



City Council Meeting Minutes
Monday, February 3, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.
Five Points Banquet Room - 360 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:* Council Members Adams, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Stevens
Absent: Council Members Brownfield, Smith
Remote: Council Member Blundy

Also Present 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 Keith Braskich and Press

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

Approve Remote Attendance *Council Member McIntyre motioned to approve the remote attendance of Council Member Blundy; Council Member Adams seconded.*
5 Ayes: Adams, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Stevens
0 Nays:
Motion carried by roll call vote.

Audience Comments Washington resident Maureen Hotkevich asked for any future action regarding the proposed amphitheater be placed on hold for 90 days. She requested a question-and-answer townhall meeting to address citizens' concerns. Her comments are attached and made part of these minutes.
Washington resident Berniece Vaughn shared that she is opposed to the proposed amphitheater project. She expressed concern for noise, future home sales, muddy conditions, parking and financial risks. Her comments are attached and made part of these minutes.
Washington resident Casey Doremus shared that during the amphitheater's open house he talked with Council Member Martin who noted that the \$12 million amphitheater is paid for. He feels information is skewed. He noted a poster referencing sound and the lady standing near the poster didn't know what hertz was. He feels hertz measures volume. He noted profit breakdowns and asked how it pertained to alcohol sales. He feels 3,000 people and \$60,000 per concert is hard to obtain. He shared that he has worked for Limelight Event Plex and stated the information provided is wrong. He claimed each concert would cost \$50,000-\$100,000 for talent. He asked who would cover it. He feels venues are a money pit. He shared a case where a person who went bankrupt was being sought to break his legs due to lack of payment. He feels Washington is not a destination location for artists. He feels it will be a struggle.

Agenda Deletions/Additions None provided.

Consent Agenda Mayor Manier presented the Consent Agenda for approval of the following items:
A. Approve January 21, 2025 Regular City Council Meeting Minutes
Council Member McIntyre motioned to approve; Council Member Adams seconded.
5 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Butler, Martin, Stevens
0 Nays:
Motion carried by roll call vote.

Presentation/Recognition/Proclamation Mayor Manier read a proclamation proclaiming 2025 as "Washington Illinois' Bicentennial Year":
Council Member Stevens motioned to approve the consent agenda; Council Member Martin seconded.
Washington Illinois' Bicentennial Year Proclamation 5 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Butler, Martin, Stevens
0 Nays:
Motion carried by roll call vote.

Mayoral Communication Mayor Manier addressed an inaccurate Facebook post claiming that Nofsinger was realigned to make way for the amphitheater. That information is false and it began in February 2012, before the City purchased the property.
Appointment of Cliff Otto to Fire Board

Mayor Manier presented the appointment of Cliff Otto to the Fire Board.
Council Member Stevens motioned to approve; Council Member Martin seconded.
Council Member Stevens shared information regarding the appointment. She share that she posted that there was no communication to Alderpersons about the Mayor choice. She had received a text from Mayor stating that she had received information about the appointment on Friday. She checked her paper packet but Mayor noted that the information was sent with the

agenda. She posted a correction sharing how she receives the electronic packet link process. She noted that she did not see the attachment on Friday. She noted that the Clerk's office provided the link on Friday but she is concerned that the Mayor did not communicate his choice for the appointment. She Googled the candidate and feels he is qualified for the position. She supports his appointment. Mayor shared that he is available if anyone has any questions.

5 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Butler, Martin, Stevens

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

City Administrator Communication City Engineer Carr asked if there were any questions regarding the Council Report and none were provided.
Council Report

Grant/North St., Safe Routes to Schools Engineering Agreement Supplement 2 City Engineer Carr shared that this is the City's engineering contract with Terra Engineering. This project has been in stages. He noted that North Street and the Main Street areas were previously addressed and they found issues with the North Street culvert at that time. They then replaced the box culvert and resubmitted it and were awarded the project. They also submitted for the Grant Street project and were awarded the grant. Council had previously approved a supplement for the projects and now this is an additional supplement for \$1,546 for Kaskaskia to revalidate the portion of the project that has timed out.

Council Member Stevens motioned to approve; Council Member McIntyre seconded.

5 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Butler, Martin, Stevens

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

Resolutions: City Engineer Carr presented the following resolution for consideration: **Synopsis:** Adoption of this ordinance would approve a pay plan step advancement of part time employee, Randy Schweigert. **Title:** Resolution for Pay Plan Step Advancement of a Part Time Employee
R-1427 (3-25) Pay Plan Step Advancement of a Part Time Employee *Council Member Adams motioned to approve; Council Member McIntyre seconded.*

5 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Butler, Martin, Stevens

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

Second Reading Ord: City Engineer Carr presented the following ordinance for consideration: **Synopsis:** Adoption of this ordinance would impose term limits for the elected offices of Alderpersons and the Mayor.
Amending Code to Provide Term Limits for Alderpersons and Mayor **Title:** First Reading Ordinance Amending Code to Provide Term Limits for Alderpersons and Mayor
Council Member Martin requested further discussion.

Council Member Butler motioned to approve; Council Member Stevens seconded.

Council Member Martin motioned to table the item for further discussion; Council Member McIntyre seconded.

5 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Butler, Martin, Stevens

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

Council Member Martin clarified that this will come back the next Council meeting for further discussion.

Council Member Comments Council Member Martin shared that he wants to table the previous item because nobody ran for one of the offices and other offices were limited. He agrees with term limits for federal positions but is not sure about local officials. Council Member Stevens shared that two people ran for Ward 3. Council Member Martin clarified that no one turned in paperwork initially and the two are write-ins.

Council Member McIntyre recognized Public Works for their responsiveness.

Council Member Blundy shared that the remote audio feed is delayed and expressed concern for adjustments moving forward. Mayor Manier noted this is the first attempt at a remote attendance and it failed. They will make improvements.

Council Member Martin feels discourse is an important part of their job. He would like to open back up discussions regarding the allowance of chickens in City limits. He feels the original intent was to limit chicken farms.

Council Member Martin motioned to bring a chicken ordinance to the Committee of the Whole agenda; Council Member Stevens seconded.

4 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Martin, Stevens

1 Nays: Butler

Motion carried by roll call vote.

Executive Session At 7:07 p.m. *Council Member Adams motioned to move into executive session: for the setting of a price for the sale or lease of property owned by the public body. ILCS 120/2(c)(6); Council Member McIntyre seconded.*

5 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Butler, Martin, Stevens

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

Adjournment At 8:20 p.m. Council returned to open session and *Council Member Adams moved to adjourn; Council Member Martin seconded.*

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

February 3, 2025

Dear Washington City Council, Washington City Planner, and Mayor Manier,

Please consider placing on hold for 90 days any future action regarding the proposed Amphitheater honoring Mr. Jim Hengst's wife.

Your constituency might be more supportive of this endeavor if you provide a question and answer Town Hall format meeting which addresses citizens' concerns about the project. Then the information could be made available on your website to those who are unable to attend a Council meeting.

Some QUESTIONS. . .

Where can we find the data that supports the positive financial outcome of this project?

Is there a guarantee that the local and state noise ordinances will be met? Won't it be too late to fix this matter after the fact?

The amphitheater's location will affect many neighborhoods with high noise levels and increased traffic.

Will our police department have enough officers to keep the amphitheater safe from vandalism when it is not in use?

What studies do you have which provide the data for the projected FINAL cost to the City of Washington? Could those studies be made available to your constituents?

Please give us more factual information before moving ahead with a project that leaves the citizens of Washington with so many questions.

Please put any further action on the Amphitheater project on hold for 90 days.

Sincerely,

Signature:

Printed Name:

Address:

Washington, Illinois 61571

I live at 1200 Westminster Drive in Washington. I am writing to voice my strong opposition to the proposed amphitheater project in Washington. While I commend efforts to enhance our community, I urge you to carefully consider the long-term implications for our residents and to explore alternative avenues for community improvement that truly prioritize the interests of all citizens.

The revised Dee Amphitheater and Pavilion Feasibility Study (Draft 2.0) indicates that the current design proposal will produce noise levels surpassing local and state regulations, potentially disrupting the surrounding community's quality of life. Although I understand that the final design will comply with these regulations, I remain opposed to the concept of a loud venue. We all know that berms and trees will not stop the noise. The location chosen for this venue affects three large subdivisions of families, including mine. Just as parents are putting the little ones to bed, the noise from the venue will begin. Families will be forced to close the windows to the fresh air and turn on the air conditioning. Still, the noise will persist. Additionally, the influx of visitors to events at the amphitheater will likely result in increased traffic congestion in our area. I urge you to genuinely consider whether you would want to live near such an amphitheater and to thoughtfully assess the impact on the residents who will bear the brunt of this decision.

We are already seeing the effect that residents who wish to sell their property close to the venue will have difficulty doing so, resulting in financial loss. Right now, the City is saying that venue parking will be free but soon the visitors will be avoiding the mud and parking in our neighborhoods. Or the City will pave the area and charge to park, and visitors will still park in our neighborhoods.

I am also concerned about the long-term financial viability of the proposed amphitheater project. I have read in local news reports that Five Points Washington, a similar entertainment venue in our area, has struggled to achieve profitability despite its many years of operation. This raises significant questions about the feasibility of an outdoor amphitheater in Central Illinois, where the weather can be unpredictable and harsh. Given that a fully enclosed, climate-controlled facility like Five Points Washington struggles to turn a profit, it is difficult to envision how an outdoor venue—subject to the whims of the elements—would fare any better. Furthermore, I understand that the City of Washington has already consulted an expert whose findings suggest that the proposed amphitheater is unlikely to be profitable. This expert assessment only deepens my concerns, as the inherent seasonal limitations of an outdoor venue, combined with potential inclement weather and extreme temperatures, could

severely limit attendance and revenue possibilities. Before committing taxpayer dollars to a venture that may prove financially unsustainable, I urge you to consider this expert analysis and the financial risks involved in moving forward with this project.

Moreover, I am worried that this project will lead to higher property taxes, which many residents, including myself, may find unaffordable. This is a crucial factor that must be considered before advancing this proposal.

I am uncertain of your position on this project, but I am deeply troubled by the City Council's apparent intent to move forward with the proposed amphitheater, especially in light of the considerable opposition from many residents. It seems to the public that Mayor Manier and several council members decided to push through this initiative long before seeking or considering the concerns and feedback of their constituents. As a member of this community, I value transparency and representation in our local government. I urge you to oppose this project and consider different uses for the City's 223 property.

Washington residents will remember who represented our community's interests when it comes time to cast our ballots. Therefore, I strongly urge you to oppose this project and explore alternative uses for the City's 223 acres.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Joyce Berniece Vaughn

I respectfully request that this letter be reflected in the minutes of this evening's meeting. (February 3, 2025)