

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION  
CITY COUNCIL OF CREST HILL  
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS  
October 14, 2024

The October 14, 2024, 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, City Treasurer Glen Conklin, 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 City Administrator Tony Graff, Deputy Chief Ryan Dobczyk, City Engineer Ron Wiedeman, Interim Public Works Director Mike Eulitz, Records Supervisor Lisa Kikkert, City Attorney Mike Stiff.

Absent were: Police Chief Ed Clark, Interim Finance Director Erica Waggoner, Interim Employee Relations Dave Strahl, Interim Community Development Director Ron Mentzer, Building Commissioner Don Seeman.

**TOPIC: Liquor License - Dragon Light – 1809 N. Larkin**

Mayor Soliman commented that he met with Mr. Hui Lin from Dragon Light Restaurant on September 24, 2024, with Police Chief Ed Clark and Liquor Commissioner Mike Gale. He commented that all the background checks came back in order. This would be for a Class H License which is for the restaurant located at 1809 N. Larkin Avenue and the hours would remain the same, which are: Monday through Thursday and Sundays are 12:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m., Friday and Saturdays are 12:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Mayor Soliman asked Mr. Hui Lin to approach the podium.

Hui Lin introduced himself and commented that on June 1, 2024, his brother and himself took over the restaurant after the previous owners retired. He commented that they completed both city and state liquor license applications and stated that they will comply with all local and state regulations for the sale of alcohol.

Mayor Soliman commented that Hui Lin also owns the Sushi Restaurant on Jefferson Street in Joliet, Illinois and he has a liquor license there as well.

Mayor Soliman asked if anyone had any questions or comments. There were none.

**TOPIC: Consideration to Rescind City Resolution #360 Regarding City of Crest Hill Annexation Petitions and Related Fire Protection Disconnection and Annexation Obligations**

City Attorney Mike Stiff commented that during the annexation of the Prado residence on Caton Farm Road it was discovered that Resolution #360 from 1991 was done as a Resolution and not an Ordinance. This Resolution does not have the force of law but has the policy of the city stating that any property annexed the developer was to be told they

must apply for de-annexation from the existing Fire Protection District if it is not already Lockport Township Fire District.

He then stated that it is a resolution which is a policy, and you can choose not to follow your policy, or you do what the plain language of the policy states which is apply for de-annexation. It does not state they have to be de-annexed; it just states that they must try by applying.

While finding this out, the two fire districts produced an IGA and with this IGA there is no need for Resolution #360. The IGA states the two fire districts, Lockport Township and Plainfield, will not actively solicit de-annexation from either district or they will not object to an annexation going forward.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote to have the city attorney draft a resolution rescinding Resolution #360.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

**TOPIC: Liquor License – Urban Kitchen – 2424 Plainfield Road, Suite 100**

Mayor Soliman commented that he met with Maria Nolasco from Urban Kitchen Restaurant on September 24, 2024, with Police Chief Ed Clark and Liquor Commissioner Mike Gale. This is a request for a Class H Restaurant liquor license for Urban Kitchen located at 2424 Plainfield Road, Unit #100. They have been open for two years and would like to serve alcohol. The restaurant hours are Sunday and Monday until 8:00 p.m. and Tuesday through Saturday until 10:00 p.m.

Mayor Soliman commented that they are delinquent from December of 2023 to the present on their Places for Eating Taxes but are going to work on taking care of what is owed.

Maria, the restaurant owner, thanked everyone for the opportunity to receive the liquor license and they are hoping sales will increase with the opportunity to serve alcohol.

Mayor Soliman informed everyone that the liquor license would not be issued until the Places for Eating Tax was current.

Mayor Soliman informed Maria she will need to submit a copy of her lease agreement, articles of incorporation, copy of the Will County Health Department Certificate, and a copy of the State Liquor License.

Maria commented that their accountant is working on the Places for Eating Taxes due and stated that they will wait until January 1, 2025, to pay for their liquor license.

**TOPIC: Approval Request for Citywide Software FOIA Implementation**

Deputy Chief Ryan Dobczyk commented that they would like to implement FOIA software. He commented that the Police Department fulfilled approximately 290 FOIA requests last year and currently they are already at 280 FOIA requests. He also commented

after talking to the city staff they had 203 FOIA requests in 2023 and currently at 167 FOIA requests.

There have been more FOIA requests since the police started using body cameras and this will trend upwards going forward and they believe there will be more FOIAs for the Lake Michigan Water Allocation as well.

They are looking for one portal on the city's website that will manage all FOIA requests. Currently our website is very confusing to file a FOIA or even find the FOIA forms. Having one portal would make this more efficient and have accountability since there will be an audit trail and show transparency.

One item that all the companies offer with FOIA Software is redaction assistance, which will help when needing to redact a large report.

Deputy Chief Dobczyk commented that he really likes the company CivicPlus who currently provides the city with the website, but their proposal is a little higher. He negotiated with the company, and they were able to cut the one-time fee in half and cut their first-year price by 25% but it will cost \$8,800.00 in the first year and future years will be over \$10,000.00.

The two other companies are Granicus and Justfoia. They like these companies but one issue with Granicus was the storage amount. He commented that he would recommend the company Justfoia, they have the most data storage, have negotiated their price, and have good customer service. He stated that Plainfield District #202, Village of Oswego, Village of Skokie all use Justfoia. The first-year pricing will be \$7,120.00 and this does include a \$370.00 one-time fee, and every year after that it starts at \$6,750.00 with a 5% increase which is common with all companies. He commented that a budget amendment would be needed.

Alderman Gazal asked if he talked to the surrounding agencies that use Justfoia. Deputy Chief Dobczyk commented that a current employee had worked for them and really liked them, but the storage space was important, which is why Justfoia is recommended since they are coming in with the most storage space. He also commented that Village of Romeville and Village of Plainfield use Next Request CivicPlus, who was the highest proposal.

Alderman Gazal asked if Lisa Kikkert, the Records Supervisor, had used the software before. Supervisor Kikkert commented that she has not used it but has been playing with the software and learning more.

Alderman Oberlin asked what our need of storage is anticipated to be? Deputy Chief Dobczyk commented that they were under the impression we were at 160 FOIA requests and recommended five hundred Gigabytes but he reminded them that we are already double, almost tripling that amount, so he would recommend 1 to 1.5 Terabytes of storage space.

Alderman Oberlin also asked how much manpower is anticipated to shave off the workforce using this program. Deputy Chief Dobczyk commented that the company stated that we would see a 20% reduction in the volume.

Alderwoman Gazal asked how many months it would take to train and asked if he could wait until the next budget year. Deputy Chief Dobczyk commented that the FOIAs are increasing, and this would help us now and it would be six weeks of training for this program. Alderperson Oberlin asked who would be trained? Lisa said there will be different access to each level and each level would have different training and there will be many users since the program would be city wide.

Alderwoman Gazal commented that she would like to eventually see this taken out of each department's budget that would use this program.

City Attorney commented that he would like to know what the assumptions, terms and conditions mean in their paperwork before it comes for approval to the City Council.

Deputy Chief Dobczyk commented that the Halloween hours for trick-or-treating will be from 4:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m.

Alderwoman Gazal asked for an update on the incident that happened on Weber Road with Will County and Crest Hill Police Department and would like a solution to this problem home since it is close to the Library and residential homes. Deputy Dobczyk commented that the Crest Hill officers were requested by Will County Sheriff's Department to assist with the perimeter of the house. The house is in the unincorporated part of Will County west of Weber Road. The Will County Sheriff's Department responded to a call from the people inside this house, and a person had run from the house, who was caught and placed into custody. After talking to the officers on the scene, it was not certain if other people were in the home or involved but the main person was put into custody. Deputy Dobczyk stated that he agrees that something needs to be done but is not sure what can be done as a city as far as enforcement action on the house since it is in Will County. It was stated that this was the second time in a couple of months that Will County has responded to this house.

Alderman Albert asked if it was a squatter situation? Deputy Dobczyk commented that from what he was told the initial report sounded more like a burglary situation where a mask was involved.

Mayor Soliman asked to deviate to agenda item number 9.

**TOPIC: Well's 4, 8 & 10 Iron Filter Emergency Repair Work**

Interim Public Works Director Mike Eulitz commented that Well #4 is located at 2333 Parkrose, is leaking to such a degree that it is believed there are several leaks and failures in the vessel. In addition, during the recent EPA inspection we were told that if this filter is not repaired, we would be in violation. At this time, we need to at least show it is under contract to be repaired so we are not in violation, whether it is repaired at this time or in the next six months. The vessels in Well #8 (2401 Waterford) and Well #10 (861 Caton Farm Road) are also beginning to exhibit some of these issues same as Well #12, which is under contract and should be constructed this month.

Based on what we have learned from Well #11 when it was being repaired, we have been in negotiations since then to get these other iron filters under rehabilitation and have a quote

from USG at a not to exceed cost of \$716,978.00. He also commented that until these are opened, we do not know what kind of trouble we have, so the quote is anticipating the worst-case scenario.

Alderman Cipiti asked if the failures of the iron filters are an explanation for the rusty water reports we receive. Interim Director Eulitz commented that the failures of these iron filters are from water leaking from the filter itself. The only complaints we would receive about this are iron complaints but not rust.

Alderwoman Methvin asked if this update/rehabilitation is a requirement to be complying with to receive the Lake Michigan Water. Interim Director Eulitz stated that it is not a requirement to receive Lake Michigan Water, but it is a requirement by the IEPA. Once we have Lake Michigan Water, we will not need the iron filters. However, we will still have these wells under operation on an emergency basis, which is why they need repaired.

Alderwoman Gazal asked about the well on Division Street overflow problem that happened a couple of weeks ago. Interim Director Eulitz commented that the Scada Alarm system was not communicating with other software, and they are looking at upgrading.

Interim City Administrator Graff commented that this will help improve our water loss percentage that we do need to have Lake Michigan Water.

Alderwoman Gazal asked where this money is coming from, the General Fund? Treasurer Conklin commented that they do not have it, and we will have to go into reserves for Water and Sewer. Alderwoman Gazal commented that we have no choice and next year will be worse. Interim Director Eulitz commented that it has come quicker than we anticipated, we would have budgeted one in each budget year, but it did not work out that way.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote to amend the 2024-2025 Budget in the amount not to exceed \$716,978.00 to USG Water for the iron Filters.

AYES: Ald. Gazal, Jefferson, Methvin, Dyke, Kubal, Albert, Cipiti, Oberlin.  
NAYES: None.  
ABSENT: None.

Mayor Soliman commented that this will be on the agenda for Monday, October 21, 2024.

**TOPIC: Approval of Pay Request #21 from Vissering Construction Inc. with Direction to Send it to the IEPA for Approval and Disbursement for a Total Amount of \$2,162,132.01**

Interim Public Works Director Mike Eulitz commented that this pay request is for the work performed in the month of September for the West Treatment Plan Project. Once we receive the check from the IEPA the city will pay Vissering.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote for pay request #21.

AYES: Ald. Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Methvin, Jefferson, Gazal.  
NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

Mayor Soliman commented that this will be on the agenda for Monday, October 21, 2024.

Mayor Soliman commented that he spoke with Interim Director Eulitz and Administrative Assistant Ada Martino regarding the Winter Fest and received information that the cost will be close to the cost last year and there will be the globe, two face painters, and two balloon artists. This was approximately \$1,700.00 for everything that was there, and we will reach out to Sam for Santa Claus. He also asked if anyone would want to volunteer to let him know.

Mayor Soliman informed the Council that there was a need for an executive session on 5ILCS 120/2(c)(1) per the memo dated October 14, 2024.

(#1) Motion by Alderperson Oberlin seconded by Alderwoman Methvin, to go into executive session on 5ILCS 120/2(c)(1) per the memo dated October 14, 2024.

On roll call, the vote was:

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

There being eight (8) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

Executive Session 8:11 p.m.

(#2) Motion by Alderperson Oberlin seconded by Alderwoman Methvin, to reconvene from the executive session on 5ILCS 120/2(c)(1) per the memo dated October 14, 2024.

On roll call, the vote was:

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Albert (8:51p)

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

Reconvened 8:50 p.m.

**TOPIC: Status and Discussion of the Crest Hill Municipal Plaza**

City Engineer Ron Wiedeman gave a brief presentation and updated the Council regarding the Crest Hill Municipal Plaza. He commented that a year ago in August the Council approved moving forward to prepare the plans for the following work:

- |              |                        |
|--------------|------------------------|
| - Irrigation | - Underground drainage |
| - Sidewalk   | - Lighting layout      |
| - Playground | -                      |

All work has been completed except for two items:

- Finalize park playground equipment and layout.
- Final approval of material for proposed poles and luminaires

Engineer Wiedeman commented that the project comes to a cost of \$1,577,000.00 with a 10% contingency. They have subtracted out the \$250,000.00 that will be coming from the Lockport Township Park district. They have secured a \$250,000.00 grant that comes from the grading and underground work for the park and they have another \$250,000.00 grant for the lighting. Therefore, the city cost would be \$1,234,843.00 to do the current work approved by the Council last year.

Staff is working with the Heritage Corridor for funding through the State's Route 66 grant program. Engineer Wiedeman also mentioned to save costs they will be seeding the park which will take 2-3 years to grow a turf to host events.

He then asked for directions from the Council on how they would like to move forward.

Interim Administrator Graff commented that there will have to be further discussion regarding the revenue streams that could be available. He then possibly mentioned looking at using the one percent tax that will be coming in or looking at a referendum for a gas tax, but it is a bigger picture that we need to look at and discuss.

Alderwoman Gazal commented that the streets are more important since they are falling apart.

Engineer Wiedeman commented that when you start asking about funding sources/sponsorships, you need to keep in mind that they will want to see drawings when you are asking for money.

Alderman Jefferson thanked Engineer Wiedeman for having visuals for them. He also commented that if the city is not going to 'GC' this he can support it. He then commented that naming rights on things is going to be the cheapest route and if we want to do naming rights with the band shell, which will help gather a nice sponsorship and help the project tremendously.

Engineer Wiedeman asked for a decision on moving forward with hiring an engineer for the band shell since there is a time restraint of May 2025. He then asked if the Council would like him to get some RFQs and see where we are.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote for the design services for Band Shell for \$54,700.00.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

**TOPIC: Execution of a Professional Services Agreement with Christopher B. Burke Engineering Ltd. To Perform Design Engineering Services for the 2025 Roadway Rehabilitation Improvement for the Locations Specified in this Memo for a Not to Exceed Amount of \$44,880.00.**

Engineer Wiedeman gave a presentation about projects that were done and projects he would like to perform in 2025. He commented that this year in Ward 1 we have our watermain projects on Oakland from Pasadena to Ludwig designed and ready to go. We

have received funding from two sources on this project; \$300,000.00 from CDBG and \$250,000.00 DCEO grant. He then discussed the anticipated project for 2025 Roadway Rehabilitations and the 2025 Locations for the watermain street rehabilitation.

#### 2025 Locations-Rehabilitation

- Loch Ln. from Gaylord to Carlton St.
- Abbey Ln. from Loch Ln. to Prestwick Dr.
- Prestwick Dr. from Abby Ln. to East End.
- Scott Court • Crestwood Dr. from Donmaur Dr. to Amelia Ct./Mia Dr.
- Mia Dr. from Amelia Ct. to Eldorado Dr.

#### 2025 Locations-WM and Street Rehabilitation

- Elsie Ave. from Kelly to Clement
- Rose Ave. from Kelly to Clement
- Ludwig Ave. from Wilcox to Clement
- Chaney Ct

The estimated cost of this work is \$1.5 million that would include engineering and the proposal from Burke is \$44,880.00 for them to prepare the bid plans and have them ready by next spring.

Engineer Wiedeman commented that to pay for this he will have to move funds from 01-03-5330 to the 13-00-5330 to cover this and it will increase the budget.

Alderman Albert asked how often we look into regrading the streets? Engineer Wiedeman commented that it is every four years, and this was completed in 2021. Alderman Albert commented that he is asking since we have done emergency repairs to Mia Drive, and it is sufficient now and wonders if we should focus elsewhere. Engineer Wiedeman commented that he would still like to clean Mia Drive up and it is still rated very poor, but he will do what the Council would like him to do.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote for the proposal from Burke for \$44,880.00.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

#### **TOPIC: Resolution Approving a Professional Service Agreement for Design Services for the Inner Circle Watermain Replacement and Roadway Rehabilitation Improvement-Design Engineering Services by and between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois and V3 Companies for a Not to Exceed of \$148,454.00.**

Engineer Wiedeman mentioned that he would like to start working on the design for Inner Circle from Hosmer Lane to Marlboro and Rahill Court. He would like to have this complete and ready for bid next spring. This would be a cost of \$148,454.00 and it is currently budgeted.



Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote for the Professional Service Agreement for Design Services the Inner Circle Watermain Replacement and Roadway Rehabilitation Improvement-Design Engineering Services for not to exceed the amount of \$148,454.00.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

**TOPIC: Plainfield Rd. Theodore and Broadway Cured in Place Pipe (CIPP) Update**

City Engineer Ron Wiedeman gave an update on the watermain lining projects. Currently we are complete with the entire contract design which includes all the watermain on Plainfield Road, Theodore, and Broadway. There has been a request for IEPA funding for this work, which includes these three locations, which are being done in four phases. It also includes the east and west receiving station and the new storage tank for the Grand Prairie work.

In June of 2024, IEPA sent out their funding for FY2025 and the City of Crest was awarded a \$4 million dollar loan from the IEPA for FY2025 with \$3.2 million dollar forgiveness. The first phase of the project, which is all of Broadway and Theodore to Center Street and it is estimated at \$3.9 million dollars and \$3.2 million dollars will be principal forgiveness. To stay eligible for the loan and the principal forgiveness, we need to bid the project out by January of 2025 and have the project under contract by March of 2025.

**TOPIC: Proposal for Plan Commission Members laptops**

City Administrator Tony Graff commented that we have received three bids, but they are still searching to see if we can receive better pricing. We are looking at under \$5,000.00 for the seven iPads. It was mentioned that Chairman Bill Thomas found a laptop that Amazon has on sale, and we are looking to see if it is comparable to the laptop in the proposals and if so, it would be a \$200.00 savings per laptop.

The Clerk's Office has \$5,000.00 budgeted for technological equipment.

Alderman Cipiti commented that the Council has iPads, not laptops, and the iPads have satisfied everything they need to do. He then asked why the quotes that were provided are for laptop computers and not iPads. He does not see the need for laptops with keyboards for the Plan Commission. He also commented that he would be leery about buying a laptop from Amazon because of a price savings, because you get what you pay for.

Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall commented that she attended the last Plan Commission meeting a few Commissioners requested a laptop since it is bigger and feel they would be able to see it better than an iPad. Alderman Cipiti commented that he would understand that and appreciate that as well, but he did not have a choice, and the iPads are what was given to them. He then stated that he does not think the Plan Commission should be given the option to get whatever they want due to personal preference, and this is taxpayer money.

Alderman Albert agreed with Alderman Cipiti and commented that the city would have more control and security over the iPad compared to the freedom of a laptop and he feels the city should stay consistent.

Stuart Soifer, a resident, approached the podium and stated that there is an adaptor that you can plug into the iPads to transfer to a regular monitor to help make the information bigger.

After discussion, the Council would like to see the same iPads purchased for the Plan Commission and to stay consistent.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote for the ordering of the iPad.

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

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

### **TOPIC: Discussion on Referendum to Change Form of Government**

City Attorney Mike Stiff commented that he sent to all the Council a confidential memorandum of his results for the research regarding changing mayoral appointments in the form of government.

He then asked the Council if they had any specific questions or any direction that the discussion needs to go but he does not feel he should be giving the legal opinion in an open meeting.

Alderman Jefferson asked if there is a provision that they can see that would prohibit or present a challenge to it happening? Attorney Stiff commented that the cases he cited in the memorandum were an attempt to tinker with the way a Public Library Board is constituted, and that attempt was overturned by the Appellate Court. He then commented that he has not found anything that states trying to take away mayoral appointment power is acceptable and has been upheld. What has been indicated is that you can change the form of government, and the Council has all the forms, Commission Form, Strong Mayor Form, and the Current Standard Form. If you want to change to one of those forms you will have to have a referendum to change the form, and it is acceptable by referendum.

Attorney Stiff commented that he has not found anything on a Non-Home Rule where you can create a 'Hybrid' form of government that is not one of the forms of government in that memorandum. As a Non-Home Rule municipality, you have the forms of government provided in the municipal code that you can change from one form to another by referendum, but he is unclear if you can pick and choose from each of those forms, basically hybrid form, as a Non-Home Rule municipality.

Alderman Jefferson asked if they could vote to put a referendum on the ballot to change from Non-Home Rule to Home Rule and was told that they could do that. Alderman Jefferson then asked if that would change the form of government?

Alderwoman Gazal commented that you must have a certain population to change to Home Rule. It was said by the population, or you can change by referendum, as well.

Alderman Cipiti asked what advantages would there be to change from Non-Home Rule to Home Rule? Attorney Stiff commented that as a Non-Home Rule community you are bound by Dillon's Rule that states you can only do what legislature has specifically allowed you to do. As a Home Rule community you can do anything you want that is not

specifically prohibited or prescribed by the Illinois Legislature Municipal Code. He then commented that you would have much greater flexibility when it comes to taxation, this would provide much greater flexibility and greater abilities to do things that are not prescribed by the municipal code.

Alderman Albert commented that the Referendums are very hard to pass since there are groups out there encouraging the voters not to vote for Home Rule status. Attorney Stiff commented that you can hold informational meetings to answer questions as to the pros and cons of the referendum, but you cannot spend city dollars to push a referendum recommendation. The Council cannot hold a meeting and try to lobby for or against it, but you can have a meeting that would need to be an unbiased informational meeting.

Attorney Stiff then gave an example how another community was made available so the school district (Superintendent/Principal) could hold a meeting for the public and the village trustees sat in the audience asking questions and he reminded the trustees that they are not acting as a board member but acting as a resident. Alderman Cipiti asked that Lockport Townships had their referendum presentation in the Chambers to the Council and Dr. McBride explained the referendum on the ballot for the Freshman Center, and asked should the elected officials have given a comment on the referendum? Attorney Stiff commented that he cannot say yes or no to that question, but it is something that you need to be cautious. Alderman Cipiti commented that it was very clear what took place in the Chambers at that meeting and commented that the Council should be careful and not publicly endorse the referendum. Attorney Stiff commented that you can give the pros and the cons if asked. Alderman Cipiti then asked if making a presentation in support of or a please vote yes is a no-no? Attorney Stiff commented that that would be a big no. Treasurer Conklin commented that Dr. McBride did not step over the line. Alderman Cipiti commented that he did not say he did. Treasurer Conklin commented that it seemed he implied that. Alderman Cipiti said there was no implications and do not put words in his mouth and his comment had nothing to do with Dr. McBride. Treasurer Conklin apologized.

Alderman Oberlin commented that they have had a referendum pass successfully in the City of Crest Hill and they were allowed to give factual information about it but not just say vote for this.

Alderman Jefferson commented that it is not about the referendum changing the form of government to take away the appointment power of the Mayor, but it is about the community growing and going forward with the advantages of being a Home Rule community. He also commented that in the next three to five years we will be at Home Rule status anyway by population. He stated that the city can use the advantages of being a Home Rule community. It is not to take away power from the Mayor because that power has been there since the 1960s. He commented that we have a lot of vacant land, and he has had communication with developers looking at the parcel of land behind Gas N Wash to develop and they want to know if all the B.S. they hear about Crest Hill is true. He then commented that the Village of Rockdale can be Home Rule with a population of 2,000.

Alderman Albert commented that the same political action committees that supported us for the retail sales tax have been known to absolutely oppose Home Rule referendums. He then commented that it can certainly be done but it will take a lot to pass.

Mayor Soliman commented that in the late 1980s Crest Hill went to referendum to hire more police officers and it failed.

Alderwoman Gazal commented that if you give the residents another bribe like we did with the property tax credit they will vote for it or see what we can give them. Alderman Cipiti asked her to repeat what she stated. Alderwoman Gazal commented that the sales tax referendum passed because we bribed people that they would get the rebate, and it seemed to work since it passed. Alderwoman Gazal then commented that she was kidding. She then commented that the city would be good the way it is but unfortunately you have a leader who wants to take control of who we hire and who we fire, and that is the only reason, and the Council has no say in the end.

Alderman Albert commented that he is all in favor for trying Home Rule, but it will be a lot of work to get it to pass.

Alderwoman Gazal commented that she agrees but if you notify the residents the correct way because it would be beneficial.

Attorney Stiff stated that we have until November to put the referendum on the ballot. This will mean you need to craft your referendum question and pass an ordinance to be submitted to the County.

If you are putting it on the ballot for the mail election you have more time but if you are eligible for the primary election it will need to be submitted to the County by December 9<sup>th</sup>.

It was mentioned to bring this back to the next work session.

#### **TOPIC: Hiring Committee**

Alderman Jefferson spoke about the hiring process. He commented that he feels what he has written out would be a much better hiring process. The candidates would be meeting with people who they are going to be working for, and the streamline of candidates would be much better since multiple people will be reviewing these. He also recommended that this would speed up the selection process because we lose many candidates based on our time-consuming hiring practices.

Alderman Jefferson commented that he does not see how a committee of elected officials doing the recommending for hiring for the city impairs the city in any way and would show good government practice.

Treasurer Glen Conkin commented that a Human Resource professional would know what questions not to ask where a Council member might struggle with that. Also, if you have a committee of four then you are leaving out colleagues and you end up having a quorum.

At the end of the day, the filling of those jobs is the ability before the mayor and the consensus of the Council to put a person in a job.

Alderwoman Gazal commented that we can have one elected official to sit on that committee then we would not be a quorum. Treasurer Conklin commented that they could

accommodate having two elected officials on the committee without being a quorum and would like that to be more of a set of eyes in there and not question takers.

Treasurer Conklin commented that the human resources professional will make the Council's job easier by prescreening those not qualified, and no one is being kept because they are someone's cousin.

Alderpersn Oberlin commented that these meetings should not be paid for. She also commented that if an elected official is in there to be eyes and ears to report back that is one thing, but that person should not be paid for since it is not a meeting, it is an interview.

Alderman Cipiti reads the ordinance stating that each alderman elected will be paid \$55.00 per city work session or committee meeting.

Treasurer Conklin commented that the job of Council and Mayor is to review available candidates and hire somebody, find compensation that you can agree with and an individual you can be okay with and hire them.

Alderpersn Oberlin commented that they drag their feet and postpone things which cause a problem. She also commented that she feels the entire Council needs to be interviewing these candidates.

Alderman Jefferson commented that he does not feel a director should be interviewing their own replacement. Treasurer Conklin commented that our interims are fully qualified, and he believes they need to be in the interview and stated that we need to have a little trust.

Alderman Jefferson commented that he is not questioning their qualifications, he is questioning their ethics. Treasurer Conklin commented that if we are questioning ethics, nothing will ever get done. He also commented that there are checks and balances in place to keep things from happening, for instance, the Civil Service Commission was implemented to eliminate nepotism and favoritism. He then stated that we need to trust the recommendation and if it does not work out then you eliminate them.

Alderwoman Gazal commented that by the time the candidates come to the Council it has been a month or two months because the process is so delayed. She also commented that she believes that is why we need a hiring committee but does not feel it is fair when you have one elected official getting paid for the meeting when the other elected officials have never been paid for a committee meeting.

Treasurer Conklin commented that in a healthy environment it would be a staff recommendation and collectively with the Mayor and the Council would hire somebody and the goal needs to be where the Council can accept the staff recommendations.

Alderman Albert commented that he is all for Alderpersn Oberlin being on the committee and going to the interviews and then there needs to be more of a meet and greet when the candidate comes to the board.

Alderwoman Methvin stated that the City of Crest Hill will attract people that are on a rise in their career, since we may be a steppingstone, but we attract them and maybe they will stay, which is okay.

Aldersperson Oberlin commented that she respects what Alderwoman Methvin is saying but these positions are not entry level positions, and you need the qualifications for that position.

Treasurer Conklin announced that there are interviews scheduled for Tuesday, October 22, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

There were no public comments.

**MAYOR UPDATES:**

There were no Mayor updates.

**COMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES:**

There were no committee/liaison updates.

**CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES:**

City Administrator Graff commented that he has received a notice about our PFAS settlement, and the next date is November 1, 2024, which is when they award the funds. The total should be around \$1.3 million.

Alderman Cipiti commented that he has been going back and forth regarding the Civil Service commission in emails and stated that he thought there was still a need for compensation and attendance. Attorney Stiff commented that he had drafted an ordinance amending the compensation but nothing else and after the meeting, based on the Council comments, he has red lined to provide for the same type of absences and only paid for meetings attended and it is ready to have a discussion.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:46 pm.

Approved this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024

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

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

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CHRISTINE VERSHAY-HALL, CITY CLERK

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RAYMOND R. SOLIMAN, MAYOR