



## City Council Meeting Minutes

Monday, February 19, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.

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

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**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 Jamie Smith

**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, Deputy Police Chief Jeff Stevens, City Treasurer Abbey Strubhar, City Clerk Valeri Brod, City Attorney Keith Braskich and Press

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

**Audience Comments** Kristi LaHood Cape owner of Countryside Banquet and Catering in Washington shared that she attended the previous meeting where her application for the Economic Development grant was discussed. She asked why City Council was not ready and stated that members of Council knew that she was going to apply and did not tell her that she would not fit the mold. She noted that recent comments were made that were opposite of comments provided in December regarding the grant. She noted it was to be decided on a case-by-case basis. She also noted that several properties were favored who have not applied for the grant. Mrs. Cape shared that this was advertised on the City's website and on social media, which is why she applied. She stated that she is invested in Washington and has operated her business for more than 30 years. She loves this community and does many fundraisers. She estimates that 80% of her business brings in people from outside of Washington.

**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 February 5, 2024 Regular City Council Meeting  
B. Approve Bills and Payroll

Alderperson McIntyre motioned to accept the Consent Agenda as presented; Alderperson Brownfield seconded.

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

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

**Announcements/ Presentations/ Proclamations** Mayor Manier recognized the following achievements by WCHS students:

- WCHS Competitive Dance Team received Varsity Grand Champion out of 123 teams at the IDTA State Competition. Other awards were: Varsity Highpoint Award, State Champion in Jazz, State Runner-up in Lyrical, Natalie Blackwell placed 5th overall for soloist, and JV took 2nd in Lyrical and 3rd in Jazz
- Brooklyn Ulick was recognized as 2023/2024 All-State Competitive Cheer Athlete which is the first time in WCHS history for a cheer team all-state athlete recognition.
- The WCHS Chess Team placed 3rd in Conference and 63rd in State.
- The WCHS Speech Team had six members advance to finals at Sectionals, of those, two went to State and Annabell Hiel advanced to finals at State.
- WCHS Wrestling had eight individuals advance to State. State winners were: Noah Woods 6th place, Cael Miller 5th place, Josh Hoffer 4th place, Zane Hulet 3rd place, Petyon Cox 2nd place and Wyatt Medlin 1st place.
- WCHS Girls Basketball are Regional Champs. They will face Morton on Tuesday for the Sectional Semifinal.
- The WCHS Co-op Swim Team won first place at their Sectional Swim Meet and are headed to State.

Mayor Manier invited Alderperson Adams to provide further information regarding the dance team. Alderperson Adams shared that the team dealt with several injuries this season and did amazing. He stated that it is a great group and they should be proud of their competition. Mayor Manier noted that dance teams are now designated as athletes.

Alderperson Stevens asked Mayor Manier to share information regarding Lobby Day. Mayor Manier shared Lobby Day has taken place for the last 12 years. He shared that the IML board meets with the governor, other leadership and the Secretary of State. He also shared that everyone who attends Lobby Day meets with their reps and it was at the Lincoln Museum and well attended.

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*City Administrator Communications* Administrator Snider invited Public Works Director Rittenhouse to provide an update about the public works building fire and the water main repair. Mr. Rittenhouse shared that there was a fire at the building on Jefferson on Friday and the streetsweeper and a one-ton truck were totaled. He shared that the insurance agent has been helpful also. Mr. Rittenhouse also shared that the state fire marshal is investigating, and his report will be shared with Council. They are now looking into street sweeper options, and they will look at two cemetery mowers and an asphalt roller that were also in the building. He shared that the adjuster thinks the building can be repaired. He continued by sharing that the water main repair near Marlene Miller's building went well and they then found a leak on RT24 which was an unfortunate burden. Police Chief McCoy shared an update about the evidence that was stored in the same building. He noted the evidence didn't sustain fire damage but there was water and smoke damage. They have secured a new location with security that can house the evidence temporarily. The new location has offered the use of their equipment to help move the evidence which will be placed in new boxes for storage. He shared that the Fire Department did a great job, and the firewall saved the evidence. Chief McCoy clarified that they could not locate a secure location in town. Mr. Rittenhouse shared that they are hoping for a new street sweeper to arrive in August or September, but they will see if they can expedite it. Alderperson Blundy asked about Eagle Avenue and Mr. Carr shared that it was anticipated in the budget and he has started a negotiations

*Washington Commercial Building and Property Improvement Grant Program Guidelines Discussion* Planning and Zoning Director Oliphant shared that Kristi had provided an application according to the given direction of Council at that time. He shared that what is being presented now similar to a façade grant but also includes improvements to the property. These are for non-maintenance items that provide improvement, and they are looking at setting a cap of \$25,000 with a 50/50 match and a minimum threshold of \$5,000. He also shared that we can carry over funds to the next budget cycle. The \$25,000 cap would allow for at least 10 total projects, and they would like projects to be completed within six months. He continued by sharing that it would be a reimbursement program, no expenses taking place prior to the application will qualify and it is intended for exterior improvements. Mr. Oliphant noted that it could also be utilized for the exterior of a new building that goes above and beyond the basic requirements of current guidelines and can include parking lot improvements. He shared that Council could consider increasing the amount. Alderperson McIntyre prefers a larger dollar amount and feels this might help properties in Sunnyland. He feels \$50,000 would be a good start. Alderperson Brownfield feels Mr. Oliphant was given little information and ran with it and did a good job. He noted that it was advertised before the rules were made making it frustrating for Mrs. Cape who he encouraged to apply. He noted that it has been around for two years and no one has applied for it yet and he also feels it should be more. He shared that staff did what Council directed them to do and he feels bad and would like to work with Mrs. Cape in some way. Alderperson Blundy likes the proposal for the façade grant. He feels there should be another side for a large redevelopment opportunity which would be a one-time only request. Alderperson Blundy feels in the case of Mrs. Cape, it could be said that Council just gave her competition \$300,000 for the brewpub and money for Five Points. Alderperson Blundy feels the guidelines should be left open to fill gaps on RT24 and Georgetown Apartments. Alderperson Martin agreed with increasing the limit to \$50,000. Alderperson Butler noted that weather or supply chain issues could be a factor with completion dates. He noted the increase in the levy and some members voted to not have a levy at all. He noted that this is almost 2% of what we will spend from our general fund this year and Joanie shared that we are on a path to get to the minimum cash reserves in the next five years. He feels it was hasty putting this out there and apologized to Mrs. Cape for the miscommunication. Administrator Snider noted that he agreed that it was never intended to go to only one project. Alderperson Brownfield shared that there was no guarantee of the total \$250,000 and he appreciates Mr. Oliphant's work on this. Alderperson Stevens shared that she also mentioned the grant and noted that she did not mention that she could have \$250,000 but there was \$250,000 in the budget. She would like to include that the owner must live in the area and would like to use the comprehensive plan as a guide. She also agrees with increasing the amount to \$50,000. Mayor Manier noted that the general consensus is to increase the limit to \$50,000 and consider other percentages later. Mr. Oliphant will bring back more information. Mayor Manier thanked Mr. Oliphant and apologized for putting this out with no guidelines, noting that it was directed by Council. Alderperson Blundy shared that he is confused why there is concern for not having money. He noted funds and other revenue and thinks we should talk about the budget concerns because he doesn't feel it is that tight. Mayor Manier noted that in five years, we will be at 9% instead of 25% because we are spending money down. Finance Director Baxter shared that we are doing an aggressive capital plan which will spend the fund balance and we will need to be mindful of that. Administrator Snider clarified that the capital improvement plan is found under administration on the website. Alderperson Brownfield clarified that we did not give Five Points \$650,000 but forgave them and we have sales tax that pays for it. Administrator Snider noted that we are drawing down our reserves, but we are investing in our community with projects like Nofsinger and Freedom Parkway and we anticipate the community will grow and return the investment.

Group 1 & 2 Budget Review Finance Director Joanie Baxter shared the following information regarding the budget:

- We will use the digital budget book again.
- Last year we phased out the Tyler system.
- She shared spreadsheets in Council's packets.
- There is also a personnel module that projects costs including benefits.
- She hopes the general fund and personnel module will be done soon.

Group 1 Details:

- These are property tax supported funds.
- We are in year two of a three-year contract.
- She anticipates an audit this year.
- It is keeping a sufficient fund balance.
- We did not increase our property tax levy this year.
- Liability insurance fund saw a 12% increase this year and anticipated a 15% increase.
- The deductible also increased.
- It includes IMRF for non-police employees and our rate increased slightly.
- She projected increases with Public Works labor contract.
- Social Security and Medicare stays the same.
- The WACC debt service fund debt service will retire in May of 2029.

Mr. Oliphant shared:

- The Tourism and Economic Development Fund includes the Chamber agreement which increased.
- The PACVB agreement should be considered in March.
- The TOC and Economic Development expenses are included.
- The Economic Development expenses have decreased.
- The CORE and Main contact is included.
- They hope to decrease residential inspection amounts with the help of Joe.
- The unforeseen expense for properties is included.
- There is a decrease in miscellaneous planning assistance with some of the money going to private redevelopment expenses.
- There is a slight increase in software expenses.
- Nuisance violations are expenses that won't be reimbursed until much later.
- \$367,000 will go to two brewpub agreements.
- Funds include the 107 High parking lot with improvement expenses.
- There is no change for landscaping and watering.

Mr. Oliphant confirmed that the net increase is only \$5,000.

Police Chief McCoy shared the following details:

- They made effort to reduce expenditures to shift funds to evidence building.
- They are skipping a few smaller projects which total about \$200,000 less than last year.
- Data entry and specialized systems are included.
- The communication fund has decreased \$30,000 from last year because the fees will be put off a year.
- The police had a reduction in dispatch fees.
- Tc3 divided funds between all available people who provide communications.
- They are hoping some unit repairs don't need to be made.
- Dare increased outreach expenses.
- There is \$100,000 in contingency for unforeseen expenses.
- There is a \$400,000 transfer from the building fund.

Alderson Blundy asked if the expenses will return next year. Chief McCoy explained that they hope to get them back, but they wanted to focus expenditures on the evidence building.

Alderson Stevens asked about license plate readers. Deputy Chief Stevens shared that one is up and running and others are being installed. They hope to purchase them after the trial period.

Alderson Stevens asked about budgeting for traffic calming strips. Deputy Chief Stevens explained that it would need to be considered with Public Works. Police Chief McCoy expressed his lack of support for calming strips.

It was noted that the Fire and Rescue fund was \$25,000 but the fire board may be requesting more sleeping quarters, and they don't know about the pending contract.

Special Projects:

- Money was transferred from the vehicle fund to the building fund.
- EMA has a small budget.

Administrator Snider explained that the Fire and Rescue contract expires April 30<sup>th</sup> but there is a built-in extension. Police Chief McCoy noted changes in the board and command structure of the Fire Department.

Chief McCoy noted the safety budget is 6.6% less than last year.

**Resolution** City Administrator Snider provided the following resolution for consideration:  
*Approve* **Synopsis:** Adoption of this resolution would approve the use of Motor Fuel Tax funds in the sum of \$1,000,000 to be used for general road maintenance operations, as required by IDOT.  
*R-1403 (3-24) IDOT* **Title:** Approving 1403 (3-24) IDOT Resolution for Maintenance  
*Resolution for*  
*Maintenance-MFT*

Alderson Brownfield motioned to approve the resolution; Alderson Martin seconded. Alderson Stevens asked about which streets were chosen. City Engineer Carr clarified that streets have been mapped previously and he noted the next area should be north of the bypass. He noted that they moved Trails Edge streets earlier in the cycle to fit it into this year's budget.

Mr. Carr also noted that maps are available on the website. He shared how streets are chosen and types of paving processes were explained.

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

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

**First Reading** Alderperson Blundy motioned to waive the second reading; Alderperson McIntyre seconded.

**Ordinance:** 4 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, McIntyre, Stevens

*Amending Chapter 70* 3 Nays: Brownfield, Butler, Martin

*of the Municipal Code* Motion failed to reach a 2/3 majority by roll call vote.

*Regarding Excessive*

*Engine Braking Noise*

City Administrator Snider provided the following ordinance for consideration:

**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 within the City.

**Title:** Amending Chapter 70 of the Washington Municipal Code Regarding Excessive Engine Braking Noise

Alderperson Butler expressed concern for making a hasty decision. He would like staff to provide more information. Alderperson Adams noted that Chief offered to look into it. Chief McCoy shared that other cities around us have not written any tickets for jake breaking. It was clarified that the only financial impact involves purchasing the signs.

**Second Reading** City Administrator Snider provided the following ordinance for consideration:

**Ordinance:** **Synopsis:** Adoption of this ordinance would approve the purchase of real estate commonly known as 105 S. High Street and a portion of the real estate commonly known as 107 S. High Street in the total amount of \$95,000 to be used for future public parking opportunities.

*3522 (3-24) Square*

*Parking Lot*

*Acquisitions*

**Title:** Approving 3522 (3-24) Second Reading Ordinance: Square Parking Lot Acquisitions

Mr. Oliphant explained that language was added to make it clear that the easement with Cana is non-exclusive as well as naming the City as covered under Cana. Alderperson Stevens read a statement regarding why she is voting no. Her statement is attached and made part of these minutes. Alderperson Blundy asked about insurance on cars and Mr. Oliphant noted the additional protection. Alderperson Blundy expressed his disapproval for signs in the parking lot feeling they might be confusing. Alderperson Stevens asked about the color of lettering used on signs and Deputy Chief Stevens explained that a green sign is permissive and a red sign is prohibitive.

Alderperson Adams motioned to approve the ordinance; Alderperson Butler seconded.

6 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre

1 Nay: Stevens

Motion carried by roll call vote.

**Alderperson's** Alderperson Martin requested training regarding how to direct complaints that he receives.

**Comment** Administrator Snider noted that requests can be sent to the front desk or Administrator Snider can help refer specific, non-police related claims.

Alderperson Blundy asked how to get things on the agenda. Mayor Manier noted that if someone needs help, they can call City Hall and talk to the department head. Items can then go to Council. Administrator Snider gave an example of the Park District water request, noting Mr. Tibbs brought it to Administrator Snider who shared it at the strategic planning meeting. Administrator Snider then told Mr. Tibbs to reach out to Council if he can't provide an answer that satisfies the Park District. Alderperson Blundy asked about remote meeting attendance. Mayor Manier noted the press conference just reviewed this at IML and that it is State policy to allow remote attendance for certain circumstances. Alderperson Adams prefers letting people know when the Council meetings are and encouraging them to come noting the golf cart idea when no one came to talk about it. Alderperson Blundy said it takes a brave person to come forward.

**Executive Session** At 8:05 p.m. Alderperson McIntyre moved to move into executive session; Alderperson Stevens seconded for the discussion of minutes of meetings lawfully closed under this Act, whether for purposes of approval by the body of the minutes or semi-annual review of the minutes as mandated by Section 2.06. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(21); Litigation, when an action against, affecting or on behalf of the particular public body has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal, or when the public body finds that an action is probable or imminent, in which case the basis for the finding shall be recorded and entered into the minutes of the closed meeting 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11)

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

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

**Regular Session** Alderperson Adams moved and Alderperson Martin seconded to approve executive session meeting minutes for the following meetings all of which were recommended to remain confidential at this time: 7/3/2023 (City Council); 7/10/2023 (Committee of the Whole); 8/14/2023 (Committee of the Whole); 8/21/2023 (City Council); 10/16/2023 (City Council); 11/6/2023 (City Council); 11/13/2023 (Committee of the Whole); 11/20/2023 (City Council); 12/4/2023 (City Council); and 12/11/2023 (Committee of the Whole)

*Approve Executive*

*Session Meeting*

*Minutes*

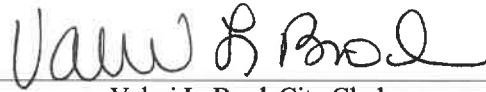
7 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Stevens

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

**Resolution:** Alderperson Adams motioned; Alderperson Butler seconded to adopt a resolution authorizing R-1404 (4-24) the destruction of verbatim recordings of all closed meetings occurring more than 18-months from today's date.  
Authorizing the destruction of verbatim recordings of all Closed meetings occurring more than 18-months from today's date.  
7 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Stevens  
0 Nays:  
Motion carried by roll call vote.

**Adjournment** At 8:24 p.m. Alderperson McIntyre moved to adjourn; Alderperson Martin seconded.  
Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.



Valeri L. Brod, City Clerk

Monday, February 19, 2024 City Council Agenda item:

**XII. SECOND READING ORDINANCES**

A. 3522 (3-24) Second Reading Ordinance: Square Parking Lot Acquisitions Ward 1

Aldersperson Liliya Stevens comments for the minutes:

At previous public city meetings I have shared my concerns regarding this agenda item. For the record, my no vote is for the following reasons: There are two (2) separate properties on this same ordinance, one in the TIF district, the other is not. I would support purchasing property to benefit the TIF district using TIF funds but I do not support using General Fund money, specifically from Streets, for the undeveloped portion of 107 S. High Street that is not in the TIF district. Also problematic is information during recent public comments regarding flooding to the neighboring property due to drainage issues on 107 S. High Street that, if purchased, would then be the City's responsibility to correct. Finally, if the City were purchasing the church parking lot, for public parking without any attachment to Cana Lutheran Church I would not object, but that's not the case. The sale agreement includes an easement to allow the church to place signage to memorialize the church's non-exclusive right for church members and guests to use the church parking lot on Sundays from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM. For the issues that I have stated, I cannot support purchasing these two properties.