

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
CITY COUNCIL OF CREST HILL
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS
August 3, 2026

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, after which Mayor Soliman asked those present to remain standing.

Mayor Soliman delivered a tribute to Ms. Jeanne Juricic, who passed away on July 26, 2026. Ms. Juricic was instrumental in the incorporation of the City of Crest Hill and in bringing the first library to the City. She served as a longtime member and past president of the Crest Hill Women's Civic League, as secretary of the Crest Hill Police Veterans Committee, and as a member of the Crest Hill Plan Commission and the White Oak Library Board. Mayor Soliman described her as the City's unofficial historian, noting she was "just as active at 85 years old as she was at 35 years old." Mayor Soliman extended condolences to her four daughters — Jill, Jane, Mary Sue, and Cathy Anne — and thanked the family for sharing her with the community.

Alderpersn Oberlin shared that she and Ms. Juricic were extremely close, having worked together on the Women's Civic League and other organizations. Alderpersn Oberlin recalled that her son had always affectionately referred to Ms. Juricic as "Ms. Crest Hill," a nickname Ms. Juricic cherished. Alderpersn Oberlin remarked that the City had "lost the last of a dying breed of devoted citizens."

Alderman Albert reflected on getting to know Ms. Juricic when he was first appointed to the Planning Commission, praising her level-headedness and warm demeanor. He noted that one of only two named rooms at the Crest Hill Library is the Jeanne Juricic Study Room, observing that her name on that room "will live forever."

Alderpersn Gazal recalled working with Ms. Juricic on the veterans committee and noted that she always gave her best regardless of her health, always arriving with "the most beautiful smile."

A moment of silence was observed in Ms. Juricic's honor.

3. ROLL CALL

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

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

Mayor Soliman stated that he received messages from City Treasurer Jamie Malloy and Alderman Angelo Deserio stating that they couldn't attend the meeting and both were excused.

4. CITIZEN/SPECIAL REQUEST/PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Senator Meg Loughran Cappel

Mayor Soliman announced that Senator Meg Loughran Cappel had been scheduled to appear to deliver a legislative update but was unable to attend due to an emergency meeting that arose. She is expected to reschedule her appearance at a City Council meeting in the future.

B. Presentation of Award for Financial Reporting Achievement

Mayor Soliman announced that the City of Crest Hill had received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for the eleventh consecutive year, for its Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for fiscal year 2025. Mayor Soliman described this recognition as the highest in governmental accounting, established in 1945, and noted that it reflects a commitment to transparency, accountability, and responsible management of public resources.

Mayor Soliman recognized City Treasurer Jamie Malloy, Finance Director Glenn Gehrke, and finance department staff members Regina Cabay, Marissa Stirn, Karen Urbanski, and Eva Hrachovsky for their contributions. Finance Director Glenn Gehrke accepted the certificate on behalf of the department and acknowledged the Council as a key part of the City's financial management team.

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. No items were removed.

Mayor Soliman proceeded to read the consent agenda items:

6A. Approve the Minutes from the Regular City Council Meeting Held on July 20, 2026.

6B. Approve the Minutes of the Work Session Meeting Held on July 27, 2026.

- 6C. Resolution approving an Agreement for 2026 Roadway Rehabilitation Program by and Between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois and Austin Tyler Construction, Inc. for an amount of \$1,766,817.55. **Resolution #1441**
- 6D. To approve Pay Request #4 from Fer Pal Construction USA, LLC with direction to Strand Associates to send to the IEPA for approval and disbursement for a total amount of \$566,757.34.
- 6E. Approve a Resolution Approving a Hardship Assistance Program for the Water Customers Still Needing to Replace Their Existing Water Meters with the City's New Smart Water Meters. **Resolution #1442**
- 6F. Approve the name of Crest Hill Commons.
- 6G. An Ordinance Approving the Salary of Community and Economic Development Director Daniel Ritter. **Ordinance #2068**

Mayor Soliman asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda items.

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

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

- 6C: Resolution 1441
- 6E: Resolution 1442
- 6G: Ordinance 2068

7. REPORTS & COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENTS & ELECTED OFFICIALS

7A. MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Soliman presented two informational items. First, Mayor Soliman recognized six Crest Hill Police Officers who received the Alliance Against Intoxicated Motorists (AAIM) July DUI Enforcement Award: Officer Lorena Zamudio, Officer Ryan Gorz, Officer Andrew Gorski, Officer Brett Williams, Officer Kaden Lewis, and Officer Thomas Burns. Mayor Soliman commended the officers for their proactive DUI enforcement during the month of July, including the Fourth of July weekend, and asked Police Chief Ed Clark to convey the Council's gratitude to all involved officers.

Second, Mayor Soliman provided an update on Canadian National Railroad at-grade crossing repairs. Mayor Soliman noted that the Gaylord Road crossing had been successfully repaired in early July, resulting in a significantly improved surface. The Oakland Avenue crossing was closed as of the meeting date for similar repairs and was expected to reopen by

Friday, August 7, 2026. Mayor Soliman asked for the community's patience during the closure.

7B. CITY CLERK'S REPORT:

City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall made two announcements. First, the City's annual garage sale will be held Thursday, August 20th through Sunday, August 23rd. Residents wishing to have their address included on the published list must register by August 18th by obtaining a permit from the Clerk's office for a \$5.00 fee. The maps and lists will be available on the City's website and in the Clerk's office on August 19th.

Second, a free shred event co-hosted with Lockport Township is scheduled for Saturday, October 24th, from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. in the Crest Hill City Hall parking lot, with a limit of four boxes per household.

7C. CITY TREASURER'S REPORT:

In the absence of City Treasurer Jamie Malloy, Mayor Soliman asked Financial Director Glenn Gehrke to present three items for approval.

- A. Approval of the List of Bills Issued through August 4, 2026, in the Amount of \$1,889,359.19.

Mayor Soliman asked for a motion to approve the list of bills.

Alderwoman Gazal made a motion to approve the List of Bills issued through August 4, 2026, in the amount of \$1,889,359.19. Seconded by Alderman Kubal. Roll Call: Ayes: Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke. Nays: None. Absent: Deserio. MOTION CARRIED.

- B. Approval of the Regular and Overtime Payroll from July 13, 2026, through July 26, 2026, in the Amount of \$329,295.26.

Mayor Soliman asked for a motion to approve the Payroll for July 13, 2026, through July 26, 2026.

Alderman Dyke made a motion to approve Payroll for July 13, 2026, through July 26, 2026. Seconded by Alderwoman Gazal. Roll Call: Ayes: Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Jefferson, Gazal. Nays: None. Absent: Deserio. MOTION CARRIED.

- C. Approval of Additional Comp Time Buy Back in the Amount of \$17,855.76.

Mayor Soliman asked for a motion to approve the additional comp time buy back in the amount of \$17,855.76.

Alderwoman Gazal made a motion to approve the additional comp time buy back in the amount of \$17,855.76. Seconded by Alderman

Dyke. Roll Call: Ayes: Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin. Nays: None. Absent: Deserio. MOTION CARRIED.

7D. CITY ATTORNEY:

There were no items to report.

7E. CITY ADMINISTRATOR:

1. Approve a Resolution Adopting a Policy Regarding the Use of the Executive Conference Room

Assistant City Administrator/HR Director Ashley Monroe explained that the policy was developed in response to prior work session discussions regarding how decisions would be made about the use of the Executive Conference Room, particularly in situations where an executive session may need to be held in an alternative location. The policy designates that the Mayor or their designee, after consulting with the City Administrator and City Clerk, would authorize exceptions to the room's primary use for executive sessions.

Alderman Jefferson questioned the rationale for formalizing a policy for a room originally designed and designated for executive session, noting that the construction of City Hall had always intended the room for executive session use. City Attorney Stiff clarified that the policy does not change the room's primary purpose; rather, it provides a written framework for managing exceptions. The policy includes language covering accessibility, operational, logistical, or other practical considerations as grounds for exception, which Council members acknowledged would cover circumstances such as Council interviews.

Mayor Soliman asked for a motion to approve a resolution adopting a policy regarding the use of the executive conference room.

Alderman Oberlin made a motion to approve a resolution adopting a policy regarding the use of the executive conference room. Alderman Albert seconded. Roll Call: Ayes: Gazal, Oberlin, Albert, Kubal, Dyke. Nays: Cipiti, Jefferson. Absent: Deserio. MOTION CARRIED. Resolution #1443

2. Approve a Resolution Adopting the City of Crest Hill Policy for the Treatment of Confidential Information and Closed Session Information and Materials

Assistant City Administrator/HR Director Ashley Monroe noted that the key change made to this policy since prior discussions was the addition of language in the opening section to ensure that the policy covers not only elected officials but also appointed officers who serve in roles involving access to confidential information.

Mayor Soliman asked for a motion to approve a resolution adopting the City of Crest Hill Policy for the treatment of confidential information and closed session information and materials.

Alderman Albert made a motion to approve a resolution adopting the City of Crest Hill policy for the treatment of confidential information and closed session information and materials. Alderman Kubal seconded. Roll Call: Ayes: Dyke, Oberlin, Albert, Kubal. Nays: Jefferson, Gazal, Cipiti. Absent: Deserio. MOTION CARRIED. Resolution #1444

Alderman Dyke requested that a future work session be scheduled to proactively address how the executive session policy's exception provisions would be applied in practice, emphasizing the importance of being "proactive instead of reactive."

7F. PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT:

There were no items to report.

7G. CITY ENGINEER:

1. Award a Contract to Sewertech LLC for the 2026 Sanitary Sewer Television and Cleaning Contract in the Amount of \$149,950.00

City Engineer Ron Wiedeman presented a recommendation to award the 2026 Sanitary Sewer Televising and Cleaning Contract to Sewer Tech LLC in the amount of \$149,950.00. The contract was solicited publicly and received five bids ranging from \$149,950.00 to \$338,708.00, with Sewer Tech LLC as the lowest bidder at less than half the amount of the second-lowest bid of \$307,425.00. The design estimate had been \$335,055.00.

City Engineer Wiedeman noted that this item had been pulled from the July 20, 2026, Council meeting after a 2023 prevailing wage violation notice from the state was discovered. He reported that the contractor had paid the associated fine and the matter had been closed, that the company had experienced no further violations, and that internal changes had been made. City Engineer Wiedeman stated that after reviewing the contractor's history and work quality, he continued to recommend award.

Alderman Cipiti and Alderman Jefferson raised questions about the significant disparity between Sewer Tech LLC's bid and the remaining four bids, and about whether the bid price could adequately cover prevailing wage requirements for the project's workforce. City Engineer Wiedeman explained that the contractor, as a new entrant to the local market, had priced aggressively to establish itself, that all staff certifications had been verified, and that the unit price figures were comparable to amounts paid to other contractors for the same scope of work in prior years. He also noted

that bid line items such as mobilization, permit fees, and insurance are often used by contractors to adjust profit margins, accounting for variability among bidders on those line items.

Mayor Soliman asked for a motion to award a contract to Sewertech LLC for the 2026 Sanitary Sewer Televising and Cleaning contract in the amount of \$149,950.00.

Alderman Oberlin made a motion to award a contract to Sewertech LLC for the 2026 sanitary sewer televising and cleaning contract in the amount of \$149,950.00. Alderwoman Gazal seconded. Roll Call: Ayes: Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Gazal, Oberlin. Nays: None. Abstain: Jefferson, Cipiti. Absent: Deserio. MOTION CARRIED.

7H. FINANCE:

There were no items to report.

7I. POLICE DEPARTMENT:

Police Chief Ed Clark reported no agenda items. Alderman Dyke noted that Crest Hill Police Officers had been seen supporting a community fundraiser at Goofy G's the previous day and commended the officers for their community involvement. Chief Clark acknowledged the comment and indicated he would convey the appreciation to the officers.

7J. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

Community and Economic Development Director Daniel Ritter provided two informational updates. Regarding the Seasons of Crest Hill development, Director Ritter reported that a pre-construction meeting had been held the prior Thursday with the development team and on-site construction contractor. He described the meeting as highly productive, noting that the contractor appeared very hands-on and responsive. The development team had already begun addressing maintenance issues on the property since recently acquiring it. Their goal was to obtain a building permit that week, pending resolution of a few outstanding items and a letter of credit, with mobilization planned to begin the following week. Director Ritter noted that there was significant underground and site preparation work to commence first. Alderwoman Gazal, who attended the pre-construction meeting, echoed Director Ritter's positive assessment, stating it was "one of the best pre-construction meetings" she had attended. Director Ritter also noted that the developer, while largely based in Wisconsin, had hired a local contractor, and that the project would include on-site security cameras coordinated with the Police Department.

Director Ritter also reported that GIS system onboarding was proceeding on schedule, with a target go-live date of September. The system, being implemented by contractor MGP, would serve engineering, public works, planning, police, and other departments, and would include a publicly

accessible interactive map providing property information such as PIN numbers, addresses, zoning, garbage collection days, and school districts.

Regarding the Old City Hall demolition, Alderman Dyke inquired about the status of the ComEd power disconnect, which had been pending for some time. Director Ritter reported that the demolition permit had been filed, NICOR gas had been disconnected, and the abatement was complete. The ComEd disconnect permit had been submitted in mid-July and was awaiting ComEd processing. The Mayor's office had reached out to the City's ComEd representative to help expedite the process. Director Ritter indicated that once the disconnect was completed and a few final items resolved, demolition could proceed.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

There were no items to report.

9. NEW BUSINESS:

Alderman Gazal raised a concern regarding the City's meeting room camera and audio system, stating that ongoing technical difficulties — including an upside-down camera image, noise, audio issues, and the need for an intern to manage the equipment during meetings — were creating distractions. She recommended that the City invest in professional-grade equipment and trained personnel to properly manage meeting productions, noting that "sometimes cheap ends up costing us more."

10. COMMITTEE/LIAISON REPORTS:

Alderman Gazal and Alderman Jefferson acknowledged and thanked the partnership with Lockport Township for the Back-to-School Fair held the previous Friday. Alderman Gazal extended special thanks to the Public Works Department and the Police Department for their time and effort in setting up the event. She expressed hope that the event could grow in future years to serve a broader population of residents. Alderman Jefferson also thanked Lockport Township and the City departments involved. He noted that the event was well-received by the families and children who attended, and that he looked forward to building on its success. He did note that there had been an outside entity present at the event about which he had not been informed in advance, and indicated he would follow up with the appropriate party.

Alderman Dyke reported that the Finance Committee was targeting the week of August 10 or August 17 for an upcoming meeting and indicated a date would be confirmed and communicated.

11. CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Alderman Gazal announced that Larry George of the local food pantry is seeking volunteers for Thursday mornings from 7:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. behind the Hillcrest Shopping Center. Individuals, including teenagers seeking to fulfill

community service hours, were encouraged to contact Alderwoman Gazal or Mr. George directly.

Alderman Albert announced that the Crest Hill Lions Club will host its 14th Annual Lions Luau and Car Show at St. Joseph's Park on Sunday, September 6, 2026, featuring a car show, vendor fair, children's games, raffles, bingo, and live entertainment including the Joliet American Legion Band beginning at noon.

12. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Jim Batusich addressed the Council on behalf of his wife, Judy Batusich, who he identified as the first woman Alderman in Crest Hill's history. Mr. Batusich outlined several of Judy Batusich's civic accomplishments, including contributions to the establishment of a senior bus service, emergency sirens on Caton Farm Road, and Gale Gardens — a senior affordable housing development named in her honor. Mr. Batusich requested that the Council consider placing a small honorary brown street sign bearing his wife's name on Barthelone Street — a two-block residential street — and clarified that he was not requesting a street name change. He indicated that he believed her service to the community merited such recognition.

Alderwoman Gazal noted for the record that she had brought this request to Mayor Soliman approximately one to two years prior and expressed support for honoring community contributors while they are living. Mayor Soliman acknowledged that the Council had previously adopted a policy limiting honorary street designations to mayoral names, and that older signs such as "Kubinski Drive" predated that policy change. Mayor Soliman stated that the Council could take up the matter at a future work session if Council members wished to revisit the policy.

Maureen Denny, 1837 North Burry Circle, addressed the Council regarding the abandoned property at 1835 North Burry Circle. Ms. Denny described a neighbor who departed approximately two years prior due to illness and has not returned to maintain the property. She detailed concerns including overgrown vegetation obstructing the public sidewalk, raccoons actively entering the structure through an opening and nesting on the property, a prior interior flood that resulted in visible black mold, potential fire hazards from stored propane tanks and oil containers in the backyard, and multiple reported break-ins to the property. Ms. Denny expressed frustration that City code enforcement had been limited to grass cutting and that staff had informed her they could not enter the property without permission.

Community and Economic Development Director Dan Ritter summarized the City's code enforcement history with the property, noting that several judgments had been obtained through administrative court, but the property owner had not appeared in proceedings despite evidence that taxes had been substantially paid and the owner remained alive. Director Ritter noted the matter had been escalated to the City Attorney's office to explore further legal options.

City Attorney Mike Stiff provided additional context, noting that the property ownership situation was connected to a prior matter at 1917 Burry Circle involving the same family. In that case, the City had successfully obtained an administrative search warrant through Will County Circuit Court to document interior conditions, pursued demolition proceedings, and ultimately achieved resolution when the

property was purchased by a private party and rehabilitated. Attorney Stiff indicated he had already reached out to the attorney who represented the daughter in the prior case, attempting to bring the parties to the table voluntarily before litigation became necessary. He noted that with Ms. Denny's consent, City building and code enforcement inspectors could come onto her property to photograph the backyard of 1835 North Burry Circle without trespassing. This documentation could then be used to support an application for an administrative search warrant before a Will County judge.

Mayor Soliman asked Ms. Denny on the record whether she would consent to City inspectors accessing her property for that purpose, and Ms. Denny agreed. Mayor Soliman directed her to speak with Director Ritter following the adjournment of the meeting to arrange for inspectors to be dispatched. Mayor Soliman also acknowledged that as a non-home rule community, the City of Crest Hill operates under more restrictive statutory authority than home rule municipalities such as Joliet, limiting certain enforcement options, and noted that efforts over many years to seek legislative changes had not been successful.

13. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

City Attorney Mike Stiff indicated that no executive session was required.

14. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business before the Council, a motion for adjournment was in order.

Alderman Dyke made a motion to adjourn at 8:23 p.m. Seconded by Alderman Jefferson. Roll Call: Ayes: Dyke, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal. Naves: None. Absent: Deserio. MOTION CARRIED.

Approved this ____ day of _____, 2026,
As presented _____
As amended _____

CHRISTINE VERSHAY-HALL, CITY CLERK

RAYMOND R. SOLIMAN, MAYOR