

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

The January 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, 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, City Engineer Ron Wiedeman, Interim Public Works Director Julius Hansen, Interim Human Resource Manager Dave Strahl, Building Commissioner Don Seeman, City Attorney Mike Stiff.

Absent were: City Treasurer Glen Conklin, Police Chief Ed Clark, Finance Director Glenn Gehrke, Community & Economic Development Director Patrick Ainsworth, Interim Community Development Director Ron Mentzer.

Mayor Soliman commented that he received a text message from Treasurer Glen Conklin, and he is excused from the meeting.

**TOPIC: Discussion to Waive Water Connection Fee for 2213 Weber Road - Existing Residential Home**

Interim City Administrator Tony Graff commented that Omar DeHaro has requested to waive the water connection fee since there is a buffalo box at this property. He commented that no records were found to show payment when the buffalo box was placed. The Council has waived connection fees in the past. The homeowner will need to pay for the meter and if the buffalo box needs any modifications to connect the service line, the homeowner will need to pay for this as well.

It was recommended to waive the connection fee only, which is \$7,678.00.

Omar DeHaro, the homeowner, commented that he has been working on this home for many years, and he would like the house to look nice and plans on possibly moving into the home once completed and he is asking for a waiver of the connection fee.

A letter will be given to the resident once this is approved explaining what is being waived and for what the resident will be liable for.

Alderwoman Gazal spoke Spanish to the resident to make sure that he understood that this is just for the tap-on/connection fee and no other associated costs. Alderwoman Methvin confirmed what Alderwoman Gazal said in English for the rest of the Council.

Alderman Albert asked if the buffalo box is on Weber Road or Imperial Street and was told it was on Weber Road.

Alderman Dyke asked for confirmation that anytime going forward and there is a buffalo box on the lot, there will be no tap-on/connection fee for the resident to pay. Alderperson Oberlin commented that they will all need to be investigated prior to waiving the fee since the problem is that there are no records or documentation.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote for a waiver at 2213 Weber Road for tap-on/connection fee in the amount of \$7,678.00.

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

NAYES: Ald. Dyke.

ABSENT: None.

**TOPIC: Request to Appoint Two (2) Part-Building Inspector Positions**

Interim Administrator Tony Graff commented that Interim Human Resource Manager Dave Strahl compared the numbers from hiring a full-time inspector and a part-time inspector to hiring two part-time inspectors and the cost savings. He also commented that the part-time appointments can be made by the Building Commissioner and do not need the Council's approval.

It was said that the full-time inspector candidate now wants to be considered for part-time as well.

Building Commissioner Don Seeman commented that the full-time inspector is retired from the Schaumburg Fire Department, and he builds houses and has an ICC certification for residential inspections, but he is now wanting to do part-time instead of full-time.

Commissioner Seeman commented that he reached out to JJC in their building program and there was a gentleman who will be finishing his education this December but would like the part-time inspector position until he has completed school and then would be interested in full-time once he graduates.

Commissioner Seeman commented that both candidates have construction and code knowledge, and they were the best candidates.

Alderperson Oberlin commented that it would be best for the Council to be provided more information before the meeting. She also asked if they would be splitting shifts and was told each would work two eight-hour days and then on Friday they would each work a four hour shift so we would have eight hour coverage.

Alderwoman Gazal asked why we do not have people working on the weekends? Commissioner Seeman commented that during the interview process they were informed that potentially if there is a need there could be a Saturday shift. Alderwoman Gazal commented that we need someone on the weekends and since we hiring two part-timers, they could alternate a Saturday.

Interim Human Resource Manager Dave Strahl commented that this was discussed during the interview process and having the two part-time positions gives the city more opportunity for more coverage. He also commented that they are paying the one part-time inspector a little more since he has a certification.

Aldersperson Oberlin agrees with Alderwoman Gazal about having an inspector on Saturdays, especially when someone might need something inspected on the weekend since they work a job as well.

Interim Manager Dave Strahl commented that they are having a hard time finding a full-time person, and we cannot rely on Commissioner Seeman alone to do all the inspections, especially with the construction season coming up. He also commented that two part-time inspectors give the city some flexibility, but they will continue looking for a full-time person.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote for two part-time Building Inspectors.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

**TOPIC: Proposal to Review Water and Sewer Connection Fee Ordinance**

City Engineer Ron Wiedeman commented that they want to make sure our rates are competitive with other municipalities surrounding Crest Hill. He commented that after looking at the tap-on fees from the following surrounding communities: Channahon, Joliet, Shorewood, Romeoville, Lockport, Minooka, and Plainfield, Crest Hill is the only municipality that combines water and sewer together. He mentioned that our residential fees are 80% higher than everyone else's. He commented that we want to get to a point where we are similar to everyone else and not so much up and down.

City of Crest Hill has it written that there is a 5% increase each year and everyone else is either 3% or zero and that 5% is escalating on top of our fees that are already high.

Engineer Wiedeman commented that we want to get our fees similar to surrounding communities so we can attract development and not scare them away.

Engineer Wiedeman recommended instead of having a formula we have a set amount for residential or multi that it is \$4,025.00 which is just water and that would put us in the neighborhood of the surrounding communities.

He then gave a presentation with charts for commercial development.

He then commented that if we could do this it would eliminate people coming before Council for waivers and setting a precedence.

Aldersperson Oberlin commented that Engineer Wiedeman's explanation and presentation was wonderful, and she agrees that we need to be competitive and applaud him for all his work done on this.

Mayor Soliman commented that this was done approximately twenty (20) years ago and at the time we were land locked and we didn't have a lot of opportunities or land that could be built on and that is why we went high, and it has escalated over the twenty years, but if a developer came in, we would reduce it 50%. It was a way to help us.

Engineer Wiedeman commented that it is fine if you are a developer and have been here and know how to ask for the reduction but if you are not from around here and do not know that then you are just scaring away the developers.

Engineer Wiedeman commented that he is looking for a recommendation to direct staff to work with the city attorney to update Chapter 13.04 and bring back to the Council for final approval to create a rate structure for water and sanitary tap-on fees as recommended by staff.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

**TOPIC: An Ordinance Authorizing the Issuance of Waterworks and Sewerage Revenue Bonds of the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois, in an Aggregate Principal Amount not to Exceed \$4,400,000**

City Engineer Ron Wiedeman commented that as part of the process to secure funding for the Capital projects required for the city to switch to Lake Michigan Water Supply, we need to approve the ordinance that is required.

There is a project on the lining of sections of Broadway and since we are not home ruled, we need to go out for a bond, and this would have to go into the newspaper and have thirty (30) days for it to be forced into a referendum from residents. If after thirty (30) days and no referendum is needed there is a second ordinance, that is the actual passage of the ordinance. This will require two votes from the Council. This is a two-step process since we are not home rule.

This is the project that we are getting the \$3.2 million forgiveness form the IEPA.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

**TOPIC: Approve a Resolution for an Intergovernmental Agreement for the Maintenance and Energy of Traffic Signals at the Intersection of Weber Road (CH88) and Randich in the County of Will**

City Engineer Wiedeman commented that the existing IGA between the City and the County is to expire this January 20, 2025, for the existing signals at Weber and Randich Road. We did this same exact process a year ago for Weber Road and Ryan. This is the same agreement because the twenty-year timeframe has come up.

Mayor Soliman asked if there were any questions and there were no questions.

**TOPIC: West STP Change Order Summary**

Interim Public Works Director Julius Hansen commented that there are many change orders for this plant, and they are numbered, and, in the packet, each numbered change order has information as to what it is.

Mike Ott from Strand & Associates is in attendance and clarified that previous Public Works Directors have brought these changes before the Council. Mike explained each change order in more detail.

Engineer Wiedeman commented that this project originally was way over budget and there have been deduction changes that have brought the original cost down.

The following change orders 1-8 have taken place during the construction of the West STP. Change Order 1 was disproportionately large due to “value engineering,” to remove items from the contract for the purposes of reducing the total loan amount. Change Order 3 is another deduction equaling \$1,179,862 in total deductions.

The following signed off on these change orders:

- Change Orders 1 through 2 were under Public Works Director Siefert.
- Change Orders 3 through 4 were under Public Works Director Kline
- Change Orders 5 through 7 were under Interim Public Works Director Eulitz.

Alderwoman Gazal wanted to make sure that we are not cutting corners with these change orders. Engineer Wiedeman commented that we are not cutting corners some of these changes are cutting back on the office equipment or lab equipment that was new and now we are going to salvage instead of new. He also commented that nothing structurally or operational has been cut.

It was suggested that the memo/table be added to the minutes – see last page.

Mike Ott from Strand & Associates commented that the contractor for this project is the best contractor he has ever worked with, and this is the most complex project and the contractor is wonderful.

It was stated that change orders have all been approved and this is just information for the record.

**TOPIC: East STP Three Influent Pump Repairs by Flygt**

Interim Public Works Director Julius Hansen commented that there are three Influent Pumps that are not working and two of those have been taken to a contractor to possibly be rebuilt. Once those get repaired or rebuilt the third pump will be taken to be rebuilt or repaired.

This will not exceed the amount of \$60,000.00. There are six pumps and three of them are not working.

Engineer Wiedeman commented that this is exactly why he came to the Council previously and wanted a study done of the equipment, so they can identify work that needs done and

put together a schedule for them on when they should replace things instead of waiting until they break.

Alderwoman Gazal asked if this is already budgeted and was told it is already budgeted.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

**TOPIC: East STP Change Order Number 4 -Final**

Mike Ott from Strand & Associates commented that there has been a smaller project at the east plant that was held up on permit compliance and this project was delayed and now it is finally ready to be done, and this change order is a final change order to button up all the final changes that occurred.

There is no additional cost since the contractor is done with the work and once this is signed there will be a final payout.

Alderwoman Gazal asked who oversees all of this and was told at the time of the event it would have been the consultant but now Strand & Associates is overseeing construction and holding the contractors accountable.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

**TOPIC: An Agreement for Strand Engineering to Provide On-Call Wastewater Services**

Mike Ott with Strand & Associates commented that they have an on-call agreement with the city to help with the clean water side, but they do not have one for the wastewater side of things. They have drafted an agreement to provide on-call wastewater needs services.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

**TOPIC: MGT Recruitment Consulting Services for City Administrator Position, Proposed Schedule & Revised Job Description**

Interim City Administrator Tony Graff commented that Ryan Cotton, who is the representative of MGT for the recruitment process, came up with a schedule and recommendation regarding the job description to help with the recruitment process.

Some of the revisions are changing the description to say they need three to seven years' experience, adding public and governmental management, and he is also recommending a

change to the structure. We currently have it stating to manage and oversee all departments but not including the Finance Department and they now feel the Finance Department should be under the Administration duties.

Aldersperson Oberlin commented that she does not agree with changing back the Finance Department to Administration since it was done for a certain reason, and that reason has not changed.

Alderman Dyke commented that he thought Administration did not oversee the Clerk's Office or the Finance Department and the two elected officials oversee their own department.

Interim Administrator Graff commented that he is currently overseeing all departments including the Clerk's Office and Treasurer Department and to attract candidates it should include those departments. Alderwoman Gazal commented that it should read that they will work with the Clerk's Office and Treasurer's Office instead of overseeing.

Interim Human Resource Manager Dave Strahl commented that usually Administration oversees all the departments heads in the operation, but the Finance Department is normally not. Interim Manager Strahl suggested to revisit this once you get an individual in charge.

Attorney Stiff commented that if you changed the job description you would have to change the ordinance.

Aldersperson Oberlin commented again that she will not approve of changing the ordinance.

Attorney Stiff suggested having the language for the Administrator be the same as the Ordinance reads.

Alderwoman Gazal asked if there is another recruiting agency other than MGT.

It was asked if we need to have a personnel committee for this appointment. Attorney Stiff asked the mayor since it is his appointment if he would like to have a personnel committee weigh in on this decision and Mayor Soliman commented that it would be fine with him.

Alderman Albert commented that the administrative role is the most important part of the city, and it is strange how we are starting a personnel committee now with this position, when he feels the entire Council should be part of this and then all other positions should have a personnel committee.

Alderman Jefferson commented that he feels if we would have had a personnel committee on the last position that we hired, a committee would have worked better opposed to the 'good fit' we now have.

It was mentioned that the target date would be the end of April to start the interviewing process of candidates.

Alderman Cipiti commented that he was under the assumption that the delay was to wait until after the election in case the mayor's position would change.

**TOPIC: Grocery Tax Replacement Ordinance**

Attorney Stiff commented that the grocery tax is being eliminated, and this does not take effect until January of 2026. There will be a locally imposed grocery tax of 1%. There is a replacement ordinance that must be sent to the state by October 1<sup>st</sup> to be effective for January 2026. This will be for any store that sells grocery items.

Attorney Stiff commented that the State is not imposing a grocery tax anymore. They are taking it away but allowing the city to impose the tax if they want. This is not keeping the same tax; this is starting a new Crest Hill 1% tax.

Aldерwoman Methvin commented that she is opposed to having a grocery tax and will vote no if the city goes for a local 1% tax.

If passed it will still be collected by the state, then given to the municipality.

**TOPIC: Community Room Agreement**

Interim Administrator Tony Graff commented that there is a complete rental agreement but there are a couple challenges needing addressed. One challenge is if it creates a cost for the rental of the facility are we going to charge the user or absorb the cost. He also mentioned that there is an insurance requirement, and we need to ask the renter to have a liability policy at their cost.

Aldерwoman Gazal asked why we are putting all these restrictions now, when we never had to do this in the old building, it is for the community, why now?

Interim Administrator Graff commented that we are just asking, we could keep this informal and just fill out an application to reserve. Aldерwoman Gazal commented that it has always been where you apply with the Clerk's Office.

Attorney Stiff commented that all municipalities require some type of insurance for the city's protection.

Stuart Soifer, a resident, commented that his HOA uses the library to hold their meetings, and they must fill out a form online and leave a \$50 deposit.

Attorney Stiff asked if the Council is okay with no fee, and just a deposit. It was then stated that it would be used for HOA meetings and non-profit meetings. Attorney Stiff commented that they need to do away with the formal application and just have a policy.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

There was no public comment.

**MAYOR UPDATES:**

There were no Mayor updates.

**CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES:**

There were no City Administrator updates.



**COMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES:**

Alderman Dyke mentioned that he just received the Corridor Travel advertisement, and it is the same as last year \$850.00 for two. This will be on the next meeting agenda.

Alderman Albert commented that he and the Village of Romeoville's Mayor had bumped into each other during the 4<sup>th</sup> of July firework show and the Mayor of Romeoville asked if Crest Hill would like to join in for the firework show.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:36 pm.

Approved this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025.

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

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

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CHRISTINE VERSHAY-HALL, CITY CLERK

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RAYMOND R. SOLIMAN, MAYOR

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**Agenda Memo****Public Works Department****City of Crest Hill**

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<b>Date:</b>	1/21/2025
<b>Submitter:</b>	Julius Hansen, Interim Director of Public Works
<b>Department:</b>	Public Works
<b>Agenda Item:</b>	West STP Change Order Summary

**Summary:**

The following change orders 1-8 have been taken place during the construction of the West STP. Each of these change orders and a detailed description have been attached. Change Order 1 was disproportionately large due to "value engineering," to remove items from the contract for the purposes of reducing the total loan amount. Change Order 3 is another deduction equaling \$1,179,862 in total deductions. The following signed off on these change orders:

- Change Orders 1 through 2 were under Public Works Director Siefert.
- Change Orders 3 through 4 were under Public Works Director Kline
- Change Orders 5 through 7 were under Interim Public Works Director Eulitz.

West Sewage Treatment Plant - Change Order Summary			
Change Order	Type	Value	Change In Contract Time?
1	Deduct	\$ (1,338,041)	No
2	Add	\$ 19,757	No
3	Deduct	\$ (6,933)	No
4	Add	\$ 43,398	No
5	Add	\$ 9,772	No
6	Add	\$ 36,428	No
7	Deduct	\$	No
8	Add	\$ 55,757	No
Total	Deduct	\$ (1,179,862)	

- Substantial Completion remains at June 1, 2026 and Final Completion remains at December 1, 2026. The Contractor is currently on time. It will be a very busy summer/fall at the site.

**Recommended Council Action:** To approve the change orders 1-7 as described in the table provided (change order 8 was approved on 1/20/25).

**Attachments:**

Change orders 1-8 with cover letter from Stand Engineering.