MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION
CITY COUNCIL OF CREST HILL
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS
August 10, 2026

The August 10, 2026, 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 Jamie Malloy, Alderman Scott Dyke, Alderman Angelo Deserio, Alderman Darrell Jefferson, Alderwoman Claudia Gazal, Alderperson Tina Oberlin, Alderman Mark Cipiti, Alderman Nate Albert, Alderman Joe Kubal.

Also Present were: City Administrator Blaine Wing, Assistant City Administrator & HR Director Ashley Monroe, Community & Economic Development Director Dan Ritter, Director of Public Works Gary Richardson, City Engineer Ron Wiedeman, and City Attorney Mike Stiff.

MAYOR
There were no agenda items.

CLERK
There were no agenda items.

TREASURER
There were no agenda items.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR
City Administrator Blaine Wing reminded Council members wishing to attend the IML Conference to notify Marybel by August 21st, and thanked those who had already registered before the early bird deadline.

City Administrator Wing addressed a technical broadcasting issue that occurred the prior week, attributable to an electrical outage at City Hall that caused hardware and software systems to reset. The camera defaulted to an upside-down orientation as a result of the reset. City Administrator Wing acknowledged that while he had believed the system's bugs were resolved prior to his July vacation, the power outage was not anticipated. He noted that a full presentation on the AV hardware and software would be brought to an upcoming work session, and apologized for the disruption.

1. Website Refresh Presentation
   City Administrator Wing presented a draft of the City's redesigned website, which will transition to the domain **cresthill.gov**. He noted the last major website refresh occurred in 2016. The new design is based on a decade of user data identifying the most commonly visited pages, which include minutes and agendas, water services, permits, reporting concerns, project updates, and utility billing. The refreshed site will feature ADA compliance, streamlined navigation reducing some areas from five clicks to one or two,

a rotating news carousel ("Crest Hill News"), an expanded calendar for meetings and events, and online payment functionality for fines, fees, and other services. Emergency alerts and a chatbot are also planned additions.

City Administrator Wing outlined several features planned for rollout over the following six to nine months, including a new agenda and meeting module, migration of the municipal code from a static PDF to a live, web-based document, and the chatbot functionality. The launch timeline calls for all department pages to be updated by August 24th, a soft launch on August 25th–26th, a hard launch on September 8th following the Labor Day holiday, and a press release on September 9th.

Alderwoman Gazal expressed enthusiasm for the online payment feature and inquired about incorporating a new mayoral welcome video and ensuring elected officials' profiles and contact information would be current. City Administrator Wing confirmed both would be addressed. Alderwoman Gazal asked if the tax rebate check information would be on the new website to which Administrator Wing stated that there has been discussions with the Finance Department about that already.

Alderman Jefferson asked about email address transition. Administrator Wing confirmed that email addresses would be transitioning to the **cresthill.gov** domain, with the legacy **cityofcresthill.com** addresses automatically forwarding for at least six months. To protect against cybersquatting, approximately eleven alternate domain spellings were also purchased at a cost of approximately $20 per year each. New business cards reflecting the updated website and email addresses were noted as forthcoming, pending final confirmation of the design with the City's media consultants.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

There were no agenda items.

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

2. Design-Build Discussion-Division Water Main Extension for the Illinois Crime Lab

City Engineer Ron Wiedeman requested the order of Engineering items be adjusted so that representatives from V3 Companies could be released early. City Engineer Wiedeman provided background on this item, noting that an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) was signed with the State of Illinois earlier in the summer committing the City to construct a water main along Division Street from Well 11 to Broadway in connection with the new Illinois Crime Lab. The state is reimbursing the City for all project expenses. The project had been originally scoped as a traditional design-bid-build delivery, but the Capital Development Board (CDB) requires project completion by year's end, making that timeline unfeasible.

V3 Companies Project Manager Jason Holey and Vice President Mike Famiglietti presented the design-build delivery method as an alternative.

They explained that design-build integrates design and construction early, enabling identification of constructability and risk issues, and compresses the overall schedule. V3 noted it is a state-certified design-build firm and that the CDB has confirmed the approach is acceptable, including V3's role as both designer and construction overseer.

During the design process, V3 identified that the originally budgeted open-cut installation method was not practicable along approximately 4,000 linear feet of the route due to proximity to a line of power poles on the south side of the road. Directional boring was identified as the appropriate installation method for that segment, with open-cut installation used for the remaining approximately 1,400 feet. This change affects cost relative to the original $1.5 million construction budget estimate, though savings are realized through reduced design documentation and elimination of separate construction oversight costs.

City Engineer Wiedeman noted that to proceed with design-build, the City would need to waive its competitive bidding requirements by a two-thirds majority vote of the full Council. He further noted that the design-build agreement with V3 was still under legal review and would need to be finalized before the item could return for formal Council action.

Mayor Soliman noted the project has been discussed for approximately fifteen years and expressed strong support for moving forward. Alderman Albert raised questions about the urgency given the project's long history, to which City Engineer Wiedeman and City Attorney Stiff explained that the CDB already has a contractor on contract and ready to mobilize, but cannot proceed without a potable water source—the existing connection through the old penitentiary was deemed insufficient by City Engineer Wiedeman's written assessment to the state. Alderman Albert also raised concerns about state payment reliability, referencing past issues with Stateville Penitentiary water billing and a possible administration change. City Attorney Stiff acknowledged the IGA contains a legislative appropriation contingency clause that could not be removed, but noted the City's practical leverage in that the crime lab cannot operate without the water connection, and that invoices would be submitted for reimbursement as work progresses rather than in a single lump sum at the end. Alderwoman Gazal asked what the benefit of this water main would be for the City. Engineer Wiedeman explained that we would have a brand-new water main that would come down Division Street to Broadway Street that could loop around to Caton Farm Road to supply water to any future new developments.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote to move forward with a design-build contract with V3 Companies, including waiving competitive bidding requirements.

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

UNSURE: Ald. Jefferson.

1. <u>A Resolution Approving an Amendment to the Construction Agreement by and Between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois and John Russ R Company for the Installation of a Maintenance Access Rd. Adjacent to the E. J. & E Property from the City's Property Located at Oakland/Caton Farm Rd. to the Existing Diversion Structure</u>

City Engineer Wiedeman presented a change order request to the existing construction contract with John Russ R Company, originally executed in December 2025. The contract covers construction of a maintenance access road for Public Works to access the mainline sewer from Oakland Avenue to the diversion structure that controls flow between the east and west wastewater plants. Upon commencement of construction, differing site conditions were discovered—specifically, a silty, wet soil material not anticipated in the original design. To maintain the structural integrity needed to support Public Works' largest vehicles, the design was amended to require an 8-inch base course with a 5-inch surface, replacing the originally specified section.

City Engineer Wiedeman further noted the road serves multiple purposes: it will provide access to the existing diversion structure, which requires both repair and rehabilitation of its internal equipment, and will incorporate a new power line routed from the new east-west receiving stations to replace a previously severed line running under the railroad.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote to approve a resolution approving an amendment to the construction agreement by and between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois and John Russ R Company for the installation of a maintenance access road adjacent to the E. J. & E Property from the City's Property located at Oakland/Caton Farm Rd. to the existing diversion structure.

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

3. <u>Crest Hill Commons Status Update and Discussion</u>

City Engineer Wiedeman presented a status update on the Crest Hill Commons park development and solicited Council input on several design elements.

The following project bid schedule was outlined:
Contract 1 for Parking lot, playground infrastructure, final park grading, concrete, and sidewalks: Bids to open approximately September 4, 2026, with construction beginning in October 2026 and restoration completing in spring 2027.
Contract 2 for Underground irrigation: To be placed under contract in October 2026, with work beginning in October and completing in spring 2027. City Engineer Wiedeman recommended retaining the City's current irrigation vendor, Carefree, on a sole-source basis given their existing

knowledge of the system installed at City Hall. He noted a waiver of competitive bidding would be requested at the appropriate time once the design estimate is available, with the anticipated cost in the range of $50,000–$70,000.

Contract 3 for Parking lot lighting and playground area lighting: Estimated bid date of mid-September 2026, with construction in October 2026 and completion in spring 2027.

Contract 4 for Playground equipment: Estimated bid date of Late fall 2026, Final design to be presented to Council in a subsequent work session; installation planned for spring 2027.

Contract 5 for Landscaping for plaza, parking lot, and playground area: To be bid in spring 2027 following council review of landscape designs.

Contract 6 for Plaza and shelter: Bid is planned for spring 2027, with construction in summer 2027.

Alderperson Oberlin noted apparent typographical errors in the schedule regarding years, which City Engineer Wiedeman acknowledged and corrected.

Alderwoman Gazal requested a site tour for elected officials prior to construction, particularly to ensure adequate electrical infrastructure is incorporated given limitations experienced at City Hall. City Engineer Wiedeman confirmed poles will include power outlets and separate breakers, ground-level outlet boxes for vendors, and that infrastructure for future security cameras and sound systems has been incorporated into the design. He agreed to arrange a field layout walkthrough.

Plaza Layout – Council Direction: City Engineer Wiedeman presented three conceptual layout options for the plaza and shelter area. Staff recommended Option A, which places a holiday tree centrally near the parking lot, an open plaza area with removable seating, and a 20-by-40-foot shelter at the rear of the plaza. Staff's rationale was that Option A provides the greatest flexibility for varied events, preserves a clear sightline through the park to the future northern pavilion, allows for vehicle access to the tree from the parking lot without bringing equipment into the park, and incorporates seat walls and plantings that also serve as vehicle intrusion barriers around the playground area. Alderman Cipiti asked about the layout of the playground. Engineer Wiedeman stated that the playground would be situated in the middle of the area containing the playground with a turf/grass barrier on the edges of the playground area. Alderman Dyke asked about how much of the plaza area is to the north of the area being discussed, as he was wondering if the Lidice location could be moved to the plaza area in the future. Engineer Wiedeman said that there are options for expansion as this area only takes up only about 25% of the whole plaza area. Council consensus was reached in favor of Option A, with no objections noted.

Seat Wall Design: City Engineer Wiedeman presented illustrative examples of seat wall styles, recommending stonework that would match the base course material of City Hall to maintain a consistent aesthetic theme across City facilities. He noted the intent is to construct the seat walls in the initial contract while deferring the detailed landscaping to a subsequent contract. Council discussion centered on ensuring the seat walls remain accessible for sitting, with plantings located on the back side only. Alderman Cipiti requested that the landscape plan incorporate native plantings to the greatest extent possible given the proximity to forest preserves and prairie areas, noting their perennial, low-maintenance character and ecological value. City Engineer Wiedeman confirmed he would raise both points with consultant RVI at a follow-up meeting the following day.

Alderman Cipiti also suggested exploring bench and amenity sponsorships and memorial dedications as a means to offset costs. City Administrator Wing noted that sponsorships, donations, and grants—including naming rights for larger elements such as a future band shell—had already been under discussion, and that a grant application for up to $600,000 was being pursued with letters of support from the library district, park district, school districts, fire districts, and elected officials.

Lighting Control System: City Engineer Wiedeman sought Council concurrence to specify the nLIGHT Eclypse lighting control system for the park. He noted it was the only vendor among those reviewed that allows control of individual lights both via mobile device and directly from the junction box, which was identified as important for police and public works operational flexibility during events. The system is designed to integrate with existing City Center Boulevard infrastructure. Council raised no objections.

Carefree Irrigation Vendor: As noted above, City Engineer Wiedeman recommended proceeding with Carefree as the irrigation contractor on a sole-source basis pending design completion and a future competitive bidding waiver request.

Plan Commission Chairman Bill Thomas noted that the Commission is actively preparing for a Thursday hearing to recommend the necessary special use permit and zoning ordinances, with an expectation of presenting the matter to the full Council in approximately two weeks. Chairman Thomas also commented on the future need for restroom facilities, referencing low-maintenance, all-stainless designs he has observed at parks elsewhere in the region. City Engineer Wiedeman acknowledged that restroom facilities are part of the ongoing planning conversation for the northern portion of the park.

<u>PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT</u>

1. <u>Update on Emergency Replacement of the Booster Pump for Well #4 from Water Well Solutions in the Amount of $27,355.00</u>
   Director of Public Works Gary Richardson reported that following a thorough inspection, the pump and motor for Well No. 4 were found to be in serious condition. Well No. 4 has been out of service for some time, and Director Richardson expressed the urgency of returning all wells to active service. He presented a quote from Water Well Solutions for pump

replacement, installation, and associated services in the amount of $27,355.00.

Mayor Soliman conducted an informal vote to approve a quote from Water Well Solutions for Well #4.

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

2. <u>2026/2027 Rock Salt Procurement and Winter Preparedness - Informational Only</u>
Director of Public Works Gary Richardson presented an informational update on the state's bulk rock salt bid process. He reported that a vendor withdrawal from the state's cooperative bid left several municipalities in the region—including Crest Hill, Romeoville, Will County, and others—without coverage under the state bid. With only Morton Salt (largely allocated to the City of Chicago) and Midwest Salt remaining, Director Richardson determined it was in the City's best interest to exit the state bid without penalty rather than risk having no vendor available mid-winter.

Director Richardson reported that both City salt storage facilities are currently full, with approximately 800 tons on hand, as he had strategically taken the final state-contracted delivery in June. He is actively soliciting quotes from private vendors, with two inquiries received and one more expected before presenting formal options to Council. He noted that current market pricing is approximately double to nearly triple the prior state bid rate of $71 per ton.

City Administrator Blaine Wing added that technology solutions for pre-application and maximized salt efficiency would also be explored, and that a joint purchase arrangement with neighboring municipalities had been considered but proved impractical due to vendor delivery logistics and mutual accountability concerns. Both Director Richardson and City Administrator Wing emphasized this situation has occurred before in Illinois, and that next year's state bid cycle typically draws stronger vendor participation in its aftermath.

<u>POLICE DEPARTMENT</u>
There were no agenda items.

<u>FINANCE DEPARTMENT</u>
There were no agenda items.

<u>PUBLIC COMMENTS</u>
No members of the public came forward to address the Council.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(29): Discussion between internal or external auditors and the City's audit committee, finance committee, or equivalent body concerning internal control weaknesses, potential fraud risk areas, known or suspected fraud, and fraud interviews conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards.

   Alderwoman Gazal made a motion to go into executive session for 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(29). Seconded by Alderman Deserio. Roll call: Ayes: Dyke, Deserio, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal. Nayes: None. MOTION CARRIED.

   Executive Session: 8:46 p.m.

   City Attorney Mike Stiff stated with the Council's permission that since the topic was one in which he excused himself the last time, he is going to do the same thing tonight. Jason Blumenthal is present for this topic.

   Alderman Deserio made a motion to reconvene from the executive session for 5 ILCS 120/(2)(29). Seconded by Alderman Jefferson. Roll call: Ayes: Gazal, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Deserio, Jefferson, Nayes: None. Absent: Oberlin. MOTION CARRIED.

   Reconvened: 9:20 p.m.

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Approved this____day of________________, 2026.
As presented____________
As amended___________

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CHRISTINE VERSHAY-HALL, CITY CLERK

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RAYMOND R. SOLIMAN, MAYOR