

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION  
CITY COUNCIL OF CREST HILL  
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS  
April 29, 2024

The April 29, 2024 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.

Mayor Soliman announced with a heavy heart that Alderman John Vershay has passed away Sunday, April 28, 2024 at the age of 87 years old. John was first elected in 1979 and served forty-five (45) years on the City Council. John leaves behind two daughters and one son. His daughter Christine Vershay-Hall is our City Clerk. We would like to offer our condolences to the Vershay Family, and we thank Alderman Vershay for his forty-five (45) years of dedication, commitment, and loyalty in his years of service to the City of Crest Hill. He made the City of Crest Hill a better place to live, and he will be missed. Mayor Soliman asked for a moment of silence out of respect and honor for Alderman John Vershay and to please keep the Vershay family in your prayers during this difficult time.

The following Council members were present: Mayor Raymond Soliman, City Treasurer Glen Conklin, Alderman Scott Dyke, Alderman Darrell Jefferson, Alderwoman Claudia Gazal, Alderperson Tina Oberlin (Remote), Alderman Nate Albert, Alderman Joe Kubal.

Also Present were: Interim Administrator Tony Graff, Interim Public Works Director Mike Eulitz, Interim Community Development Director Ron Mentzer, Interim Human Resource Manager Dave Strahl, City Attorney Mike Stiff, Deputy Clerk Karen Kozierka.

Absent were: City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall, Alderman Mark Cipiti, Police Chief Ed Clark, Finance Director Lisa Banovetz, City Engineer Ron Wiedeman, Building Commissioner Don Seeman, Interim City Planner Maura Rigoni.

Mayor Soliman commented that he received a text message from Alderman Cipiti, and he is excused from the meeting.

Alderperson Tina Oberlin announced that she is present and attending the meeting remotely due to illness.

**TOPIC: Electric Aggregation Renewal.**

Adam Hoover with NIMEC introduced himself and stated that he is here to discuss the municipal aggregation which deals with residents and moving them over to another electrical supplier in a group purchasing theory. This allows residents to find lower rates than ComEd to save money for their electricity. This program allows residents to move to MC Squared Energy Services, LLC, the supplier, but guaranteed to match the same ComEd rate as the ComEd rate now changes from month to month. There are no savings for the residents now since the rates are being matched to ComEd but there is a civic contribution given to the city.

He commented that they are up for renewal and looking to renew this program. MC Squared is the only supplier who is running the same price match program with civic contribution.

Alderwoman Gazal asked how this will affect the city if we do not renew now. Adam explained that you cannot renew but if you do not you have to wait six months and this offer could not be available when you want to renew, and the residents could get confused switching back and forth.

Mayor Soliman asked if he could explain if we renewed now how notification would work. Adam explained that in the beginning when you first start the program the resident of the city receives a letter stating there is this program, which is on the city letterhead, and this will create questions. During the renewal process, the only residents who receive this letter are the current residents who are in the program and anyone who might be new to the city.

Alderwoman Gazal asked how she would explain to the resident what the benefit is for being part of the program. Adam commented that it provides the civic contribution to the city \$9,000.00-\$10,000.00 annually without costing anyone. He also commented that any resident can opt in or opt out at any time without a penalty.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote to renew the electric aggregation program.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Cipiti.

Mayor Soliman commented that this will be on the May 6, 2024 agenda.

**TOPIC: One Day Liquor Entertainment License Waiver Request.**

Mayor Raymond Soliman commented that John Mauzer, President of the American Italian Cultural Society was present and is requesting a waiver of the one-day liquor entertainment license fee. The outdoor party will be held on Saturday, June 1, 2024 from 2:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. on their property and only for their members of the club. Mayor Soliman commented that they will need a liquor entertainment license for a club member to DJ in the afternoon. Mayor Soliman commented that he spoke with the Chief of Police regarding this, and they are in favor of this.

John Mauzer approached the podium and stated that this event is to give back to their members only, not even their spouses or any guests. There will be children's games, bocci bags, and they will have burgers, brats, and hotdogs, along with free beer. They will section off the back corner of their parking lot and put a temporary fence up where the beer will be.

Mayor Soliman asked for any questions or comments. There were no questions or comments.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote for a waiver of the liquor license fee.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSTAIN: Ald. Albert.

ABSENT: Ald. Cipiti.

Mayor Soliman commented that this will be on the May 6, 2024 agenda.

Mayor Soliman asked to deviate to item seven (7) on the agenda.

**TOPIC: Well's 9 & 12 Iron Filter Emergency Repair Work**

Interim Public Works Director Mike Eulitz commented that there is an emergency repair needed for Well's #9 and #12, the iron filter vessel. In the last month they have noticed some small leaks but recently they have noticed several more leaks to the degree that it is believed to have some type of failure in the vessel. This is like what was happening at Well #11. The Scope of this emergency work will include removal of the filter media, inspection of the filter floor and repairs as needed. This scope will also include all labor and materials involved in replacing the filter floor and legs if needed. If upon a thorough inspection after the filter media is removed, the vessel floor does not need a full replacement but rather spot replacements and welding, then the City will have a deduction in the contract in that amount.

Interim Director Eulitz requested an agreement with USG for an amount not to exceed \$386,386.00. Currently the iron filter was constructed with the well in 1999 and typically the vessels have a lifespan of 15-20 years.

Mayor Soliman commented that well #12 is the largest water tower that we have.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote for the emergency repair work on well #9 and well #12.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Cipiti.

Mayor Soliman commented that this will be on the May 6, 2024 agenda.

Treasurer Glen Conklin commented that this will require a budget amendment.

**TOPIC: HERA Property Registry Professional Services Agreement.**

Interim Director of Community Development Ron Mentzer commented that in 2019, the City Council approved Ordinance #1802 to require owners of vacant properties in mortgage default to register their property with the City. The city subsequently executed a professional services agreement with ProChamps to create and manage the web-based registration platform the city used to process and track these registrations. Unfortunately, ProChamps went out of business in the summer of 2023 and filed for bankruptcy last year and ceased providing Registration Services to the City.

Interim Director Mentzer stated that the City Council had discussions regarding a new vendor proposal who would do the same type of work for the city that ProChamps had done to facilitate the process of those registrations. He also commented that the Council seemed to be in favor of the new company called HERA and authorized staff and the attorney to negotiate the professional services agreement with HERA but because of staff turnover at City Hall, this was not completed until recently. He commented that he has been negotiating with the city attorney and HERA representatives to negotiate the draft agreement and we feel it is a fair agreement and would recommend approval of the agreement.

Mayor Soliman asked if there were any comments or questions.

Alderman Oberlin asked if the city attorney is good with the agreement and the changes. Attorney Stiff commented that he has reviewed the agreement with Interim Director Mentzer and feels the current drafted agreement is good.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote to recommend the service agreement with HERA Property Registry Professional Services.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Cipiti.

Mayor Soliman commented that this will be on the May 6, 2024 agenda.

Mayor Soliman asked to deviate to item five (5) on the agenda.

**TOPIC: Proposed Amendment to Defaulted Mortgage Property Registration Ordinance.**

Interim Director of Community Development Ron Mentzer commented that as stated earlier there was an ordinance passed in 2019 which would require owners of vacant properties in mortgage default to register their property with the city. The ordinance does not apply to all vacant properties and only applies to properties that are in some state of mortgage foreclosure. Most communities that have these types of ordinances subject properties in foreclosure and vacant properties for this type of registration program. He also commented that from a code enforcement perspective, staff feels this would be the right thing for City of Crest Hill to do that would require people that own vacant properties or properties that qualify as vacant properties under the terms of the ordinance to register these properties so that the city has accurate contact information of these property owners in case there is concerns or code enforcement issues with these properties.

Interim Director Mentzer commented that he worked with the city attorney to adjust the city language in the current ordinance to expand it and include vacant properties with the help of HERA representatives who provided some language from other communities regarding these vacant properties.

Mayor Soliman asked if the Council had any questions or comments.

Alderwoman Gazal commented that if the property owners are in foreclosure do you think they care to even register. Interim Director Mentzer commented that they would not care but there will be substantial penalties in the ordinance that would be applied to them. Attorney Stiff commented that the banks are the ones actually foreclosing and they want to register the property and follow the ordinance. He also commented that banks have been contacting us regarding who they discuss the ordinance with to stay current since ProChamps is no longer in business.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote to amend Chapter 5.74 of the city code.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Cipiti.

Mayor Soliman commented that this will be on the May 6, 2024 agenda.

**TOPIC: Plan Commissioner Recommendation on D-Bats Special Use Permit and Zoning Variation Requests – 425 Caton Farm Road.**

Interim Community Development Director Ron Mentzer commented that Platinum Triple Play is looking to open a D-Bats facility in Crest Hill at 425 Caton Farm Road. This property is currently zoned M-2, and this type of use is classified as an indoor recreational facility and requires a special use permit. They also requested a zoning variation that would reduce the number of parking spaces that would normally be required for an indoor recreation facility which is over eighty (80) spaces but reducing the number of spaces to thirty-nine (39) spaces and a related parking setback variance that would be tied to the construction of new parking and driveway improvements. This property is unique since the property owner also owns the adjacent industrial property and they share an access drive.

There was a Public Hearing held by the Plan Commission on April 11, 2024 with a unanimous recommendation for approval. The Plan Commission recommendation was conditional, as follows:

- Finalization of the cross-access easement with the property to the east.
- Finalization of engineering, landscaping, photometrics, and compliance with all building and fire codes.
- The operations of the business should be in accordance with the business plan attached to the staff report.

Interim Director Mentzer requested recommendation of approval to authorize staff and city attorney to prepare the ordinance that would be necessary to formalize the approval of the recommendation.

Alderperson Oberlin commented that it may have a Lockport mailing address, but it is a Crest Hill address and applying for the variance and special use through the City of Crest Hill and would like to know why they are naming it D-Bat Lockport and not D-Bat Crest Hill.

Edith Murillo, owner of D-Bats, approached the podium and explained D-Bat is a franchised business and they name the D-Bats according to where they are located.

Alderman Albert asked what the building is being used for that they will share the property line with because he is concerned that being a M-2 zoning, there could be many trucks coming in and out of this location. Interim Director Mentzer commented that he believes it is part of the cabinet making business.

Edith commented that children are their number one concern. With that said, the way the parking structure is being constructed will allow parking spaces in the front (north) of the building, the east side of the building, then there will be additional parking on the south part of the building, and 80% of the parking will be held in the rear portion of the building with an 'S' curve allowing vehicles to maneuver in and out easily.

Edith commented that while visiting other D-Bat locations, it was noticed that most of the D-Bats are in a shopping center, and you cannot control the traffic of other businesses.

Alderwoman Gazal asked if they will be holding tournaments at this location. Edith commented that they will not be holding tournaments, and they are more of a training facility, and hold camps and clinics. She also commented that to control the number of patrons you must reserve your spot ahead of time. Alderwoman Gazal asked what the capacity is. Edith responded commenting that the occupancy is still being worked on by the architect, but the capacity will depend on the event that is going on.

Alderman Albert asked if there is any guarantee from the property owner that he will not use this new parking lot to move his shipments in and out. Interim Director Mentzer commented that the production facility does have more than one driveway, there is another on the other side of the facility, which is a shared drive with another industrial building.

Edith commented that her summertime hours would be 10:00 a.m. until 8:00 or 9:00 p.m. and the business owner stated his employees are gone by 3:00 p.m. every day.

Mayor Soliman asked if this is a year-round facility and what is the busier season. Edith commented that it is year-round and October, November, December are their busiest months.

Mayor Soliman asked if there were any other questions. There were no more questions.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote for approval of the special use and parking variations for D-Bats.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Cipiti.

Mayor Soliman commented that this will be on the May 6, 2024 agenda.

**TOPIC: Not for Profit Donation Request.**

Mayor Soliman commented that Representative Natalie Manley is awarding the City of Crest Hill a \$250,000.00 grant to be distributed to twenty-five (25) not for profit organizations of the city's choice.

Mayor Soliman commented that he made a list of the organizations of the Council members who responded with their choices. The Council members that responded were Alderwoman Gazal, Alderperson Oberlin, Alderman Dyke, Alderman Albert, and the Mayor. He commented that there were fifty-one choices.

Mayor Soliman commented that there were nineteen organizations agreed upon in the lists, so we are needing to make decision on six more to add. He also commented that Representative Manley was very adamant about the playgrounds having 'buddy benches', which is a bench that is at a park for the child who is shy or doesn't have friends and if they go and sit on the bench other children will know to go sit with this child and make a buddy.

Mayor Soliman commented that another organization that did not get more than two votes was the Special Olympics, which are Crest Hill Police Department does a lot with this organization.

He also explained a new organization called Honor and Remember Illinois, which is for the family of the Veterans who have lost a loved one.

Discussion was had regarding changing their choices since some did not realize some of the organizations were not for profit organizations. Alderman Albert commented that he feels there should be more discussion with the Council among the fifty-one organizations on the list, there are twenty-five organizations that are within the City of Crest Hill.

Mayor Soliman commented that now that we understand more of what Representative Natalie Manley is looking for and he asked that the Council that did not participate could make a list and the Council wanting to change their choices bring a new list and we will bring this back at another work session in May.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

There were no Public Comments.

**MAYOR UPDATES:**

There were no Mayor Updates.

**COMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES:**

Alderman Dyke commented that WGN is doing 66 days of giveaways on Route 66 and will be awarding listeners gift cards from various establishments along Route 66 and on the 67<sup>th</sup> day WGN radio will award one lucky listener a grand prize of gift cards to all sixty-six establishments.

This opportunity is a total of \$550 per day for members (\$400 sponsorship plus \$100 gift card and \$50 gift card).

- Sponsors will have two live reads per day and three fifteen second recorded promotions
- Listing on the WGN contest page

- Inclusion on WGN social media and newsletter and much more

Other cities and villages have questioned the gift card piece of this sponsorship, but what you could do is purchase gift cards from a restaurant in the city.

It was asked for Alderman Dyke to call and get more information on this and the cost.

Mayor Soliman asked if he could get the information and have it for the May 6, 2024 meeting.

#### **CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES:**

Interim Administrator Tony Graff had no updates.

Alderwoman Gazal asked if he had heard anything on the microphones. Interim Administrator Graff commented that there is a next generation on the microphones and LVS and the other company are recommending more microphones at all seats, which would be more surround. He also commented that they are going to give us a quote with microphones at each seat.

Interim Administrator Graff informed the Council that Harbour delivered the cornerstone, and he would like directions on where they would want this placed. It is recommended that we should get a flat stone on top of the brick if it is placed outside. He also commented that he will take pictures and send them in an email, and they can do a vote.

Mayor Soliman asked for a motion to go into executive session on Personnel 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) and Litigation 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11).

(#1) Motion by Alderwoman Gazal seconded by Alderman Albert, to go into an executive session on Personnel 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) and Litigation 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11).

On roll call, the vote was:

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Cipiti.

There being six (6) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

Executive Session 8:15 p.m.

(#2) Motion by Alderperson Oberlin seconded by Alderman Jefferson to reconvene from the executive session on Personnel 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) and Litigation 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11).

On roll call, the vote was:

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Cipiti.

There being six (6) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

Reconvened at 11:21 p.m.



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

The meeting was adjourned at 11:22 pm.

Approved this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
CHRISTINE VERSHAY-HALL, CITY CLERK

\_\_\_\_\_  
RAYMOND R. SOLIMAN, MAYOR

DRAFT