

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION
CITY COUNCIL OF CREST HILL
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS
January 24, 2022

The January 24, 2022 City Council work session was called to order by Mayor Raymond R. Soliman at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 1610 Plainfield Road Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois.

The following Council members were present: Mayor Raymond Soliman, City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall, City Treasurer Glen Conklin, Alderman Scott Dyke, Alderman John Vershay, Alderwoman Claudia Gazal, Alderman Darrell Jefferson, Alderperson Tina Oberlin, Alderman Mark Cipiti, Alderman Nate Albert.

Also present were: Administrator Jim Marino, Director of Public Works Mark Siefert, City Engineer Ron Wiedeman, Police Chief Ed Clark, Finance Director Lisa Banovetz, HR Director Renee Herbst

Absent were: Alderman Joe Kubal, Management Consultant Steve Gulden, Assistant Public Works Director Blaine Kline, Interim Planner Maura Rigoni, City Attorney Mike Stiff

Water Rate Presentation

Mayor Soliman presented the Water Rate Presentation per the paperwork dated January 24, 2022. Director Siefert gave a brief introduction for the water rate study. Dave McDonald of Burns & McDonald gave a presentation on the rate study. An average 2-month bill would cost approximately \$124.00. The rate study process includes financial planning, the cost of service and the rate design. Crest Hill's current residential water and sewer bill is low relative to regional peers. The Financial planning guiding principles include the evaluation of water and sewer as self-sufficient utilities. One principal is to mitigate rate shock. We would make sure we sustain a minimum of 90 days of operation and maintenance expense in reserve. Be cautious with the use of debt. To achieve debt service coverage of 1.50x or higher over time as a combined utility. Funding the total system capital plans and evaluate sufficiency of existing automatic 5% revenue increases. Mr. McDonald presented the proposed rate adjustments for the sewer revenue percent change which showed the existing automatic increase, the proposed incremental increase, and the proposed total effective increase. Next was the water revenue percent change which showed the existing automatic increase, the proposed incremental increase, and the proposed total effective increase. Mr. McDonald then went over the summary of proposed sewer financial plan. He then went over the summary of proposed water financial plan. There are two possible options for the City to consider. The first is the base and volume rate components increase at the proposed system wide increase percentage or a higher fixed fee in which the base charge increase is higher than the volume charge increase. Mr. McDonald explained how the two options would affect the bi-monthly water bills. Mayor Soliman asked with the fixed rate if the lower end users would pay more. They would. It would still be 9 or 10%. He then went over the water rates for year one and what the cost would be.

Alderperson Oberlin asked if we applied for and received government funding would this change these numbers. It would. These figures are projected without government funding. Alderman Albert asked if the proposed infrastructure repairs is in line with what we are currently proposing. Director Siefert went over the future proposed infrastructure repairs

and projects. We are looking towards the year 2030. Mayor Soliman asked if this includes the new well sites. It would. Mayor Soliman commented that if more communities join the Water Commission it will offset some of the cost to the City. Director Siefert explained that if a community joins after the Commission is formed the City would receive a portion of the original construction cost back. We would receive it as a credit to future payments. Mayor Soliman expressed that he felt going across the board would be the best option for the City. Alderperson Oberlin also felt that across the board would be fairer to all of the users.

Alderwoman Gazal asked if monthly billing versus our current bi-monthly billing would be a better option. Oberlin commented that many years ago we billed for water every three months. We then went to monthly billing and ended up doing billing every two months. Alderwoman Gazal feels that it would be easier for the residents if we bill monthly. Alderman Albert asked how the other municipalities bill for their services. Director Siefert said that we are looking into the monthly billing. He believes that Joliet and Plainfield bills monthly. Administrator Marino commented that most people are used to paying bills on a monthly basis versus bi-monthly. We would need to look into shut offs that would need to be done on a monthly basis and how this is going to work. Alderman Albert asked about shutting off on a bi-monthly basis. Staff did not feel that this would work. Mayor Soliman said that the shut offs were the main reason that we went from monthly to bi-monthly. We did not have the staff to cover it. The Mayor commented that the Utility Billing Department has done a great job with reducing the number of shut off's that we have. We used to have 200 to 500 shut offs at a time and we are down to under 50 at a time. Administrator Marino said that we would have to evaluate the possibility of additional staff if necessary. Alderman Jefferson questions the increase in the years 2022 and 2023. Is this cost of living or an actuary increase. Mr. McDonald explained that we are looking at the funding requirements to determine the rates. He then gave a brief presentation on the loans and rates. Alderman Cipiti asked Director Siefert what option he likes the best. Director Siefert commented that after discussion with the staff, going across the board is the best option. He explained that we are going to get into discussion about conservation or water and how the residents can participate by using rain barrels etc. Alderman Vershay asked what the amount of water loss is. Director Siefert stated it was 8% in 2021. This is included in the purchase water loss price. When we switch to Lake Michigan water we must be under 10% loss. Every year we have do water loss detection. Recently we found 4 leaks from hydrants. Part of the loss detection is through use of hydrants for fire prevention. Any usage that is from a sprinkler system is detected through a meter. This is not done with a hydrant. Alderman Albert asked how does the 8% compare to previous years. We are down from years ago when we were at 14% to 15% Director Siefert feels that doing water meter replacement is helping with the amount of water loss. We have replaced 1800 meters so far. Director Siefert commented that we will need to continue doing water main replacement. He also commented that they are logging how many breaks we have and where they are located. Treasurer Conklin questioned the debt coverage percentage. Mr. McDonald went over the figures. Alderperson Oberlin asked how many breaks have we had on Rte. 30. Twenty. Also, how are any loans or grants we receive going to affect the projected rates. Director Siefert explained that we will look at our financial statement on a yearly basis. If we see a potential grant we will try to work this in and present the options to the Council. Alderman Vershay questioned the possibility of lining the mains on Rte. 30. Discussion followed on various areas in the City that would benefit from the lining of the mains. Alderman Albert asked that we get information to the residents making them aware that we currently have some of the lowest rates in the area. Alderperson Oberlin felt that this would be beneficial considering what we have dealt with in the past. We need to get the facts to the residents.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote on what option the Council would like to see implemented for the upcoming water rates. All members present were in agreement with rates across the board.

Director Siefert and Mayor Soliman commended everyone who worked on tonight's presentation.

Bus Bench Replacement Contract Approval

Mayor Soliman presented the Bus Bench RFP Update per the memo dated January 24, 2022. Director Siefert announced that we received multiple completed proposals. Fuel Media Holdings presented a guaranteed revenue amount per bench, this would be \$300.00 per bench and would be a 3-year contract. Per the contract the City will have control of the advertisement on the benches. Staff would be working with Pace and Fuel Media Holdings on the routes. There are several benches that are looking bad and are located where there are no longer routes. Alderman Jefferson asked what the projected revenue would be per year. \$3,000.00 per year. Alderman Vershay asked if we are going to put benches up along Theodore at every stop. Director Siefert thought the only addition would be at the City Center if it is added to the route. This is for benches only, not the shelters that Pace has. The benches will be bolted down on a cement slab. Alderman Cipiti asked if the City will be seeking the advertisers. Fuel Media Holdings will handle this. If there are any businesses that are interested in advertising they will be directed the Fuel Media Holdings. This project will be a done in late spring or early summer. Alderman Albert asked if we could have something in the contract that if there is a City event can we have an advertisement placed on a bench. Alderman Cipiti asked how this would impact the current \$35.00 fee. This would replace it. We did not renew anyone's license this year pending the amendment to the fee and proposal.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote on the Bus Bench Replacement Contract Approval. All members present were in agreement.

Special Parking Prohibitions Ordinance

Mayor Soliman presented the Special parking Prohibitions Ordinance per the memo dated January 21, 2022. Chief Clark presented an ordinance with two new sections. During special events, the restriction would not be enforced. The first section is for no parking on City Center Boulevard and Crest Hill Drive. The second section is for no parking of semi-tractors and box trucks on Brian Drive. We have received numerous complaints from residents and businesses regarding the parking on Brian Drive. Alderman Albert was in agreement. Alderman Vershay questioned parking for delivery purposed only. Chief Clark explained that this is addressed in the ordinance.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote on the Special Parking Prohibitions Ordinance. All members present were in agreement.

Chief Clark informed the Council that the Police Department recently wrote 87 snowfall parking tickets. Alderman Dyke questioned what is being done with vehicles that have not moved. Chief Clark explained that we can put a tow tag on the vehicles. If there is an emergency we can circumvent the rules.

IT Director Position

Mayor Soliman presented the IT Director Position per the memo dated January 24, 2022. Administrator Marino explained he has addressed Council in regards for the need to have

an IT Director. Administrator Marino felt that it would be in the best interest of the City to have someone on site. We will be utilizing equipment that we currently have but will also be adding additional equipment. All of the equipment will need to be installed along with the phone system. This will need to be maintained on a daily basis. We have paid Virtek over \$683,000.00 since 2017. He went over what the hourly rate is and what it would be if we increased the hours they are on site. We don't want to run into a situation where the equipment is installed but is not functioning. The estimated salary for an experienced IT Director is \$120,000 plus the cost of benefits. Alderperson Oberlin asked if this position would be hourly or salary. It would be salary. Alderman Cipiti asked if this is comparable to other communities. It is. Treasurer Conklin asked where they will be located in the building. He explained that currently the IT Tech works out of the finance office, and it can become a distraction. He would be willing to give up his office space, so they are not interfering with staff. Administrator Marino explained that we would need to create this position. It would not need to go through the Civil Service process.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote on the IT Director Position. All members present were in agreement.

Amend Employee Handbook – Increase Longevity/President's Day

Mayor Soliman presented the proposed amendment to the City of Crest Hill Employee Handbook per the memo dated January 24, 2022. HR Director Herbst stated with the passing of the current 150 Union contract there is a need to amend the handbook. The amendment would include the change to the longevity and the addition of Presidents day as a paid holiday. Alderwoman Gazal asked how the staff would be notified. It would be done with an in house memo.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote to the Amend Employee Handbook – Increase Longevity/President's Day. All members present were in agreement.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: There were no public comments.

MAYORS UPDATES Mayor Soliman announced that we received a letter for Crest Hill Pony Baseball for a donation for the 2022 year. We have donated to the organization in the past. Alderwoman Gazal asked how much money do we have in the fund. Discussion followed. She also asked if we are going to do any type of event in the future. Alderman Albert is the Chairman of the events committee. We still need to find a Co-Chair and discuss the future.

COMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES: There is no committee or liaison updates

CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES: Alderman Cipiti asked for an update on the Granicus software. Administrator Marino stated that we are now looking at another vendor to see if it would be better fit. The Granicus software is cumbersome and complicated. We are scheduled to have a demonstration from another vendor this week. Administrator Marino would like to work with staff to find the best fit for the City. Alderperson Oberlin said that in regard to Lidice, it is going to be the 80th anniversary. We will get this updated.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

Approved this 7 day of FEBRUARY, 2022
As presented ✓
As amended _____


CHRISTINE VERSHAY-HALL, CITY CLERK


RAYMOND R. SOLIMAN, MAYOR