



**City Council**

City Council Chambers ◊ 524 West Stephenson Street ◊ Freeport, IL 61032

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**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE REPORT  
REGULAR MEETING  
Monday, March 11, 2013**

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**CALL TO ORDER**

The regular meeting of the Freeport Illinois, City Council Committee of the Whole was called to order by Alderperson Tom Klemm on Monday, March 11, 2013, at 6:00 p.m. in council chambers.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Alderpersons: Tom Klemm, Shawn Boldt, Ronnie Bush, Jennie DeVine, and Dennis Endress (5)

Not present: Mayor George Gaulrapp and Alderpersons Michael Koester, Scott Helms and Andrew Crutchfield (4)

City Staff Present: Corporation Counsel Sarah Griffin, City Clerk Meg Zuravel, Accountant Duane Price, and Chief of Police Jerry Whitmore

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairperson Klemm.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS – AGENDA ITEMS**

- Steve Carroll, 811 S. Oak, Freeport Illinois, spoke in support of vacant property ordinance because where he lives there are presently eight properties that would be considered vacant. He stated there is currently on the books an ordinance in the International Fire Code which could be used but the City would need to adhere to it. He stated that he has spoken to Mayor Gaulrapp and to the collective council and there is a way out. He stated that time is killing us.
- Joy Sellers, 1021 S. Oak, Freeport Illinois spoke in support of demolition of abandoned houses and upgrades to the street lighting to help make neighborhoods safer. She stated the issue of abandoned homes is all over Freeport. Ms. Sellers asked for support of the council to keep the demolition and light program that they voted on. She would like Freeport to return to the way it looked.
- Evelyn Curry, 806 S. Float Street, spoke in support of demolition of abandoned houses and upgrades to the street lighting to help make neighborhoods safer. She stated that the vacant properties throughout the City are an eyesore.
- Daneice Davis, 1762 Hance Drive, Freeport, Illinois, spoke in support of demolition of abandoned houses and upgrades to the street lighting to help make neighborhoods safer. She stated that several members of the CAPS committee attended the City Council meeting last week and they are truly concerned about the 3rd Ward and the City as a whole. She asked council to please take a look at some of the abandoned and slum properties that exist among the properties owned by good tax paying homeowners. The CAPS committee requested support of the council through the demolition and lighting initiative and assist them in getting these homes demolished and adequate lighting as soon as possible. She asked to have this done for safer neighborhoods throughout Freeport.

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**MINUTES**

Aldersperson Endress moved for approval of minutes from meeting held on February 11, 2013, seconded by Aldersperson Boldt. Motion passed by voice vote without dissent.

**DISCUSSION OF BUILDINGS OWNED BY THE CITY OF FREEPORT, ILLINOIS AS REQUESTED BY ALDERPERSON CRUTCHFIELD/ALDERPERSON KOESTER**

Chairperson Klemm asked if there were any items for discussion. Corporation Counsel Griffin stated that on March 12, 2013, a meeting had been scheduled with City Engineer Gallagher, McClure Engineering, Gary Anderson and the Mayor to review the numbers and go through the building located at 230 W. Stephenson and they will provide an update after that meeting.

**DISCUSSION OF FIRE STATION/PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING**

Fire Chief Kevin Countryman stated that he placed on the council desks a memorandum dated March 11, 2013 regarding Non-Contract Fire Station Items. He stated that construction on the new station has progressed to a point that numerous additional projects need to begin. These projects have costs over and above the original contract with Winter Construction (\$1,178,000.00). During the original discussion on the new public safety building he had informed City administration that he anticipated an additional \$75,000.00 in project costs. Chief Countryman explained that he has provided a listing of the projects and an estimated cost. He will bring these items for the next City Council meeting for formal approval. He stated formal contracts will be developed for all projects. Chief Countryman provide a listing of the following items; phone communications for \$13,500 with Aero, radio communications for \$12,500 with Mobile Electronics, exterior lighting/electrical for \$13,000 with Loescher's, painting of the apparatus bay walls with Mid-West painting contractors, and exterior signage for \$20,000. Discussion was held regarding the breakdown to bring electricity to the building and a plan for the outside lighting. Chief Countryman also estimated there will be additional costs for the lease or purchase of a copy machine now that the administrative offices will be located in that building. Chief Countryman stated that tonight this is an informational item and he will provide action items on the next council agenda. He also noted that these items will be paid for through the Fire Capital Improvement fund and he had worked these numbers into his original forecast.

**DISCUSSION OF DETERMINING THE COST OF CONVERSION STREET LIGHTS – UPDATE ON PROJECT BY ALDERPERSON BUSH**

Aldersperson Bush provided an update on the street lighting and stated that on February 27, 2013 they (Aldersperson Bush, Mayor Gaulrapp, City Engineer Gallagher, Public Works Director Dole and Chief of Police Whitmore) had met with field representative Cindy Sanders from ComEd. A report of all the street lights in the City of Freeport was received by City Engineer Gallagher this morning. This breakdown shows the current number of street lights and rental costs to the City of Freeport, as well as two proposal options for upgrades from Mercury Vapor to High Pressure Sodium street lights. Currently, we rent 1276 Mercury Vapor (MV) lights and 269 High Pressure Sodium (HPS) street lights. As the MV lights burn out, ComEd replaces them with HPS, as these lights are more efficient and are the current standard. ComEd currently does not have an LED lighting program, so if we are interested in updating our current MV lights, the only option available is the HPS. HPS street lights are roughly twice as bright as our current MV, but produce a yellow-orange color light, rather than the blue-green of the MV.

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Aldersperson Bush stated that City Engineer Gallagher will work through the next step to go through the list and put together the cost estimates and he is planning on having that prepared for the next council meeting.

**DISCUSSION OF VACANT PROPERTY ORDINANCE**

The representatives from the Neighbors United provided a PowerPoint presentation of vacant properties. Sheila Faine, John Lewis, Charles Franklin and Jackie Whitford showed photos and spoke about dilapidated properties. They stated their concerns for the safety of our emergency personnel including police and firefighters who may need to enter these vacant buildings in the dark. They stated these properties breed crime and are places where gangs hang out, drug dealers are able to hide, squatters, and young teens can have a place to go. They spoke about the animals that have been seen leaving these vacant properties. They stated there needs to be a way to hold property owners responsible for run down and dilapidated property. The representatives asked for support of a vacant property ordinance in order to have a registration central point and to develop a means of enforcement for go after these vacant property owners to bring their property into compliance.

Discussion was held regarding why a subcommittee was not set up during the discussion of the vacant property ordinance the last time and it was asked if anyone recalled why it ended up not being set up. Discussion was held regarding the committee already set up for the Rental Property Regulation Task Force and whether the members could have an item added to review the Vacant Property Regulations. Corporation Counsel stated you could combine the committee but there would have to be a motion to combine them for the next council meeting. Discussion was held forming a subcommittee for the vacant property ordinance.

Aldersperson Bush made a motion to move an item to the next council agenda to have a joint committee for the Rental Property Regulation and Vacant Property Regulation. This motion was seconded by Aldersperson Endress. Motion passed by voice vote without dissent.

**DISCUSSION OF PRELIMINARY DRAFT OF FY 2013-2014 BUDGET**

Accountant Duane Price stated he placed in the Committee packet the draft version of the budget for Fiscal Year 2013-2014. He stated this is the starting point and noted that it is a draft with a version date of March 7, 2013. He stated he attached to it a summary of items that he thought would be of interest to the council highlighting items that had increased. On page 13 of the budget it showed that there was a preliminary budget deficit of \$728,697.00 where for the 2012-2013 budget it showed a deficit of \$207,197.00.

Discussion was held regarding the addition of two positions in the Finance Department. Accountant Price stated he will be retiring in July of 2014 so the intent is to hire his replacement sometime next winter so that person will work with him through the payroll, the budget process, and through the Fiscal Year end.

Accountant Price stated the administration recommended having a person hired next year to handle IT issues. Aldersperson Bush asked if someone could be hired out to do that and Accountant Price stated yes. Aldersperson Klemm stated that for the Fire and Police department the concern is the timing when

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it is contracted out. Alderperson Bush stated that we need to get some cost estimates for contracted out versus hiring someone and paying benefits.

Discussion was held looking at the budget line item by line item and whether the timing should be held over for the next mayor.

Accountant Price stated that this budget does have a \$728,697.00 deficit. He stated that healthcare costs contributed to much of deficit and he could have overstated some of those numbers but he won't know for sure until the this fiscal year near and end. It could be dependent on the reinsurance attachment point.

Discussion was held regarding the draft budget contains two full time building inspectors and currently we have working one person at a .70 time period. Accountant Price stated that it is budgeted for the current part time inspector to go full time.

Discussion was held on the sidewalk program and how it would be a shared program which would have reimbursement to the general fund. Alderperson Boldt stated that the sidewalk program was tabled and he will bring forth a program for the sidewalks over the next week.

Discussion was held on the capital equipment expense of \$400,000 and borrowing money for a five year period. Accountant Price stated it would be set up so that the debt service would come out of the capital equipment fund but the purchase would be next year for all of the items. Alderperson Boldt asked for an updated Capital Equipment Fund accounting of the projected expenditures and revenue.

Alderperson Klemm asked about the ordered tree truck in the amount of \$160,000 and Accountant Price stated that we have paid \$70,000 for the truck and it is having the arm put on it.

Accountant Price stated that July 31, 2013 is the date the Appropriation Ordinance must be filed.

Discussion was held as far as having a committee to go through the budget and whether the Committee of the Whole could be changed to go back to a committee structure.

Corporation Counsel Griffin stated that certainly an ordinance could be drafted for the next Committee of the Whole meeting.

Alderperson Bush made a motion to take a look at forming four committees of the council and would recommend getting the conversation started to see where we go from there and he recommends that to have an ordinance drafted for the next council meeting. Alderperson DeVine seconded the motion. Discussion was held regarding having further discussion on the issue and to be able to discuss it at the Committee of the Whole meeting. Alderperson Bush amended his motion to have this item prepared for discussion at the next Committee of the Whole meeting, seconded by Alderperson DeVine. Motion prevailed by voice vote without dissent.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS – AGENDA OR NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

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Kathy Knodle, 1612 W. Harrison Avenue, Freeport Illinois stated that it was a pleasure to see the new Fire/Public Safety building and it will be very nice for the community. She thanked the council for looking into the vacant properties.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

*s/ Meg Zuravel*  
Meg Zuravel, City Clerk