

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
CITY COUNCIL OF CREST HILL
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS
October 5, 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

Mayor Soliman asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance and to remain standing. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited in unison.

Mayor Soliman announced that Father John Doyle passed away on September 12, 2026, at the age of 93. Father Doyle had served as an active priest for 57 years, including 40 years of ministry to inmates at Stateville Penitentiary. He served as pastor of St. Anne's Church in Crest Hill for 27 years and simultaneously pastored St. Ambrose Parish (now St. Carlo Acutis Church) from 1999 to 2015. He retired in 2015 and was a regular presence at Crest Hill Memorial Day activities and City Council proceedings. Mayor Soliman praised him as a wonderful man and a great priest.

Mayor Soliman also announced the passing of Mr. Bill Gallagher on September 23, 2026, at the age of 89. Mr. Gallagher was a U.S. Army veteran who was active in the Carillon Lakes community and served on the City's Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Board as the residents' representative for approximately seven years. Mayor Soliman described him as an outstanding, well-respected, and generous individual. Mayor Soliman asked for a moment of silence in memory of both Father Doyle and Mr. Gallagher.

3. ROLL CALL

Roll call indicated the following present: Mayor Raymond Soliman, City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall, City Treasurer Jamie Malloy, Alderman Scott Dyke, Alderman Darrell Jefferson (Arrived at 7:09 p.m.), Alderwoman Claudia Gazal, Alderperson Tina Oberlin, Alderman Mark Cipiti, Alderman Nate Albert, and Alderman Joe Kubal (Arrived at 7:08 p.m.).

Also present were: Finance Director Glenn Gehrke, Assistant City Administrator / HR Director Ashley Monroe, City Engineer Ron Wiedeman, City Planner Atefa Ghaznawi, Police Chief Ed Clark, and City Attorney Mike Stiff.

Mayor Soliman stated that he received a message from Alderman Deserio stating that he was unable to attend the meeting. Mayor Soliman then stated that he also received a message from Alderman Kubal stating that he will be arriving late. Alderwoman Gazal stated that she received a message from Alderman Jefferson stating that he was on his way.

4. CITIZEN/SPECIAL REQUEST/PUBLIC HEARINGS

4A. Proclamation-Community Planning Week

Mayor Soliman introduced a proclamation designating October 2026 as Community Planning Month in the City of Crest Hill, in conjunction with the national observance endorsed by the American Planning Association. The proclamation was read aloud. It recognized the contributions of both appointed Plan Commission members and professional planning staff to the improvement of the City of Crest Hill.

Alderwoman Gazal made a motion to Approve the Proclamation for Community Planning Week. Seconded by Alderperson Oberlin. Roll Call: Ayes: Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Gazal, Oberlin. Nays: None. Abstain: Jefferson. Absent: Deserio. MOTION CARRIED.

Mayor Soliman presented a framed copy of the proclamation to City Planner Atefa Ghaznawi, noting that she had brought fresh ideas and considerable experience to the City since joining staff more than a year prior. City Planner Ghaznawi accepted the proclamation on behalf of the Community Development Department, thanking the Mayor, City Council, and both full-time staff and planning consultants for their commitment to public service.

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.

Alderwoman Gazal requested to remove items 6I (Ordinance Amending Vehicle Codes), 6K (Holiday Decor), and 6M (Crest Hill Employee Handbook) from the consent agenda.

Mayor Soliman proceeded to read the remaining twelve consent agenda items:

6A. Approve the Minutes from the Regular City Council Meeting Held on September 21, 2026.

6B. Approve the Minutes of the Work Session Meeting Held on September 28, 2026.

6C. Approve a Resolution Approving an Agreement for 2026 Sanitary Sewer Televising and Cleaning Contract by and between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois and Sewertech LLC for an Amount of \$149,950.00.
Resolution #1458

6D. Approve a Resolution Approving an Agreement for the Crest Hill Commons, Phase 1 by and between the City of Crest Hill, Will County,

Illinois and Austin Tyler Construction, Inc. for an Amount of \$1,743,026.97. **Resolution #1459**

- 6E. Approve an Ordinance Approving Preliminary and Final Plat of Subdivision, Rezoning, Special Use Permit for a Contractor-Based Business Known as Reasonable Tree Experts, and Requested Variation from the Crest Hill Zoning Ordinance with Respect to Certain Real Property Located at 1618-1626 N. Broadway Street in Crest Hill, Illinois (Application of Kurt Fife - Extreme 2017 LLC). **Ordinance #2071**
- 6F. Approve Participation of the City of Crest Hill in the Fifth Cohort of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus EV Readiness Program.
- 6G. Approve a Resolution Endorsing the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus' Greenest Region Compact. **Resolution #1460**
- 6H. Approve a Resolution for a Professional Services Agreement for Weber Road and City Center Area Median and Parkway Landscaping by and between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois and RVI+ Planning and Landscaping in the Amount of \$55,400.00. **Resolution #1461**
- 6I. Approve an Ordinance Amending Section 10-01-10-501 (Restricted Truck Traffic - Designated Streets) of Division V (Special Weight Limits), Article 10 (Special Provisions Pertaining to the City of Crest Hill), Chapter 10.01 (Crest Hill Vehicle Code), Title 10 (Vehicles and Traffic) of the City of Crest Hill Code of Ordinances. (REMOVED for Discussion)
- 6J. Awarding the Contract to P.T. Ferro Construction Company for the Weber Road and McGilvray Drive Intersection Improvement for an Amount of \$227,566.44.
- 6K. Approve the Proposal from Holiday Outdoor Decor (HOD) for Snowflake Decorations in the Amount of \$7,972.75 (REMOVED for Discussion)
- 6L. Approve the Purchase of a Dur-A-Lift DTAX2-39FP Insulated Aerial Bucket Truck Mounted on a 2027 Ford F-600 4x4 Chassis with a Knapheide Steel Service Body from Runnion Equipment Company in the Amount of \$169,239.00.
- 6M. Approve a Resolution Adopting Changes to the Crest Hill Employee Handbook. (REMOVED for Discussion)
- 6N. Approve an Ordinance Approving the Salary of City Planner Atefa Ghaznawi Effective August 18, 2026. **Ordinance #2073**
- 6O. Approve an Ordinance Approving the Salary of Administrative Assistant - Public Works Kimberly Linden Effective October 6, 2026. **Ordinance #2074**

Mayor Soliman asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda items excluding removed items **6I, 6K and 6M**.

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

Mayor Soliman commented that they would now discuss the items that were removed from the Consent Agenda to discuss separately.

- 6I. Approve an Ordinance Amending Section 10-01-10-501 (Restricted Truck Traffic–Designated Streets) of Division V (Special Weight Limits), Article 10 (Special Provisions Pertaining to the City of Crest Hill), Chapter 10.01 (Crest Hill Vehicle Code), Title 10 (Vehicles and Traffic) of the City of Crest Hill Code of Ordinances.

Following a brief procedural clarification between City Attorney Mike Stiff and Alderwoman Gazal regarding the relationship between items 6-I and 6-M, it was confirmed that item 6-I was to be voted on independently, while 6-M and the related City Administrator item (E-1) were to be considered together. No substantive discussion was recorded on the merits of the Ordinance.

Aldersperson Oberlin made a motion to Approve an ordinance amending Section 10-01-10-501 (Restricted Truck Traffic-Designated Streets) of Division V (Special Weight Limits), Article 10 (Special Provisions Pertaining to the City of Crest Hill), Chapter 10.01 (Crest Hill Vehicle Code), Title 10 (Vehicles and Traffic) of the City of Crest Hill Code of Ordinances. Seconded by Alderman Cipiti. Roll Call: Ayes: Kubal, Dyke, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert. Nays: None. Absent: Deserio, Jefferson. MOTION CARRIED. **Ordinance #2072**

- 6K. Approve the Proposal from Holiday Outdoor Decor (HOD) for Snowflake Decorations in the Amount of \$7,972.75.

Alderwoman Gazal raised concerns about the lack of recognition of the Events Committee in the staff memo accompanying this item. She noted that she and Alderman Jefferson had met individually with City Administrator Blaine Wing due to posting timeline constraints, and expressed frustration that the memo did not reflect the committee's involvement in identifying the vendors. She further questioned why committee purchases that are funded through sponsorship revenue and existing budget line items—rather than general tax dollars—required full council approval, whereas previous committees had not operated under the same constraints. Alderwoman Gazal called for a written policy clarifying the committee's spending authority.

Aldерwoman Gazal noted the need to move forward given procurement timelines for holiday decorations. City Administrator Wing was not present to respond, as he was absent and expected to return the following day.

Aldерperson Oberlin made a motion to Approve the Proposal from Holiday Outdoor Decor (HOD) for Snowflake Decorations in the Amount of \$7,972.75. Seconded by Alderman Dyke. Roll Call: Ayes: Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke. Naves: None. Absent: Deserio. MOTION CARRIED.

- 6M. Approve a Resolution Adopting Changes to the Crest Hill Employee Handbook.

Aldерwoman Gazal explained that this item had been missed at the prior meeting and addressed a desire to codify flexibility in employee work schedules—specifically, to allow department heads to authorize schedule adjustments (such as earlier start and end times) for non-bargaining employees in a manner consistent with the existing Local 150 contract language.

Assistant City Administrator / HR Director Ashley Monroe presented draft proposed language that would establish the standard workday as 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. while permitting management to alter work schedules to accommodate operational needs of the City, with a minimum of 48 hours' notice to affected employees. She noted this mirrored Section 7.3 of the bargaining unit contract.

Alderman Cipiti raised a distinction between schedule changes initiated by a supervisor versus those requested by an employee, noting the proposed language appeared to address only the former scenario. Council members expressed a preference to review the complete revised language before voting, rather than act on language not yet formally before them. Assistant City Administrator / HR Director Monroe offered to bring the refined language to the upcoming work session for further discussion.

Aldерperson Oberlin made a motion to Table consent agenda item 6M. Seconded by Aldерwoman Gazal. Roll Call: Ayes: Dyke, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal. Naves: None. Absent: Deserio. MOTION CARRIED.

City Attorney Mike Stiff stated that item E1, under the City Administrator, the Health Insurance Opt-Out Incentive Program is related to this item that was just tabled. He asserted that the Opt-Out issue can be tabled also or voted on as a stand-alone. Aldерwoman Gazal asked which he recommended and he stated that it would be cleaner to have a full document to approve, but there were two abstentions to item E1 and that's why that item was not on the consent agenda.

City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall provided the resolution numbers:

- 6C: Resolution 1458
- 6D: Resolution 1459
- 6E: Ordinance 2071
- 6G: Resolution 1460
- 6H: Resolution 1461
- 6N: Ordinance 2073
- 6O: Ordinance 2074

7. REPORTS & COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENTS & ELECTED OFFICIALS

7A. MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Soliman announced the impending closure of Toton's TV, a Crest Hill business that had operated for nearly 60 years. He recalled the business's founder, Wally Toton, who started the store in the 1960s and had since retired at the age of 86. Mayor Soliman praised the business for its full-service model—including sales, delivery, and repair—and noted that a clearance sale had been underway. He also recognized two other long-standing Crest Hill businesses: Don's Body Shop, approaching the 60-year mark, and Merichka's Restaurant, at approximately 94-95 years in operation, all three of which have remained within the same family throughout their histories. Mayor Soliman extended congratulations and best wishes to the Toton family on their retirement.

7B. CITY CLERK'S REPORT:

City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall announced an upcoming free community shred event, co-hosted by the City of Crest Hill and Lockport Township Government, scheduled for Saturday, October 24, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. in the front parking lot of City Hall. Residents were asked to limit their materials to four boxes.

7C. CITY TREASURER'S REPORT:

City Treasurer Jamie Malloy read two items for approval.

- A. Approval of the List of Bills Issued through October 6, 2026, in the Amount of \$1,312,926.07.

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

Alderwoman Gazal made a motion to approve the list of bills issued through October 6, 2026, in the amount of \$1,312,926.07. Seconded by Alderman Jefferson. Roll Call: Ayes: Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Jefferson, Gazal. Nays: None. Absent: Deserio. MOTION CARRIED.

- B. Approval of the Regular and Overtime Payroll from September 7, 2026, through September 20, 2026, in the Amount of \$329,682.93.

Mayor Soliman asked for a motion to approve the Payroll for September 7, 2026, through September 20, 2026.

Alderman Jefferson made a motion to approve Payroll for September 7, 2026, through September 20, 2026, in the amount of \$329,682.93. Seconded by Alderwoman Gazal. Roll Call: Ayes: Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin. Nays: None. Absent: Deserio. MOTION CARRIED.

7D. CITY ATTORNEY:

City Attorney Mike Stiff reported no agenda items. In response to a question from Alderman Cipiti regarding the status of the City's efforts to obtain ownership of property related to the Jasmine drainage ditch, City Attorney Stiff reported that he had spoken with the property appraiser the prior week and requested that the appraisal be delivered in time for the next work session, at which point the matter would be placed on the agenda for discussion.

7E. CITY ADMINISTRATOR:

1. Approve a Resolution Approving the Inclusion of a Health Insurance Opt-Out Incentive Program in the Crest Hill Employee Handbook and Authorizing the City Administrator to Execute the Program.

Assistant City Administrator / HR Director Ashley Monroe reported that this item had been reviewed at the prior work session. City Attorney Mike Stiff recommended that this item be consolidated with the tabled Employee Handbook revisions and brought back together at the next work session for a comprehensive discussion, rather than being voted on as a standalone resolution. Council agreed with this approach.

Alderman Oberlin made a motion to table the approval of a resolution approving the inclusion of a health insurance opt-out incentive program in the Crest Hill employee handbook and authorizing the City Administrator to execute the program. Seconded by Alderwoman Gazal. Roll Call: Ayes: Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti. Nays: None. Absent: Deserio. MOTION CARRIED.

7F. PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT:

There were no items to report.

7G. CITY ENGINEER:

There were no items to report. In response to a question from Alderwoman Gazal asking if the “pile of water” was being fixed on McGilvray Drive, City Engineer Ron Wiedeman confirmed that drainage improvements in the northeast corner of the McGilvray Drive intersection area had been included in the design.

When Alderman Cipiti asked if the drainage study for the Jasmine Creek area was on schedule, City Engineer Wiedeman replied that the study was on schedule to be completed by the end of October, with a presentation planned for the first workshop in November.

7H. FINANCE:

Finance Director Glenn Gehrke reported no agenda items. In response to a question from Alderman Dyke who noted that council members’ names did not appear on June and July payroll reports, Finance Director Gehrke indicated he would look into the matter and report back.

7I. POLICE DEPARTMENT:

Police Chief Ed Clark reported no agenda items. He announced that the next “Coffee with the Cops” event would be held on Wednesday, October 7, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at McDonald’s on Plainfield Road.

When Alderperson Oberlin inquired, Chief Clark announced that Trick-or-Treat hours for Halloween (Saturday, October 31) would be from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Mayor Soliman noted that there would be no school parade at Chaney-Monge School this year due to Halloween falling on a Saturday. Alderwoman Gazal raised constituent feedback that the hours should extend to 7:00 p.m., noting that nearby Joliet was reportedly observing hours until 7:00 p.m., and asked Chief Clark to look into the matter. Chief Clark agreed to follow up.

7J. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

There were no items to report.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

There were no items to report.

9. NEW BUSINESS:

There were no items to report.

10. COMMITTEE/LIAISON REPORTS:

Alderman Jefferson provided an update on the Winterfest event, scheduled for Saturday, December 12, 2026, from 1:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at City Center, 20600 City Center Boulevard. Planned activities include live reindeer, a parade, holiday lights, kids’ activities, food, and more. The public was encouraged to attend.

11. CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Alderwoman Gazal reminded residents that October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month and encouraged all residents—including family members—to

schedule mammograms and perform self-checks. She shared that she had personally lost her mother to breast cancer.

Aldersperson Oberlin echoed Alderwoman Gazal's remarks, noting that the Council was wearing pink in recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. She also reminded the public that while the disease is more prevalent in women, men can also be affected and should likewise be aware.

Alderman Albert announced that the Crest Hill Lions Club would be conducting their annual Candy Day fundraiser on Saturday, October 10, 2026, from approximately 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Larkin and Route 30 and also at the Dunkin' Donuts on Route 30. He noted that the Candy Day fundraiser is one of the largest fundraisers for the Illinois Lions Club Foundation, with proceeds benefiting children and adults with vision and hearing impairments.

12. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Linda Dyke, Kelly Avenue: Ms. Dyke addressed the Council regarding conduct she had observed prior to the previous work session, in which a City employee was heard belittling two named elected officials for their scrutiny of certain expenditures. She expressed the view that elected officials have a legal and ethical obligation to question City spending on behalf of taxpayers and that City employees should do the same. She called for a public apology from the individual involved. Ms. Dyke also congratulated City Planner Atefa Ghaznawi on her presentation the prior week and requested that the Police Department look into a black truck that had been parked in the grass at 1723 Wilcox for more than two days.

Sue Voitik, Gaylord Road: Ms. Voitik addressed two matters. First, she inquired about the status of work at Jasmine Creek, noting that weeds that had been cut had since grown back. City Engineer Wiedeman reiterated that a comprehensive drainage study was underway, with conclusions expected from the consultant mid-month and a formal presentation scheduled for November 9th. Second, Ms. Voitik raised concerns about significantly elevated water bills, citing a recent bill of over \$600 for a single-occupancy household. She expressed skepticism that the increase was attributable to actual usage, noting she had been away during the periods identified by City staff as times of high consumption, and that her cameras showed no unauthorized water use. Ms. Voitik asserted that Crest Hill water is bad; you cannot drink it, you cannot cook with it and claims that her last pet passed away from the water. Ms. Voitik stated that the citizens of Crest Hill should be given free water and that they shouldn't have to pay these types of bills and then have to buy water at the store also. She claims that the bills are outrageous and there is something going on with the system. Ms. Voitik stated her intention to contact the utility commission to see if they will do an audit on the entire City of Crest Hill. She referenced widespread complaints on social media about water bills 50–70% higher than prior cycles.

Mayor Soliman acknowledged the concerns, attributed the meter readings as reflecting actual flow through the meter, and directed Ms. Voitik to speak with Finance Director Glenn Gehrke after the meeting. He also noted that the City recently adopted a hardship payment plan policy and was exploring monthly billing

as a means of alleviating the burden on residents. Mayor Soliman contextualized the rising bills within the broader Lake Michigan water infrastructure project—a 60-mile pipeline serving six communities and nearly 400,000 residents, expected to deliver Lake Michigan water to Crest Hill by fall 2030. Alderwoman Gazal provided the specific rate increase figure: an 11% increase effective May 1, 2026, raising the rate from \$34.87 to \$38.71 per first 400 cubic feet.

Steve Kemnetz: A resident identified as a contractor corroborated the concerns raised by Ms. Voitik, citing his own observations at several properties he services where he found no evidence of leaks, yet water bills had spiked dramatically—in one case from \$120 to \$380 before returning to \$120. He expressed the view that some AMI meters may be malfunctioning, citing reports of similar issues in South Village, and noted that meters can be adversely affected by lightning and water quality issues. He urged the City to investigate meters when residents complain rather than dismissing them, and asked that staff treat residents with compassion and professionalism. He indicated he had installed a secondary flow meter on his own property to track usage independently. Mayor Soliman reiterated the City’s commitment to working with residents and invited anyone with billing concerns to speak with Finance Director Gehrke. Alderman Albert clarified for the record that while Mayor Soliman indicated costs would “go down,” the more accurate representation is that rate increases would become smaller over time; the actual cost of water would not decrease in the foreseeable future.

Mayor Soliman made an announcement to City Council that the work session on October 12th begins at 6:30 p.m. There will be an executive session from 6:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and the City Council work session will start at 7:00 p.m.

14. ADJOURNMENT:

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

Alderman Dyke made a motion to adjourn at 8:12 p.m. Seconded by Alderman Jefferson. Roll Call: Ayes: Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Jefferson. Nays: None. Absent: Deserio. MOTION CARRIED.

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

CHRISTINE VERSHAY-HALL, CITY CLERK

RAYMOND R. SOLIMAN, MAYOR