



MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
Monday, January 12, 2026 at 6:30 PM
City of Rochelle Council Chambers—420 North 6th Street, Rochelle, IL 61068

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Pledge to the Flag and prayer were led by Mayor Bearrows.
- II. **ROLL CALL:** Present were Councilors T. McDermott, Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Arteaga, Valdivieso, and Mayor John Bearrows. A quorum of seven were present. Also, present were City Manager Jeff Fiegenschuh, City Clerk Rose Huéramo, and City Attorney Dominick Lanzito.
- III. **PROCLAMATIONS, COMMENDATIONS, ETC:** None.
- IV. **REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:**
1. Mayor's Report: On behalf of the City, the Mayor presented a plaque and key to the city in recognition of his eight years of dedicated service as he transitions to new adventures. All wished Jeff well in his new role as City Administrator in Washington, IL.
 2. Council Members:
- V. **PUBLIC COMMENTARY:** None.
- VI. **DISCUSSION ITEMS:**
1. **Ritchie Road to Centerpoint Line Construction:** Blake Toliver, Electric Superintendent and Ben Klene, a representative from BHMg, reviewed concerns identified during the interview process for the apparent low bidder, Helm Electric, on the Centerpoint Substation Project along Ritchie Road. Although Helm Electric was the lowest bid of the four bidders, they have limited experience with projects of this size and complexity. The consultant evaluated five areas of concern, including limited experience with T2 conductor installation, self-supported power pole assembly, four-mile line construction, with no experience of 69 kV underground installations at this voltage level. While no major deficiencies were identified and Helm Electric is currently performing work for the City, the consultant recommended awarding the project to the next lowest bidder, Michels.

At 6:49 PM Motion made by Councilor D. McDermott and seconded by Councilor Valdivieso, **“I make business item #4, an Ordinance Awarding a Contract be moved business item #1 and change the order.”** Voting Yea: T. McDermott, Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Arteaga, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 7-0.

4. **An Ordinance Awarding a Contract to TAPP, Inc for the Purchase of Steel Poles.** Bids were received on November 13, 2025, for the purchase of steel transmission poles associated with the Ritchie Road to Centerpoint Line Project. The project was publicly advertised on 10/17/25, and bid notifications were distributed to ten potential vendors, resulting in three qualified submissions. The bid results were as follows:

Vendor	Bid Total	Lead Time
MVA Power	\$1,297,702.46	26 Weeks
TAPP, Inc.	\$1,475,246.00	64–65 Weeks
ROHN Products	\$2,115,800.00	42–46 Weeks

MVA Power submitted the apparent low bid with no major specification exceptions and an acceptable schedule. However, subsequent vendor review revealed that although MVA is based in Canada, the poles would be manufactured in China. This presents heightened concerns related to material quality control, overseas shipping reliability, and exposure to potential tariff cost fluctuations. BHMG Engineers conducted interviews and contacted project references for MVA Power. While none of the reported issues were catastrophic, they were notable enough to present risk to the City on a critical infrastructure project. Conversely, TAPP, Inc. has strong demonstrated experience with similar steel pole projects and is regarded as a reliable supplier. TAPP has also committed to shipping standard and WPE poles early to help support construction phasing. The current project schedule can accommodate TAPP's longer overall lead time. Electric Superintendent Blake Toliver was available for questions. Motion made by Councilor D. McDermott and seconded by Councilor Shaw-Dickey, **"I move Ordinance 2026-03, an Ordinance Awarding a Contract to TAPP, Inc., for the Purchase of Steel Poles, be approved."** Voting Yea: T. McDermott, Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Arteaga, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 7-0.

VII. BUSINESS ITEMS:

1. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS BY OMNIBUS VOTE with Recommendations:

- a) Approve City Council Meeting Minutes - 12/8/2025
- b) Approve Special City Council Meeting Minutes - 12/23/2025
- c) Approve Payroll - 11/24/25-12/7/25, 12/8/25-12/21/25
- d) Approve Payment Register - 12/8/25, 12/15/25, 12/30/25, 1/5/26
- e) Approve Exception Payments - 12/9/25, 12/17/25

Motion made by Councilor Valdivieso, Seconded by Councilor Hayes, **"I move consent agenda items (a) through (e) to be approved by Omnibus vote as recommended."** Voting Yea: T. McDermott, Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Arteaga, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 7-0.

2. **An Ordinance Suspending Late Fees as Identified in Chapter 98 Article I of the Rochelle Municipal Code through December 31, 2026.** Over the past several years, RMU has suspended late fees for residential utility customers. Staff proposes the continuation of a suspension of utility late fees through the end of 2026 to assist customers who may fall behind on payments. Customers also have the option to utilize short and long-term payment plans as well as an assistance program offered through RMU. City Manager Jeff Fiegenschuh was available for questions. Motion made by Councilor Arteaga, Second by Councilor T. McDermott, **"I move Ordinance 2026-01, an Ordinance Temporarily Suspending Utility Late Fees as Identified in Chapter 98 Article I of the Rochelle Municipal Code, be approved."** Voting Yea: T. McDermott, Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Arteaga, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 7-0.

3. **An Ordinance Authorizing and Providing for the Issuance of Not to Exceed \$5,000,000 Aggregate Principal Amount General Obligation Bonds (Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2026, of the City of Rochelle, Ogle and Lee Counties, Illinois, and for the Levy of a Direct Annual Tax Sufficient to Pay the Principal of and Interest on Said Bonds.** On October 27th, 2025, Rochelle's City Council agenda included a discussion item proposing the issuance of a general obligation bond (Alternate Revenue Source) to fund necessary City projects. The projects identified include the construction of one new 8-unit aircraft T hangar at Rochelle's Municipal Airport and electrical upgrades to support current and future technology infrastructure and service demands at Rochelle's Technology Center. Following the October 27th discussion item the following actions have been taken: November 24, 2025, City Council approved an order calling the Bond Issuance Notification Act (BINA) hearing and an ordinance setting forth the intent to issue general obligation

alternate bonds in an Amount not to exceed \$1,500,000 for the Technology Center, and \$3,500,000 for the Rochelle Municipal Airport and related improvements within the City and paying for costs related thereto. November 30th, 2025, Notice of the BINA hearing was published and posted starting the 30-day petition period. December 8th A public hearing was held regarding a plan to issue not to exceed \$5,000,000 in aggregate principal amount of the City's General Obligation Bonds (Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2026. December 30th, 2025, the petition period expired. (30 days after notice is published in local newspaper.) January 7, 2026 a conference call was held with the rating agency, and a due diligence session was completed with the Bond council, Disclosure council, Underwriter, City Staff and Legal Counsel. The next step in this process is adopting an ordinance authorizing and providing for the issuance not to exceed \$5,000,000 aggregate principal amount General Obligation Bonds (Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2026, of the City of Rochelle, Ogle and Lee Counties, Illinois, and for the levy of a direct annual tax sufficient to pay the principal of and interest on said bonds. This ordinance identifies the purpose and parameters which include:

Bond Details:

- - Maximum Term: Until January 1, 2037
- - Interest Rate: Not to exceed 5.50%
- - Denominations: \$5,000 or multiples
- - Semiannual interest payments (Jan 1 & Jul 1)

Funding Sources:

- - Airport revenues
- - Technology Center revenues
- - Federal grants
- - Other lawful City funds
- - Ad valorem property taxes (unlimited rate/amount as backup)

Tax Levy:

- - Direct annual tax up to \$700,000 per year (2025–2035) to ensure debt service
- - Taxes may be abated if pledged revenues cover payments

Compliance & Covenants:

- - Bonds designated as qualified tax-exempt obligations under IRS rules
- - Full faith and credit of the City pledged
- - Compliance with Illinois Debt Reform Act and Open Meetings Act confirmed

Additional Provisions:

- - Redemption options (optional and mandatory)
- - Registration and transfer procedures
- - Creation of Bond Fund and Project Fund
- - Conditions for issuing parity or additional bonds
- - Non-arbitrage and tax-exemption compliance
- Approved by City Council and filed with County Clerks of Ogle and Lee Counties.

All bond details, funding sources, tax levy, compliance & covenants, as well as additional provisions are identified in the ordinance. Public Works Director Tim Isley was available for questions. Motion made by Councilor T. McDermott and seconded by Councilor Hayes, **“I move Ordinance 2026-02, an Ordinance Authorizing and Providing for the Issuance of Not to Exceed \$5,000,000 Aggregate Principal Amount General Obligation Bonds (Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2026, of the City of Rochelle, Ogle and Lee Counties, and for the Levy of a Direct Annual Tax Sufficient to Pay the Principal of and Interest on Said Bonds, be approved.”** Voting Yea: T. McDermott, Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Arteaga, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 7-0.

5. **A Resolution Approving a Temporary Construction Easement with the Richard R. and Doris J. Kennay Trusts.** We are requesting approval to secure a temporary construction easement totaling 4.876 acres for two years from Rick and Doris Kennay to allow for the material storage and construction of the Centerpoint Substation. Electric Superintendent Blake Toliver was available for

questions. Motion made by Councilor D. McDermott and seconded by Councilor Shaw-Dickey, **"I move Resolution R2026-01, a Resolution Approving a Temporary Construction Easement with the Richard R. and Doris J. Kennay Trusts, be approved."** Voting Yea: T. McDermott, Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Arteaga, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 7-0

6. **An Ordinance Modifying the City's Administrative Procedures for Assessing and Determining Claims Under PSEBA.** The City's current ordinance requires a formal hearing as part of the process for determining eligibility for benefits under the Public Safety Employee Benefits Act (PSEBA). This requirement was established at a time when statutory guidance and relevant case law were more limited. Since the adoption of the ordinance, substantial case law has developed, and the PSEBA statute itself has been amended. These changes provide clearer legal standards and procedural direction for evaluating PSEBA claims. Given the expanded statutory framework and established case law, the hearing requirement contained in the ordinance is now redundant. Maintaining this requirement results in additional administrative steps and legal costs without providing added legal protection or benefit to the City or applicants. Updating the ordinance to align with current law would streamline the PSEBA application process while remaining compliant with statutory requirements and judicial guidance. HR Director Jillian Condon was available for questions. Motion made by Councilor Shaw-Dickey and seconded by Councilor Arteaga, **"I move Ordinance 2026-04, an Ordinance Modifying the City's Administrative Procedures for Assessing and Determining Claims under PSEBA, be approved."** Voting Yea: T. McDermott, Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Arteaga, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 7-0.

- VIII. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** At 7:12 PM, Motion made by Councilor T. McDermott and seconded by Councilor Hayes, **"I move Council recess into executive session to discuss setting of a price for sale or lease of property owned by the City. Section (c) (6), the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, and/or dismissal of specific employee(s). Section (c)(1) and collective negotiating matters. Section (c) (2)."** Voting Yea: T. McDermott, Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Arteaga, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 7-0.

At 9:27 PM, Motion made by Councilor D. McDermott, Seconded by Councilor Arteaga, **"I move return to open session."** Voting Yea: T. McDermott, Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Arteaga, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 7-0.

- IX. **ADJOURNMENT:** Motion made by Councilor Arteaga, Seconded by Councilor Shaw-Dickey, **"I move the Council adjourn."** Voting Yea: T. McDermott, Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Arteaga, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 7-0.

John Bearrows, Mayor

Rose Huéramo, City Clerk