



MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
Monday, November 10, 2025 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 City Manager Jeff Fiegenschuh, City Clerk Rose Huéramo, City Attorney Dominick Lanzito.
- III. PROCLAMATIONS, COMMENDATIONS, ETC:**
1. 50th Anniversary Proclamation of Focus House - November 2025
 2. Veterans Day – November 11, 2025
 3. Swearing-In Ceremony - Matt Hoffman, City Treasurer
- IV. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:**
1. Mayor's Report: Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the new Fit Hub location will take place on 11/14 at 1:00 p.m. Focus House 50th Anniversary Celebration 11/13 at 5:00 p.m. at Luna. Chamber Event – Quartermania at Flight Deck on 11/15 at 5:00 p.m. The Budget Workshop will be held 11/17 at 6:00 p.m. Town Hall Meeting on the potential data center development 11/18 at 6:00 p.m.
 2. Council Members: Councilwoman Arteaga reminded residents to support C.A.N. by purchasing a pork chop dinner at the Fire Hall on November 14 starting at 4:30 p.m. Also announcing Prescott Brothers will hold their 2 Ton Thanksgiving Food Drive 11/20, from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- V. PUBLIC COMMENTARY:** None.
- VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS:**
1. **Burlington Junction Railway Presentation:** Peter Hoth of Burlington Junction Railroad provided the council with an update regarding the company's recent leadership transition, announcing that he has assumed the role of President and CEO. He also presented an overview of the Transload Center's growth and economic development over the past year, as well as plans and projections for its continued expansion in the future.
 2. **Spring Lake Remediation Project Update:** HR Risk and Safety Coordinator Britt Zick presented the Council with an update on the Spring Lake Remediation Project. As of October 23, the Environmental Agency advised that no further soil or water sampling is required based on the final analytical report. The agency has deemed the incident resolved and officially closed the case. Additionally, all electrical work associated with the project has been completed. The City is now collaborating with the Park District to replace the damaged fence.
 3. **Small Business Interior Improvement Program:** Community Development Director Michelle Pease presented the council with a proposal to establish a Small Business Interior Improvement Program, modeled after the existing facade program that assists businesses with exterior enhancements. This new program would focus on interior improvements, offering matching funds to support business owners in upgrading and enhancing their indoor spaces
 4. **Fast Forward Line Inspection Report:** Superintendent of Electric Operations Blake Toliver presented the Council with the results of a study conducted by Fast Forward, which performed both panoramic and thermal data collection and assessments of the City's overhead distribution lines and poles. Within the city limits, a total of 236 thermal anomalies were identified. If all issues were addressed, the estimated conservative outage mitigation savings would amount to \$188,800.00.

VII. BUSINESS ITEMS:

1. **CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS BY OMNIUS VOTE with Recommendations:**
 - a) Approve City Council Meeting Minutes - 10/27/2025
 - b) Approve Payment Registers - 10/27/2025, 11/3/2025
 - c) Approve Exception Payment Registers - 10/27/2025, 11/03/2025
 - d) Approve Payroll - 10/13/2025-10/26/2025
 - e) Approve a Resolution Appointing an Authorized Agent for IMRF
 - f) Approve 2026 Holidays
 - g) Approve 2026 Meeting Dates
 - h) Authorize the Completion of Signature Forms at Financial Institutions

Motion made by Councilor Valdivieso, Seconded by Councilor D. McDermott, **"I move consent agenda items (a) through (h) 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 Levying Taxes for all Corporate Purposes for the City of Rochelle, Ogle County and Lee County, Illinois, for the Fiscal Year Beginning January 1, 2026 and Ending December 31, 2026.** The State of Illinois requires the City to annually adopt and file a Property Tax Levy Ordinance on or before the last Tuesday in December. Last year, the City's Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV) was \$324,521,968 and its property tax rate was .928120 per \$100 of EAV. The City collected \$3,011,953 in property taxes. For 2025, Ogle County has estimated the City's EAV at \$354,394,722 which is an increase of nearly \$30 million. The proposed levy calculation options would result in the City collecting \$3,104,199 in property taxes, an increase of 3% (excluding the bond). Based on the estimated EAV, the tax rate would decrease .052204 per \$100 EAV for the 3% option to .875916. The proposed 2025 levy includes funding the Police and Fire Pension Funds as recommended by the pension boards' actuarial studies. City Manager Jeff Fiegenschuh was available for questions. Motion made by Councilor T. McDermott, Seconded by Councilor Arteaga, **"I move Ordinance 2025-66, an Ordinance Levying Taxes for all Corporate purposes for the City of Rochelle, Ogle and Lee Counties, for the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2026, and ending December 31, 2026, be approved."** Voting Yea: T. McDermott, Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Arteaga, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 7-0.

3. **Ordinance Abating the Taxes Levied for 2025 to Pay the Principal and Interest on \$2,955,000 Taxable General Obligation Refunding Bonds (TIF Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2013 of the City of Rochelle.** In 2010, the Mayor and Council approved an ordinance providing for the issuance of bonds to finance offsite improvements related to the Lighthouse Pointe Subdivision and Route 38 corridor. The City subsequently issued Taxable General Obligation Bonds, Series 2010 (Recovery Zone Economic Development Bonds) for \$2,940,000. In April 2013, due to federal budget cuts which affected the subsidy available through the Recovery Zone Bond program, the Council approved the issuance of General Obligation Refunding Bonds for \$2,955,000, which included interest and bond issuance costs. The annual debt service related to these bonds is being paid through TIF revenues, instead of property taxes, when sufficient funds are available. To abate the property taxes, the proposed ordinance must be approved annually and forwarded to Lee County and Ogle County. City Manager Jeff Fiegenschuh was available for questions. Motion made by Councilor Arteaga, Seconded by Councilor Shaw-Dickey, **"I move Ordinance 2025-67, a Ordinance Abating the tax hereto Levied for the year 2025 to pay debt services on General Obligation Refunding Bonds (Tax Increment Financing Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2013 of the City of Rochelle, Ogle County, be approved."** Voting Yea: T. McDermott, Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Arteaga, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 7-0.

4. **Ordinance Abating the Taxes Levied for 2025 to Pay the Principal of and Interest on \$4,500,000 General Obligation Bonds (Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2018 of the City of Rochelle.** In 2018, the Mayor and Council approved an ordinance providing for the issuance of bonds to finance

infrastructure improvements. The City subsequently issued General Obligation Bonds (Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2018 in the amount of \$4,500,000. The annual debt service related to these bonds is being paid through the Capital Improvement Fund from a transfer from the Non-Home Rule Sales Tax Fund, instead of property taxes, when sufficient funds are available. To abate the property taxes, the proposed ordinance must be approved annually and forwarded to Lee County and Ogle County. City Manager Jeff Fiegenschuh was available for questions. Motion made by Councilor Shaw-Dickey, Seconded by Councilor D. McDermott, **"I move Ordinance 2025-68, an Ordinance Abating the Tax hereto levied for the year 2025 to pay the principal of and interest of \$4,500,000 General Obligation Bonds (Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2018, of the City of Rochelle, Ogle and Lee Counties, be approved."** Voting Yea: T. McDermott, Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Arteaga, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 7-0.

5. **Ordinance Abating the Taxes Levied for 2025 to Pay the Principal of and Interest on \$7,775,000 General Obligation Bonds (Electric System Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2021 of the City of Rochelle.** In 2021, the Mayor and Council approved an ordinance providing for the issuance of bonds to finance electric infrastructure improvements. The City subsequently issued General Obligation Bonds (Electric Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2021 in the amount of \$7,775,000. The annual debt service related to these bonds is being paid through the Electric Fund instead of property taxes when sufficient funds are available. To abate the property taxes, the proposed ordinance must be approved annually and forwarded to Lee County and Ogle County. City Manager Jeff Fiegenschuh was available for questions. Motion made by Councilor Valdivieso, Seconded by Councilor Arteaga, **"I move Ordinance 2025-69, an Ordinance Abating the tax hereto levied for the year 2025 to pay the principal of and interest on \$7,775,000 General Obligation Bonds (Electric System Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2021, of the City of Rochelle, Ogle and Lee Counties, be approved."** Voting Yea: T. McDermott, Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Arteaga, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 7-0.
6. **Ordinance Abating the Taxes Levied for 2025 to Pay the Principal of and Interest on \$8,895,000 General Obligation Bonds (Electric System Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2022 of the City of Rochelle.** In 2022, the Mayor and Council approved an ordinance providing for the issuance of bonds to finance electric infrastructure improvements. The City subsequently issued General Obligation Bonds (Electric Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2022 in the amount of \$8,895,000. The annual debt service related to these bonds is being paid through the Electric Fund instead of property taxes when sufficient funds are available. To abate the property taxes, the proposed ordinance must be approved annually and forwarded to Lee County and Ogle County. City Manager Jeff Fiegenschuh was available for questions. Motion made by Councilor Hayes, Seconded by Councilor T. McDermott, **"I move Ordinance 2025-70, an Ordinance Abating the tax hereto levied for the year 2025 to pay the principal of and interest on \$8,895,000 General Obligation Bonds (Electric System Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2022, of the City of Rochelle, Ogle and Lee Counties, be approved."** Voting Yea: T. McDermott, Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Arteaga, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 7-0.
7. **Ordinance Abating the Taxes Levied for 2025 to Pay the Debt Service on General Obligation Bonds (Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2023A of the City of Rochelle.** In 2023, the Mayor and Council approved an ordinance providing for the issuance of bonds to finance improvements in the Downtown and Southern Gateway TIF. The City subsequently issued General Obligation Bonds (Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2023A in the amount of \$2,500,000. The annual debt service related to these bonds is being paid through the Downtown and Southern Gateway TIF Fund instead of property taxes when sufficient funds are available. To abate the property taxes, the proposed ordinance must be approved annually and forwarded to Lee County and Ogle County. City Manager Jeff Fiegenschuh was available for questions. Motion made by Councilor D. McDermott, Seconded by Councilor Hayes, **"I move Ordinance 2025-71, an Ordinance Abating the tax hereto levied**

for the year 2025 to pay the principal of and interest on \$2,500,000 General Obligation Bonds (Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2023A, of the City of Rochelle, Ogle and Lee Counties, be approved." Voting Yea: T. McDermott, Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Arteaga, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 7-0.

8. **Ordinance Abating the Taxes Levied for 2025 to Pay the Principal of and Interest on \$4,795,000 General Obligation Bonds (Electric System Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2023 of the City of Rochelle.** In 2023, the Mayor and Council approved an ordinance providing for the issuance of bonds to finance electric infrastructure improvements. The City subsequently issued General Obligation Bonds (Electric Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2023 in the amount of \$4,795,000. The annual debt service related to these bonds is being paid through the Electric Fund instead of property taxes when sufficient funds are available. To abate the property taxes, the proposed ordinance must be approved annually and forwarded to Lee County and Ogle County. City Manager Jeff Fiegenschuh was available for questions. Motion made by Councilor T. McDermott, Seconded by Councilor Shaw-Dickey, **"I move Ordinance 2025-72, an Ordinance Abating the tax hereto levied for the year 2025 to pay the principal of and interest on \$4,795,000 General Obligation Bonds (Electric System Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2023, of the City of Rochelle, Ogle and Lee Counties, be approved."** Voting Yea: T. McDermott, Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Arteaga, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 7-0.
9. **A Resolution Approving the Purchase of 313 W 5th Avenue.** The City of Rochelle desires to purchase property located at 313 W 5th Avenue and a vacant lot (PINs 24-24-337-007 and 24-24-337-008) in Downtown Rochelle for the purpose of improving and fostering development. The purchase price is \$110,000.00 for both parcels. Currently, the City owns the property to the west of these lots. Michelle Pease, Community Development Director, was available for questions. Motion made by Councilor Valdivieso, Seconded by Councilor Shaw-Dickey, **"I move Resolution R2025-46, a Resolution Approving the Purchase of 313 W. 5th Avenue, be approved."** Voting Yea: T. McDermott, Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Arteaga, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 7-0.
10. **An Ordinance Waiving Competitive Bidding Requirements and Authorizing an Agreement with AIDash for Vegetation Management Services Software.** RMU is committed to maintaining a safe, reliable, and cost-effective electric system for our community. As part of that commitment, we have identified an opportunity to strengthen our infrastructure management and vegetation control efforts using AIDash—an artificial-intelligence platform built specifically for utilities. AIDash uses satellite imagery and data analytics to help utilities monitor and maintain their systems more efficiently. Rather than relying solely on manual inspections and routine trimming cycles, AIDash provides insight into which areas pose the greatest reliability risks. This allows staff to prioritize maintenance where it will have the most impact—saving time, money, and resources. Benefits to the City: Enhanced Reliability: Helps reduce outages by identifying potential issues before they affect service. Operational Efficiency: Directs maintenance efforts where they're most needed, leading to smarter use of staff and contractor resources. Cost Savings: Supports a data-driven approach to vegetation management that can reduce unnecessary work and extend maintenance cycles. Strategic Planning: Offers long-term insights that support better budgeting and capital planning for RMU's infrastructure. Jake Calzavara representative for AIDash attended remotely, and Superintendent of Electric Operations Blake Toliver was available for questions. Motion made by Councilor D. McDermott, Seconded by Councilor Arteaga, **"I move Ordinance 2025-73, an Ordinance Waiving Competitive Bidding Requirements and Authorizing an Agreement with AIDash, Inc., for Vegetation Management Services Software, be approved."** Voting Yea: T. McDermott, Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Arteaga, and Valdivieso. Nays: Mayor Bearrows. Motion passed 6-1.

11. **A Resolution Approving Easement Agreements with John Norton. RMU is progressing with the construction of the Centerpoint Substation.** To complete this project, RMU requires several easements to allow for the installation and maintenance of electrical infrastructure associated with the substation. These easements will ensure permanent access for operations, maintenance, and emergency response. The following easement is needed: Property Owner(s): John Norton Parcel Number(s): 25-31-400-003-0000 and 24-36-100-023-000 Compensation (if applicable): \$12,558.00 and \$4,056.00 Superintendent of Electric Operations Blake Toliver was available for questions. Motion made by Councilor Arteaga, Seconded by Councilor D. McDermott, **"I move Resolution R2025-47, a Resolution Approving Easement Agreements with John Norton, be approved."** Voting Yea: T. McDermott, Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Arteaga, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 7-0.
12. **A Resolution Approving Easement Agreements with Chicago Title Trust.** RMU is progressing with the construction of the Centerpoint Substation. To complete this project, RMU requires several easements to allow for the installation and maintenance of electrical infrastructure associated with the substation. These easements will ensure permanent access for operations, maintenance, and emergency response. The following easement is needed: Property Owner(s): Chicago Title Trust Parcel Number(s): 24-36-100-023-000 Compensation (if applicable): \$99,723.00 Superintendent of Electric Operations Blake Toliver was available for questions. Motion made by Councilor Shaw-Dickey, Seconded by Councilor T. McDermott, **"I move Resolution R2025-48, a Resolution Approving Easement Agreements with Chicago Title Trust, be approved."** Voting Yea: T. McDermott, Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Arteaga, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 7-0.
13. **A Resolution Approving Easement Agreements with Donald Cappell and Frances Cappell.** RMU is progressing with the construction of the Centerpoint Substation. To complete this project, RMU requires several easements to allow for the installation and maintenance of electrical infrastructure associated with the substation. These easements will ensure permanent access for operations, maintenance, and emergency response. The following easement is needed: Property Owner(s): Donald Cappell and Frances Cappell. Parcel Number(s): 24-27-200-004-000 Compensation (if applicable): \$20,124 Superintendent of Electric Operations Blake Toliver was available for questions. Motion made by Councilor Valdivieso, Seconded by Councilor D. McDermott, **"I move Resolution R2025-49, a Resolution Approving Easement Agreement with Donald Cappel and Frances Cappel, be approved."** Voting Yea: T. McDermott, Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Arteaga, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 7-0.
14. **A Resolution Approving Easement Agreements with Fresh Furrow LLC.** RMU is progressing with the construction of the Centerpoint Substation. To complete this project, RMU requires several easements to allow for the installation and maintenance of electrical infrastructure associated with the substation. These easements will ensure permanent access for operations, maintenance, and emergency response. The following easement is needed: Property Owner(s): Fresh Furrow LLC Parcel Number(s): 24-22-400-007-000 Compensation (if applicable): \$78,408.00 Superintendent of Electric Operations Blake Toliver was available for questions. Motion made by Councilor T. McDermott, Seconded by Councilor Arteaga, **"I move Resolution R2025-50, a Resolution Approving Easement Agreement with Fresh Furrow, LLC, be approved."** Voting Yea: T. McDermott, Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Arteaga, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 7-0.

15. **A Resolution Approving Easement Agreements with Noggle Family Limited Partnership.** RMU is progressing with the construction of the Centerpoint Substation. To complete this project, RMU requires several easements to allow for the installation and maintenance of electrical infrastructure associated with the substation. These easements will ensure permanent access for operations, maintenance, and emergency response. The following easement is needed: Property Owner(s): Noggle Family Limited Partnership Parcel Number(s): 24-36-400-004 and 25-11-400-005 Compensation (if applicable): \$65,664 and \$122,740 Superintendent of Electric Operations Blake Toliver was available for questions. Motion made by Councilor D. McDermott, Seconded by Councilor Valdivieso, **"I move Resolution R2025-51, a Resolution Approving a PSA and an Easement Agreement with the Noggle Family Limited Partnership, 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 7:50 PM. Motion made by Councilor D. McDermott, Seconded by Councilor T. McDermott, **"I move the Council recess into executive session to discuss setting of a price for sale or lease of property owned by the City. Section (c) (6) and discussion of minutes of meetings lawfully closed under this ACT for purposes of approval by the body of the minutes or semi-annual review of the minutes as mandated. Section (c) (21)."** Voting Yea: T. McDermott, Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Arteaga, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 7-0.
At 8:22 PM. Motion made by Councilor Valdivieso, Seconded by Councilor Shaw-Dickey. **"I move the Council adjourn."** Voice vote all in favor. Nays: None. Motion passed 7-0.

- IX. **ADJOURNMENT:** At 8:22 PM. Motion made by Councilor Valdivieso, Seconded by Councilor Shaw-Dickey. **"I move the Council adjourn."** Voice vote all in favor. Nays: None. Motion passed 7-0.

John Bearrows, Mayor

Rose Huéramo, City Clerk