

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
CITY COUNCIL OF CREST HILL
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS
October 19, 2026

1. OPENING OF MEETING

The regular meeting of the City of Crest Hill was called to order by Mayor Raymond R. Soliman at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 20600 City Center Boulevard, Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited in unison.

3. ROLL CALL

Roll call indicated the following present: Mayor Raymond Soliman, City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall, City Treasurer Jamie Malloy, Alderman Angelo Deserio, Alderman Darrell Jefferson, Alderwoman Claudia Gazal, Alderperson Tina Oberlin, Alderman Mark Cipiti, Alderman Nate Albert, and Alderman Joe Kubal.

Also present were: City Administrator Blaine Wing, Finance Director Glenn Gehrke, City Engineer Ron Wiedeman, Community Development Director Dan Ritter, Deputy Police Chief Ryan Dobczyk, and City Attorney Mike Stiff.

Mayor Soliman stated for the record that he received a telephone call from Alderman Dyke stating that he was unable to attend the meeting.

4. CITIZEN/SPECIAL REQUEST/PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were no agenda items.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT FOR AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

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

6. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Soliman asked if any of the Council members wished to have any items removed from the consent agenda for further discussion. No items were removed.

Mayor Soliman proceeded to read the consent agenda items:

6A. Approve the Minutes from the Regular City Council Meeting Held on October 5, 2026.

6B. Approve the Minutes of the Work Session Meeting Held on October 12, 2026.

6C. Approve a Resolution Approving Agreement No. 1 to the November 3, 2025 Professional Services Agreement by and between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois and Strand Associates which Increases the Contract Amount by \$15,900.00 for a New Amount of \$49,800.00.
Resolution #1461

- 6D. Approval of Pay Request #45 from Vissering Construction Inc. with Direction to Send it to the IEPA for Approval and Disbursement for a Total Amount of \$292,209.00.
- 6E. Approve a Resolution Approving a Health Insurance Opt-Out Incentive Policy and Authorizing the City Administrator to Implement the Policy. ***Resolution #1462***
- 6F. Approval to Purchase the Motorola M500 In-Car Camera System in the Amount of \$12,243.04.
- 6G. Authorize a Recruitment and Placement Services Agreement in the amount of \$17,100 with LocalGov Staffing Solutions with City Attorney Changes.

Mayor Soliman asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda items.

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

City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall provided the resolution numbers:

- 6C: Resolution 1461
- 6E: Resolution 1462

7. REPORTS & COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENTS & ELECTED OFFICIALS

7A. MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Soliman had no agenda items but gave an informational report on the independent forensic audit of the former Crest Hill Events Committee. The report was based on a statement prepared by legal counsel Jason Blumenthal.

Mayor Soliman recounted that he created the Events Committee in 2009 and appointed Aldersperson Oberlin to mark the City's 50th anniversary. After the City picnic proved successful and was made an annual event, the City attorney at the time advised establishing a separate bank account to track donations, sponsorships, and event revenues. Because the committee kept a private account separate from the City from 2010 through 2021, the records available to the auditors were limited. The auditors nevertheless reviewed bank records, contracts, invoices, emails, and other documents.

Based on the available records, the auditors identified no significant red flags indicating that funds had been misappropriated. They also found that record keeping and financial practices did not consistently reflect best practices. They recommended new approval procedures for committee expenditures, tracking of all finances under generally accepted accounting principles, approval of budgets in public meetings, and other transparency

and accountability measures. Some recommendations had already been implemented, and additional policy changes will be brought to the Council in the coming months.

Mayor Soliman noted that since the committee was dissolved in 2021, all event revenues and expenditures have gone through the City's accounting system. The full statement from the auditors and attorneys will be posted on the City website after the meeting. He asked that comments on the report be held until the end of the meeting.

7B. CITY CLERK'S REPORT:

City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall reminded residents that the free community shred event will be held this Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. in the front parking lot of City Hall. Participants are limited to four boxes.

7C. CITY TREASURER'S REPORT:

City Treasurer Jamie Malloy thanked Finance Director Glenn Gehrke and noted that all Council members should have received the attendance chart he prepared. Director Gehrke asked Council members to report any disagreements with it.

City Treasurer Malloy then read two items for approval.

- A. Approval of the List of Bills Issued through October 20, 2026, in the Amount of \$1,411,635.71.

Mayor Soliman asked for a motion to approve the list of bills.

Alderman Jefferson made a motion to approve the list of bills issued through October 20, 2026, in the amount of \$1,411,635.71. Seconded by Alderwoman Gazal. Roll Call: Ayes: Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Deserio, Jefferson, Gazal. Nays: None. Absent: Dyke. MOTION CARRIED.

- B. Approval of the Regular and Overtime Payroll from September 21, 2026, through October 4, 2026, in the Amount of \$307,569.77.

Mayor Soliman asked for a motion to approve the Payroll for September 21, 2026, through October 4, 2026.

Alderman Jefferson made a motion to approve Payroll for September 21, 2026, through October 4, 2026, in the amount of \$307,569.77. Seconded by Alderman Cipiti. Roll Call: Ayes: Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Deserio, Jefferson. Nays: None. Absent: Dyke. MOTION CARRIED.

In response to a question from Alderwoman Gazal, City Treasurer Malloy reminded residents about the property tax rebate. Applications were

distributed with the water bill and must be submitted to the finance office by December 4. Late applications will not be accepted. Rebate checks, in green envelopes, are expected around March 17. Alderwoman Gazal requested that a reminder also be posted on social media for residents.

7D. CITY ATTORNEY:

There were no items to report.

7E. CITY ADMINISTRATOR:

1. Update on Emergency Repair of the Collector Arm at the East Wastewater Treatment Facility with Dahme Mechanical Industries for an Amount of \$38,888.00.

City Administrator Blaine Wing explained that he processed the repair as an emergency because it will take six to eight weeks to complete. Under City code, emergency expenditures must be brought to the Council for authorization afterward. He noted that the new treatment facility is not yet online, so the East plant is the City's only treatment facility. Of its two collector arms, one is out of service, and colder temperatures make mixing and clarification more difficult.

Strand Associates representative Mike Ott described the failed component as critical infrastructure for the plant's wet weather treatment capacity. It is part of the clarifier, the round settling tanks that follow the biological process. Solids settle by gravity and are collected by the two-armed mechanism. Some solids are returned to the process and the rest go to the biosolids train, leaving clean effluent. With only one arm in service, the plant's effective treatment capacity is cut in half. Mr. Ott supported treating the repair as an emergency authorization.

Aldersperson Oberlin made a motion to approve the emergency repair of the collector arm at the East Wastewater Treatment Facility in the amount of \$38,888.00. Seconded by Alderman Albert. Roll Call: Ayes: Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Deserio, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin. Nays: None. Absent: Dyke. MOTION CARRIED.

Alderwoman Gazal asked for an update on the completion of the new sewage treatment facility. Administrator Wing said the full plant is expected to be operational around January or February 2027, with some components coming online this fall. He will obtain exact dates from the engineers and provide the Council a full update.

7F. PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT:

There were no items to report.

7G. CITY ENGINEER:

City Engineer Ron Wiedeman updated the Council on current construction projects.

The Caton Farm Road widening from Oakland to Broadway begins tomorrow and will take about two weeks. It adds roughly a foot on either side to bring the lanes, currently about eleven feet, to twelve feet to accommodate truck traffic, followed by resurfacing. Closures will be daytime lane closures, and the schools, police, and fire departments have been notified.

On the 2026 Roadway Rehab, HMA recycling began last Saturday in Ward 3 and will proceed to Ward 4 and then Ward 2, working south to north. The final surface is expected around the end of the month, weather permitting.

At City Commons, the contractor plans to begin grading and underground preparation tomorrow or Wednesday.

At Inner Circle Phase 1, sodding is expected later this week. At Inner Circle Phase 2, from Marlboro to Hosmer, the water main and services are complete and in service. Storm adjustments and concrete removal are underway, with completion expected in late fall.

At Oakland Avenue Phase 2, from Ludwig to Theodore, storm sewer relocation has just begun, and no water main work has been done. The project, once expected to finish this year, will likely be completed in the spring.

Crack sealing is expected the last week of October or first week of November.

Alderman Albert raised a question about the persistent standing water on Gaylord Road near the railroad tracks. Engineer Wiedeman said a blockage in the railroad ditch and culvert had been cleared by the railroad, and a pipe connecting two large ponds had been cleaned. The blockage had held the ponds at a higher elevation, causing water to come out of a drainage structure at Gaylord Road and over the road into a driveway to the west. He will follow up with the Public Works Director later this week.

7H. FINANCE:

Finance Director Glenn Gehrke had no agenda items. He restated that property tax rebate applications are accepted through December 4. Applications are available in English and Spanish on the website, along with links to the Will County Supervisor of Assessments for PIN lookup and to a copy of the property tax bill.

Regarding utility billing concerns, Director Gehrke said staff review the entire bill and usage data with residents who contact the finance department. He noted that the City controls only the system up to the water meter. He

also said most meters provide hourly reads, with about 30 meters still to be replaced. Slow, continuous usage often indicates a toilet leak. In response to Alderwoman Gazal, he confirmed that the City offers dye tablets that residents can place in a toilet tank overnight to detect leaks, and agreed they should be promoted more.

7I. POLICE DEPARTMENT:

There were no items to report.

7J. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

Community Development Director Dan Ritter thanked those who attended last Tuesday's groundbreaking for The Seasons of Crest Hill. The developer is moving quickly toward foundations and has expressed interest in another project in the City. A press release will follow.

At the former City Hall site, Quik Trip's demolition permits have been approved. The demolition contractor was expected to be available in about two weeks, and the developer has been asked to preserve some bricks.

Kindred Gastro Pub on Renwick, run by a new operator who runs a similar business in Lisle, is expected to open soon.

Acapulco Bakery and Restaurant in the Hillcrest Shopping Center is also expected to open soon.

Director Ritter clarified that a Chuck E. Cheese play facility advertised in a release was for Crestwood, not Crest Hill. He has contacted the company about locating here.

At the next work session, Merichka's Restaurant is expected to bring the first request under the commercial grant program changes adopted in July, beginning with a landscape grant.

The draft comprehensive plan will be sent to the Council and Planning Commission this week and posted on the website for public feedback. An open house and a Planning Commission public hearing will precede Council adoption.

Alderwoman Gazal asked that Willow Falls, including its assisted living residents, be notified before the Quik Trip demolition and that work not begin before 8:00 a.m. Director Ritter agreed to remind the contractor of the 8:00 a.m. start and to notify Willow Falls and the full Council once a date is set.

Mayor Soliman commended Fiduciary Real Estate Development. He said the 260 upscale apartment units at The Seasons of Crest Hill were overdue and will spur economic development along the Weber Road corridor.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:
There were no items to report.

9. NEW BUSINESS:
There were no items to report.

10. COMMITTEE/LIAISON REPORTS:
Alderswoman Gazal announced that the annual WinterFest will be held December 12th, with the time changed to 1:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Planned activities include reindeer, a parade, holiday lights, children's activities, a jumpy house, and food trucks. The Crest Hill Lions have approved assisting with the event.

A holiday light contest will be announced soon.

11. CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS:
Aldersperson Oberlin wished everyone a safe and happy Halloween and asked drivers to watch for children.

Alderman Albert reminded residents of the Crest Hill Lions Club Halloweenie Roast on Halloween, from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., at the Richland Center, Chaney School, and Remington Lakes Park on Borio Drive. He also urged residents to vote on November 3, noting that Richland School has an important referendum on the ballot.

12. PUBLIC COMMENT:
No one approached the podium to make public comments. Mayor Soliman then recognized Aldersperson Oberlin to comment on the Mayor's Report.

Aldersperson Oberlin thanked Alderman Kubal, whom she credited with speaking up during the matter. She said she had waited until the audit concluded because the auditors asked everyone to refrain from comment. She stated that she had been subjected to attacks in the chambers and on social media, and that she had cooperated fully with the auditors. She described the committee's work, including more than 30 events in the 2009 anniversary year, funding through sponsorships and banner sales so that taxpayers would not bear the cost, and support for local schools, the food pantry, the Disabled American Veterans, and police department equipment. She said the committee also paid the police department for its services.

Aldersperson Oberlin explained that the account was private, and that she moved it to a new institution after the previous one made a deposit error and the account needed to be changed when a co-chair left the City. She said her computer later failed and records were lost, though the committee's early records had been kept. She said her personal information was circulated in documents obtained from a financial institution, which she described as doxing. She spoke of using her own money to hire a lawyer for the protection of her private information. She said she had been disappointed by colleagues who had known her for decades. She also objected to Alderman Jefferson's efforts to place a report containing personal information on the public record.

Alderwoman Gazal responded that she understood the experience, having been investigated for six months over an alleged executive session comment. She said she took offense at the singling out of one alderman and that every elected official has a duty to support transparency. She said members had asked for years for reports on the private account and were told no information was owed. She added that the city administrator had signed a FOIA response based on the understanding that the account was closed, and that all Council members were drawn into the matter.

Alderpersion Oberlin clarified that she had not called anyone the best alderman. Alderman Albert said that when the audit was first proposed he voted yes reluctantly and had predicted it would confirm what was already known. He read the portion of the Mayor's report stating that no significant red flags were identified and that no paperwork was available. Alderwoman Gazal agreed there was no paperwork. Alderpersion Oberlin responded that there were gaps rather than a lack of record keeping. She explained that the records were kept on her desktop computer, which later failed beyond recovery, and that she had told the auditors this.

Alderman Cipiti said he took offense at Alderpersion Oberlin's use of the word "revenge" shortly after mentioning his name, and stated that nothing he did was motivated by revenge. Alderpersion Oberlin apologized, saying her remark was not directed at him.

Alderman Jefferson stated that he carries out his fiduciary duties professionally and has no personal discord with anyone. He said he sought only a redacted version of the report to be made public, never the release of personal information. Mayor Soliman then ended the discussion, stating it was time to move forward.

13. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

- A. 5ILCS 120/2(c)(1): The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body or legal counsel for the public body, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee of the public body or against legal counsel for the public body to determine its validity.

Alderpersion Oberlin made a motion to go into executive session on 5ILCS 120/2 (c)(1) at 8:03 p.m. Seconded by Alderman Deserio. Roll Call: Ayes: Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Deserio. Nays: None. Absent: Dyke. MOTION CARRIED.

Alderpersion Oberlin made a motion to reconvene from the executive session on 5ILCS 120/2 (c)(1) at 9:10 p.m. Seconded by Alderman Deserio. Roll Call: Ayes: Albert, Kubal, Deserio, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti. Nays: None. Absent: Dyke. MOTION CARRIED.

14. APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEMS:

City Attorney Mike Stiff stated that there are two actions needed coming out of executive session.

A. Approval of Conditional Employment Offers to Candidates

Attorney Stiff said a motion was needed to authorize the HR Director to make a conditional offer of employment to the full-time water superintendent candidate on the terms discussed in closed session.

Alderman Albert made a motion to authorize the HR Director to make a conditional offer of employment to the full-time water superintendent candidate. Seconded by Alderperson Oberlin. Roll Call: Ayes: Kubal, Deserio, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert. Nays: None. Absent: Dyke. MOTION CARRIED.

Attorney Stiff stated a motion was needed to authorize the HR Director to make a conditional offer of employment to the full-time building inspector candidate on the terms discussed in closed session.

Alderman Deserio made a motion to authorize the HR Director to make a conditional offer of employment to the full-time building inspector candidate on the terms discussed in closed session. Seconded by Alderman Albert. Roll Call: Ayes: Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Deserio. Nays: None. Absent: Dyke. MOTION CARRIED.

15. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business before the Council, and no other action needed from an executive session, a motion for adjournment was in order.

Alderman Jefferson made a motion to adjourn at 9:12 p.m. Seconded by Alderman Deserio. Roll Call: Ayes: Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Deserio, Jefferson. Nays: None. Absent: Dyke. MOTION CARRIED.

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

CHRISTINE VERSHAY-HALL, CITY CLERK

RAYMOND R. SOLIMAN, MAYOR