



City Council Meeting Minutes
Monday, September 3, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.
A Banquet Room at Five Points Washington - 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:* Alderpersons Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Martin, Smith, Stevens
Absent: Alderpersons Butler, McIntyre

Also Present Planning and Development Director Jon Oliphant, City Engineer Dennis Carr, Public Works Director Brian Rittenhouse, Police Chief Mike McCoy, City Treasurer Carol Crocker, 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 and John Amdall spoke on behalf of the Washington Historical Society. They presented a flyer for everyone regarding the unveiling of a life-size bronze Heyl Pony and a young girl sculpture. Ms. Amdall provided an invitation to the presentation about the Heyl ponies and provided information about the upcoming bicentennial.

Members of Central Intermediate School Student Council thanked the City for the addition of the sidewalk near their school. They shared that they regularly use and they are thankful for the safety it provides. They are excited that the Board of Education and City are interested in student and public safety because they feel it is important, especially during high traffic times. They shared that the addition of the sidewalk has allowed previously left-out children to attend after school activities because now the parents feel safer.

Mayor Manier shared that he has been mayor for a while, and it is unusual for people to come thank the city. He appreciates their courage and thanked Planning and Development Director Oliphant and Engineer Carr for facilitating the sidewalk project. Alderperson Martin thanked them as well. Mayor Manier feels our future is bright with this group.

Tyler Shirley, President of Painters Local 157 and resident of the City spoke. He feels the painting of the water tower is crucial due to its appearance and functionality. He is opposed to using the lowest bidder, LC United who is from out of state. He shared that they are based out of Sterling Heights, Michigan and they have a bad safety record. He shared that they were sited with 40 safety violations which resulted in a worker falling inside a water tower. He shared that LC United received their second prevailing wage violation and were fined by the state. He feels the company takes advantage of its workers and may be barred from doing future public bids. He feels that as a longtime resident, he cannot stand by while they compromise our City's integrity.

He asked Council to make their decision to not use LC United and choose another company to do the work.

Agenda 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 August 19, 2024 Regular City Council Meeting
- B. Approve Washington Commercial Building and Property Improvement Grant Program Pay Request - Russell's Cycling & Fitness, 10 Valley Forge Plaza
- C. Approve Reimbursement to Washington Fire Department for Temporary Bunkhouse Expenses
- D. Approval for Additional Property and Liability Insurance Premium – Selective Insurance

Alderperson Brownfield motioned to accept; Alderperson Martin seconded.

Alderperson Stevens asked what funds Item C will come from. She asked about Item D and Engineer Carr shared that when we trade in our fleet vehicles, it takes about a month to get the old vehicle off our records, then they come with endorsements on the vehicles as well. Engineer Carr noted the dealers sent the invoices right as we were preparing our liability insurance.

6 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Martin, Smith, Stevens

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

Mayoral Communications: None provided at this time.

City Administrator Communications Mayor Manier introduced Public Works Director Rittenhouse who explained that in 2021 staff contracted Dixon Engineering to perform inspections on Water Tower #2 and it was

Bid Award - Water Tower #2 Painting recommended that the water tower have a new topcoat due to several spot failures and some other minor improvements. A new topcoat will protect the undercoating and give the tower another 10 to 15 years of protection. Six bids were received and LC United was the lowest bidder. They had budgeted \$325,000 for the painting and they are asking for the approval of \$285,000 to cover the bid plus unforeseen repairs that they may find. LC United is on a list of pre-bid qualifiers recommended by Dixon.

Alderson Brownfield motioned to accept; Alderson Adams seconded.

Alderson Stevens confirmed that LC United was talked about by the member of the public. She asked if Mr. Rittenhouse was concerned about them. Mr. Rittenhouse expressed that he is not and noted that Dixon Engineering is a leader in water tower painting and they recommend them. She asked why they are asking for more than the bid amount and Mr. Rittenhouse explained it is for any unforeseen repairs that they may find. This would allow them to address the repairs immediately instead of pausing the project and getting off schedule. Alderson Stevens is concerned with LC United and wants to investigate. Alderson Brownfield expressed appreciation for the information but noted that the City contracted Dixon Engineering and we need to trust the engineers and staff. He is in favor of moving forward. Alderson Blundy asked if this needed to be approved tonight or can it wait for the next meeting. He feels the City should do homework on LC United especially since other bids were close.

2 Ayes: Adams, Brownfield

4 Nays: Blundy, Martin, Martin, Smith

Motion failed by roll call vote.

Engineering Agreement - Construction Observation and Inspections Mayor Manier introduced Public Works Director Rittenhouse who shared that Dixon has worked with us before and this will provide someone on site to ensure that construction observations and inspections are completed. They quoted \$38,350.

Alderson Brownfield motioned to accept; Alderson Adams seconded.

Alderson Brownfield asked if this needed to be tabled until there is an approved contract. Mr. Rittenhouse feels confident that we will use them since they did Water Tower #1 and this price shouldn't change.

6 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Martin, Martin, Smith

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

Public Works Director Rittenhouse asked for council direction regarding the contractor. Alderson Stevens would like Mr. Rittenhouse to look into the claims against LC United. Engineer Carr asked if they should look into all companies, noting that every contractor has had an issue and safety issues with each will likely be found. He asked if Council would like them to look into only the union or also non-union contractors, noting the gentleman who spoke is the union president speaking out against a non-union company. Alderson Martin wants to just look into LC United and if nothing is revealed, he will vote on it. Mayor Manier expressed disappointment, stating that this is not what policy makers should be doing. Alderson Blundy asked about the ease of obtaining information and Engineer Carr said they would reach out to past projects. Alderson Blundy asked if we can reach out to Dixon. He doesn't want to ignore safety issues. Public Works Director Rittenhouse will try to get information from Dixon. Alderson Stevens asked about awarding the bid to Seven Brothers since staff is asking for \$285,000. Engineer Carr stated that the City will have to make a stance on why we did not go with the low bid and the legal team will need to look into this due to the potential of a lawsuit. Attorney Schryer shared that Council will need to state why they did not choose the lowest bid and clarify if their stance is a basis for disqualifying LC United. Public Works Director Rittenhouse noted that it takes time to investigate every person and Dixon already has these companies prequalified. He trusts Dixon and their recommendation. Public Works Director Rittenhouse again noted that the requested amount above the bid will be used if issues come up during the project. Alderson Adams noted that is done on other projects as well. Engineer Carr noted that staff has been criticized in the past for overages and this will avoid that situation. He also noted that this will avoid holds which cost money and Mr. Rittenhouse is trying to be fiscally responsible. Mr. Rittenhouse will look into how long the bid is good for. Alderson Brownfield feels almost every place has had OSHA violations and most have been fined.

Resolutions: Mayor Manier presented the following resolution for consideration.

R-1418 (18-24) Declaring Items as Surplus **Synopsis:** Adoption of this resolution would declare the International 7400 Truck Commonly Known as LIN #2, which is in the possession of the City of Washington to be "Surplus".

Title: Declaring Various Items as Surplus Property

Alderson Adams motioned to accept; Alderson Smith seconded.

6 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Martin, Martin, Smith

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

First Reading Ord: Mayor Manier presented the following ordinance for consideration.

Authorize Donation and/or Sale of City Property as Surplus **Synopsis:** Adoption of this ordinance will authorize the sale of one used International 7400 Truck, commonly known as LIN #2 designated as "surplus property".

Title: Authorizing Donation and/or Sale of Various Items and Property Owned and Used by the City of Washington Designated as Surplus Property

Second Reading Ord: Mayor Manier provided the following ordinance for consideration:

3546 (27-24) Amend **Synopsis:** Adoption of this ordinance would amend Chapter 137.02 of the City Code regarding carrying concealed weapons so that it is compliant with State of Illinois law.
Chapter 137.02, **Title:** Amending Chapter 137.02, Carrying Concealed Weapons
Carrying Concealed **Chief McCoy** shared that the old ordinance did not comply with state and federal laws. He shared that what is being presented was reviewed by the attorneys.
Weapons **Alderson Stevens** motioned to approve; **Alderson Smith** seconded.
6 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Martin, Smith, Stevens
0 Nays:
Motion carried by roll call vote.

Alderson Comments **Alderson Stevens** read a statement regarding the separation agreement with Administrator Snider. She shared that she voted against the resolution and feels confident that Administrator Snider could continue to work and wanted citizens to receive her explanation. Her statement is attached and made part of these minutes. **Alderson Adams** shared that he voted because it was the most fiscally responsible for the City considering what they were facing. **Alderson Martin** feels the decision was best for the City and the right thing to do. **Alderson Blundy** asked, regarding evaluations and property tax increase, can we forecast what it will do for the City's revenue. He noted that everyone received about a 7-8% increase. **Attorney Schryer** clarified that the assessment doesn't affect the rate. Each taxing body approves a levy which determines the rate which is divided by the total assessed value. He noted the rate will go down if the levy stays the same. He noted that if **Mr. Blundy's** question is if the percentage stays the same, then yes, the amount of the levy will go up. He feels **Finance Director Baxter** should be asked. **Alderson Adams** recalls talking about that when they voted because they knew the assessed values would go up. **Engineer Carr** confirmed that the levy was set to capture that growth.

Adjournment At 7:07 p.m. **Alderson Adams** moved to adjourn; **Alderson Smith** seconded.
Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.



Valeri L. Brod, City Clerk

Alderson's Comments on September 3, 2024 - My statement on the Separation Agreement Vote that I would like read for the record in the minutes:

At our last meeting on August 19, 2024, the Washington City Council voted on a separation agreement with **James Snider**, our City Administrator. I voted against that Resolution but I did not speak on the matter, consistent with advice from the City's Counsel. Since that meeting, I have been asked repeatedly what happened and why the Council voted for the separation agreement. I cannot explain the motivation of those who voted for it but I can explain why I voted against it.

The City Council had an employment agreement with **Jim Snider** which was still in effect and we could reasonably expect him to continue working pursuant to that agreement or voluntarily leave employment without any severance paid pursuant to the terms of that agreement. I had confidence that **Mr. Snider** could continue to perform as expected and saw no reason to pay him to quit working for the City. I have not become aware of any other information to change my views since voting and I wanted the citizens of Washington to receive this explanation as so many have requested.

Lilija Stevens
Ward 1 Alderson