

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION
CITY COUNCIL OF CREST HILL
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS
September 25, 2023

The September 25, 2023 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, Alderperson Scott Dyke, Alderperson John Vershay, Alderperson Darrell Jefferson, Alderwoman Claudia Gazal, Alderperson Tina Oberlin, Alderperson Mark Cipiti, Alderperson Nate Albert, Alderperson Joe Kubal.

Also present were: Interim Management Consultant Steve Gulden, Police Chief Ed Clark, Finance Director Lisa Banovetz, Interim Director of Community Development Ron Mentzer, City Attorney Mike Stiff.

Absent were: Assistant Public Works Director Blaine Kline, Interim Planner Maura Rigoni, City Engineer Ron Wiedeman, Building Commissioner Don Seeman, Interim Employee Relations Manager Dave Strahl.

TOPIC: Creation of a new position: Communication Specialists

Interim Management Consultant Steve Gulden commented that we discussed this position around six weeks ago at a work session. He noted a suggestion from Alderwoman Gazal which was to look at a broader scope of this position, possibly as a public communication position. Steve commented that we can have this communication person for crisis communication. He commented that this was all added in the job description. Steve commented that this person could be our public communication officer for things like a police incident or a major fire and have this person draft news releases or press conferences.

Steve commented that his initial thought was to hire someone who is right out of college, who might have a social media background or a marketing degree, but when you have someone in a crisis communication matter you want someone with more experience, which it was thought to increase the salary range to \$55,000.00 - \$75,000.00 for someone with experience. Steve discussed this with the Finance Director Lisa Banovetz, and she felt that the budget can handle the increase for this position.

Alderwoman Gazal asked how Steve came up with that salary range. Steve commented that he looked at other municipalities that have this position and what they pay, such as Antioch, Romeoville, and Joliet. Alderwoman Gazal commented that she feels we cannot compare to Romeoville since they are bigger and feels we need to lower the pay range.

Alderman Cipiti commented that this is a new type of position for the city, and he feels it should start out as a part-time position and see what the workload would be for this position, then maybe after 6-12 months re-evaluate the position. He also commented that he would like to take it a little slower.

Steve commented that if they do decide to go part-time, you will have to scale back the job description, Steve also commented that image is everything in today's marketing and he believes to portray the positive, and we need a dedicated person to bring that positive image out to the public.

Aldersperson Oberlin commented that she believes that we need to go with a full-time person to get the level of competence we need. She also commented that we can always re-evaluate later in the year. She also wanted the job position to include the cable channel and the scroll to inform the public and make changes as needed. Steve commented that under Essential Duties and Responsibilities, bulletin number 7, it states to monitor all forms of communication including the city's media channels. Aldersperson Oberlin stated that she seen that but would specifically want the cable channel included and be known that he/she will be the one dictating how this looks. Steve commented that we can add cable in there.

Aldersperson Oberlin also stated that she believes it is very important to have this position.

Alderman Albert commented that he likes everything presented in the job description and he agrees with Aldersperson Oberlin about adding the cable channel.

Alderman Vershay commented that if you go with part-time, you won't find a person that meets half the qualifications. Steve commented that you won't find a committed person at a part-time level, they will leave eventually when a full-time position opportunity comes along.

Alderman Cipiti asked if it would be a one-year contract or how would this be re-evaluated after one year. Steve commented that it would not be a one-year contract and that most will not take that job knowing there is possibly an end to the job at the one-year mark. Aldersperson Oberlin commented that at the end of one year you would have a performance evaluation done and if you are not living up to your performance, then we would have to change something.

Aldersperson Oberlin commented that at the conference this past weekend they kept stressing about having a professional City Administrator that keeps the Council and public informed and updated.

Alderman Jefferson asked if this person would handle the public communication for the entire city including the Police Department and Public Works. Steve commented that if there were a crisis this person would open the conference up and turn it over to whoever is handling this in the Police Department but if there is a water main break or a gas leak, etc. this person would handle it.

Attorney Stiff commented that this person would report to the City Administrator and the message that the Communication Specialist will be sending out needs to be reviewed by the department head as well before the message goes out to the residents.

Steve stated that the administrator will oversee this person, and all department heads are the crisis team, and everyone should be talking to each other, and the message should be crafted within all departments. Aldersperson Oberlin commented that what she likes most is that this will be communicated to the Council prior to the message going out to the

residents. Steve commented that it would typically be the City Administrator communicating with the Council.

Alderman Jefferson stated that this position is listed as a nonexempt position. Steve stated it is a non-union position. It was stated that it should be listed as an exempt position.

Alderman Kubal commented that he feels the city needs this kind of position and think this will give a lot of opportunity to improve our communication to the residents.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote for creating the Communication Specialist position and for the advertising of this employee with a salary range of \$55,000.00 - \$75,000.00.

It was commented that we are amending the description to include the cable channel, to list as an exempt position, and amend the salary to \$55,000.00 - \$70,000.00.

Alderman Albert and Alderman Kubal commented that they are fine with listing the position at \$55,000.00 - \$75,000.00 if needed.

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

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None.

TOPIC: Consideration for the Approval of the 2023 Annual Tax Levy

Finance Director Lisa Banovetz commented that it is the same form of information that they received last year and will not repeat it unless the Council wants.

Director Banovetz mentioned that 2023 is a quadrennial year for Will County, which means the Illinois State Statute requires every parcel in Will County to receive a revised assessment notice regardless of whether the property has changed or not. She commented that this assessment showed the prior year's assessment, the township assessment, and Will County's final assessment and multipliers were applied. She commented that she wanted to mention this since people in Will County have seen their tax bill increase, which has nothing to do with the city.

Since we are a non-home ruled community, we are only subject to look at what we received last year and the city would receive either 5% more than what we received the prior year or the Consumer Property Index (CPI) increase, whichever is less.

She went over the Property Tax Levy Year 2023 Booklet. She explained the Truth-in-Taxation and the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL).

She commented that the total amount of the Levy for 2023 is \$2,589,000 for the tax levy for all funds and it will be brought to the Council next week for approval.

She commented that most of one's tax bill goes to the schools and the city only receives 6.45% of tax bills. She stated that 62% goes to schools, fire protection district receives 13%, County receives 7%, Crest Hill receives 6%, and the park district receives 5%. She also stated that we only budgeted 15% of property taxes that went into the general fund.

She discussed the extension limitation law and staying within the 5%. She also commented that our bond rating of AA has not changed. She stated that if a city takes on additional debt that will affect your bond rating, but the city hasn't and the city has been fiscally responsible and has done a great job with not taking on any debt.

Interim Management Consultant Steve Gulden commented that going back to the Communication Specialist position and how this would be great to put on social media how the residents only pay 6.45% for public service such as, police, public works, watermain breaks, and snow plowing.

Mayor Soliman commented that it is great that there are 36 municipalities in Will County, and we are number 15 and if you get your property tax rebate check we are number 12 out of 36 municipalities. He also stated we are funded 80% by the Police Pension Fund, which is one of the highest for this area and we are very lucky. He also commented that with the AA Bonding rate we are number 3 out of 22 rankings which is a good ranking.

Alderperson Oberlin commented that we did a lot of hard work to get the Police Pension funded correctly and wanted to thank all the Council members, along with Director Banovetz and Treasurer Conklin.

Mayor Soliman also wanted to thank the past officials and past city Finance Directors and Treasurers for getting us where we are.

Treasurer Conklin commented that we are closer to 70% with the Police Pension Fund. Mayor Soliman commented that 70% is impressive as well. Treasurer Conklin commented that they have taxed everything they could and still ended up being much less expensive than others.

TOPIC: Stop Sign Placement behind 20631 Renwick Road

Police Chief Ed Clark commented that he is addressing a situation that Alderwoman Gazal brought to his attention regarding residents that are concerned about the lack of stop signs at the roadway easement behind Crusade Burger located at 20631 Renwick. Chief Clark stated that he believes that this had fallen through the cracks during the development. He commented that he went out and took some ariel pictures and has talked to Caton Development who was helpful on how things worked. He also commented that he looked at the area and found locations where stop signs could be placed. He and Attorney Stiff have been discussing how we can get these stop signs accomplished. Attorney Stiff commented that these are private roads and if we can get the owner of the strip mall where Crusade Burger is located to agree to place a stop sign on their property but then the question will be enforcement, and he doesn't know who we can go to and get an enforcement agreement. If the Council is interested, we would need to get ahold of the other property owners and see if they are willing to allow the Police Department to enforce the stop sign on a private road. He also commented once you start placing something on a private roadway you have the duty of maintaining that stop sign.

Alderwoman Gazal commented that back in the day the city should've followed through when this area was developed. The city should have done a traffic study and placed stop signs.

Attorney Stiff commented that if the city wants to put a stop sign and the property owner will allow it there is still the question of how we enforce the stop sign and have an enforcement agreement with everyone who owns that road.

Steve commented that typically before you go into a retail development you must have so many feet before you can have another stop sign. He also commented that if you don't get four property owners to sign off on an enforcement agreement, he would highly advise not to put a stop sign because if there is an accident you will be sued.

Alderwoman Gazal asked who was enforcing the stop sign behind the bank, it is the same road. Steve commented that we cannot enforce the stop sign since it is private property.

Alderman Albert commented that the only difference from the bank stop sign is that they are entering into a public road and the private property stop signs would be entering into additional private property.

Attorney Stiff commented that the city has immunity for not following a law that is in the books, you can't sue the city for not following one of your own ordinances or statutes. He also commented that if he was in an accident in a mall parking lot it would be between the parties and not the city and could possibly end up in civil court. Steve commented that would change if we put a stop sign up with no enforcement agreement and no ability to enforce the stop sign, and then be sued for not enforcing the stop sign.

Alderwoman Gazal questioned how we enforce the stop signs that we installed in Remington, is it because it comes out to Ontario, a public road. Chief Clark commented that it is because we have an enforcement agreement.

Steve suggested putting up temporary signs that say cross traffic does not stop, until we can get all four agreements, which Caton Development would have to do.

Alderman Albert asked what about a special service area for this since this is going to be a problem once it is developed because the center of the roadway is property lines. Steve commented that it will be a disaster, but the best thing would be if an investor purchases the vacant lots and the approval process the city can say you need to do these things in the process. Steve commented that typically a special service area is to do it before the development is built and must be unanimous.

Alderman Vershay commented that this was a big discussion long ago and he isn't sure if this property is even in the city. Steve commented that he is assuming it is since the County has it in the city.

Mayor Soliman asked when this was built, and it was noted in the early 2000's. Alderman Albert commented that the problem comes in when it was subdivided, and it didn't include any rights-of-way. Steve commented that in the future when the streets have potholes and cracking and there is no mechanism to get this fixed and the business owners do not want to pay for it then it will turn into a nightmare when code violations are given to these business owners.

Alderman Albert commented that if the rest of the property gets developed it will be easier to fix these issues but right now, we cannot put stop signs on private property.

Alderwoman Gazal asked if we could check how much the lots cost and maybe the city can invest in buying the lots. Steve commented that the two big inner lots were \$2,000,000.00 each and it was agreed to \$1,000,000.00 each six months ago.

Steve recommended that we should contact the owners of the strip mall to erect a sign stating that cross traffic does not stop and contact the owners of the other properties and investigate a special services area.

Chief Clark commented that he can provide owners information and start documenting conversations with them, and he will contact the owners regarding cross-traffic signs, especially Crusade Burgers.

Attorney Stiff asked if there have been any reported accidents to our knowledge. Alderwoman Gazal commented that two residents, one that lives on Heron was upset because he has felt twice that he was going to get in an accident and at nighttime people are speeding out of the restaurant. She commented that just the other night a car flipped on Borio in that area.

Police Chief Clark also commented that he wanted the Council to know they are fixing the prisoner phone since the other one was ripped off the wall and wanted to let them know there will be an invoice for that coming shortly.

TOPIC: Consideration of Plan Commission Recommendation to Approve Flagpole Set Back Variance at 2386 Jorie Court

Interim Director of Community Development Ron Mentzer commented that at the last Plan Commission meeting they reviewed and unanimously approved a setback for a variance request for a proposed flagpole for Reza Auto Repair located at 2386 Jorie Court. The flagpole would be on the east side of the property. The zoning ordinance requires the setback from all property lines a distance equal to the height of the flagpole. The flagpole's proposed location complies with the setback requirement of the property lines. There is a unique circumstance with this property which is a storm water out lot that separates this property from Gaylord Road.

Alderman Oberlin commented that there is no issue for him to have the flagpole and she has no problem with the variance.

Alderman Albert asked if this will be just an American flag on the flagpole. Reza Jaddi, the owner of Reza Auto Repair, stated that it would be a larger version of the American Flag at the top and underneath would be a Blue Line Flag that would support Law Enforcement. Alderman Albert asked if that could be a condition of the approval. Attorney Mike Stiff commented that you cannot dictate content. Alderman Albert commented what if he puts up a Reza Auto Repair Sign. Interim Management Consultant Steve Gulden commented that there is nothing you can do about it. Legally we cannot dictate what other flags are placed on the pole.

Aldersperson Oberlin asked how long the current flagpole has been there and has the same two flags been on the pole that entire time. Reza commented yes and approximately four years.

Reza commented that they have always had an American Flag hanging on the front of his building. He also stated he has been there thirteen years and is a permanent fixture and he owns ten properties in the City of Crest Hill, and he wants to show his pride for our Country.

Alderman Vershay asked if it falls will it fall in the street. Attorney Stiff commented that it will either fall into a retention pond, parking lot, or into the building on his property.

Mayor asked if any Council member has a rejection with the request of the variance on the setback. There were no Council members that had a problem with the setback.

TOPIC: Consideration of Reza's Auto Repair for a Waiver of the Standard Variance Application Fee

Mayor Soliman commented that Mr. Reza Jaddi is a veteran and the mayor thanked him for his service. He also commented that the Plan Commission was asking for consideration of a waiver of the Plan Commission fee. Interim Director of Community Development commented that about three years ago the City Council approved a fee resolution, establishing what the fees would be for these types of applications. He noted that in a commercial setting the application for a variance is \$1,000.00 and if this was a residential setting the fee would be \$150.00. Those fees are collected to offset the cost of processing these types of requests. The Plan Commission was upset with the variance charge for an American Flag. They felt the \$1,000.00 was steep in this case. The applicant submitted an email asking to have this fee waived. Interim Director Mentzer and Interim Consultant Gulden met and after discussion it was suggested to have a fee of \$250.00. This would be more than a residential situation but far less than what we normally charge for a setback variance.

Alderman Albert commented that the same work is involved if it is residential or commercial.

Aldersperson Oberlin asked if we are looking to alter the ordinance going forward. Ron commented that it is something we can do. He does feel this is a unique situation because it could be more of an elaborate setback variance request. Ron suggested maybe modifying the fee chart that was approved to specifically state commercial setback variance for flagpoles. Attorney Stiff commented that as of now the fee schedule is for variances in a commercial setting, across the board. This could take a lot more work than a variance for a flagpole. He believes you can have a separate fee for flagpoles, but he would suggest not lowering the fee for commercial variances.

Alderswoman Gazal asked how we can control this and will this open a can of worms. Steve commented that we can deny the variance.

Aldersperson Oberlin commented that she has no problem with having a reduction for flagpole variances only, but we need to be fair and consistent. Alderman Cipiti commented

that he has no problem with looking at the structure of the fees but until that happens, we should go with what we currently have.

Mr. Reza stated that he wanted to be very clear, he is not asking for a waiver. He stated that he wants to pay but feels the fee should have been more on the residential side of it. He commented that he feels the fees for a commercial and residential variance should be closer in cost. Reza commented that he would like to make it easier for anyone else to put up a flagpole and not be discouraged by the costs. He stated that he knows there is a process and does not want a waiver and is willing to pay the proposed amount.

Steve recommended that we come back with a revised fee schedule then look at refunding Mr. Reza back the difference.

Alderpersion Oberlin commented she does not want to punish a good businessman from displaying the American Flag and think Steve's recommendation is a wonderful idea.

Alderman Vershay commented that anyone who wants to put up an American flag should not be charged since they are proud of our Country. He also stated he is proud of Reza Jaddi.

Alderman Cipiti commented that he liked Steve's recommendation and then change the fee going forward. Steve commented that at that time we would refund Mr. Jaddi if approved by the Council.

Alderman Jefferson commented that after hearing the explanation of all the fees associated with the variance, he is agreeable with the recommendation from Steve.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Stuart Soifer, the president of the Renwick Club Homeowners Association, gave a little history on the stop sign. He commented that over twenty years ago the subdivision was turned over to the homeowners. He commented that board members, the previous Police Chief, the Fire Chief, the City Engineer, the City Attorney, and himself were all at a meeting regarding the same issues about the stop signs. They were told that the city does not pay for anything on private property. They have an agreement for enforcement which allows the police during an accident to assign a ticket. He commented that they spent several thousand dollars placing stop signs on their own at the locations that the Police Chief wanted them and have replaced them twice. He also commented he just signed a check for \$3,800.00 to replace signs again. He stated that if stop signs are going to be placed and paid for with city funds, he wanted to know where he sends the invoices to be reimbursed for what they have spent since the city is going back on what he was told twenty plus years ago. He stated that he had approved a check for \$500,000.00 to resurface their streets, which they had to do on their own. Stuart commented that at a meeting with the mayor, Mr. Gulden, and the property manager and himself questions came up about doing their streets and the question came up and was asked what if we don't take care of the streets, the mayor commented that if the streets become in disrepair and an issue to the city, the city will take care of the streets and then assess the homeowners. He stated that if the city fixes the streets, he hopes you bill special assessments to the property owners that are there.

Steve commented that under that scenario it all depends on what the agreement says which it may say that the city has a right to special assess but, in this case, there is no agreement. Stuart commented that he does not believe there is an agreement. Steve said under this case the city would not be able to do that.

Alderpersion Oberlin asked when you say there is no agreement you mean addressing this issue or no agreement in general.

Police Chief Ed Clark commented that he had the Deputy Clerk, Karen Kozerka look for an agreement and they could not locate an agreement. Steve stated there is an ordinance approving the plan but no specific agreement regarding the covenants and restrictions, and development agreement. Chief Clark commented that one of the issues was the actual name of the development.

Alderpersion Oberlin commented that she remembered there was an issue with fencing, and he had a document that specified he did not have to have an actual fence. So, there was some agreement at that time.

Attorney Stiff commented that he asked his real estate paralegal to pull the plat of survey which would give us some amount of information.

Steve stated that the agreement must specifically spell out that the city can conduct repairs, if the HOA refuses to, otherwise, the city cannot.

MAYORS UPDATES:

Mayor Soliman commented that he received an email from Ms. Carolina Kon who is the Executive Director for Bridges for a New Day. They were in Lockport for twenty years and Romeoville for ten years and they moved to Crest Hill a month ago. They are located at 16151 Weber Road in the Lower Level, and they would like to do a ribbon cutting this Wednesday, September 27, 2023 between 1:00p.m. – 4:00 p.m. He also said she will have Mary Kay Campbell from the Romeoville Chamber there as well. Everyone is invited.

Mayor Soliman also commented that he received a call from Ron Romero from the cable company. He commented that Ron is looking to move on from the City of Crest Hill since he is busy with the Rock n Roll Museum in Joliet and a couple other things and his schedule is not permitting him to be at the city as often as we need him to be. He stated that Ron asked the mayor to find a replacement for him. The mayor asked him about the interns he had in the past and he was told that they all graduated and have moved on to other jobs. Mayor Soliman commented that Ron would stay on as long as he could. Mayor Soliman asked the Council if they knew of anyone who may be interested in the position. Ron would stay on as long as he could as a courtesy.

Alderwoman Gazal commented that we need to post this position and look for someone professional with experience since we have very expensive equipment. We need to have a resume and know their past experiences since we have invested a lot of money into this room.

Alderman Cipiti asked if this is a paid position and what the pay is. It was commented that it is \$200.00 per meeting and some time he puts in during the week.

Steve commented that we would need a job description and what skills are needed for this position and post it.

Alderman Albert commented that the position is really the recording and uploading of the actual meeting but what throws it off is the long late nights when there is executive session, and this person must wait until that is over.

COMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES:

No committee updates tonight.

ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES:

Steve commented that Interim Director Ron Mentzer and Interim Planner Maura Rigoni and himself met with Gas N Wash which is under construction and making great progress. Steve stated that they are requesting a sales tax and/or TIF agreement with respect to the development. We have turned this over to our TIF Consultant Kane, McKenna & Associates, to analyze and we will give it to Engineer Wiedeman to review. Recommendations will come to the Council within the next four to six weeks.

Alderman Gazal asked if she could speak about Staff Meetings. Steve commented that Alderman Gazal asked him to put on the agenda an executive session regarding staff meetings. After it was added to the agenda, Attorney Stiff told Steve it could not be an executive session under exempt staff meeting because what Alderman Gazal wants to talk about is not just staff. Attorney Stiff advised Steve to take it off executive session.

Alderman Gazal stated that several department heads had brought this to her attention. She commented that a staff meeting is for the staff to meet with department heads and would like clarification if elected officials are in attendance, would that open the meeting to all elected officials. Steve stated that you cannot have more than two alderpeople. Alderman Gazal stated that if more elected officials choose to go to the staff meeting then we will need to post these meetings and then we are inviting the residents to the staff meetings. Some of the staff are not comfortable with an elective official being there. She commented it should be the City Administrator and the staff.

Attorney Stiff commented that elective officials typically don't attend staff meetings.

Alderman Gazal asked City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall if she attends the staff meetings. Clerk Vershay-Hall commented that she does attend the meetings and has been for many years. Steve commented that he would not turn any elected official away unless there were more than three or more in attendance.

Alderman Oberlin commented that if it is a staff meeting then it should be staff attending and if one elected official is invited then all elected officials should be invited, and the point of the meeting is for the staff to meet.

Alderman Cipiti asked Clerk Vershay-Hall if she feels she needs to attend these meetings and if you didn't go would it affect anything. Clerk Vershay-Hall commented that some things do pertain to the Clerk's Office and what needs to go on the agenda. Alderman

Gazal commented that the Clerk doesn't decide what goes on the agenda, the Administrator decides what goes on the agenda and gives the agenda to the Clerk's Office. Clerk Vershay-Hall commented that if you guys do not want me there, she doesn't care. Alderwoman Gazal commented that back in the day no elected officials attended the staff meetings and some of the staff are asking her and unfortunately, she is always being the bad person. Clerk Vershay-Hall commented that the clerk has always been in the meetings. Alderwoman Gazal commented that she had never seen the past clerk Vicky Hackney ever in the meetings. She also commented that there is a line an elected official should not cross.

Alderman Vershay commented that staff meeting should be for only the staff working there. He also commented that just as the City Council's job is only for legislation. He stated elected officials should not stick their nose where it doesn't belong.

Alderman Albert commented that it is a tough conversation based on how the city is structured at this moment. He commented that the Treasurer is an elected official and is also the direct supervisor of staff and should certainly be welcomed because he has staff. He also commented that he doesn't believe we ever got a clear definition of staff in the Clerk's Office. At one time it was said that if the Deputy City Clerk is acting as the Deputy City Clerk she would work underneath the City Clerk, therefore Chris would have staff there. He also mentioned that he thought the administrative clerks were to report directly to the city administrator. He commented that once that is all clarified then we can discuss who can be at the staff meetings based on who has staff.

Clerk Vershay-Hall commented that awhile back when the Council approved that the Treasurer would control his staff and the Clerk would control her staff. Alderwoman Gazal commented that Treasurer Conklin does not control his staff and that the Finance Director Lisa Banovetz controls the staff and let's not mix things up, Treasurer Conklin does not run the office and he does not manage staff. She commented that the Finance Supervisor does which is Lisa Banovetz, and she is not sure why they keep dragging Treasurer Conklin into things.

Alderman Albert stated that it is because the way the ordinance is read, and that Director Banovetz is under Treasurer Conklin as staff, and he would be responsible. Treasurer Conklin stated that the Finance Director Lisa Banovetz is his only responsibility. Treasurer Conklin commented that he would be represented at the staff meeting by Director Banovetz. He also stated that we need to call it what it is, which is a desire to exclude City Clerk Vershay-Hall from staff meetings or himself or your own self from staff meetings.

Mayor Soliman asked the City Attorney Mike Stiff if he can ask for a straw vote for something not on the agenda. Attorney Stiff commented that it is just a straw vote and the vote that counts would be at the regular meeting. Alderman Albert stated he would like to have a recommendation from the person running the staff meeting. Steve commented that he has never been to a staff meeting where an elected official has been. He commented that typically a representative staff member from the Clerk's Office should be at the staff meeting.

Alderwoman Gazal commented when the past City Administrator, Jim Marino, was here the Deputy Clerk was attending the meetings. Clerk Vershay-Hall commented that at that time the Clerk was working and was not retired at the time.

Alderwoman Gazal asked Attorney Stiff if the Deputy Clerk was acting as a Deputy Clerk, she would be under the Clerk but when she is not acting as Deputy Clerk she would be under the Administrator and so would the other clerk. Attorney Stiff commented that that is correct that the Deputy Clerk is only under the Clerk when doing Deputy Clerk things.

Alderman Cipiti commented that the Deputy Clerk should attend the staff meetings or a designee in her absence to get the information needed from the staff meeting and report back to the Clerk.

Clerk Vershay-Hall asked then why the administrator doesn't have his clerk in the staff meetings. Steve commented that he agrees she should be invited into the staff meetings.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote regarding if any elected official should be allowed to attend the staff meetings.

AYES: None.

NAYES: Ald. Gazal, Vershay, Dyke, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Jefferson

ABSENT: None.

Alderman Albert commented that he is voting no but we need to allow an elected official to host the staff meeting if there is no city administrator at that time.

Attorney Stiff stated that this should be put into a policy and this policy would not apply if there were an administrator vacancy and the meeting would then be conducted by an elected official which then needs to be decided if that is the mayor or not. He also stated he is envisioning this as a resolution for the policy and not go into the handbook.

Alderman Jefferson originally passed his vote and then changed to a no after the attorney explained the policy passage that will be done.

Alderman Albert commented that the timers on the lights outside are wrong and they need to come on earlier when the sun is setting. He also commented that possibly before the open house we could get soap and paper towel dispensers in the bathrooms. Alderman Albert commented that we need to get a professional in to look at the audio in the Chambers. He has received several complaints about not hearing good when they watch the meetings on television. Clerk Vershay-Hall commented that the microphones are direct and not surround and they are microphones from the old building. Alderman Albert stated that they are not doing us any good and we sit so far from them.

Alderwoman Gazal commented that at IML they have something on their walls for soundproofing and echoing and she commented that she has a picture.

Stuart Soifer commented that it is hard to hear while sitting in the audience and he has come close to asking for an assisted listening device for the meetings. He also commented that the microphones are not the correct microphones for this kind of application. He stated that the room is what they in the sound industry call a very lively room and the sound just bounces off the walls since there is nothing to absorb the sound. He stated that with these microphones you need to be really onto them when you are speaking in them. He commented how the Council members will speak while others are speaking, and he feels the Council needs to get a decorum on rules of order and put in a request to speak system

for this kind of situations and this will also address the other issue that Alderwoman Gazal brought up a few weeks ago about some comments that were potentially made.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:09p.m.

Approved this _____ day of _____, 2023

As presented _____

As amended _____

CHRISTINE VERSHAY-HALL, CITY CLERK

RAYMOND R. SOLIMAN, MAYOR