

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION
CITY COUNCIL OF CREST HILL
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS
October 27, 2025

The October 27, 2025, the 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 Jamie Malloy, Alderman Scott Dyke, Alderman Angelo Deserio, Alderman Darrell Jefferson, Alderwoman Claudia Gazal, Alderperson Tina Oberlin, Alderman Mark Cipiti, Alderman Nate Albert, Alderman Joe Kubal.

Also Present were: City Administrator Blaine Wing, Finance Director Glenn Gehrke, City Engineer Ron Wiedeman, Community & Economic Development Director Daniel Ritter, City Attorney Mike Stiff.

Absent were: Police Chief Ed Clark, Interim Public Works Director Julius Hansen, Building Commissioner Don Seeman, Community Development Consultant Ron Mentzer, Interim Human Resource Manager Dave Strahl.

TOPIC: Feathered Fork Class H Liquor License

Due to audio failure, there was no recording of this item.

TOPIC: Discussion and Direction on The Feathered Fork (20631 Renwick Rd) Façade Grant

Due to audio failure, there was no recording of this item.

Mayor Soliman asked to deviate to agenda items number thirteen and fourteen.

TOPIC: 2400 Waterford Drive – Zoning Variation for Corner Fence

Community & Economic Development Director Dan Ritter explained that this request involved three variations for a corner fence at 2400 Waterford Drive. The property owners were requesting a 6-foot solid fence at the property line, while regulations would normally require a 4-foot fence with an open design set back five feet from the property line.

Director Ritter noted that this was a unique property that backs up to rear yards, not anyone else's front or side yard. There were no known visibility issues or traffic concerns. The Planning Commission had unanimously recommended approval.

The property owners are Ruben and Clara Miranda, but their daughter, Dayanara Miranda, explained they wanted to increase the fence height from four feet to six feet for noise reduction, security, privacy, and consistency with neighboring properties. They also mentioned their current fence was deteriorating.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote to approve zoning variations for 2400 Waterford Drive to allow a 6-foot fence instead of a 4-foot fence.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

TOPIC: 16825 Churnovic Lane, Amazon – City Code and Zoning Ordinance Variations

Community & Economic Development Director Dan Ritter explained that Amazon was seeking improvements for circulation purposes within their site. The request included two variances: one for driveway width and another for landscape modeling requirements. The changes would help control truck traffic flow throughout the site and add pedestrian improvements for employees. The Planning Commission had unanimously recommended approval.

Andrew Obrzut, representing Amazon, explained that they were adding another drive aisle lane to help circulation around the facility without trucks having to leave onto adjacent roadways. The driveway expansion would allow trucks to properly turn in and out of the facility. The pedestrian improvements would allow employees who park their vehicles to walk on sidewalks to the building, addressing a safety concern.

Alderwoman Gazal asked if Amazon could address complaints from residents about employees' driving behavior. The Amazon representative acknowledged the concern and agreed to look into it.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote to approve city code and zoning ordinance variations for Amazon at 16825 Churnovic Lane.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

TOPIC: Tacos Before Vatos Request(s)

The Council discussed requests from Tacos Before Vatos. City Administrator Blaine Wing explained that the business had reached out over the past two weeks, and meetings were held that included the Clerk's Office, Finance Department, and the Building Department. They had several requests and asked to be open as soon as possible but there are still some outstanding balances for the Places for Eating Tax and penalties.

Brianne Alcantar, the owner of Tacos Before Vatos, explained she was unaware that when closing a business temporarily, she needed to either put her tax account on standby or file zeros to show no income. She acknowledged this was her fault for not being better informed. She requested permission to reopen her business while setting up a payment plan for outstanding balances, noting she was part of a new senior program called "Meals on Wheels Dine Around Town."

Mayor Soliman asked Brianne if she had forwarded her mail since she stated that they did not receive any mail from us regarding these fines. Brianne stated that she did not have her mail forwarded while she was closed for renovations, but she never received any mail from the City stating there was anything owed, and she mentioned that her home address was on the application.

Administrator Wing explained that Tacos Before Vatos had outstanding balances for the Places for Eating Tax, late fees, and penalties from adjudication totaling approximately \$5,000.00.

Finance Director Glenn Gehrke clarified the timeline of violations, noting that there were several instances where the business had failed to appear at hearings.

Administrator Wing gave several options for the Council's consideration:

- Option #1 - Cut the \$5,000.00 in half and place them on a payment plan since they are requesting a \$100.00 monthly payment plan.
- Option #2 - The \$5,000.00 would remain and they could work out a payment plan through the collection agency.
- Option #3 - The \$5,000.00 would remain and place them on a payment plan with the City.
- Option #4 - The Council could decide to forgive the full \$5,000.00.

After discussion, the Council agreed that if Brianne paid \$422.65 in cash for the outstanding Places for Eating Tax and late fees, she could reopen immediately. The remaining \$5,000.00 in penalties would remain and be handled through the collection agency. Brianne promised to responsibly pay the Places for Eating Tax on time every month going forward.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote to allow Tacos Before Vatos to reopen upon payment of \$422.65 in cash, with the remaining penalties to be handled through collections.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

TOPIC: Provide Direction for Staff on the DRAFT PFAS Treatment Alternatives

Chris Ulm from Strand & Associates presented detailed findings on PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) treatment alternatives for Crest Hill's water supply system. He began by explaining the City's reliance on eight wells that were drawn from the Silurian dolomite aquifer, known for its vulnerability to contamination due to rapid recharge from surface water. This characteristic makes the aquifer particularly susceptible to impurities, including PFAS.

Chris reviewed recent regulations, highlighting that the EPA and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) have established maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) for six specific PFAS compounds. These regulations mandate compliance by April 2029, with the City having already identified four of its wells exceeding these levels in historical sampling. The PFAS compounds are measured in parts per trillion, an extremely low concentration level that underscores the challenge of detecting and removing them.

To address this issue, five alternative approaches were evaluated. These included:

1. **Remove Affected Wells from Operation:** This would involve only using wells that meet regulatory standards and reducing reliance on those with elevated PFAS levels.

2. **Install Treatment Systems for Affected Wells:** This approach would implement treatment technologies directly at the affected well sites. Among the treatment options considered, granular activated carbon was recommended due to its effectiveness in absorbing PFAS compounds.
3. **Provide Point-of-Use Treatment Systems for Residents:** This method would involve distributing treatment systems such as under-sink filters to reduce PFAS exposure at the point of consumption. However, this could pose logistical challenges, including ensuring compliance with testing each unit.
4. **Purchase Treated Water from a Neighboring Supply:** This option would require sourcing water from a nearby municipality, such as Joliet, capable of providing water that meets PFAS standards. It necessitates additional infrastructure changes and could be costly.
5. **Drill a New Deep Sandstone Well:** This would involve establishing a new well in a deeper aquifer that is less susceptible to surface contamination. However, the deep sandstone aquifer contains naturally occurring radium, necessitating additional treatment processes.

After discussing these alternatives in detail, Chris recommended immediate implementation of Alternative 1. This was considered the most cost-effective and quickest solution, allowing for operation of wells with lower PFAS levels more frequently while reserving the use of affected wells for peak demand periods only. By doing so, the City could minimize overall PFAS exposure.

Council members expressed their concerns about the costs and timeline for implementing these changes, particularly given the anticipated switch to Lake Michigan water by the year 2030. There was deliberation about using potential settlement funds to cover the costs associated with these solutions, notably any temporary treatment options considered under Alternative 2.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote to approve alternative one.

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

NAYES: Ald. Jefferson.

ABSENT: None.

The Council agreed to further explore pilot programs for treatment options at a future work session. This would allow them to assess the practicality and efficiency of potential treatment systems, such as those using granular activated carbon, in reducing PFAS levels.

TOPIC: Resolution Approving an Agreement for Chemical Feed System Upgrades by and Between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois, and Strand Associates for an amount of \$33,900.00

City Engineer Ron Wiedeman explained that at the last Council meeting, they had approved the construction of chemical feed upgrades at the station. This resolution was for Strand to do the inspection and observation of this work, as current city staff would not have time to do it. The proposal was for \$33,900.00.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote to approve the agreement with Strand & Associates for Chemical Fee System Upgrades in the amount of \$33,900.00.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

TOPIC: A Resolution Approving a Construction Engineering Agreement for East Receiving Station Reservoir Improvement by and Between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois, and Strand Associates, Inc. for an amount of \$179,500.00

City Engineer Ron Wiedeman explained that items 6 and 7 were for the same project, with item 6 being for construction engineering and item 7 for geotechnical work. He noted that the City's 2.5-million-gallon tank did not make EPA funding for the current year but would be eligible for the next year. To stay within the construction timeframe, they needed to have these agreements in place to apply for bypass funding through the IEPA.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote to approve a Construction Engineering Agreement with Strand Associates for East Receiving Station Reservoir Improvement in the amount of \$179,500.00.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

TOPIC: A Resolution approving a Construction Testing Agreement for East Receiving Station Reservoir Improvement by and Between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois, and Rubino Engineering, Inc. for an amount of \$12,841.50

As City Engineer Ron Wiedeman had explained, this resolution was for the geotechnical work for the same East Receiving Station Reservoir Improvement project, to be performed by Rubino Engineering.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote to approve a construction testing agreement with Rubino Engineering for the East Receiving Station Reservoir Improvement in the amount of \$12,841.50.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

TOPIC: Exhibit A-Approval of Change Order No. 1 to extend the 2024 Sanitary Sewer Televising and Cleaning Contract with Hoerr Construction, Inc from the Diversion Structure to West Wastewater Treatment Plant for a cost of \$78,293.00

City Engineer Ron Wiedeman explained that the exhibit on page 92 showed the limits of what they were looking to video - from the diversion structure located just south of Caton Farm to the main trunk sewer all the way back to the west plant. The contractor who did the work last year was willing to hold their prices, which Engineer Wiedeman described as "fantastic prices." The only difference between the previous contract and this one was the addition of a clearing brush item because there were additional trees and brush areas that needed to be cleared to access the manholes for visual inspection.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote to approve Change Order No 1 to extend the 2024 Sanitary Sewer Televising and Cleaning Contract with Hoerr Construction, Inc. for \$78,293.00.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

TOPIC: Execution of a Professional Services Agreement with Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd. to Perform Design Engineering Services for the 2026 Roadway Rehabilitation Improvement for the Locations Specified in this Memo for a Not to Exceed Amount of \$69,790.00

Mayor Soliman commented that this topic was already discussed at the last meeting, and we will skip this item.

TOPIC: Discussion on Gaylord Rd Resurfacing and Grand Prairie Water Commission Transmission Main and Gaylord Rd Resurfacing

City Engineer Ron Wiedeman explained that for the Grand Prairie project, a new 60-inch transmission line would be installed from Renwick down Gaylord to Cedarwood to the City's corporate limits at the south end. The water main would be in the northbound lane, but Grand Prairie would only resurface what they disturb - just one lane. He proposed negotiating to have the entire street resurfaced when Grand Prairie completes their work, potentially saving costs for the City. The estimated cost for the City's portion would be approximately \$1 million.

Engineer Wiedeman also mentioned that as part of this project, a short taper as you head southbound toward the west plant would be lengthened to make it less abrupt.

Alderman Cipiti asked if there was a possibility of addressing a congested area at the intersection of Theodore and Gaylord where Spring Creek crosses. Engineer Wiedeman responded that while the culvert would be replaced, widening the intersection might require studies and dealing with wetland issues, which would be beyond the scope of Grand Prairie's project. However, he agreed to discuss this with Grand Prairie.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote to direct staff to work with Grand Prairie Water Commission for an IGA with the City' share of the work to resurface the roadway at Gaylord Road and Cedarwood Drive for an Estimated \$1,100,000.00.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

COMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES: (Communications Committee)

City Administrator Blaine Wing initiated a discussion about establishing a communications committee during the City Council meeting. He pointed out the absence of a formal communications plan and a dedicated staff member to manage communications for the City. Despite this, the City is currently focusing on enhancing several major communication tools, notably the website and the newsletter, which are essential for effective communication with residents and businesses.

Administrator Wing highlighted that the City is working with certain tight deadlines from vendors involved in these communication updates. To manage these deadlines more effectively, he proposed forming a Communications Committee comprising two Council members. This committee's role would be to assist in providing timely feedback, ensuring that communication projects like the website and newsletter proceed smoothly.

Mayor Soliman specifically recommended the appointment of Alderperson Tina Oberlin and Alderman Nate Albert to serve on this committee. He clarified that the committee's primary responsibility would be to focus on the design elements of these communication mediums rather than being involved in content creation. This approach would allow the committee to contribute insights into the visual and navigational aspects of the City's communication tools, which are crucial for user engagement and accessibility.

The proposal opened a broader discussion among the Council members about the criteria for serving on city committees. Alderwoman Gazal raised concerns over past experiences with committee communications and queried whether there is an official policy or ordinance governing who can serve on such committees. City Attorney Mike Stiff provided clarity, mentioning that the Illinois Municipal Code grants City Councils the authority to establish their own rules for standing committees, indicating that municipalities have the discretion to determine the composition and membership criteria for these committees.

Some Council members expressed their views and concerns, with questions about how committee work fits within the broader scope of Council responsibilities. The conversation highlighted the importance of having a structured approach to communication within the City's operational framework, underscoring the need for a committee that could bridge gaps between staff efforts and council guidance effectively.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote to create the Communications Committee.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSTAIN: Ald. Albert.

ABSENT: None.

TOPIC: Fortinet Firewall Licenses

City Administrator Blaine Wing explained that the City typically purchases firewall licenses for one year at a time, but a three-year term would save approximately \$16,000.00. He noted that while only one year was budgeted, the Finance Director was comfortable with the three-year term since the savings were significant.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote to approve the purchase of Fortinet Firewall licenses for a three-year term at a cost of \$70,100.82.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

TOPIC: Third Amendment to Contract for Purchase of Real Estate (Former City Hall Property)

Community & Economic Development Director Dan Ritter explained that this was the third extension for the contract with QuikTrip for the former City Hall property. The delay was due to the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) being extremely slow in their review process for access questions. QuikTrip had done everything asked of them, but they were still waiting on IDOT for a full review.

Alderwoman Gazal expressed frustration with the continued extensions, asking how many more they would grant. Director Ritter explained that the delay was not QuikTrip's fault but IDOT's, and any developer would face the same issues. Council members discussed the possibility of reaching out to state legislators to help move the process forward with IDOT.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote to approve the third amendment to the contract for the purchase of the former City Hall Property with QuikTrip Corporation.

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

NAYES: Ald. Cipiti.

ABSENT: None.

TOPIC: Approval of Well 8 Change Order

City Administrator Blaine Wing explained that this change order in the amount of \$4,068.00 was for replacing an 8-inch diameter pipe that was not included in the original repair scope for Well 8. The existing pipe needed repair, but this was not known until other repairs were being done, which is why it was not included in the original scope.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote to approve the change order for well eight in the amount of \$4,068.00.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

TOPIC: Approval of Well 10 Change Order

City Administrator Blaine Wing explained that this was similar to the Well 8 change order but involved a 6-inch pipe instead of an 8-inch pipe and included a flange inside the tank that needed repair. The cost was \$8,136.00. He mentioned that once this repair was completed, Well 10 was estimated to be operational within a week.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote to approve the change order for well ten in the amount of \$8,136.00.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

No members of the public came forward to address the Council.

MAYOR UPDATES:

There were no Mayor updates.

COMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES:

Alderwoman Gazal reported that she had spoken with the Lockport Township Supervisor Alex about sponsorship for a City event. She mentioned that the supervisor typically dedicates \$7,000.00 to each municipality, with \$1,000 already used for a shredding event.

She needed something in writing to present to the board for the remaining funds. She also reported that township officials would participate in the parade with a decorated bus and invited elected officials who wanted to participate to let her know by the following Monday.

City Attorney Mike Stiff addressed Alderwoman Gazal's earlier question about committee membership, explaining that the Illinois Municipal Code allows City Councils to set their own rules for standing committees but does not designate who can serve them. Each municipality typically establishes its own guidelines.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES:

City Administrator Blaine Wing provided several updates:

1. He reminded Council members to let Marybel know what time slot they preferred for photos on November 3rd, with slots available from 5:00 to 6:50 PM, followed by a group photo at 6:50 PM.
2. He had updated Civil Service Commission information after speaking with the attorney, noting that the commission is not a volunteer group, and he had copies of the fact sheet and petition for each Council member.
3. The City had begun testing the new LED lights, which would display Halloween colors until midnight. He noted that the vendor had done a good job, worked around people in the building, and cleaned up each night. The lights come with a 10-year service warranty and 15-year warranty on components.

City Attorney Mike Stiff advised that there was no need for the planned executive session as the investigation Administrator Wing was conducting was not yet ready to be discussed.

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

The meeting adjourned at 10:13 PM.

Approved this ____ day of _____, 2025.

As presented _____

As amended _____

CHRISTINE VERSHAY-HALL, CITY CLERK

RAYMOND R. SOLIMAN, MAYOR

DRAFT