

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION  
CITY COUNCIL OF CREST HILL  
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS  
February 13, 2023

The February 13, 2023 City Council work session was called to order by Mayor Raymond R. Soliman at 7:03 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 1610 Plainfield Road 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 John Vershay, Alderman Darrell Jefferson (Via Zoom), Alderwoman Claudia Gazal, Alderperson Tina Oberlin, Alderman Mark Cipiti, Alderman Nate Albert

Also present were: Administrator Jim Marino, Director of Public Works Mark Siefert, City Engineer Ron Wiedeman, City Attorney Mike Stiff, Finance Director Lisa Banovetz, Police Chief Ed Clark, Building Commissioner Don Seeman, Interim Planner Maura Rigoni

Absent were: Alderman Joe Kubal

Mayor Soliman asked for a vote for Council approval to allow Alderman Jefferson to attend the February 13, 2023 meeting remotely.

(#1) Motion by Alderwoman Gazal seconded by Alderperson Oberlin, to approve Alderman Jefferson to attend the February 13, 2023 meeting remotely.

On roll call, the vote was:

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Kubal

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

**TOPIC: GovHR Compensation Study**

Mayor Soliman informed Council there is information in their packets regarding the GovHR Compensation Study and Rachel Scaggs from GovHR gave a presentation via Zoom. Rachel explained the first thing they do in the study is establish a group of comparable communities that are similar to Crest Hill. Rachel stated that similar criteria looked at in the comparable communities would be:

Equalized Assessed Value	Per Capita Income
Total Expenditures	Proximity
Population	Number of Full Time Employees
State Sales Tax	Indebtedness
Property Tax Revenue	

Rachel stated there were twenty (20) communities most similar to Crest Hill across the nine (9) categories. Once comparable communities are established, they look through the data and give compatibility points on a comparison scale. Rachel stated a Compensation Plan was put together for Crest Hill at the 50<sup>th</sup> and 65<sup>th</sup> percentiles. Rachel further explained this means being at the 50% percentile essentially means 50% of the communities are paying more and 50% are paying less and then at the 65<sup>th</sup> percentile 65% are paying more

and the rest are paying less. Rachel stated 65<sup>th</sup> percentile will put you above the average. This gives two options for the City to look at and see what percentile would be preferred.

Rachel explained the Compensation Plan consists of eight (8) pay grades; one (1) being the highest and eight (8) being the lowest and is broken down into four (4) bands:

- Grades 1 – 2: Administrative and Technical Staff
- Grades 3 – 4: Supervisors and Advanced Technical Staff
- Grades 5 – 7: Directors and Senior Managers
- Grade 8: City Administrator

Rachel also explained there is a gradation between grades as follows:

- Grades one (1) and two (2) have a 10% difference
- Grades three (3) and four (4) have a 20% difference
- Grades five (5) through seven (7) have a 10% difference

Rachel stated once the Compensation Plan is accepted, approved, and implemented there are two things needing review annually. Rachel explained first is to review the classification of the position side if we have combined positions or moved position around. If you do this you need to make sure it is still in the same grade as long as there are justifiable reasons behind it. Second item is to reach out to the comparable communities and see what their most recent increase was and adjust the compensation ranges by the increase to make sure you are staying up with the market. The last item would be to figure pay adjustments if needed. Rachel stated as long as all is maintained and kept up to date you would not need another study for approximately five years.

Mayor Soliman asked Rachel if we are pretty much in the same range as most communities, except for a couple other communities? Rachel stated Crest Hill is in range but if any were below, they would need to bring them to the minimum range as soon as possible depending what the increase looks like. Rachel stated overall majority of the positions fall in the proposed range, which shows our salaries are competitive for these positions.

Alderwoman Gazal commented that some of the communities don't have water and/or sewer positions and feels we can't compare to those communities. Rachel stated they do not pull job descriptions and view apples to apples we look at the broad overview of the positions. Rachel stated overall the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile encompasses the title and salary level. Alderwoman Gazal also asked if the studies will take into factor the employee's length of employment? Rachel answered they prefer ranges when analyzing the data which will look at the position more so than the person in the position.

City Treasurer Conklin commented it is important we address any adjustments relatively quickly because these adjustments will be retroactive. Treasurer Conklin commented that typically the adjustments are a function of the City Administrator. Treasurer Conklin also commented the Treasurer's Office will only be doing any recommendations for their office and will not be doing any recommendations for employees outside their office.

Administrator Marino asked Council what preference range they would like to use for salary ranges to establish a base line when looking at adjustments? Rachel stated when choosing a percentile, it should go across the board.

Alderman Albert asked if the City offers anything above and beyond any other communities? Administrator Marino stated the benefits offered to the employees are comparable and typical as far as longevity, vacation time and holidays.

Administrator Marino stated the other item with GovHR is two types of merit increases: Defined Step Increment Merit System and the Open Range Merit System. Administrator Marino stated the City currently operates under the Open Range Merit System. Rachel explained the Open Range Merit System currently is the minimum and maximums which one can advance through based on satisfactory performance review and gives more flexibility. Rachel also explained the Defined Step Increment Merit system is when there is a defined step to get to the minimum and maximum and you progress through those steps and get a percentage step annually based on your performance review.

Alderman Oberlin stated that a merit increase is based on what the employee is doing for the company; two people can do the exact same job and one performs at 100% and the other at 60%; why should both employees get the same increase? Administrator Marino stated if someone is performing well, they would advance to the next step and if one is not performing well, they will not advance to the next step. Rachel explained with the defined step increment merit system if an employee is doing an exceptional job, they can advance two steps, which still gives you flexibility.

Alderman Cipiti asked what is our current system to evaluate performance? Administrator Marino stated he believes it is different in each department. Alderman Cipiti asked Administrator Marino if he has done any merit raises yet with Crest Hill, Administrator Marino commented not yet.

Finance Director Banovetz commented that she met with her staff and Administrator Marino informed her that employees will get a cost of living allowance (COLA) increase and a merit raise would be assessed later. Director Banovetz commented we need to do employee evaluations, so the employees know they are valued and a contributing member of the City and feels it is important to ask them what they want to achieve and what their goals are or trainings wanted.

Alderman Oberlin asked Public Works Director Mark Siefert if the department heads do the employee evaluations, and the City Administrator does the department heads annually? Director Siefert commented in the past each department would do their own evaluations and meet with the City Administrator and have a list of five (5) goals and how many goals you completed would determine your pay increase. Director Siefert believed the merit-based raise reviews were approved by Council and started in 2017. Alderwoman Gazal asked Administrator Marino if he has done an evaluation with the department heads? Administrator Marino commented no. Alderwoman Gazal then asked when will this be done? Administrator Marino commented that he does not know.

Alderwoman Gazal commented that we have some employees that are under the range and have taken more job duties than what their job description states and feels we need do something for the employees who go above what they are expected.

Alderwoman Gazal asked Mayor Soliman if he has an opinion and Mayor Soliman shook his head no.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote to adopt the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile range and staying with an open range merit increase. All members present were in agreement.

**TOPIC: Bannon Variance – 2411 Durness Court**

Interim Planner Maura Rigoni informed Council at the Planning Commission meeting on January 11, 2023 a variance request came before the plan commission for the Bannon property at 2411 Durness Court. The request was for a variation from the 10' foot required setback for an accessory structure 6" from the west property line to construct a shed. The Plan Commission did have an agreement with the variance, and this will not bother the ComEd easement. Interim Planner Rigoni explained the shed would be sitting on the property line. Choosing the west side would not impact any of the neighbors.

Alderpersion Oberlin asked if we ever heard from ComEd? Interim Planner Rigoni stated we did not since it did not impact ComEd's property.

Alderman Dyke asked what is so crucial that it must be 6" from the line? Interim Planner Rigoni stated the closer it moved to the deck the harder it would be for the homeowner to open the shed doors.

Alderman Albert stated that at the plan commission meeting the homeowner that lives directly to the north of Mr. Bannon was at the meeting and stated he has no issues with this, and he also stated his shed is on the property line as well.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote. All members present were in agreement excluding Alderman Dyke.

**TOPIC: Browns Chicken Sign Variance**

Interim Planner Maura Rigoni stated the current property owner at 16111 Weber Road of Crest Lake Commons would like to install an electronic message board sign. Interim Planner Rigoni stated it came before the Plan Commission and the Council because of the variance for a setback that was approved back in 2017. Interim Planner Rigoni stated the Plan Commission gave a favorable recommendation with landscaping added for the variation as presented.

Alderwoman Gazal asked if there was approval from the strip mall owner? Interim Planner Rigoni stated the owner of the strip mall is aware of this. It was asked if this sign is just for Brown's Chicken? Ed Daily one of the owners of the Brown's Chicken stated he had purchased the sign over a year ago and explained he would like more exposure and feels this sign would give more attention on Weber Road. Ed further informed Council it would only be used for Browns Chicken advertisement and seen from both sides.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote. All members present were in agreement to allow Brown's Chicken the electronic message board sign with landscaping.

**TOPIC: City Center Interior Building Signage Discussion**

Public Works Director Mark Siefert stated he has been working with Warehouse Direct and Takeform to design and develop for the signage at the City Center. Director Siefert informed Council there are three (3) different types of sign categories: informational, /directional, designation/office and regulatory. They would like the curving on the top of the sign that matches all the logos and are uniform. Director Siefert showed samples of informational/directional signage. These signs would be in the main foyer, Council

Chambers foyer and Police Department foyer so when the public walks in these spaces they are directed where to go. Director Siefert explained the signs are more for the public area or emergency situations.

Director Siefert explained all signs will be uniform and the signs for the public viewing will also include braille. Director Siefert stated Don Seeman, the Building Commissioner, is working with the Fire Department to make sure we are in compliance with all the signage.

Alderman Cipiti asked if signage has an inspection at the end to make sure we meet all requirements? Director Siefert answered stating the fire department does the final inspection, which our Building Commissioner is working with them.

Director Siefert stated the sign behind the dais will be 4 foot by 2 foot brushed aluminum and a new quote will be given for the sign behind the dais.

Director Siefert stated his recommendation to City Council is to approve all signs except for the dais sign and bring back recommendations and quote for the Dais sign.

Mayor Soliman asked the if the cost is around \$30,000.00? Director Siefert stated yes between \$30,000 and \$31,000 without the dais.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote. All members present were in agreement for the interior signage.

Director Siefert asked for two (2) Alderpersons to volunteer to join a committee with him to decide what pictures, signs, bulletin boards, awards from the foyer at our current City Hall will go to the new City Center. Director Siefert stated they will need to take inventory and decide what we are taking to the new City Center and where we are hanging these items. Alderperson Oberlin volunteered and stated she would be happy to be part of the committee. Also, Alderman Albert volunteered to be on the committee as well.

Mayor Soliman stated he thought it would be a very nice gesture to put a stone at the new Police Department to honor Officer James Nink and Sargeant Timothy Simenson. Mayor Soliman stated it would be a nice tribute to our slain police officers and their families for making the ultimate sacrifice.

Alderperson Oberlin commented that the Police Memorial is dedicated to the Police and Veterans Garden for this reason. Alderperson Oberlin commented she knew the families personally and her decision is not for any lack of compassion but feels this is why we have the Memorial Garden.

Mayor Soliman asked how much would this cost? Director Siefert stated depending on the size and etching this would cost approximately between \$5,000.00 and \$7,000.00. Mayor Soliman asked for everyone to drive past the Plainfield Police Department on 147<sup>th</sup> and see how they named their department? Mayor also stated this was an idea brought up in 2015 and 2016 by the past Police Chief, Dwayne Wilkerson, and a great way to honor our two slain Police Officers. Alderperson Oberlin stated we are honoring them in the Memorial Garden, and we are not Plainfield we are Crest Hill and Dwayne Wilkerson is not here anymore.

Alderman Cipiti stated he did not appreciate the comment the Mayor made towards Alderperson Oberlin suggesting her opinion was disrespectful to past, present, and future law enforcement.

Alderperson Oberlin stated that our current Chief of Police will tell you she has done nothing but support our Police Department even before she held the Council seat. Alderperson Oberlin further stated she takes personal insult to that comment just because the Mayor wants something and someone does not agree with him. Alderperson Oberlin stated she has nothing but the upmost respect for law enforcement. Alderperson Oberlin strongly stated the Mayor has insulted her publicly for the last time.

Mayor Soliman asked for a straw vote. Alderman Dyke asked what is the straw vote on? Alderman Albert asked are we taking a straw vote on naming the Police Station after the two slain officers and get a stone that states that? Alderman Albert stated the biggest decision on the table is naming the Police Station after the two slain officers and that was not on the agenda and Alderman Albert stated he is not ready to vote on that. Mayor Soliman asked Director Siefert if he can get a price on the stone? Director Siefert stated he will get a price on the stone.

**TOPIC: Terminate Mechanical Concepts Contract**

Administrator Marino explained that the company, Mechanical Concepts, who have installed the air conditioning and heating system have not responded and have not completed their work at the City Center building. Administrator Marino also stated the subcontractors are contacting us because they have not been paid by Mechanical Concepts and it is our belief that they have went out of business.

Attorney Mike Stiff stated the City needs to declare a default and terminate the contract in order to have another contractor complete the unfinished work. If the Council votes to terminate the contract, we will file a claim with the insurance company and notify them by mail that we are voiding the contract. Kirwan Mechanical will provide a quote to complete the unfinished work by Mechanical Concepts.

Alderwoman Gazal asked how much is the bond and what have we paid them so far? Attorney Stiff answered stating the contract amount was \$740,000.00 and the performance bond is in the amount of \$925,000.00. Finance Director Banovetz stated we have paid them 95% already. Attorney Stiff stated there is a separate bond; a performance bond, which takes care of us for performance by the contractor and the other bond is a payment bond to pay claims of unpaid subcontractors and vendors.

It was stated that City staff would like to use Kirwan for HVAC after the contract can be terminated with Mechanical Concepts. Director Siefert stated the City has been using Kirwan for several years, and they are responsive and trustworthy. Administrator Marino stated we would want Kirwan to come in and evaluate the whole system and see if changes need to be made.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote. All members present were in agreement to declare a default and terminate the Mechanical Concepts contract.

**TOPIC: Approve a Change Order with Harbour Contractors**

Administrator Marino requested to approve a change order for Harbour Contractors to extend the construction management services to complete construction of the City Center.

Shawn Thompson from Harbour stated this contract will go to May 31, 2023. If we move in and the dollar amount has not been expended, it will be returned back to the City.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote. All members present were in agreement to extend Harbour Contractors construction management services or until the \$70,588.67 has been depleted.

**TOPIC: Approve City Center Change Orders**

Administrator Marino commented that he has before the Council a long list of change orders and he will not go over each change order but understands that the City would like to be informed of any change orders before they are done. Administrator Marino stated the approximate cost of the change orders is around \$200,000.00. Administrator Marino stated there are a few items that are discretionary and we do not have to do them.

It was stated the coating on the basement floor is not necessary and will be removed from the change order. Alderperson Oberlin asked why more file cabinets? Building Commissioner Seeman stated these are in addition to what the Building Department is already taking to the City Center.

Shawn Thompson stated there is no skid protection on the stairwells in the blueprints, but they should be placed since the basement stairwells will be used.

Shawn Thompson stated the architect has never come out during the foundation stage / rough construction stage and inspected. Building Commissioner Seeman stated no concrete inspections were done, no structural steel inspections were done, and no visual inspections were done.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote for the painting of the lobby wall; it will be only one wall. All members present were in agreement of the painting of the lobby wall.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote for the stripping on the stairwells. All members present were in agreement to install stripping on the stairwells.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote for the architect walk through. All members present were not in agreement with an architect walk through.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote for the additional file cabinets for the building department. All members present were in agreement for the additional file cabinets.

Mayor Soliman asked if any other comments or concerns on the rest of the change orders? There was no response, concerns, or questions. Shawn Harbour asked if we are good on the rest of the Change orders? Council agreed they are good to go ahead with the rest of the change orders.

**TOPIC: Bridges to a New Day Donation**

Mayor Soliman asked if the Council would like to donate. Attorney Stiff apologized since he was supposed to look into this and it slipped his mind.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

There were no public comments.

**MAYORS UPDATES:**

There were no other updates.

**COMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES:**

Aldersperson Oberlin announced The Lidice Memorial ceremony is scheduled for June 11, 2023 at 11:00am.

**CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES:**

There was no administrator updates.

Mayor Soliman announced that there is a need for an executive session on 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) litigation and personnel.

Motion by Aldersperson Oberlin seconded by Alderman Vershay, to go into an executive session on 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) litigation and personnel.

On roll call, the vote was:

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Kubal

There being eight (7) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED

The executive session was called at 10:02pm.

Motion by Aldersperson Oberlin seconded by Alderwoman Gazal, to return to regular work session.

The meeting was reconvened at 11:49 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 p.m.

Approved this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2023

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

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

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CHRISTINE VERSHAY-HALL, CITY CLERK

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RAYMOND R. SOLIMAN, MAYOR