

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION  
CITY COUNCIL OF CREST HILL  
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS  
August 11, 2025

The August 11, 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 Treasurer Jamie Malloy, City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall, Alderman Scott Dyke, Alderman Darrell Jefferson, Alderwoman Claudia Gazal, Alderperson Tina Oberlin, Alderman Mark Cipiti, Alderman Nate Albert, Alderman Joe Kubal.

Also Present were: City Administrator Blaine Wing, Police Chief Ed Clark, City Engineer Ron Wiedeman, Community & Economic Development Director Daniel Ritter, City Attorney Mike Stiff.

Absent were: Alderman Angelo Deserio, Finance Director Glenn Gehrke, Interim Public Works Director Julius Hansen, Community Development Consultant Ron Mentzer, Building Commissioner Don Seeman, Interim Human Resource Manager Dave Strahl.

Mayor Soliman, with Council concurrence, invited Lawrence George from the food pantry to address the City Council.

Lawrence George expressed his appreciation to the Council for their support of the Crest Hill Food Pantry, which has operated behind Hillcrest Shopping Center since Mayor Soliman helped establish it there. He described the pantry's success over the past 10-15 years in helping people overcome poverty, praised his team of volunteers, and highlighted their new tablet registration system called "Link to Feed" that tracks visitors across multiple pantries.

Mr. George then shared the pantry's financial challenges, stating that for years and years, they have been supported through fundraisers and the oldest fundraiser being 77 years old. Mr. George commented that with both he and his wife now retired, the pantry faces mounting debt of \$10,000.00 to \$20,000.00 and they are maxed on their debt with PNC. He outlined several potential solutions, including selling the house that serves as the pantry, finding businesses to purchase while keeping the pantry operational, or transferring ownership to the Family Outreach Program to qualify for grants. He then commented that they want to applaud all their volunteers and staff for all the hard work that they do. He then concluded by providing his contact number (815-730-9567) and asking for prayers and ideas to save the pantry.

**TOPIC: Josh Hassert Legislative Update**

Josh Hassert provided a legislative update from Springfield. He reported that the Illinois General Assembly adjourned the 2025 spring session on June 1st, with 432 bills passing both chambers. Notable items that failed to pass included transit reform, cannabis/hemp regulation, energy reform, and tier two pensions - all expected to be addressed during veto session.

Mr. Hassert detailed the budget situation, explaining that despite a \$1 billion shortfall, legislators passed what they called a "balanced budget" appropriating \$55.2 billion with assumed revenues of \$55.4 billion. Local government distributive fund (LGDF) funding remained flat - "nothing was taken away, but nothing was given either," he noted.

New revenue sources totaling \$88 million included tax amnesty, motor fuel tax transfers, sports betting increases, hotel tax revenue, and tobacco tax harmonization that raised taxes from 36% to 45% on wholesale prices, now including vapes and products like Zyn. The capital budget included \$8.2 billion in new capital and reappropriations.

On transit reform, Mr. Hassert explained that while the Senate passed a bill, the House refused to take it up due to controversial last-minute proposals including a \$1.50 per package delivery tax that would have applied to Amazon, FedEx, DoorDash, and grocery deliveries.

Regarding local issues, Mr. Hassert reported that Stateville planning continues with no concerning news about funding cuts. The State Police facility is moving forward, with plans to transfer over one hundred acres to the Forest Preserve for habitat restoration once construction is completed. He expects a busy veto session in October, happening a month earlier than usual.

Council members asked about the delivery tax feedback, and it was said that it had the most negative feedback and the transit reform impacts. Mr. Hassert explained that the proposed Northern Illinois Transit Association (NITA) would centralize CTA, Metra, and Pace operations, but suburban areas objected to Chicago-centric board representation.

**TOPIC: Exhibit A - Approval of Change Order No. 1 to add Abbey Lane to the 2025 Roadway Rehabilitation Program for a cost of \$100,000.00**

City Engineer Ron Wiedeman requested approval to add Abbey Lane to the 2025 roadway rehabilitation program for an additional \$100,000. He displayed a map showing the targeted streets in yellow and purple, explaining that during design work, they discovered many asphalt driveways had settled 2-3 inches behind the back curb, causing water to pool and freeze in winter, potentially damaging curb, and gutter.

Engineer Wiedeman commented that we had some money within the concrete flat work program, and we went and replaced all of those as part of that concrete flat work project this year. With Abbey Lane having the same "serious condition" rating as other scheduled streets, and with favorable bids saving approximately \$586,000.00 under budget, Engineer Wiedeman recommended including Abbey to complete the southern half of the subdivision.

Alderman Albert commented that it was nice to hear some good news that we are under budget on some of these projects and that they are coming in less than expected.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote.

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

NAYES: Ald.

ABSENT: Ald. Deserio.

Mayor Soliman noted for the record that Alderman Deserio had texted that he was under the weather and unable to attend the meeting.

The item will appear on Monday night's agenda for formal approval.

Mayor Soliman asked to deviate to the City Administrator Updates, item #9 on the agenda.

### **CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES:**

#### **Public Works Director Recruitment Presentations**

City Administrator Wing introduced two firms presenting their proposals for the Public Works Director executive search.

**Arndt Municipal Support** - James Arndt, President and CEO of Arndt Municipal Support, along with Scott Smith, a Retired City Manager presented first. Mr. Arndt highlighted their recent successes including searches for Mattoon City Manager, Salem City Manager and Police Chief, Charleston Public Works Director, and Casey Public Works Director (with twenty-five candidates and a finalist from Tampa Bay). They had ninety applicants for the Niles Village Manager position with sixteen candidates to present. Their approach includes tailored services, white glove treatment, proactive weekly communication, and use of the Maxwell DISC assessment for candidate fit.

Mr. Arndt commented that they offer three service options: full recruitment with on-site support and negotiation assistance; presentation of candidates with client handling interviews; or professional outreach only. When asked about Will County experience, they mentioned West Chicago's building official search but acknowledged limited local presence.

**LocalGov Staffing Solutions** - Lori Peterson, a certified staffing professional, presented their direct hire recruitment approach. She emphasized her 1,000+ public sector recruitments since 2007 and her company's launch in April 2023 with seven completed recruitments including Manhattan's accountant position. Ms. Peterson proposed reimagining the job advertisement to highlight Crest Hill's assets: the five-year-old public works facility, great fleet and equipment, opportunity to build a team due to vacancies, permanent administrator in place, new treatment plant, and Lake Michigan water project.

Her direct hire process eliminates application deadlines to move quickly in the candidate market, maintains constant communication with candidates, and uses fifteen different outreach methods beyond LinkedIn. The firm charges a small non-refundable retainer upfront; if they do not find a suitable candidate, they work for free until successful. When questioned about Public Works Director experience specifically, Ms. Peterson acknowledged she had not filled that exact position but expressed confidence based on her research showing limited competition in the current market.

Administrator Wing indicated staff would provide a side-by-side comparison in Friday's update for Council decision at Monday's meeting.

**TOPIC: Status Update on Public Act 102-0613 (Lead Service Line Replacement and Notification Act)**

City Engineer Ron Wiedeman, along with City Administrator Blaine Wing, presented a comprehensive update on the Lead Service Line Replacement and Notification Act.

Administrator Wing explained that after his arrival two months ago, information was brought to his attention following a retirement in Public Works. This led to weekly meetings involving both Engineering Firms, Public Works staff, Engineering staff, and Finance staff for the past five to six weeks.

Engineer Wiedeman explained that the act requires the owners and operators of community water supplies such as municipalities to develop and maintain a complete materials inventory of all service lines and to implement a comprehensive replacement plan of lead and galvanized with lead solder water services.

He also clarified responsibilities stating that in Crest Hill, Crest Hill is responsible for the water service from the water main to the b-box, then from the b-box to the resident or to the home would be the resident's responsibility.

Engineer Wiedeman provided a timeline of actions taken:

- August 2024: Started addressing fields in the inventory.
- September 2024: Strand helped identify homes built after 1986 using GIS and Zillow (significant because plumbing code changed that year, prohibiting lead solder)
- November 2024: IEPA requested the lead service line inventory by December 15th.
- December 15, 2024: Submitted inventory with Strand's help.
- January 2025: IEPA reviewed, provided comments, City resubmitted, and plan was accepted with completion deadline of April 2027

Engineer Wiedeman noted an important historical fact that in the early forties, the City of Joliet outlawed lead services and a lot of the older stuff that we here have in town does not mean they do not have any lead. He then stated confidently that lead is not something that we have to worry about here in Crest Hill.

The team's efforts have reduced the number of unknowns from 2,500 to 1,415, with 1,397 being public side unknowns and only 118 private side unknowns. Matt from Strand explained how they determined private side materials: Crest Hill in 2023 and 2024 did an extensive meter replacement program and then went through a ton of filing boxes and there were like 6500 services, and we went through each one and there was material that the plumbers would indicate on there.

Moving forward, the City plans to:

- Apply for \$50,000.00 grants for professional services over three years (\$150,000 total)
- Conduct surveys through letters, exploration digs, or metal detecting.
- Complete the inventory by end of 2025.
- Send required IEPA letters by end of August 2025
- Maintain a dedicated webpage with interactive maps.

Engineer Wiedeman demonstrated the interactive map at [gettheleadout.com/cresthill](http://gettheleadout.com/cresthill), showing current data: zero lead services, 140 galvanized services, and approximately 6,500 known services. Residents can click on their property to see what the City knows about their service lines.

Alderperson Oberlin expressed concerns about data preservation, stating that her concern is to make sure that we have the information going forward accessible and in five years from now we are not saying we did not keep a copy of that. Administrator Wing assured that data would be in the GIS database and publicly available, following the same color-coding system as sixteen other communities.

When asked about grant funding usage, Engineer Wiedeman confirmed it would be used for investigation purposes on both City and private sides. He also clarified that while the City is responsible for replacements from water main to b-box, Federal and State money is only available for lead replacements, not galvanized.

**TOPIC: Provide Direction Multi-Unit Dwelling and Two-Unit Duplex with Single-B-Box and Multiply Meters and/or Unit with Galvanized Water Services**

Engineer Ron Wiedeman presented two distinct situations requiring the Council's direction regarding properties with single b-boxes serving multiple units.

**Multi-Dwelling Units (Condos/Apartments)**

Engineer Wiedeman identified 228 locations where a single b-box feeds multiple units through a meter room. He then explained the problem is when there is a resident that does not pay their bill, the City has no way of turning off their water because there is one b-box that controls the entire residence.

Engineer Wiedeman commented that the proposed solution involves installing "alley meters" that allow remote shut-off capability. Engineer Wiedeman stated, the Utility Billing Supervisor, Regina, from her desk can turn that meter off. This way we do not have to send out any staff and she can just turn it off from her desk or turn it back on from her desk.

Administrator Blaine Wing noted the City already owns approximately 108 alley meters in stock. The estimated cost for completing all 228 locations would be approximately \$183,000.00. Engineer Wiedeman suggested spreading the work over four years at \$45,000.00 annually, with the Billing Department coordinating appointments and the Public Works Department either completing the work or hiring contractors.

Council members raised concerns about access, with the City Attorney clarifying that permission could be obtained from either property owners or tenants for common areas. Since these properties already complied with the recent meter replacement program, cooperation was expected to continue.

Mayor Soliman asked if anyone had any objections to getting more alley meters and no objections were raised.

## **Raynor Area Duplexes**

The second issue involved eighty-two duplex units (41 buildings) in the Raynor Avenue area, built before Crest Hill became a City. Engineer Wiedeman discovered these properties have a unique configuration which is a copper line from our water main to the b-box. Then they have one single b-box and that b-box then runs to about five to seven feet in front of the home where at that point, it splits to galvanize and then goes into the house.

This configuration prevents the City from shutting off water to individual units and creates inconvenience when plumbing work is needed. The proposed solution involves installing T-connections with two new b-boxes and running new copper lines to each residence, estimated at \$500,000.00 total.

Council extensively discussed payment options:

1. City pays 100% over multiple years.
2. City pays for right-of-way portion only; residents pay the rest.
3. Payment plan with 24-48 months at no interest
4. 50/50 cost split with payment plans
5. Incentive-based sliding scale (e.g., 80/20 for early sign-ups, 50/50 later, 25/75 final)

Council members expressed concern about the financial burden on residents, with cost estimates of \$12,000.00-15,000.00 per service replacement. It was then pointed out many properties are rentals owned by landlords who collect rent.

Alderman Albert asked if we could look into an SSA.

Administrator Wing suggested exploring a Special Service Area (SSA) as another funding option, though the Council noted only one previous SSA existed in the City's history, and they can be challenging if enough residents oppose.

City Attorney Mike Stiff raised an important consideration about treating all galvanized service properties consistently and stated that you need to give them the same type of potential financial accommodation as you are the others. This affects not just the 82 duplex units but potentially 60+ additional properties with galvanized services.

The Council consensus was to return with an incentive-based plan and draft letter, featuring the sliding scale discount model to encourage early participation.

## **TOPIC: Intergovernmental Agreement between Chaney-Monge School District 88, Richland School District 88A and the City of Crest Hill**

Police Chief Ed Clark presented the intergovernmental agreement for the School Resource Officer (SRO) program. He noted that since the December 2024 presentation, there had been many meetings with school officials and Officer Outlaw to develop the program structure.

Chief Clark explained that they have looked through several IGAs to produce what we thought was the best one, and thanked City Attorney Mike Stiff for his assistance. The agreement clearly delineates responsibilities and complies with the Juvenile Court Act, Illinois School Student Records Act, and Family Educational and Privacy Rights Act.

Key aspects of the agreement include:

- Three-way split of salary costs between the city and both school districts
- Shared costs for ongoing training and education
- Sole responsibility for discipline remains with schools.
- Goal is not to introduce children unnecessarily into the juvenile justice system.

Chief Clark emphasized that the goal is to foster communication and growth with the children of Crest Hill.

Aldersperson Oberlin raised a concern about Section 18b not specifically mentioning lockers in searches. The City Attorney explained that lockers, being school property, do not require the same privacy considerations as personal effects and can be searched at the school's request.

Aldersperson Oberlin asked what Officer Outlaw's duties would be when schools are not in session and it was stated that Officer Outlaw would assist with investigations and potentially traffic enforcement. She retains all rights and benefits of a regular Crest Hill Police Officer. Chief Clark plans weekly check-ins with schools initially to ensure smooth program operation.

Alderswoman Gazal asked what Officer Outlaw's schedule would be and Chief Clark explained it would be randomized between the two schools to prevent predictability. He stated he does not want somebody to predict when the school resource officer is going to be there. Both superintendents coordinate to avoid scheduling conflicts.

Chief Clark commented that Officer Outlaw's activities at school would be doing classroom presentations, meeting with students, attending meetings, and becoming embedded with the school. Both schools have provided workspace for her.

Alderman Albert commented on Officer Outlaw's existing relationships with students where he has seen at least half a dozen kids go up and say hello to her at the back-to-school event.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSTAIN: Ald. Cipiti.

ABSENT: Ald. Deserio.

It was stated that the agreement will be voted on at Monday's Council meeting with a resolution making it retroactive to today's date, as Officer Outlaw began her informal duties with the school year's start. This will be a one-year deal and reevaluated at the one-year mark.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

There were no public comments.

**MAYOR UPDATES:**

Mayor Soliman provided an update on the mobile DMV scheduled for Monday, October 20th from 10 AM to 2 PM, with setup and cleanup extending hours to 9 AM to 3 PM. He clarified that appointments will be required and handled through Representative Manley's office via telephone. The appointment schedule allows for two people every 15 minutes. The Mayor noted he would follow up about walk-in availability and confirmed that the mobile DMV will not offer road tests or written tests, only paperwork services. This information will be posted on the City website.

**COMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES:**

There were no committee/liaison updates.

**CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES:**

City Administrator Blaine indicated he had nothing additional to report beyond the earlier presentations but wanted to thank Police Chief Ed Clark for his work, though the Chief had already left the meeting.

Attorney Stiff stated that there is a need for an executive session for 5ILCS 120/2(c)(1).

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

On roll call, the vote was:

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Deserio.

There being seven (7) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

Executive Session 9:15 p.m.

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

On roll call, the vote was:

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Deserio.

There being seven (7) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

Reconvened 9:51p.m.

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:52 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

DRAFT