



## Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

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Monday, January 13, 2025, at 6:30 P.M.

Five Points Washington, 360 N. Wilmor Road, Washington, IL 61571

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Mayor Manier called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., with a quorum present.

*Present:* Council Members Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith and Stevens

*Also Present:* Planning & Development Director Oliphant, City Engineer Carr, Finance Director Baxter, Public Works Director Rittenhouse, Police Chief McCoy, City Treasurer Carol Crocker, City Clerk Brod, Attorney Derek Schryer

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1. COUNCIL MEMBERS WISHING TO BE HEARD: Nothing provided.
2. CITIZENS WISHING TO BE HEARD: Washington resident Sharon Amdall provided an update regarding the bicentennial. She recapped information provided at the December 9, 2024, meeting. She noted that the committee was formed in 2017 to create and promote events. She shared that a city-wide celebration is scheduled for August 14-23, 2025. She offered to speak at events for other organizations and shared that their website address is [washingtonbicentennial.org](http://washingtonbicentennial.org) and they have a Facebook page. Her full comments are attached to these minutes.
3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Council Member Smith motioned to accept the January 13, 2025, minutes; Council Member Brownfield seconded. Passed by voice vote.
4. NEW BUSINESS:
  - A. *Term Limits Discussion* – City Engineer Carr shared that City Attorneys have provided a draft ordinance regarding term limits for alderpersons and mayor. Council Member Blundy asked for clarification regarding language pertaining to the length of full elected terms. Attorney Schryer asked for Council’s direction regarding the language but noted it is currently stated at three full four-year terms and does not include two-year terms. He also noted that appointments are not in the language.
  - B. *TP&W Railroad Bridge Painting Discussion* – Planning and Development Director Oliphant explained that the bridge is not in best shape visually. The concrete infrastructure is structurally effective according to Genesee & Wyoming Railroad. Given this is the bicentennial year, staff thought this discussion would be nice. He shared that information from IDOT included painting costs that range from \$12-\$100 per square foot with the average cost over \$20. Staff estimates that the cost to power wash and paint the bridge is \$30 per square foot, though this could fluctuate. At a minimum, staff estimates the cost at \$30,000 plus the \$1,750 application fee and with painting, power washing, insurance, traffic control, and construction oversight, the total cost could total \$50,000. Sandblasting is not included or allowed. Planning and Development Director Oliphant shared that staff received a call from Township Highway Commissioner, Scott Weaver who shared that they applied for the painting of the bridge. City Engineer Carr shared printed photos of the bridge but noted that Council does not need to choose from them. He further explained that Mr. Weaver secured a permit with the railroad and IDOT and they only need insurance paperwork. The provided pictures came from Mr. Weaver’s collaboration with the Historical Society who has worked with people to obtain donations of paint. The railroad told Mr. Weaver that they don’t want anything to touch the concrete infrastructure. Staff is looking for direction from Council to see if there is a desire for the City to do it alone, partner with the township and Historical Society, or just step back and allow the others to do it without City help. Council Member Stevens noted that in 2017 the Bicentennial Committee addressed the bridge and the committee is encouraging other organizations to come up with plans to celebrate the bicentennial. She shared that at a 2022 township meeting, they offered to contribute to the painting of the bridge for the bicentennial. In June of 2024 the township approved the permit fees for the bridge project. Mayor Manier noted that he had previously discussed this with Mr. Weaver and conversations regarding the bridge painting go back to 2009, when someone offered to donate painting services. He noted that the railroad has since changed hands and now they have been talking with the Secretary of Transportation to move this forward but we need to remember that this is owned by the railroad. Council Member Stevens asked for the record to state that she wants the City to support the Bicentennial Committee. Council Member Brownfield favors the City working together with the township and feels it is a great idea to explore donations. Council Member Martin feels it needs to be painted, is not a fan of a mural, and noted that older photos show damage to the foundation. He wonders why they won’t let us fix it. The City and township have been told not to touch the concrete. Engineer Carr noted that rusted rebar is pretty much useless and even covering it would be temporary. Council Member Smith favors a partnership with the township and feels this is a great way to welcome people to Washington. Council Member Blundy favors a partnership with the township. The Historical Society shared that they may consider a mural done by Walldogs. The township and Historical Society are looking for someone to pick up the cost of insurance. It was noted that nothing was set in stone at this time. Council Member Butler favors a partnership with the township. He expressed concern that including the bicentennial logo might date the mural. He further expressed concern for the condition of the structure. Council Member Stevens noted previous committee discussions included painting removable panels and Engineer Carr shared that they are built specifically for the structure and it might be difficult to provide a mechanical fastener. General consensus is to move forward working with the township and bring more information back.

- C. *City Hall Window Replacement Discussion* – City Engineer Carr shared that the front of City Hall has the original windows. He noted that most of them show daylight through the edges of the frames and one window is not operational. Staff feels the windows are a priority over interior office painting. Of the three quote requests sent, only one quote was provided for \$17,000. Further calls provided another quote but the specifics were different. The local procurement policy states that projects over \$15,000 should go out for competitive bids; however, the State policy specifies projects over \$30,000. Staff is asking for approval to waive the \$15,000 limit so they can bring the lowest of the quotes for consideration instead of the going through the bid process. Council Member McIntyre supports the request but is concerned that our procurement process is too low due to increases in the market. He feels the policy limit should be increased. He also feels that windows are a maintenance issue. He suggests a \$25,000 limit. Council Member Brownfield clarified that the windows are wood and wondered if the replacements would be vinyl. He would prefer choosing a product with less maintenance and better energy cost. Council Member Stevens does not support staff's request. She shared that Buildings and Facilities has a schedule in the Capital Improvement Plan for windows and doors. Council Member Blundy agreed and feels Council should follow the policy and go out for sealed bid. He feels changing the policy can be discuss later and expressed that this is a capital expense and should be reviewed in the Capital Improvement Plan. City Engineer Carr shared that \$20,000 has been budgeted for painting at City Hall and staff would like to use that budget for the windows. Council Member Martin favors moving forward with staff's request and feels it will save money over time. Council Member Adams agreed. Council Member McIntyre would like to bring back discussion about the procurement policy, stating that this was well budgeted. Council Member Butler agreed with moving forward with the low quote noting it will save the cost of assembling bid packets and the price can go up once bids are in. He also feels the procurement policy should be increased to \$25,000 for future requests. Council Member Smith favors moving forward. City Engineer Carr clarified that one bid was from a windows and siding company and the other is a general contractor who subs out window work. City Engineer Carr plans on reaching back out to the other companies. He noted the windows are different manufacturing companies but same rating. Council Member Blundy expressed that others could lower their bid now and does feel this is fair.
5. OTHER BUSINESS: Council Member Blundy noted his previous discussion suggestion for a responsible bidder ordinance. He shared that he has found that there are 80 municipalities that have them. Illinois Municipal Code says you should choose the lowest responsible bidder but it doesn't define responsible bidder. He requested further discussion. Council Member Stevens agreed. Council Member Brownfield expressed concern for asking staff who are busy working on the budget. He feels more time may be needed. Council Member Blundy agreed. He also noted the open house regarding the amphitheater is scheduled for the January 22<sup>nd</sup> and the minutes say Council was discussing a townhall meeting. He suggested having Council in session and allow the community to ask questions. He would like a record and recording and doesn't feel the one-on-one forum provides the same outcome. Mayor Manier noted that a townhall meeting is not an official meeting with roll call and the City has done this previously. He feels people may have questions and don't want to get embarrassed asking in front of other people who think differently. He also feels if there are still questions after the 22<sup>nd</sup> we can talk about moving forward. Council Member Brownfield shared that he will be absent from the open house and asked if people are going to document questions. Mayor Manier shared that it will be similar to the IDOT open house for Nofsinger. He shared that this is an opportunity for all the experts to be in the same room to answer any questions. Council Member Stevens said the purpose of a townhall meeting is for everyone to hear answers to questions that were asked. She asked if staff has addressed Bob Montgomery's questions. City Engineer Carr recommended that questions be directed to the experts. Council Member Stevens noted the questions can be sent to an email address for the Hengst Foundation. Engineer Carr shared that the email address is on their website. He further noted that a townhall can be lengthy and can turn into attempts to back people into corners instead of trying to get true answers. One-on-one conversations tend to have less negativity and pitchforkness. Mayor Manier clarified that there will be something provided showing what type of questions were asked.
- Finance Director Baxter shared that everyone received a letter regarding electric aggregation. It was sent because there was a change in ownership and nothing else has changed.
- City Engineer Carr shared the Hengst Foundation email is [info@thehengstfoundation.org](mailto:info@thehengstfoundation.org), and he shared that they are waiting for the drilling contract to look at the site for the sewer/trunkline compromise.
- Public Works Director Rittenhouse shared that they just received a part for Well#12, they are waiting for warmer weather to flush the system, and they hope to have it operational by Friday.
- Council Member Adams expressed his appreciation for staff that put together the open forum. He feels it is positive and he feels items brought forward tend to be attacked and this is a great opportunity to chat. Council Member Martin agreed that this is great for people to ask their questions without being overwhelmed. He feels it is amazing that this foundation has brought the \$12 million opportunity to them and they are donating it. Our City welcomes it and is grateful for the opportunity.
6. ADJOURNMENT: At 7:23 p.m. Council Member McIntyre moved to adjourn; Council Member Adams seconded. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.



Valeri L. Brod, City Clerk

# Washington City Council Comments

Washington Bicentennial – January 13, 2025

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

We provided an update about the Bicentennial to the Council on December 9, 2024... thank you, City Clerk, for including our comments in the minutes. Unfortunately, the 300+ people who were online were not able to hear our comments.

We understand there are still some questions. So here is a brief recap to clear up any confusion.

The Washington Bicentennial Committee was formed in 2017 to create awareness about Washington's Bicentennial, coordinate events, and promote these events.

Our strategy is to involve as many organizations as possible to create their own events, activities, and products to celebrate the Bicentennial in their own way. We are encouraging all to participate and are very pleased with the events, activities, products, and celebrations already underway or planned.

A City-wide celebration is being planned for August 14 to 23, 2025, with other Bicentennial celebrations taking place throughout the year, starting now.

From 2018 through 2024, our focus has been on awareness and fundraising. We have now finished our fundraising and are moving on to coordinating/promoting/publicizing celebrations by others.

So if you are aware of an organization that would like to hear from the Washington Bicentennial Committee, please let us know. We are certainly available to make a presentation.

For more information, check our website [WashingtonBicentennial.org](http://WashingtonBicentennial.org) and our Facebook page.

Thank you,

John & Sharon Amdall

  
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