

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

The November 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, Alderman Darrell Jefferson, Alderwoman Claudia Gazal, Alderperson Tina Oberlin, Alderman Mark Cipiti, Alderman Nate Albert.

Also Present were: Interim Administrator Tony Graff, Police Chief Ed Clark, Interim Public Works Director Mike Eulitz, Interim Human Resource Manager Dave Strahl, City Attorney Mike Stiff.

Absent were: Alderwoman Jennifer Methvin, Alderman Joe Kubal, Finance Director Glenn Gehrke, Interim Finance Director Erica Waggoner, City Engineer Ron Wiedeman, Interim Community Development Director Ron Mentzer, Building Commissioner Don Seeman.

Mayor Soliman commented that Alderman Kubal and Alderwoman Methvin are excused from the meeting.

TOPIC: EXECUTIVE SESSION 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(1) and 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11)

(#1) Motion by Alderperson Oberlin seconded by Alderwoman Gazal, to go into an executive session on Personnel 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) and 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11) per the memo dated November 12, 2024.

On roll call, the vote was:

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Methvin, Kubal.

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

Executive Session 7:01 p.m.

(#2) Motion by Alderperson Oberlin seconded by Alderwoman Gazal, to reconvene from the executive session on Personnel 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) and 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11) per the memo dated November 12, 2024.

On roll call, the vote was:

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Methvin, Kubal.

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

Reconvened 8:04 p.m.

TOPIC: Renewal Fortinet Licenses

Interim City Administrator Tony Graff commented that this is an annual renewal that handles our firewalls and cyber security. This is recommended by AIS, Inc. and the renewing license cost is \$28,883.46.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote for the renewal cost for the Fortinet Licenses.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Methvin, Kubal.

Alderman Gazal commented that she had requested to look into a new I.T. company and we are now three years later and still no other bids or changes have been made.

Interim Administrator Tony Graff commented that he would ask AIS to inquire about some other companies and get some quotes.

TOPIC: Professional Services Contract for the WY2022-WY2024 Water Audits and Water System Improvement Plan

Interim Public Works Director Mike Eulitz commented that this is the next step to completing our water audit and submitting it to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Engineering Enterprises Inc. is a partner with us, and they have submitted a proposal of \$45,000.00 to do the water audit for the years 2022 through 2024.

Alderman Cipiti asked how much city water was provided to assist with the fire. Interim Public Works Director Mike Eulitz commented that we are in contact with the Lockport Fire District, but they had six tanker trucks that filled up approximately 2,500 gallons each, but he is not sure how many rounds they made. Once they find out how many rounds were made, he can figure out an estimate of how much water was used for the fire.

Interim Administrator Graff commented that they have a meeting scheduled for Tuesday with the Fire Chief and he will have all the data from the fire to review.

City Attorney Mike Stiff asked if the Fire District is taking the lead in submitting a claim to the property owner's insurance company or if the city is making their own separate claim? Interim Administrator Tony Graff commented that they will have more on that after the Tuesday meeting, but he thinks it would be dual claims.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Methvin, Kubal.

Mayor Soliman commented that topics 3, 4, and 5 are grouped together. Attorney Stiff commented that he can speak about topic three but topics four and five do not need discussion, they were on the agenda for safety precautions so they would be on the next agenda for the regular meeting.

Attorney Stiff also commented that these three agenda topics were tabled to November 18, 2024, regular meeting but also placed on the work session agenda.

TOPIC: Discussion of an Ordinance Repealing the Position of Assistant Director of Public Works

Attorney Stiff commented that this ordinance repealing the position of the Assistant Director of Public Works will also create the position of Assistant to the Director of Public Works.

The discussion last week suggested that it was in favor of creating the new position but not eliminate the old position in the event the new permanent Public Works Director comes in and wants an assistant. Attorney Stiff also commented that all of the Assistant Public Works Director duties are being rolled into the newly created position of the Assistant to the Director of Public Works and if you have an Assistant Public Works Director in the future you will have to drastically change the job duties since the new position will already be doing most of the duties.

Alderman Albert commented that he would like to see us move forward with the promotion but restructuring now without a permanent department head does not make sense. He also commented that there will be a need down the road to have an Assistant Public Works Director to fill in and he does not feel the position of the Assistant to the Director of Public Works can fill in for Director of Public Works.

Treasurer Conklin commented that if we retain that job title of Assistant Public Works Director, we need to make sure that we are not budgeting for an Assistant Director and an Assistant to the Director.

Alderman Jefferson commented for the record that he agrees with Alderman Albert.

Alderman Cipiti commented that he does not think we need to be creating any new positions or restructuring until there is more stability at this time.

Alderman Dyke commented that he feels we need to wait until we have a permanent Public Works Director who will be here and assess how he would like to run his department before we go making changes to that department.

Interim Public Works Director Mike Eulitz commented that this is not restructuring the department but more so giving the department stability.

Alderman Gazal asked if Ada Martino could be an interim until we have a permanent Director. Attorney Stiff commented that they still need to create the position.

Interim Administrator Tony Graff commented that Public Works Department needs essential services such as experience on the administrative side just as much as the operations side and this administrative position is a key position and someone is going to have to do the work.

Alderman Oberlin asked what exactly is being done with IEPA and was told that there is a monthly report that needs done for the IEPA for our water and sewer and the

information is gathered by the employee with the water license and then Ada puts the report together and deals with the IEPA. Alderperson Oberlin commented that our employee with the water license needs help as well and has so much placed on his shoulders right now and is being overworked. Interim Public Works Director Mike Eulitz commented that Ada would be his help and has been helping him.

Mayor Soliman commented that he worries since Ada has been doing this for 10 months now and keeping everything and all the reports in order and if she decides that she is going to go back to what her regular duties are and what she was getting paid to do and then the city will be hurt by this.

Interim Public Works Director Mike Eulitz commented that it is not just that, he has had to lean on her because one person cannot do his job and she had to take on some of the smaller projects that Public Works has been running and he is confident enough in her to handle the day to day operations since she already has been doing that for him when he is off.

Alderman Dyke asked what the other clerk, Kim, does at Public Works? Interim Public Works Director Mike Eulitz commented that she answers the phone and does clerical work, handles billing, and works with the mechanics but she does not do anything near what Ada is doing.

Alderman Jefferson commented that even with creating this new position the gentleman with the license that is overworked will continue to be overworked because the newly created position does not have any of those credentials needed.

Attorney Stiff asked if he changed the ordinance to keep the Assistant Public Works Director position and create the new position of Assistant to the Public Works Director would that be okay and it was three ayes and three nays in attendance.

TOPIC: Discussion of an Ordinance to Create Assistant Director of Public Works Position

This was discussed in the previous topic.

TOPIC: Discussion of a Resolution Approving the Promotion of Adalberto Martino

Attorney Stiff commented that if the ordinance is changed to keep the Assistant Public Works Director position and create the new position of Assistant to the Public Works Director, what is the position on the resolution approving the promotion of Ada Martino to the newly created position? It was then stated that the votes would be the same, which would be a 4 – 3 straw vote.

Alderman Jefferson asked if the attorney was sure this new position does not need to be posted? Attorney Stiff commented that Attorney John Kelly and Interim Human Resource Manager Dave Strahl, both said it does not need to be posted. Alderman Jefferson commented that he would like that in writing. Attorney Stiff commented that he has it in writing form Attorney John Kelly, and he will forward that to the Council.

Topic 3, 4, and 5 items will be on the agenda for November 18, 2024.

TOPIC: Update on the Selection and Hire of Two Candidates for Police Officer

Police Chief Ed Clark commented that they have conducted the testing for the Police Officer candidates through a third-party testing agency that is nationally known. The list was assembled, and military preference points were assessed, and the final list was approved by the Civil Service on October 29, 2024. There are thirty (30) candidates on the list.

Chief Clark is looking to send two candidates in January 2025 to the Police Academy at the Cook County Sheriff's Office.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote of the hiring of two candidates.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Methvin, Kubal.

TOPIC: Winterfest 2024 – Update – Requested by Alderperson Mark Cipiti

Mayor Soliman commented that the parade will be at 3:00 p.m. with the help of Sam Chellino, as Santa. The parade route will be a shorter route but end at City Hall at 4:00 p.m.

Alderman Gazal asked who was making decisions on the parade. Mayor Soliman commented that there was a meeting last week with the Police Chief, Alderman Albert, Ada Martino, and the Mayor. Alderman Gazal then commented that once again we are not including Alderman Cipiti, who is on the Events Committee. Mayor Soliman commented that the Lions Club has been working with Public Works with the parade for the last couple of years and the Events Committee was not involved in those discussions and the same format was followed. Alderman Gazal commented that they are not welcome with the Lions Club, and she does not see the Lions Club inviting the Council to do anything.

Alderman Albert commented that there is no committee, and that committee needs to be dissolved since the alderperson stepped away years ago and everyone runs their own events anyway.

Alderman Gazal commented that we choose who we want to invite, and she is confused if it is a Lions Club event or a Crest Hill event.

Alderman Albert commented that the parade started four years ago and the Public Works Director at that time set this up. We try to keep things going with the limited staff and limited memory that we have of things. He then commented that the year the City of Crest Hill canceled the parade during covid, the Lions Club stepped up to facilitate and the City Council approved to have a couple of the Police Officers help with the parade route, and this has been going on for four years now and Alderman Gazal has been a part of it for the last three years. Alderman Gazal agreed that she has been part of it since she requested to be part of it, since no one involved the Council.

Alderman Albert commented that in the past he had asked Alderman Gazal to be on the committee and she said no, she agreed that she said no to the committee but not with this.

Alderman Albert asked if Alderwoman Gazal did not agree that it is all related and she commented that it is not and to her a committee handles everything. Alderman Albert asked if everything means the Memorial Ceremony, Lidice Ceremony, and the Meet in the Park. Alderwoman Gazal then commented that the Meet in the Park is a Ward 2 event. Alderman Albert asked Alderwoman Gazal if she uses city resources for that. Alderwoman Gazal commented that the only city resources she uses are Public Works employees like everyone else uses for the events. She then stated that Alderman Albert goes to the Lions Club and talks 'garbage' about her to everyone because the Siegel's gave her pumpkins to hand out and that affected Alderman Albert. Alderman Albert then commented that he does not and Alderwoman Gazal 'hijacked' an event and made it about herself and he sees nothing wrong with that, but the organization had a problem with that. Alderwoman Gazal then commented that she has a problem with no communication and if we are using city funds the Council needs to be aware of that. Alderman Albert commented that the Council certainly needs to know when city funds are being used.

Alderman Albert commented that this is why nothing gets done in this city because we beat everything to death and it destroys the morale around here, and it destroys staff. He then commented that he is so happy someone is advocating for this wonderful employee at the Public Works Department because we have/had tremendous employees in this city, and no one advocates for them and that is why we are where we are. Alderwoman Gazal commented that she was advocating for staff in executive session when Alderman Albert was sitting there quiet. Alderman Albert then asked her if she means all staff, and does she mean the same staff that came to an open meeting that represented Local 150? Alderwoman Gazal commented that was because she questioned the overtime.

Alderman Albert commented that he respects Alderwoman Gazal's passion and has said that numerous times but if we want to keep the transparency, he is all about that and has said that from day one but the snark comments behind everyone's back is so disrespectful. Alderwoman Gazal asked Alderman Albert to prove it.

Mayor Soliman asked if anyone does not want to have a Winterfest to speak now. He also commented that he thinks it is nice to have the Memorial Day Program, Lidice Ceremony, and Winterfest.

Alderman Oberlin suggested discussing this as a group going forward after this year's Winterfest event. The City Council should be involved in any city event, especially when it says second Annual Winterfest. She also commented that she is off work that week of the Winterfest and would be happy to help. Alderman Oberlin also commented that the twelve years she was Chairperson of the Events Committee never once was she asked to participate in the Winterfest or any fest.

Mayor Soliman commented that last year, Ada Martino and Blaine Kline did most of the work for the Winterfest and with Blaine gone Ada was overwhelmed, and he offered to help, and he asked the Council, and no one stated they wanted to help.

Mayor Soliman commented that emails went out to our vendors, and he received a check for \$2,500.00 from Spesia & Taylor, a verbal commitment from J Russ & Company for \$5,000.00, and \$500.00 from Len Cox & Sons, \$500.00 from V3 Companies, which totals \$8,500.00 with possible additional \$6,000.00 for a grand total of \$14,500.00 to have the event. He then commented that when it comes to the Public Works employees and the

Police Officers, he feels that should be the city's responsibility to pay for those since it is a city event.

Alderman Cipiti requested an additional loop be added to the parade route since there are a couple of areas in his ward that do not have access to the parade. Alderman Albert commented that that area, Fox Meadow, has been looked at already to add it. Alderman Cipiti then asked if the Council could get the parade route once it is finalized.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There were no public comments.

MAYOR UPDATES:

There were no Mayor updates.

COMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES:

There were no committee/liaison updates.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES:

Interim City Administrator Tony Graff commented that they are still waiting for the award letter for the grant. Once we are awarded the grant, we will go out to bid and the design is all complete with the assistance from LVS regarding cameras.

Alderwoman Gazal commented that there are two existing cameras at the back of Public Works door that are run by someone's phone and asked if the police have access to those cameras. She also commented that one of our employees owns those cameras mentioned and manages those cameras and this should not be, and she wants to know why that particular employee can install his own cameras and manage them on his phone.

Alderman Dyke asked if they could use the old cameras and Administrator Graff commented that they are trying to integrate them into the design. Alderman Dyke then asked if they would have cameras inside as well. Interim Administrator Graff commented that he did not know how much more inside cameras will be placed but there will be some. Alderperson Oberlin commented that it is a public building and needs to have cameras that are city property and controlled by the city.

Interim City Administrator Tony Graff commented that they are moving forward with the Building Inspector appointment and waiting on the background. He also commented that we are still moving forward with the Community Economic Development Director appointment, as well.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:19 pm.

Approved this _____ day of _____, 2024.
As presented _____
As amended _____

CHRISTINE VERSHAY-HALL, CITY CLERK

RAYMOND R. SOLIMAN, MAYOR

DRAFT