water will the rusty watercolor change since we will have the same pipes. Chris Ulm from Strand & Associates commented that there is a buildup lining on the pipes of iron deposits and hardness and when sending the new water in there might be some flushing. It will not be an amazing change on day one, but Lake Michigan Water is of much higher quality and less aggressive water but might take up to six months to notice.

Interim Administrator Graff commented that an important factor to understand is what the system is bringing to our city which is the backup of secondary resource water which is important. If something happens in the big city, we will have a secondary resource system.

Mayor Soliman commented that this will be voted on at the June 17, 2024, Council meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

There were no public comments.

**MAYOR'S UPDATES:**

There were no Mayor updates.

**COMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES:**

Alderperson Oberlin commented that the Lidice Ceremony will be on Sunday, June 9, 2024, at 11:00 a.m. at the Lidice Memorial Park. We have been celebrating this in our city since 1942 and were the first city to do that. She encourages everyone to attend.

**CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES:**

There were no City Administrator updates.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:09pm.

Approved this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024

As presented \_\_\_\_\_

As amended \_\_\_\_\_

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CHRISTINE VERSHAY-HALL, CITY CLERK

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RAYMOND R. SOLIMAN, MAYOR