



City Council Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 18, 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, Stevens
Absent: Alderperson Smith

Also Present City Administrator 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 Treasurer Abbey Strubhar, City Clerk Valeri Brod, City Attorney Keith Braskich, Planner Joe Boyer and Press

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

Audience Comments Washington resident John Amdall provided a statement asking City Council members to be mindful of their comments, specifically addressing members who used the word “give/gave” when discussing the recent Five Points agreement. The Amdall’s full comments are attached and made part of these minutes.

Patricia Smith from Wagner Street shared that she has called the City about speeding on her street. She expressed concern about the lack of sidewalks in her neighborhood and noted that kids walk to the bus stop. She stated that she hasn’t seen any police patrol the area. She shared that there is pooling water at a neighbor’s house and there are beer cans in a neighbor’s yard. She has called the Park District about the lack of poop bags at the park and would like the port-a-potty placed at the dog park.

Dave Suffield from Chestnut Lane thanked Council for the engine breaking signs. He feels it happens often. He pointed out that the American flag is flying lower than the State of Illinois flag.

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:

- Approve Minutes of the March 4, 2024 Regular City Council Meeting
- Purchase Authorization for FY24-25 Commodity Bids and Contractor Assistance
- Approve Bills and Payroll
- Electric Energy Bids for City Facilities

Alderperson Brownfield motioned to accept the Consent Agenda; Alderperson Adams seconded.
7 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Stevens
0 Nays:
Motion carried by roll call vote.

Mayoral Communications Mayor Manier shared that the governor has prohibited home rule communities from making up the grocery tax that may be taken away from municipalities. He noted that Mr. Boyer has been working on the Wagner Street issues and Chief McCoy has been made aware of speeding. Mr. Boyer shared that he has addressed some issues and noted that Wagner and Peach Streets could use attention.

City Administrator Communications City Administrator Snider shared that he will provide the editorial from the governor to members of Council. He pointed out that, regarding Item D on the Consent Agenda, the new rate of electricity should save the City about \$50,000 per year for the next four years.

Public Works Director Rittenhouse clarified that information about brush pick up will be posted soon. Alderperson Stevens and City Engineer Carr discussed the water pressure for Illinois American Water residents once they receive City water. Engineer Carr said their water pressure will not get better because it comes from the Illinois American Water system which needs improvements. Engineer Carr and Alderperson Blundy discussed that they are waiting on an issue with people volunteering to remove the pipes in their houses for testing and the IEPA is going to have to decide if water pressure is more important than a plant failure.

FY2025 Budget Review Group 4 & 5 Finance Director Baxter introduced Public Works Director Rittenhouse who shared the following budget information regarding Water/Sewer:

- Repair and Maintenance Contractual has reserved money to replace lead lines
- Electricity costs have risen affecting the budget

- Systems Commodities will replace lead service lines and air valves
- Water Tower #2 includes topcoat in the budget
- Catherine Street reconstruction is in the budget
- They will continue with SCADA

Administrator Snider clarified that ARPA money was spent to make up for public safety expenses a few years ago. It was designated for this, it is in the General Fund reserves and it must be used by 2026. Alderperson Stevens asked if there is any Covid money left and Finance Director Baxter noted that Cures money will be used for the evidence building.

Public Works Director Rittenhouse shared:

- In Water Subdivision Development fees, there was \$140,000 budgeted for additional water harvesting lines needed for water quality.

Regarding sewer:

- They combined a few funds which show it went up a bit
- It has trunk sewer televising for \$125,000
- Other televising is also included
- SCADA maintenance is included
- They may need to join a watershed group and the IEPA will direct this
- Non potable strainer needs to be repaired or replaced
- Manholes need to be repaired or replaced
- New bulbs are needed
- Wastewater SCADA will continue
- CIPP lining and identifying mains that need lining will be needed

Alderperson Stevens and Public Works Director Rittenhouse reviewed that the trunkline has not been televised in the past and this will be in the budget. Mr. Rittenhouse shared that it will be contracted to Hoerr Construction due to specialized equipment. The televising will be brought to Council and it needs to be done during low flow, regardless if we do the lagoon study. He also shared that we might not need to do this if we proceed with a new main.

- The Sewer Connection Fee account contains a transfer of debt service

City Engineer Carr explained that the Sewer Subdivision Fund has to be used for specific items and can be used to extend a sewer to pick up new customers. He also shared information regarding STP2 including:

- We had budgeted \$50,000 for land acquisition which can be used to purchase property north of WTP1 or trunkline negotiations
- The lagoon study would be about \$150,000 and is included in the budgeted

Finance Director Baxter shared that the sewer accounts include a bond reserve which was created because of a 2009 restriction and it comes due in 2030. She clarified that there is \$5.5 million in Sewer and \$1 million in Water.

Regarding Group 5:

- MERF is included
- Capital Replacement and Building Replacement Fund also included

Public Works Director Rittenhouse shared:

- It was increased by \$15,000 for maintenance on trucks
- \$8,000 went up in property insurance
- Lease rent went up due to increase of vehicles which now show a full twelve months of lease time.
- Purchase Equipment Vehicles has the new street sweeper and new snow plow

Alderperson Stevens asked about the review process. Finance Director Baxter explained that the lease expense has gone up but the funding has not. Public Works Director Rittenhouse shared that the City is not adding to the fleet but just changing the funding source and the fleet includes mowers and other vehicles. The Capital Replacement Fund is focusing on items more than \$15,000 and the majority are in the police department. Chief McCoy explained that these were items that we carried over from last year.

Regarding Building for the current year:

- The main project is the evidence building
- It includes grants and transfers from the police fund and police special projects
- They need to fix windows at City Hall
- The wastewater treatment plant needs attention
- Design engineering and site work for the Cemetery is budgeted and it will be brought back to council in preparation for a new building
- The current cemetery building needs work

Alderperson Stevens asked about insurance on the current evidence and public works building and if we are getting money back. Administrator Snider clarified that it is still being worked out.

Administrator Snider shared that the current agreement with the fire department expires April 30th and can roll over until the end of August. He has reached out to the current chief and if they don't respond prior to the budget approval, the budget will be passed with the same amount as last year which was about \$859,000. If Council wants to give more it will then require a budget amendment. Administrator Snider explained that our budgets are heavy on infrastructure improvements. Finance Director Baxter clarified that she is working on it and can share it with council. Alderperson Blundy asked if there is concern about spending down reserves and noted the large amounts in the fire budgets and pensions. Administrator Snider and Finance Director Baxter noted concerns with the Water Fund and the removal of the grocery tax by the State. Administrator Snider reminded that Council can make cuts if they choose. Finance Director Baxter said the General Fund is healthy causing no concern. It is reviewed out to five-year forecasts and the Capital Fund provides the biggest pressure on the fund.

Administrator Snider said they have been very mindful on projections and noted that sales tax is economically driven.

IEPA Project Plan and Water Rate Study Engineer Carr explained that this was brought to the Committee of the Whole for discussion and there are a few larger capital projects coming up in the water account for which funding is needed. This would be an agreement with CMT and Raftelis to create a plan for a State fund loan which includes a rate study. The agreement is for \$70,000.

Alderson Stevens motioned to approve; Alderson Martin seconded.

Alderson Stevens is pleased we are using the same people from who performed a study in 2018, allowing both studies to be compared. Administrator Snider feels CMT is well respected and pointed out that Engineer Carr had mentioned an additional, possible sewer study, but he doesn't feel is warranted with this because they use two different funding sources and there wasn't going to be much savings to do them at the same time. Engineer Carr shared that if we move forward with the trunkline, he would recommend doing the sewer rate study. He clarified that this is to get in line to do the loans, see if we can afford them and it will help see if we are charging the correct amount. Administrator Snider noted that Council can determine what projects to take out in order to lower rates. He also noted that this will give us information to see if we compare with other communities across Central Illinois, noting that Bloomington just raised their rates 50%. Alderson Blundy noted that removing Water Tower #3 might affect the rate and he would like a rate for only production and then add capital projects. Alderson McIntyre noted that even without any capital projects, we are currently not charging enough for only providing water. Alderson Stevens shared that the studies can be found online. Administrator Snider shared that this is a very economic service.

7 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Stevens

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

Countryside Banquet & Catering Commercial Grant Program Project Discussion Planning and Development Director Oliphant explained that this application has been previously discussed by Council. He noted that Council consensus was that the City would fund 30% of the total project with a \$115,000 cap and Ms. LaHood has since requested to divide her parking lot project in multiple phases because she would still have significant costs. Staff is asking for Council's direction concerning her request. Mr. Oliphant also explained that this project would not be completed as a 2023/2024 expense. He explained that Council could decide if the \$115,000 budgeted funds from 2023/2024 should carry over to the next budget cycle or should it only include the \$300,000 budgeted for 2024/2025.

Alderson Stevens feels this was one application, Council decided on 30% and her opinion is if the 30% is not suitable, Ms. LaHood can withdraw her application and Council can move on to something else. She feels if the \$115,000 works, the remainder is carried over to the next fiscal year. She feels Council needs rules and guidelines before we use it. Mayor Manier clarified that the direction was to provide 30% of the \$389,000 requested and Ms. LaHood is saying she can't afford to pay the remainder of the project. Alderson Stevens feels this is new information and Council can't keep changing the rules. Alderson Adams asked if Ms. LaHood shared her plans with Mr. Oliphant and Mr. Oliphant shared that Ms. LaHood is having the project requoted and trying to figure out the best way to do the parking lot in multiple phases. Alderson Martin suggested waiting until Ms. LaHood works out a plan and bring it back to Council. Alderson Adams agreed and doesn't mind carrying over some funds. Mr. Oliphant noted that Council has previously agreed to fund up to \$115,000 of the project. Alderson Butler doesn't mind splitting up this project but expressed concern about the proposed guidelines allowing projects to be split over multiple years which was not the original intent. He feels projects should be addressed in their totality and funded that way. Alderson McIntyre agreed and doesn't see the need to rollover funds and increase the amount. Mayor Manier shared that there is always an opportunity that projects that generate sales tax can be reviewed for incentives. Mr. Oliphant clarified that staff will wait for a new proposal and revisit it. Alderson Blundy feels Council should budget the \$350,000 and is only concerned with breaking up projects. No vote took place. This item will be brought back for further discussion.

Washington Park Culvert Extension City Engineer Carr explained that when Washington Park berm was discussed as a drainage priority project, the Park District was already discussing a culvert extension. He noted the location is in front of Lincoln Grade School and they are asking to bury the culvert when we are working on the park berm. Engineer Carr shared that staff can do this in-house but the purchase of 500 feet of pipe requires approval to not to exceed \$25,000.

Alderson Adams motioned to approve; Alderson McIntyre seconded.

Alderson Blundy asked if this area is washing out and Engineer Carr confirmed that it is and this will help fix it.

7 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Stevens

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

Second Reading City Administrator Snider provided the following ordinance for review:
Ordinance: 3524 (5-24) *Second Reading Ordinance: Code Enforcement Administrative Adjudication Process*
Synopsis: Adoption of this ordinance approves the City of Washington Official Zoning Map for 2024 as required by state statute.
Title: Adoption of 2024 Official Map of Zoning Districts
Planning and Development Director Oliphant explained this is required yearly by state statute and there are no new rezoning filings.

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

Second Reading City Administrator Snider provided the following ordinance for consideration:
Ordinance: 3525 (6-24) *Second Reading Ordinance: Adoption of 2024 Official Map of Zoning Districts*
Synopsis: Adoption of this ordinance would amend the Washington Municipal Code to prohibit excessive engine braking of commercial vehicles that emit excessive noise within the City, and to post signs prohibiting excessive engine braking noise at certain locations.
Title: Amending Chapter 70 of the Washington Municipal Code Regarding Excessive Engine Braking Noise

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

Alderson's Comments None provided at this time.

Executive Session At 7:39 p.m. Alderson Brownfield motioned to move into executive session; Alderson McIntyre seconded, for the purpose of 5 ILCS 120/2(c) (1) – The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body or legal counsel for the public body, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee of the public body or against legal counsel for the public body to determine its validity.

Adjournment At 9:03 p.m. Alderson Stevens moved to adjourn; Alderson Adams seconded. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Valeri L. Brod, City Clerk

Washington City Council Comments

March 18, 2024

We are John and Sharon Amdall and we live in Washington.

We are here to comment on the March 11 Washington Committee of the Whole discussion.

We would like to ask the City Council Members to think about their comments and to be accurate rather than make inflammatory or theatrical comments.

Some Council Members have said... And I quote... “the City of Washington gave Five Points \$600K.”

The focus is on the word “gave” – What is the definition of “gave”?

To give something, the city must write a check. The City of Washington never wrote a check nor will write a check to Five Points. So... how could a City Council Member say that the City of Washington gave Five Points anything?

Yes... the City of Washington does write checks to local businesses and does “give.” For example, TIF funding and the future Commercial Building and Property Improvement Grant that was discussed last week at the Committee of the Whole.

Our request tonight is for accuracy, truthfulness, and transparency. Not theatrics.

NO... Did I say NO?... the City of Washington did not give Five Points anything. Any Council Member who says the word “give” either does not understand the definition of the word give, is intentionally misrepresenting the facts, or is using the word for theatrical effect.

Back to the facts.

Twenty years ago, the Council Members were nervous about repaying the bonds with the sales tax, so there was an agreement for Five Points to make additional payments as a backup to the sales tax.

The actual sales tax revenue has far exceeded all previous estimates and these additional backup payments were no longer needed and recognized by this Council as unneeded payments from Five Points. Thank you.

The current City Council voted to amend the agreement with Five Points to suspend the future payments. Thank you. You made the right decision because the home rule sales tax for Five Points is raising far more revenue than was ever envisioned by the City Council at that time of the original agreement.

Clearly Five Points is creating economic growth in Washington and we would ask that ALL of the City Council members celebrate this success and use Five Points as an example of Washington’s efforts to drive positive economic development.

Thank you

John & Sharon Amdall