

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION
CITY COUNCIL OF CREST HILL
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS
January 30, 2023

The January 30, 2023 City Council work session was called to order by Mayor Raymond R. Soliman at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 1610 Plainfield Road 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 John Vershay, Alderwoman Claudia Gazal, Alderperson Tina Oberlin, Alderman Mark Cipiti, Alderman Nate Albert, Alderman Joe Kubal.

Also present were: Administrator Jim Marino, Director of Public Works Mark Siefert, Assistant Public Works Director Blaine Kline, Police Chief Ed Clark, Attorney Michael Santchi,

Mayor Soliman asked for a straw vote to allow Alderman Jefferson to attend the meeting remotely.

All members were in agreement with the request.

Absent were: City Engineer Ron Wiedeman, Interim Planner Maura Rigoni, Attorney, Mike Stiff, Finance Director Lisa Banovetz

TOPIC: Consideration of Reduction in Alarm Registration Fee

Alderwoman Gazal explained many residents have asked questions regarding the increase of the alarm fee from \$20.00 to \$100.00. Police Chief Ed Clark explained the increase has caused some concern from the residents. Chief Clark stated our alarm fee numbers from the last years were as follows:

2019 - 320 active alarm registrations
2021 - 342 active alarm registrations
2022 - 338 active alarm registrations

Due to the pandemic, there were no alarm registrations sent out in 2020. He stated, as of today, we have approximately 320 active alarm registrations for 2023, per a report given by Deputy Clerk Karen Kozierka.

Chief Clark discussed having a reduction in the alarm fee for the fiscal year 2024, possibly reducing the residential alarm fee and keeping the business alarm fee at \$100.00; since most concerns came from residents and not business owners.

City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall explained out of the 320 active alarm registrations for 2023; 266 residents have paid the \$100.00, 52 residents still owe the fee, 8 residents were new alarm registrants and 17 residents have closed their accounts.

Mayor Soliman asked how many were residential. Chief Clark stated in 2022 of the 338 alarm registrations; 128 were resident alarms and 210 were business alarms.

Chief Clark explained when an alarm call comes in, we respond no matter if the resident is registered or not. He also explained the registration helps get the immediate keyholder information to Wescom, our dispatch center immediately.

Alderman Gazal asked what if a resident decides to keep their alarm system but not register with the city? Chief Clark stated that is the resident's decision but the building department will send a letter to the resident and at some point the resident would be cited.

Alderman Gazal asked what if a resident has a false alarm at the property? Chief Clark stated if called to property and it is a false alarm the resident would not get charged for the first false alarm response. The second false alarm would cite the resident \$50.00, and any false alarm after the second would cite the resident \$100.00 per each false alarm.

Mayor Soliman asked when was the last time the alarm fee was increased? Chief Clark believed it was prior to 2000.

Alderman Oberlin asked what is the registration fee paying for? Chief Clark responded it is basically for Wescom (our dispatch center) to keep the updated information available for immediate response and not relying on the alarm company to get the information needed to relay in an emergency.

Alderman Cipiti stated he researched other neighboring municipalities, and most do not require a yearly fee but do require the owner of the alarm to register their alarm. Alderman Cipiti also stated other municipalities he researched do have a fee for false alarms and some municipalities do have a fee for never registering the alarm.

City Treasurer Conklin stated from a financial perspective we are looking at a budgeted amount of approximately \$30,000 with a difference of \$26,000 between the \$20.00 and the \$100.00 alarm fees. Treasurer Conklin explained we would be a lot closer to the budget if the City chose to keep the businesses at \$100.00 and possibly keep residents at \$25.00.

Alderman Gazal asked what is the point in paying the City when the residents are already paying the alarm company? Treasurer Conklin explained it would be for the purpose of revenue; we are not home ruled. Alderman explained she can understand if charging a fee to the resident for repeated false alarms but not for registering their information.

Alderman Albert mentioned the old ordinance stated it was \$50.00 for a new registered alarm and an annual renewal of \$20.00. Alderman Albert stated he was in favor for getting rid of the registration and renewal fees and taking a closer look at the false alarm fees.

Treasurer Conklin asked if we are looking on rebating these monies to the resident or looking into the next year's budget. It was stated this would be for next year's budget and we would not budget.

Mayor Soliman asked what will happen to the 52 residents who have not paid their alarm fee for the year 2023? Chief Clark explained the Building Department will issue a letter to the resident, then fine the resident and eventually if not addressed they will have to come to an Administrative hearing.

Alderman Albert stated he would believe there are more residential alarms then what we have registered. Alderman Albert also stated if there is no fee the resident would be more likely to register their alarm.

Mayor Soliman asked for a straw vote to keep the businesses as is and eliminate the residential alarm fee for the budget year 2023-2024; starting January 1, 2024. False alarm fees will stay as is.

All members were in agreement to keep the business alarm fee at \$100.00, eliminate residential alarm fee and to keep false alarm fees as is.

TOPIC: Regional Water Commission Formation Update

Director of Public Works Mark Siefert discussed the progress the Regional Water Commission has made and the direction it is going. Director Siefert explained he will be bringing back a first amendment to the document that was signed last year due to the length of time that the allocation process is taking. Originally it was thought that the Commission would be up and formed by April of this year which will need pushed out and the cleanup of language regarding payments. Director Siefert also stated there are more things the attorneys are working on amongst all communities.

TOPIC: Crest Hill Project Update

Chris Ulm from Strand Associates gave an update regarding the Lake Michigan water Project. Chris Ulm discussed the steps, per memo dated January 30, 2023. Chris explained the Corrosion Control Desktop Study which must be done when switching your water source to make sure the water does not have lead and copper corrosion and contamination. Chris also discussed Well No. 14 needing to be added to keep the supply growing during the summer months when our existing supply is taxed. This will anticipate bringing Well No. 10 up to capacity with Well No. 14 and bypassing the rest during high demand time given the water quality. Strand will prepare a report to meet IEPA requirements after looking at the wells by July of 2023.

TOPIC: Lake Michigan Allocation Application Update

Director of Public Works Mark Siefert discussed the process of the application and all the requirements of the new reviewer. Chris Ulm from Stand Associates further explained the complex permit application process with Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR).

Chris Ulm stated IDNR will want to see an active public participation and Council involvement in the process. Chris also stated we will need to extensively monitor and track water usage, prove your water distribution system and reduce leakage and stay in compliance with the 10% water loss. Alderperson Oberlin asked if we are currently under the 10%? Director Siefert answered: we are at 11.6% in our allocation and out of all the communities submitted, we are the lowest.

TOPIC: Approval of a Resolution in Support of the Cities Lake Michigan Allocation Application

Director of Public Works Mark Siefert explained he is working with Attorney Michael Santchi from Spesia and Taylor on creating an ordinance that states if your water line breaks and it is determined to be the homeowner's responsibility, they would have 10 days to fix the water line or the water will be shut off.

Director Siefert told the Council they are forming the first City Leak Detection Program. and informed the Council in the past two weeks through this program they have found 4 leaks. Director Siefert said some of these leaks are the homeowner's responsibility, which is why we are creating the ordinance. Director Siefert also explained with this new leak detection program and ordinance we will be stopping the leak when the leak is on the resident's side before the meter.

Attorney Michael Santchi from Spesia and Taylor informed the Council he has prepared a resolution in conjunction with attorneys who are representing other applicants that are represented by Strand & Associate, as well. Attorney Santchi explained this resolution will provide written support of the City's efforts and understanding of the requirements of being a Lake Michigan permittee.

Mayor Soliman asked for a straw vote for creating the resolution per the memo dated January 30, 2023.

All members were in agreement to create the resolution,

TOPIC: Recommendation to Amend a Contract with Strand and Associates for the Lake Michigan Water Allocation Application with Amendment 1

Director of Public Works Mark Siefert recommended to amend the contract with Strand and Associates for the Lake Michigan Water Allocation Application. The original contract was for \$131,000.00; this amendment would be an additional \$65,000.00. The additional amount is for some engineering explorations plus a second pre-hearing with comments and revisions that were not included in the original contract.

Mayor Soliman asked for a straw vote to approve an amendment to the Strand and Associates Contract for the Lake Michigan Water Allocation Application.

All members were in agreement to amend the contract.

TOPIC: Recommendation to Approve a Contract with Strand and Associates for Water Model Updates and Calibration of the Current Model

Director of Public Works Mark Siefert explained back in 2015 the City's first computer based hydraulic water model was created. This model is able to run scenarios of new development, new water mains, maintenance projects and various Lake Michigan Scenario's. Since the model is very comprehensive and the model is now seven years old; it is recommended to update and recalibrate the current model. This update will cost \$32,100.00.

Mayor Soliman asked for a straw vote to approve the Water Model Updates and Calibration of the Current Model and not to exceed \$32,100.00.

All members were in agreement to create to approve the updates and Calibration of the current water model.

This will be added to the Agenda on the February 6, 2023 meeting.

TOPIC: Recommendation to Enter into an Agreement with Strand for an Emergency Well Transition Plan and the Source Water Protection Plan

Director of Public Works Mark Siefert explained the purpose of this contract would cover two items; which one part is mandated by the IEPA. Direct Siefert further explained when the City switches to Lake Michigan water, the 8 wells the city currently manages will need to be switched from a primary role to a backup role and the second part of the contract would be the Source Water Protection Plan.

Director Siefert stated this is a mandated report that Strand and Associates would submit on behalf of the City by July 26, 2203. This would not exceed \$77,900.00.

City Treasurer Conklin asked if this amount will be coming out of the same budgeted amount of \$380,000.00? Director Seifert explained the Source Water Protection Plan will come out of the budgeted \$380,000 this year but the emergency will not; this would come out of next year's budget since it will not be completed until then.

Director Siefert further explained in more detail the switching of the well from primary role to back up role.

Mayor Soliman asked for a straw vote to approve the recommendation of an agreement to Strand for an Emergency Well Transition Plan and Source Water Protection Plan.

All members were in agreement to approve the recommendation.

TOPIC: Recommendation to Enter into an Agreement with Strand for the Loan Application for the Well 14 Raw Water Main

Director of Public Works Mark Siefert explained Well 14 was funded by the State of Illinois appropriations to pay for the well drilling. Director Siefert also explained the transmission main will be paid for by a low interest loan (SRF) through the State of Illinois and this contract would be for Strand and Associates to begin working on the application. The cost to enter into this contract with Strand and Associates would be \$20,000.00.

Mayor Soliman asked for a straw vote to enter into the agreement with Strand and Associates for the loan application for Well 14 water main.

All members were in agreement to enter into an agreement with Strand and Associates for the loan application.

TOPIC: Discussion Regarding the Change Orders Process for the West Plant Construction Project

Director of Public Works Mark Siefert requested direction regarding the Change Order process for the West Plant Construction Project. Director Siefert stated, recently change orders for the new City Center, for as small as \$500, have been brought to the City Council for approval. Director Siefert stated he is requesting clarification to determine how City Council would like to approve all change orders with this project going forward.

Further discussion followed regarding process of change orders and amounts.

TOPIC: Surplus Update

Assistant Public Works Director Blaine Kline informed the Council out of the 21 items listed we sold 20 items for a total of \$37,757.91 that will come back to the City.

Alderman Albert asked why an item was having seventeen bids and then the item was pulled off the auction bidding? Assistant Director Kline explained if they feel an item is worth more than the final price, the staff would decline the sale and relist it for a higher amount.

TOPIC: Request to Hire Additional Public Works Laborers in Lieu of a Project Manager and Wastewater Lead Operator

Director of Public Works Mark Siefert stated previously the City Council had approved the hiring of a Wastewater Lead Operator and a Project Manager for the Public Work's Department but feels there is more of a need of 'boots on the ground' rather than administration. Director Siefert stated since 2000 the Public Works staff has had 17 employees while the population of the City has grown by 79%; and other departments in the City have grown with the population. Director Siefert explained instead of hiring a Wastewater Lead Operator and a Project Manager he would like to hire at least two street laborers, possibly 3. Director Siefert stated the costs of hiring the street laborers as follows:

1 st Street Laborer	\$ 84,314.00
2 nd Street Laborer	\$168,628.00
3 rd Street Laborer	\$252,942.00

Alderwoman Gazal stated she feels we need more laborers than supervisors, but in a couple months or years will you be asking for a supervisor? Director Siefert explained with the switch to Lake Michigan water we will need a Wastewater Lead Operator eventually. Director Siefert also explained he has no problem with handling this position with the assistance of the Assistant Director until we hire a Lead Operator.

Alderman Oberlin asked if these costs for hiring the street laborer is the entire package or just the salary? Director Siefert stated that was the entire package including the salary, insurance and IMRF.

Mayor Soliman asked for a straw vote to approve the hiring of two street laborers with a projected budget change in the amount of \$168,628.00 for the Public Works Department. The informal vote was seven (7) yes votes, one (1) no vote.

TOPIC: Request for Tuition Reimbursement

Director of the Public Works Mark Siefert informed the Council he was accepted into the master's degree program at the University of St. Francis in business administration (MBA) and training and development (MTSD). Director Siefert feels this would greatly benefit the City.

Currently, the City Handbook allows for reimbursement in tuition and lay's out all repayment options. Director Siefert stated the cost would be \$40,000.00 over two years. If approved, would this money be budgeted in the upcoming and future budgets?

Alderman Cipiti questioned spending the money and getting returned based on staying employed with the City. Director Siefert explained the reimbursement policy in the handbook if separating from the City. Members of the Council stated they did not feel the three years stated in the handbook was sufficient enough. Attorney Michael Santchi explained the policy was set by the Council and can be changed by the Council.

Some Council members felt the MBA specializing in finance is not needed for the Director of Public Works position. It was stated there is no requirement for a finance degree when hiring for this position.

Director Siefert rescinded his request.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Stuart Soifer addressed the Council regarding clarification on the homeowner's responsibility if a leak is found. Director Siefert explained a homeowner is only responsible for the repairing of the leak if it is past the b-box.

MAYORS UPDATES:

There were no Mayor updates.

COMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES:

There were no committee/liaison updates.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES:

Administrator Marino had no updates at tonight's meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:53pm

Approved this _____ day of _____, 2023

As presented _____

As amended _____

CHRISTINE VERSHAY-HALL, CITY CLERK

RAYMOND R. SOLIMAN, MAYOR