



City Council Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 2, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.

Washington Fire Department Training Room - 200 N. Wilmor Road, Washington, Illinois

Call to Order Mayor Gary W. Manier called the regular meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., with a quorum present.

Roll Call *Present:* Alderpersons Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens

Also Present City Administrator Jim Snider, Finance Director Joanie Baxter, Planning and Development Director Jon Oliphant, City Engineer Dennis Carr, Public Works Director Brian Rittenhouse, Police Chief Mike McCoy, City Clerk Valeri Brod, City Attorney Derek Schryer and Press

Pledge of Allegiance All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mayor Manier.

Audience Comments Sharon Amdall spoke on behalf of she and her husband regarding Five Points. Her comments are provided in their entirety and attached to these minutes. She addressed the coverage of the bond payments, the City's use of the tax revenue, the value of the facility in the community and she noted that it brings people from other communities who spend their money here. Nicole Miller, representing Five Points, shared that in the absence of value is when cost becomes an issue. She feels Sherril West explained Five Points very well in previous meetings and she thanked Alderperson Stevens for posting a question on social media asking residents why they moved to Washington which revealed out of 105 comments, 62 were unique and answered the question and of this sample, 16+ percent had Five Points in their answer. She shared a few comments that were on the post that included Five Points in their answer. She asked Council to consider the value of Five Points in the community and shared that realtors say people move here because of Five Points. She shared that she chose Washington because of the community center. She feels it is an honor to serve on their board and hopes to see everyone at Five Points soon.

Review Agenda for Deletions/Additions Nothing added or deleted at this time.

Consent Agenda Mayor Manier presented the Consent Agenda for approval of the following items:
A. Approve Minutes of the December 18, 2023 Regular City Council Meeting
Alderperson McIntyre motioned to accept the consent agenda; Alderperson Martin seconded.
8 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens
0 Nays:
Motion carried by roll call vote.

Mayor Communications Mayor Manier shared there will be a special meeting next week to recognize the St. Pat's girls' basketball teams and a group from CIS who won awards for coding. It will include proclamations and it will be held at Five Points to accommodate the size.

City Administrator Communications Administrator Snider shared that a written Council report was provided.

Resolution: Administrator Snider provided the following resolution for consideration:
R-1401 (1-24) Adopt Tazewell Co. Multi-Jurisdictional Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan
Synopsis: Adoption of this resolution would adopt the Tazewell County Multi-Jurisdictional Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan effectively setting goals and objectives regarding different natural disasters that may occur in the region and providing the ability to obtain grants in the event of a natural disaster.
Title: A Resolution approving the Tazewell County Multi-Jurisdictional Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan

Planning and Development Director Oliphant explained that this is a plan that takes place every five years. He noted that Woodford and Peoria counties also have plans. He shared that we have participated in at least two or more cycles and there is no cost to the City with exception of staff meeting time. This will help us be eligible for hazard mediation assistance if needed. He shared details regarding an application which could receive 75% funding for stormwater improvements on the east side of town if it is approved. He noted the application is in process with IEMA which will be submitted with the State's application through FEMA.

Alderperson McIntyre motioned to approve; Alderperson Smith seconded.
8 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens
0 Nays:
Motion carried by roll call vote.

2nd Reading Administrator Snider provided the following ordinance for consideration:

Ordinance: **Synopsis:** Adoption of this ordinance would amend the Washington Area Community Center Agreement such that future annual WACC payments are based on any difference between the previous year's 0.25% home rule sales tax revenue and the debt service payment. WACC payments would be forgiven so long as the 0.25% home rule sales tax revenue is at least \$75,000 more than the annual debt service for the payments due in 2024-2029.
Ord. 3520 - Approve WACC Use Agreement Amendment
Title: An Ordinance Approving the WACC Use Agreement Amendment

Alderson Adams motioned to approve; Alderson Brownfield seconded.

Alderson Stevens stated that in 2006 the City started getting the .25% sales tax but the WACC didn't start paying until 2010 and wonders why it didn't start in the beginning. She said it was going to be a privately funded community center originally and the city administrator at the time determined that the City needed revenue in place to cover the bond payment. Then in 2010, in an agreement it stated that WACC would partially repay for a portion of the building costs. She noted that this would then provide a payment from WACC towards the bond.

Alderson Stevens continued by sharing that after Covid, Ms. West provided an explanation and Council restructured the payments. Now we want forgiveness for everything and she wondered why it can't be evaluated each year. She noted that if this is passed tonight, we won't be getting the \$75,000 that is part of the budget. Alderson Stevens expressed that if it is a community center, the public should be able to attend board meetings and it was clear that sales tax would cover the cost debt service. She stated that the total cost of the bond would be almost \$8 million. She commented that newspaper articles stated that any extra money would go to the City and this is totally separate from the City.

Alderson Adams noted that they came to explain why this is happening. He doesn't disagree with some of what Alderson Stevens said but when he does calculations, the total cost of the bond is \$7.7 million, through 2030. We will collect \$12.35 million and forgoing future payments the City will benefit \$4.65 million. He also noted that they have paid more than \$650,000 so far, it brings people in, it's a great investment and he agrees it is a benefit to the community.

Alderson Martin shared that everyone agrees that Five Points is great. He asked if the agreement was made to pay back the loan or was it to offset the costs of the debt services.

Mayor Manier shared that City Administrator Bob Morris wrote the sales tax specifically to capture additional sales tax for capital projects before Five Points asked for the \$5 million. At the time, Mr. Morris felt Council would be in favor of using the tax revenue towards the debt service. He noted that the sales tax was not intended to be for Five Points alone.

Alderson Martin asked if it was an understating with Five Points that the payments would just cover the costs of debt service if the tax didn't cover it.

Alderson Blundy said if that was part of the agreement, it would be written in the agreement and the language would be made clear.

Alderson McIntyre said he supports Five Points and wondered why we started collecting in 2010. He noted that the total is over \$7 million on a \$5 million note with interest. He asked what the purpose was that Five Points would pay the City back. He noted that we just raised the tax to pay for pensions and roads. He would just like clarification about the original agreement. Mayor Manier asked Finance Director Baxter to explain. Ms. Baxter shared that when you look at the sales tax in 07/08 it was much closer to the actual cost and there were years we weren't able to pay for it. She noted that they refinanced in 2015 to get a loan with less interest. She continued by explaining that now we call it a .25% sales tax for WACC but if you look at the ordinance, it is for any capital purpose. Ms. Baxter further explained that we waited until 2010 to see how this would actually operate. They were going to act sooner but they wanted to make sure Five Points was doing well, then, they came up with figures that were reasonable. She noted that Covid hit. Ms. Baxter shared that the extra funds were not yet known and they have been used to make community improvements.

Administrator Snider noted that sales tax over the last 20 years has been declining due to internet purchasing and in 2020, the general assembly created a rule that shared internet sales tax revenue with municipalities and this coupled with the lower interest on the debt, is how it is being made whole.

Alderson Martin asked if the payments were originally brought up because the City didn't want to be on the hook. Ms. Baxter explained that it was designed as a cushion because the debt service was much closer than what we are currently making.

Alderson Blundy shared that he has heard different versions of why these were done. He referenced the chart noting there was enough to cover the debt and there is no mention in the language that this was done if the sales tax falls short. He said millions of tax dollars have gone to the facility through fees with the high school and park district. He feels it is not in the best interest of the city to forgive all of it today and would like to review it annually.

Alderson Stevens feels it is not in the best interest of the City to lose more than \$660,000 to a 501c3 entity and leaving the community out after hearing how Five Points is run. It is problematic for her. She feels Five Points is great for the community but doesn't support a blanket forgiveness.

Mayor Manier asked if Council is talking about losing the money versus revenue coming in, there were a few votes against raising the tax levy which would have lost \$2.1 million.

Alderson Brownfield stated that he takes offense to the comments about how Five Points is run. They do a great job and are professionals from different industries and he feels this is a gem to our city. Alderson Brownfield shared that two or three people voted no on the tax levy but are worried about money to pay for things. He noted the cost of inflation on items. He appreciates conversations.

6 Ayes: Adams, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith
2 Nays: Blundy, Stevens
Motion carried by roll call vote.

2nd Reading Administrator Snider provided the following ordinance for consideration:

Ordinance: **Synopsis:** Adoption of this ordinance would provide for the annexation of the requested two parcels into the city limits that are located adjacent to or near Centennial Drive, McClugage Road, and Spring Creek Road.
Ord 3521 - Request by Kenneth L. and Donna L. Haag, to Annex Two Parcels Near Centennial Dr., McClugage Rd., and Spring Creek Rd. **Title:** An Ordinance Approving a Request by Kenneth L. Haag and Donna L. Haag, as Trustees of the Kenneth L. Haag and Donna L. Haag Joint Revocable Trust Agreement Dated September 12, 2019, to Annex Two Parcels Near Centennial Drive, McClugage Road, and Spring Creek Road

Aldersperson Stevens motioned to approve; Aldersperson McIntyre seconded.
8 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens
0 Nays:
Motion carried by roll call vote.

Aldersperson's Comment Aldersperson Martin asked if we have received the flow meter test results and Engineer Carr explained that the holiday time is busy for private sector companies. He will follow up with them now that everyone is back after the holiday.
Aldersperson Martin motioned to add discussion regarding meeting audio equipment to the next agenda; Aldersperson Stevens seconded.
Administrator Snider noted that it is on the Strategic Planning meeting schedule and Aldersperson Martin would like it discussed at the next meeting.
8 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens
0 Nays:
Motion carried by roll call vote.

Administrator Snider asked for Council direction on what to bring back. He noted that we have an issue with permanent furniture due to use at the fire department. Aldersperson Martin would like to talk about extra microphones and what will get us through until it is ready.
Administrator Snider said it would require a whole new audio system with a new receiver. He noted additional costs and could look at getting numbers back.
Aldersperson Stevens asked if the City Administrator has asked Jacob Spitzer because he has some ideas. Administrator Snider would like to speak with specialized audio sources and has his own knowledge as well.
Aldersperson Blundy wanted to clarify why he voted no on the property tax. He said he didn't see it as giving back the entire levy and stated that if the vote failed, they would have come back with a different plan. He felt property taxes were high enough. He stated that he didn't have any other mechanism to vote no.

Adjournment At 7:12 p.m. Aldersperson McIntyre moved to adjourn; Aldersperson Stevens seconded. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Valeri L. Brod, City Clerk