

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION  
CITY COUNCIL OF CREST HILL  
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS  
August 12, 2024

The August 12, 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.

The following Council members were present: Mayor Raymond Soliman, City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall, City Treasurer Glen Conklin, Alderman Scott Dyke, Alderwoman Jennifer Methvin, Alderman Darrell Jefferson, Alderwoman Claudia Gazal, Alderperson Tina Oberlin, Alderman Mark Cipiti, Alderman Nate Albert, Alderman Joe Kubal.

Also Present were: Interim Administrator Tony Graff, Police Chief Ed Clark, Interim Community Development Ron Mentzer, City Attorney Mike Stiff.

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

**TOPIC: Plan Commissioner Vacancy Recommendation**

Mayor Soliman commented that there is a vacancy on the Plan Commission for a Commissioner. Commissioner Jan Plettau had resigned and retired to another state. Jan was a Ward 3 resident. Mayor Soliman recommended Mr. Marty Flynn as the Ward 3 Plan Commissioner and Marty does reside in Ward 3, also. He asked Mr. Marty Flynn to approach the podium and introduce himself.

Marty Flynn approached the podium and introduced himself. He stated that he has lived in Fox Meadow Subdivision since 1998, he is a Field Technician for a Communication Company and before that he was a Communication Electrician for Local 134. He commented that he has two children and three grandchildren and loves living in Crest Hill.

It was stated that there were three applicants for this vacancy and all three were interviewed.

Mayor Soliman commented that Marty has a passion and wants to get involved in city government and he wants to give back to the community.

Alderwoman Gazal asked if the goal was just to have applicants from Ward 3. Mayor Soliman commented that it was not, and it was open city wide. However, we do have three individuals from Ward 4, and two from Ward 3, one from Ward 2, and one from Ward 1, which is good distribution throughout the city. Alderwoman Gazal asked if his decision was based on Ward 3 to have them even. Mayor Soliman commented that he thinks it is good to have semi-equal representation of all the wards in the city, and since Jan was from Ward 3, he felt that would be proper to have a replacement for that ward.

Alderman Cipiti asked if we could have something written in our policy for reappointments to assign a number of appointments to a ward. City Attorney Mike Stiff commented that it could hamstring you if you do not get applicants from that ward.

Alderman Oberlin asked Marty what made him first interested and how he heard about the vacancy. Marty commented that he heard from a friend that there was a vacancy opening.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote to appoint Marty Flynn and if there is a positive appointment he will be at the August 19, 2024, meeting.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

Mayor Soliman informed Marty Flynn that the actual vote will be at the City Council Meeting on August 19, 2024.

Marty thanked the Council for their consideration.

**TOPIC: Special Events Police Service contract with the Crest Hill Lion's Club**

Police Chief Ed Clark commented that the Crest Hill Lions Club is having their "Lions Luau" Sunday, September 1, 2024, from 7:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. at St. Joes Park. They are asking for two officers with two vehicles.

Alderman Jefferson asked if this is voluntary time or paid time and if paid time is it overtime or regular. Chief Clark commented that the events have a formula that the City Council produced twelve years ago. It is an overtime rate, and an administrative fee included for the vehicle as well. It will be calculated, and an invoice is sent to whatever organization is requesting the officers and paid for by the organization.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote for the approval of the special request from the Crest Hill Lions Club for a Special Event Police Services Contract.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSTAIN: Ald. Albert.

ABSENT: None.

This will be on the August 19, 2024, agenda.

**TOPIC: A Resolution Designating XXXXXX as the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) Authorized Agent for the City of Crest Hill.**

Alderwoman Gazal commented that there is no information on this topic in the packet.

Interim Administrator Graff commented that we are forecasting with the absence of our Finance Director, we need to create a resolution to appoint an agent for the city for the IMRF. We do not have that agent yet, but we are working with the Treasurer to see who

he would want to use. Interim Administrator Graff commented that this is like a placeholder. We might make the decision this week, which will go to the City Council.

Alderwoman Gazal asked why we placed something on the agenda that we cannot discuss. Interim Administrator Graff commented that it is standard practice, and we must have an IMRF agent and the Treasurer or the Mayor cannot do it independently and he did not want to bring it to you soon without having it in front of you beforehand.

Alderman Jefferson asked, if possible, can it be someone who has pension fund experience. Treasurer Conklin commented that IMRF operates their own investment and there is no vote by anyone within the organization. This is more for enrollment, resources, and access and not a decision-making role.

**TOPIC: Joint Shredding event with Lockport Township Government and the City of Crest Hill**

City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall commented that Alex contacted her and informed her that the township government would like to do a joint shredding event with the City of Crest Hill. They would like to use the City Hall's parking lot as the location. They will have one staff member on hand and need one or more to volunteer. This will be on Saturday, October 26, 2024, from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m.

Clerk Vershay-Hall commented that Alex had stated if the city does not have money in the budget at this time the township would pick up the cost.

Mayor Soliman asked Alex to approach the podium. Alex Zapian, the Lockport Township Supervisor, introduced himself and thanked the Mayor, the Council, and the Clerk for having him here. He explained that he would like the township to have more collaboration with the municipalities that are incorporated into the township. In the past they have supported events with other municipalities.

Alex stated that he will be at the shred event with a staff member, which they pay out of their own budget, and he can only guarantee one other than himself. He also commented that if the City of Crest Hill could provide a staff member volunteer that would be most helpful.

Alex stated that it would be appreciated if the city could provide some sort of sponsorship for the event. However, he does have a budgeted line item to support collaboration with the city and because they have not provided any support to Crest Hill, they could pick up the entire shred cost if needed. That is an estimated amount between \$1,500.00 and \$1,700.00.

Alderman Oberlin commented that these are wonderful events, and she would like to volunteer for this event.

Mayor Soliman commented that it is a great opportunity, and he would recommend to the Council that we split 50/50 with Lockport Township for the cost of the shred truck.

Alderwoman Gazal asked Alex what dollar amounts they have donated to other municipalities. Alex commented that he had allocated up to \$20,000.00 to support other municipalities. They then divided this with the three municipalities equally, which is

approximately \$7,000.00 a municipality. He then commented that they have supported Lockport with \$6,000.00, and Romeoville with \$2,500.00. Alex then emphasized that any events in the future that Crest Hill may have, the Township of Lockport is more than happy to collaborate on.

Mayor Soliman mentioned that the Police Department is having a Neighbors Night Out Event and possibly they would like to reach out and have a table at the event.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote to split 50/50 with Lockport Township for the Shred Event.

Alderman Albert asked for clarification if this is a true partnership with Lockport Township and there will not be anybody's name on it besides Lockport Township Government and the City of Crest Hill. Alex commented that that is correct.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

There will be an official vote on Monday, August 19, 2024.

**TOPIC: Proposal from GovHR – Finance Director Position**

Interim Administrator Tony Graff commented that they are wanting to move forward and not wait for the Interim Finance Director vacancy. This would be the professional outreach for the cost of \$7,000.00. This is the advertising, recruiting, and then we would do the interviewing that will be chosen by the City Council.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote for a contract in the amount of \$7,000.00 for GovHR for the recruitment proposal for the Finance Director position.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

This will be on the agenda for the Council Meeting on Monday, August 19, 2024.

**TOPIC: Resolution Approving the Appointment of Interim Finance Director and Employee Leasing Contract with GovHR Temp**

Interim Administrator Tony Graff commented that we are searching for an interim, which they did provide us with a candidate. He commented that the Mayor, Treasurer, and himself met with the candidate. This candidate is not looking for a full-time long-term commitment, possibly three or four months.

Treasurer Glen Conklin commented that her experience was good, she asked good questions and had good answers, and her timeline is good to give us the time to find a permanent Finance Director. The contract would be for three months starting on August 13, 2024, and ending on November 22, 2024.

Alderman Cipiti asked what if a permanent Finance Director is not hired at the end of the contract. Attorney Stiff commented that if it is the standard contract, then the contract

would continue for two-week periods until terminated by either party. Alderman Cipiti then asked who would be the one to terminate it on the city side. Attorney Stiff commented that if it is an appointed position and the Mayor's appointment with the Council approval then it would be at the Mayor's direction to terminate.

Attorney Stiff commented that in the past Attorney Santschi explained the issues with a Council terminating the agreement on a mayoral appointment. He also commented that he is happy to discuss this with anyone in a closed session. Alderperson Oberlin commented that she would like to discuss this since it is disconcerting on the extensions. Alderman Cipiti commented that there have been situations when things were not going very well, and many Council Members wanted to have change but were told it could not happen since it was the mayoral appointment. Treasurer Conklin commented that it is the way the law is set up in the State of Illinois. Attorney Stiff commented that the municipal code provides for removal of appointed officers by the Mayor and once the Council has given consent for the appointment, that person can only be removed pursuant to the terms of the removal statute which is the Mayor's control. He also commented that on the other side of this if the Mayor wanted to remove an appointment that has already received advice and consent of the Council the Council can veto that to block that move, with super majority on that.

Alderwoman Gazal asked if they could discuss the hourly pay for the Interim Finance Director and it was stated that it was in the contract stating that it is \$120.70/hour.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote for the resolution approving the appointment of Interim Finance Director Employee Leasing Contract with GovHR.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

**TOPIC: Discussion of Route 66 Tourism Grant Application**

Alderman Dyke commented that last year we had missed the grant, since we did not know about it in time. He then commented that it is that time again and the deadline to submit for the grant is Friday, August 16, 2024, at 4:00 p.m. Alderman Dyke stated he spoke with City Engineer Ron Wiedeman about taking over and helping us and he is willing to do that. This grant would cover several projects which will need to be discussed.

Alderman Dyke commented that with this grant we could have the electrical charging stations placed at City Hall for electric cars. He also commented that when they built the new City Hall the electrical lines were put in.

Interim Administrator Graff contacted Heritage Corridor and talked to them regarding the competitive grants, and this is \$300,000.00 with a minimum of \$20,000.00. We have a concept plan for the Memorial Park next door to City Hall and there is some availability to have Route 66 themes at the park and have the charging stations as well.

Interim Administrator Graff commented that the estimated total project cost for the park would be approximately three million dollars if we do the design that we talked about. Lockport Township Park District and the City of Crest Hill have each put aside \$250,000.00 which will help with Phase I. Phase I would be getting all the utilities done, and having the electricity run out there.

Alderwoman Methvin asked who does the grant writing for the City of Crest Hill. Interim Administrator Graff commented that City Engineer Ron Wiedeman does most of the grant writing and the Police Department does their own grant writing.

Alderpersn Oberlin commented that Route 66 was going to be moving to the Route 53 location once it is finalized, and we should not be basing the park on the Route 66 sign since it will be moved to a new location. Attorney Stiff commented that the agreement requires the sign to be in whatever location we determine for the year of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary and we can always move the sign to another location once that term is up.

Alderman Albert commented that if we needed to, we could always get another Route 66 sign. He also clarified that the park is not called Memorial Park it will be City Center Park but if we are going to move forward with that project this Route 66 celebration is the way to go.

**TOPIC: Special Event Ordinance and/or Policy**

Interim Administrator Graff commented that he placed this on the agenda and needed some more guidance, since he found out the Council had placed a moratorium on the Special Events Ordinance. He thought since there was much discussion about an event being private or public or a partnership there should be more discussion and clarification with the Ordinance designated for Special Events. He then read the Ordinance for Special Events.

Alderpersn Oberlin commented that the Special Events Ordinance was put into place for people coming into the city and not for the City's events.

Administrator Graff commented that the definition has a lot of good language in the ordinance explaining about public and private partnerships. He then asked the Council if we needed a Community Event Ordinance and put in writing what the event is and how it will be supported.

Attorney Stiff recommended following up with other municipalities and seeing how they go about in their municipality handling of their special events.

Alderman Jefferson commented that while doing homework with other municipalities we need to look at some public private partnerships in other municipalities.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Stuart Soifer, a resident, asked if last week it was approved to search for a new city manager and was told the Council did not approve to start the search but would start the search in March of 2025. He then asked what the reasoning for that was.

Mayor Soliman commented that the individual from GovHR was here at the meeting and stated that the timing was not the best for that search and suggested to start the search in March with the upcoming election in April and we could most likely have someone in place by the end of May for the City Administrator position and the City Council voted in favor of the GovHR Representatives recommendation.

Stuart asked for the informal vote count for agenda item six. Mayor Soliman commented that item six was for approving the resolution for an Interim Finance Director and all the Council voted in favor of approving the resolution. Stuart then said he meant agenda item five which was the recruitment proposal for GovHR for the Finance Director position and asked what the difference is between the Finance Director position and the City Administrator position. He then asked why you would go through the process searching for a Finance Director now but not go through the process of searching for a City Administrator until March of 2025.

Alderwoman Methvin commented that the City cannot move forward effectively without a Finance Director.

Alderman Albert commented that we have worked with GovHR/MGT for several years and their recommendation for the City Administrator was to hold off. We have made offers to people who could not commit to that short unknown time and what this Council will look like after the election.

Alderman Jefferson commented that his vote was because he feels the search process has been compromised and he does not feel getting an appointment for the City Administrator at this point and time. He then commented that the Finance Director is different and stated that we are the City of Neighbors but a City that does not work.

Treasurer Conklin commented that they are very different roles. The Finance Director will work with the Council and the City Administrator, and they are not visionary since they do a function, whereas a City Administrator is to develop the Council and Mayor's vision and implement that.

Stuart also asked if there is an update regarding Stateville Prison since it was announced that the prisoners will start being moved. Mayor Soliman commented that we have heard nothing from the Governor's Office, but the prisoners must be moved by September 30, 2024.

Alderman Cipiti asked if we should not wait to be contacted by the State but maybe we should reach out to them for clarification. Mayor Soliman commented that the plan was to move the prisoners by mid-September but now it has been moved to the end of September. Alderman Cipiti then asked how the movement of the prisoners will affect Crest Hill. Mayor Soliman commented that there are about 420 inmates left in Stateville and some will stay in the R&C Center and the rest will be moved out. The impact will be with the sewer and water and the impact will probably be minimal.

Interim Administrator Graff commented that he has calculations of the impact that was done by the engineers, and he will bring that to the next meeting.

**MAYOR'S UPDATES:**

There were no Mayor's updates.

**COMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES:**

There were no committee/liaison updates.

**CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES:**

There were no updates.

(#1) Motion by Alderwoman Gazal seconded by Alderperson Oberlin, to go into an executive session on Personnel 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(5).

On roll call, the vote was:

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

There being eight (8) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

Executive Session 8:02 p.m.

(#2) Motion by Alderperson Oberlin seconded by Alderwoman Methvin, to reconvene from the executive session on Personnel 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(5).

On roll call, the vote was:

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

There being eight (8) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

Reconvened 8:42 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

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

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

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

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

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