

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
CITY COUNCIL OF CREST HILL
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS
December 15, 2025

1. OPENING OF MEETING

The regular meeting of the City of Crest Hill was called to order by Mayor Raymond R. Soliman at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 20600 City Center Boulevard, Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited in unison.

3. ROLL CALL

Roll call indicated the following present: Mayor Raymond Soliman, City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall, City Treasurer Jamie Malloy, Alderman Scott Dyke, Alderman Angelo Deserio, Alderman Darrell Jefferson, Alderwoman Claudia Gazal, Alderperson Tina Oberlin, Alderman Mark Cipiti, Alderman Nate Albert, and Alderman Joe Kubal.

Also present were: City Administrator Blaine Wing, Police Chief Ed Clark, Finance Director Glenn Gehrke, City Engineer Ron Wiedeman, Community & Economic Development Director Dan Ritter, and City Attorney Mike Stiff.

4. CITIZEN/SPECIAL REQUEST/PUBLIC HEARINGS

4A. Holiday Lights Contest Winners Presentation

The Mayor opened this portion of the meeting by recognizing several special guests in the audience who were present to receive awards.

Alderwoman Claudia Gazal and Alderman Jefferson presented the holiday lights contest awards.

Alderwoman Gazal expressed appreciation to all participants for their efforts in decorating their homes despite challenging weather conditions.

Special thanks were given to the Judges, City Clerk Chris Vershay, and her staff, Karen and Samantha.

Award recipients included:

- Honorable Mentions:
 - Sam Chellino (Morning Delight gift card)
 - Amin Ghanayem (Firewater gift card)
 - Huante Family for Christmas Candy Canyon (Sumerce Coffee Shop gift card)
- Fifth Place:
 - Hrycyk Family (Sopranos Pizza gift card)

- Fourth Place:
 - Ksiazak Family (gift card)
- Third Place (tie):
 - Ludvigsen Family (Firewater gift card)
 - Hill Family (Prairie Bluff gift card)
- Second Place:
 - Puttrich Family (Mickeys gift card)
- First Place:
 - Filipiak Family (\$100 Sopranos Pizza gift card)

During the presentation, Santa Claus made a surprise appearance and Alderwoman Gazal shared humorous gift suggestions for the Mayor and City Council members.

Several Council members commented on the impressive displays throughout the City and congratulated all winners, noting the difficult weather conditions they had to contend with this season.

4B. Approve a Resolution Approving the Appointment of Gary Richardson to the Position of Director of Public Works for the City of Crest Hill Effective December 16, 2025, and Setting the Initial Salary for Gary Richardson

Mayor Soliman explained that the City had worked with Laurie Pederson from LocalGov Staffing Solutions to search for a Public Works Director. After receiving several applications, the Council interviewed three candidates on December 2nd and selected Gary Richardson for the position.

Mayor Soliman highlighted Mr. Richardson's qualifications, including 23 years of public service with 11 years as a Public Works Director at the Village of University Park and most recently at the Village of Lansing.

Mayor Soliman noted that he was impressed with Richardson's interview, describing him as well-spoken, confident, and someone who would lead by example and build a strong team.

Mayor Soliman asked for a motion to Approve a Resolution Approving the Appointment of Gary Richardson to the Position of Director of Public Works for the City of Crest Hill Effective December 16, 2025, and Setting the Initial Salary for Gary Richardson.

Alderman Jefferson made a motion to Approve a Resolution Approving the Appointment of Gary Richardson to the Position of Director of Public Works for the City of Crest Hill Effective December 16, 2025, and Setting the Initial Salary for Gary Richardson. Seconded by Alderperson Oberlin. Roll Call: Ayes: Dyke, Deserio, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal. Nays: None. **MOTION CARRIED. Resolution #1364**

Gary Richardson approached the podium, introduced himself, and thanked everyone for the opportunity and is very excited to start his new position with the City of Crest Hill.

Many Council members congratulated Gary Richardson and welcomed him to the City.

5. **PUBLIC COMMENT FOR AGENDA ITEMS ONLY:**

No one approached the podium to make public comments on the agenda items.

6. **CONSENT AGENDA:**

Mayor Soliman asked if any of the Council members wished to have any items removed from the consent agenda for further discussion.

Alderman Dyke requested to remove item 6E (LocalGov Staffing Agreement) from the consent agenda.

Alderperson Oberlin requested to remove item 6K (Credit Card Policy) from the consent agenda.

Mayor Soliman proceeded to read the consent agenda items:

- 6A. Approve the Minutes of the Work Session Meeting Held on November 24, 2025.
- 6B. Approve the Minutes from the Regular Meeting Held on December 1, 2025.
- 6C. Approve the Minutes from the Special Work Session Meeting Held on December 2, 2025.
- 6D. Approve a Resolution Approving an Employee Leasing Agreement by and between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, IL and MGT Impact Solutions, LLC for the Services of Stephana Przybylski as Interim Human Resources for the City of Crest Hill. ***Resolution #1365***
- 6E. Approve a Resolution Approving the Execution of an Agreement by and between the City of Crest Hill and LocalGov Staffing Solutions for Recruitment Services Relating to the Search for an Assistant City Administrator/HR. ***(REMOVED for Discussion)***
- 6F. Approve a Resolution Approving an Extension of the Term of the Updated and Extended Independent Contractor Consulting Services Agreement by and between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, IL, and Ronald Mentzer. ***Resolution #1367***
- 6G. Approve a Resolution Approving an Agreement for Consolidated Strategy, Marketing, Management & Reporting Services by and between the City of Crest, Will County, IL and Method Engine, LLC not to exceed \$20,000.00. ***Resolution #1368***

- 6H. Approve a Resolution Approving an Agreement for the 2025 MFT Patching Program by and between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois, and D Construction, Inc. for an Amount of \$281,310.00. ***Resolution #1369***
- 6I. Approval to Award the Contract to Hoerr Construction Inc. for the 2024 Sanitary Sewer Cleaning and Televising for Lining Priority Areas 4 and 5 Maintenance Improvement in the Amount of \$1,063,280.00.
- 6J. Approval of Pay Request #35 from Vissering Construction, Inc. with Direction to Send it to the IEPA for Approval and Disbursement for a Total Amount of \$761,869.16.
- 6K. Approve a Resolution Amending the Credit Card and Purchasing Policies of the City of Crest Hill. ***(REMOVED for Discussion)***
- 6L. Approve the Resolution Approving a Revised Wastewater Discharge Permit No. 1001- 22 Issued to Rich Products Corporation. ***Resolution #1371***
- 6M. Approval of the List of Bills Issued through December 31, 2025, in the Amount of \$2,307,688.05.
- 6N. Approval of the Regular and Overtime Payroll from November 17, 2025, November 30, 2025, in the Amount of \$308,999.49.

Mayor Soliman asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda items excluding items **6E, and 6K**.

Alderman Albert made a motion to Approve the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Alderwoman Gazal. Roll Call: Ayes: Deserio, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke. Nayes: None. MOTION CARRIED.

City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall provided the resolution and ordinance numbers:

- 6D: Resolution 1365
- 6F: Resolution 1367
- 6G: Resolution 1368
- 6H: Resolution 1369
- 6L: Resolution 1371

Mayor Soliman commented that they would now discuss the items that were removed from the Consent Agenda to discuss separately.

- 6E. Approve a Resolution Approving the Execution of an Agreement by and between the City of Crest Hill and LocalGov Staffing Solutions for Recruitment Services Relating to the Search for an Assistant City Administrator/HR.

Alderman Dyke raised a concern regarding the pricing summary in the agreement, observing that it included pricing information for positions beyond just the Assistant City Administrator/HR Director position, which was the primary focus of the discussion. Lori Pederson from LocalGov Staffing Solutions explained that the additional positions and their associated pricing were included in the agreement as optional considerations for any potential future recruitment needs. She emphasized that the contract itself, which was detailed in Exhibit B, specifically pertained only to the recruitment services for the Assistant City Administrator/HR Director position that the City was currently pursuing.

In further clarification, the City Attorney also addressed the issue by affirming that the full proposal had indeed been included with the agreement package for reference purposes. He pointed out that the presence of additional positions in the proposal did not impact the Council's decision now since the Council was only being asked to approve the agreement that was strictly related to the Assistant City Administrator/HR Director search. The approval was focused solely on this single position, as delineated in Exhibit B. This assurance helped to dispel any ambiguity regarding the scope of the contract and reinforced the Council's understanding of the agreement before moving forward with the approval process.

Mayor Soliman asked for a motion.

Alderperson Oberlin made a motion to Approve the Execution of an Agreement by and between the City of Crest Hill and LocalGov Staffing Solutions for Recruitment Services Relating to the Search for an Assistant City Administrator/HR. Seconded by Alderwoman Gazal. Roll Call: Ayes: Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Deserio. Nays: none. **MOTION CARRIED. Resolution #1366**

6K. Approve a Resolution Amending the Credit Card and Purchasing Policies of the City of Crest Hill.

Alderperson Oberlin expressed significant concerns regarding the existing policy that permitted the sharing or handing over of City-issued credit cards to other employees. She adamantly emphasized that when an individual is issued a City credit card in their own name, they should remain the sole authorized user of that card. Allowing others to use the card could potentially compromise accountability and responsibility, undermining the very purpose of having a card issued in a specific person's name.

Alderperson Oberlin underscored her belief that all purchases should go through the proper channels, asserting that the City had sufficient staff members with access to credit cards. In situations where a specific cardholder was unavailable, she highlighted alternative pathways, such as accessing other authorized individuals like the City administrator or their assistant, especially for emergency purchases.

Alderwoman Gazal supported the need for further deliberation on the matter and moved to TABLE the item, acknowledging that she, along with other members, had lingering questions regarding the policy and its implications. She proposed tabling the resolution to amend the credit card and purchasing policies, suggesting these should be addressed in a more thorough discussion in the forthcoming work session slated for January.

Mayor Soliman asked for a motion to table the item.

Alderwoman Gazal made a motion to TABLE the Resolution Amending the Credit Card and Purchasing Policies of the City of Crest Hill. Seconded by Alderman Dyke. Roll Call: Ayes: Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Deserio, Jefferson, Gazal. MOTION CARRIED.

7. REPORTS & COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENTS & ELECTED OFFICIALS

7A. MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Soliman thanked Alderwoman Gazal for organizing Winterfest 2025, which took place the previous Saturday. He noted that conditions were much better than the previous year, with temperatures around 30 degrees and no wind. Mayor Soliman described it as a fantastic family-friendly event that received positive feedback from attendees, and he looked forward to a "bigger and better" Winterfest in 2026.

The Mayor concluded by wishing all residents a blessed Christmas and a healthy and happy New Year for 2026.

Alderwoman Gazal thanked the Mayor for providing the luncheon for the staff and elected officials.

7B. CITY CLERK'S REPORT:

1. Approval of Autumn Ridge Association to use the Community Room in 2026.

City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall requested Council approval for the Autumn Ridge Association to use the Community Room for their HOA meetings in 2026. The dates would be January 15th, April 16th, July 16th, and September 17th, all starting at 7 PM.

Alderwoman Gazal made a motion for the Approval of Autumn Ridge Association to use the Community Room in 2026. Seconded by Alderman Jefferson. Roll Call: Ayes: Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Deserio, Jefferson, Gazal. Nays: None. MOTION CARRIED.

Clerk Vershay-Hall wished everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Safe New Years.

7C. CITY TREASURER'S REPORT:

Treasurer Jamie Malloy thanked Alderwoman Gazal for her work on the Winterfest and wished a belated happy birthday to Alderwoman Gazal and a happy birthday to Alderman Albert. She mentioned that cake was available after the meeting to celebrate. Treasurer Malloy concluded by extending holiday wishes to everyone.

7D. CITY ATTORNEY:

1. Approve an Ordinance for Referendum Seeking a Public Advisory Opinion on the Question of Whether to Abolish the Civil Service Commission for the City of Crest Hill, Illinois.

City Attorney Mike Stiff reported that efforts to collect signatures for a referendum to abolish the Civil Service Commission had fallen short of the required 340 signatures by about two hundred.

He explained that the correct procedure to abolish the Civil Service Commission would be to collect the required number of signatures, present them to the Circuit Court, and have a Judge direct the Clerk to place the question on the ballot. However, he noted that other municipalities had successfully abolished their Civil Service Commissions through ordinances without following this specific process.

Attorney Stiff presented an alternative option: the City Council could pass an ordinance to place an advisory referendum question on the March ballot. While acknowledging this approach was not technically the correct procedure and could potentially face legal challenges, he noted that two other municipalities (City of Silvis and City of Lincoln) had used this method successfully without facing challenges.

Extensive discussion followed regarding the risks of proceeding with an ordinance versus waiting to collect signatures properly for a future election. Alderman Jefferson shared his research showing that eighteen municipalities since 1997 had abolished Civil Service Commissions by ordinance without challenges. He characterized Civil Service as an archaic hiring method that hamstrings the City's ability to hire efficiently.

City Administrator Blaine Wing noted the practical difficulties the Civil Service requirements create for the City's hiring process, as it requires creating testing lists and causes months of delays.

Some Council members expressed concerns about not following the technically correct procedure, while others felt the risk was

minimal and worth taking given the benefits of modernizing the hiring process.

Alderman Jefferson made a motion to Approve an Ordinance for Referendum Seeking a Public Advisory Opinion on the Question of Whether to Abolish the Civil Service Commission for the City of Crest Hill, Illinois. Seconded by Alderman Cipiti. Roll Call: Ayes: Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Kubal, Dyke, Deserio, Jefferson. Nays: Albert. MOTION CARRIED. Ordinance #2044

Attorney Stiff advised that he would process the paperwork promptly rather than waiting until the December 29th deadline.

7E. CITY ADMINISTRATOR:

City Administrator Blaine Wing reported that the new City newsletter was available on the website and would soon be mailed to households. He also noted that the Public Works Department was working with contractors to address a water line issue at Food for Less, which had temporarily frozen due to cold weather. Repairs were scheduled for the following morning.

Alderwoman Gazal and Alderman Jefferson suggested that in future newsletters, the Mayor's message should appear on the first or second page as is customary in other municipal newsletters, noting that the Mayor is "the face of the City." Administrator Wing indicated he would consider these suggestions for the spring newsletter.

7F. PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT:

There were no items to report.

7G. CITY ENGINEER:

1. Approve Pay Request #1 from Fer Pal Construction USA, LLC with Direction to Strand Associates that Once all Revised Documents are Received, to Send to the IEPA for Approval and Disbursement for a Total Amount of \$1,078,900.10.

City Engineer Ron Wiedeman explained that while some paperwork was still pending from the contractor, they wanted to process the payment request before year-end.

Alderman Oberlin made a motion to Approve Pay Request #1 from Fer Pal Construction USA, LLC with Direction to Strand Associates that Once all Revised Documents are Received, to Send to the IEPA for Approval and Disbursement for a Total Amount of \$1,078,900.10. Seconded by Alderman Jefferson. Roll Call: Ayes: Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Deserio, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin. Nays: none. MOTION CARRIED.

Engineer Weideman wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

7H. POLICE DEPARTMENT:

Police Chief Ed Clark introduced two new Police Officers who were hired on December 1st and would begin Police Academy training on January 5th: Madeline McNamara, a Crest Hill resident, and William Hernandez from the Plainfield area.

Both officers expressed their gratitude for the opportunity and their commitment to serving the community. Council members warmly welcomed the new officers and encouraged them to take advantage of the training and mentorship available to them.

7I. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

1. Approve a Resolution Approving an Agreement for an Update and Audit of the 2014 City of Crest Hill Comprehensive Plan by and between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois and Houseal Lavigne Associates, LLC.

Community & Economic Development Director Dan Ritter presented a resolution for an update and audit of the 2014 City of Crest Hill Comprehensive Plan by Houseal Lavigne Associates LLC. He explained that this firm had created the original 2014 plan and had significant experience in comprehensive planning. The update would assess what has been accomplished in the past decade and establish new goals and objectives for the City.

Alderman Albert made a motion to Approve a Resolution Approving an Agreement for an Update and Audit of the 2014 City of Crest Hill Comprehensive Plan by and between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois and Houseal Lavigne Associates, LLC. Seconded by Alderman Jefferson. Roll Call: Albert, Kubal, Deserio, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti. Nays: Dyke. MOTION CARRIED. Resolution #1372

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

There was no unfinished business.

9. NEW BUSINESS:

There was no new business.

10. COMMITTEE/LIAISON REPORTS:

Alderwoman Gazal delivered an extensive report on the recent Winterfest event, expressing gratitude to numerous sponsors, volunteers, City staff, and Elected Officials who contributed to its success. She specifically thanked City Administrator Blaine Wing for his dedication and Marybel DeHaro for her behind-the-scenes coordination. She also recognized Public Works staff, the Police

Department, the Crest Hill Lions Club, and many others who helped make the event successful.

11. CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Alderperson Oberlin announced that the City would be recycling holiday light strands and extension cords at City Hall from December 29, 2025, through January 30, 2026, as well as recycling real Christmas trees.

Multiple Council members congratulated the holiday lights contest winners, welcomed the new Public Works Director and Police Officers, and thanked Alderwoman Gazal for organizing the Winterfest.

Alderwoman Gazal shared a personal reflection about the second anniversary of her father's passing and encouraged everyone to reach out to family members, emphasizing the importance of reconciliation and not taking relationships for granted.

Council members extended holiday wishes to residents and fellow Council members.

12. PUBLIC COMMENT:

No one approached the podium for public comment.

13. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business before the Council, and no action needed from an executive session, a motion for adjournment was in order.

Alderman Dyke made a motion to adjourn at 8:28 p.m. Seconded by Alderman Deserio. Roll Call: Ayes: Kubal, Dyke, Deserio, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert. Nayes: None. MOTION CARRIED.

Approved this _____ day of _____, 2025.
As presented _____
As amended _____

CHRISTINE VERSHAY-HALL, CITY CLERK

RAYMOND R. SOLIMAN, MAYOR