



City Council

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

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE REPORT
REGULAR MEETING
Monday, October 14, 2014**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Freeport, Illinois, Committee of the Whole was called to order by Mayor James Gitz with a quorum being present at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, October 14, 2014 in council chambers.

2. ROLL CALL

Present on roll call: Mayor James Gitz and council members Tom Klemm, Shawn Boldt, Ronnie Bush, Jennie DeVine, Dennis Endress, Sally Brashaw, Michael Koester and Andrew Crutchfield (8).

City Staff Present: Corporation Counsel Sarah Griffin, City Clerk Meg Zuravel, Community Development Director Jim Brown, Finance Director Cynthia Haggard, Public Works Director Tom Dole, City Engineer Shaun Gallagher, Battalion Chief Jim Blackburn, Deputy Chief of Police Jim Drehoble, and Water and Sewer Director Tom Glendenning.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Alderperson Klemm, chairperson of meeting.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The September 8, 2014 meeting minutes were presented. Alderperson Koester moved for approval of the minutes, seconded by Alderperson Endress. Motion prevailed by voice vote without dissent.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS – AGENDA ITEMS

There was no one signed on the sheet for public comments this evening.

6. REPORT FROM NORTHWEST ILLINOIS DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

Dave Young, Executive Director of Northwest Illinois Development Alliance provided an update of goal attainment and financials. He provided a written report to the council which contains the statement of activities for September 2014. Also contained in the packet was the September 9, 2014 Economic Development Goal Dashboard and the Opportunity Update Membership Report. Director Young stated NIDA has been operating with a deficit of \$25,000 to \$30,000. He provided an overview of recent activities including working on the Pearl Valley Farms egg production facility project. He stated he has been working with them for the last two years. Pearl Valley Farms (PVF) is a major producer of fresh eggs for the conventional and specialty egg markets. PVF has quadrupled in size in less than twenty-five years and now has 106 employees. Owners of PVF feel it is necessary to expand and consumers are increasingly looking for eggs from hens raised in cage-free environments. PVF currently has fifty-one acres in the City of Freeport-County of Stephenson Joint Enterprise Zone. The owners desire to add thirty-five more acres and construct new barns and increase their number of egg-

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laying hens from 1.0 million to 1.6 – 1.8 million. The new barns will be equipped to allow PVF to raise chickens in cage-free or enriched-colony caged environments. The proposed expansion will create 20-30 new jobs and stimulate a \$20 million dollar capital investment in machinery, technology and buildings.

Mr. Young has also been working with Torkelson Cheese Company of Lena and Kolb Lena of Kent. Mr. Young described the work he has done with the developer of the JoAnn Fabric strip mall to develop the out-lot and if this project moves forward it will be phase three of the development. Now that the Meadows TIF has been approved by council, they have the tools to work with. He is hoping to there will be a repurpose of buildings in the area of West and South Street through utilization of the TIF.

Mr. Young explained the work accomplished for the Workforce Development which was extended to include jobs in the county to keep youth employed locally when they finish college. They have been working to build bridges between students and employers to get the appropriate training opportunities for 133 slots. They are unable to get candidates and he is working with Freeport Area Church Cooperative and Northwestern Illinois Community Action Agency to solicit people to fill the slots. He has been working with the King Center to place job training and workforce development in the King Community Center.

Mr. Young explained his visit to Titan Tire this afternoon. He met with the corporation representative (Steve Straus) and the Mayor to understand the position of the corporation in the competitive market. They spoke about advantages the company can take in the future to move forward competitively. They also learned about new products Titan Tire is hoping to roll out in six to eight months. Mr. Young has been working with the Met-Life real estate group and the building has been packaged along with twelve other properties. He explained the revolving loan fund government agreement.

The council was provided the opportunity to ask questions of Mr. Young and he provided updates on manufacturing jobs, training and the status of the medical marijuana facilities application process. Mr. Young and council members also discussed the certificate of employability.

Council members requested Mr. Young to email the qualifications for the 133 training slots with Workforce Development.

Discussion was held on the GED program, tutor program available at the Central Resource Center and the need for a vocational center.

7. Update on parking/schools zones at Aquin High School and Blackhawk School

Tom Dole, Public Works Director stated the Chief of Police met about both of these items. Aquin Catholic High School requested a speed zone on Empire Street in the area where their parking lot enters and exits. They requested this span of area on Empire Street to be 20 miles per hour. He will request a letter from Aquin and then take the measurements to prepare this item for the next council meeting.

Director Dole stated there is an area along Blackhawk School on south Blackhawk Avenue between Dewey and Winnefred Street. A request has been received from bus drivers to place no parking signs

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on the east side of the street during school hours. Director Dole stated he needs to do a review of the neighborhood to determine driveway parking availability. He stated the persons parking in front of the school are staff members of the school and they are making bus parking difficult. Discussion was held as to whether there should be a crosswalk added. Director Dole stated he will work with Alderperson Koester to determine the best way to move forward with this but before doing this he wants to check the neighborhood off street parking. Alderperson Bush noted a review needs to be conducted of all schools.

8. Update on Spending Plan

Cynthia Haggard, Finance Director presented a draft spending plan dated October 14, 2014. Director Haggard stated the numbers used were the same numbers presented by Accountant Price this summer to develop the appropriation ordinance. She then has added comments as actual numbers have been realized as to whether the number needs to be increased or decreased. She stated at this point based on her calculations, we are looking at a deficit of \$97,440.60. Ms. Haggard pointed out areas where she noticed disparity including the gaming tax revenue and the circuit clerk fines. Alderperson Boldt requested that additional columns be added to also show the actual year to date and the appropriated amount. Director Haggard explained the importance of knowing that just because an amount is appropriated does not mean it is the amount that can be spent because then you are spending the contingency. She noted the City may not have funds available for the contingency and stated the contingency should be spent only in an emergency.

Corporation Counsel Griffin explained some years the council voted to move forward the spending plan for approval on the council floor and there was a year, she thinks it was 2009 or 2010, which the spending plan was not passed by council, although it was followed by department heads.

Director Haggard stated she has met with various department heads and still need to have time to work through the numbers with a couple of the department heads. She has been preparing documents for the audit and has been tied up with that.

Mayor Gitz asked if council wants to see the spending plan at the next council or what is the council pleasure. Alderperson Koester stated he would like the spending plan at the next council Committee of the Whole.

It was requested for the Committee of the Whole meeting to have the spending plan along with the actual year to date amounts for the line items. Alderperson Boldt stated his dissatisfaction in having the tax levy and the spending plan at varying times and they are six months away from each other. He would like to be able to have a tentative budget working off of the levy numbers.

Discussion was held about the effect on the Illinois budget and the November elections of the governor. There were questions and comments on the state income tax extension and the property tax burden of the schools. Council members provided their opinions of the maintaining City services at a quality level and keeping the tax levy stable.

Discussion was held on the cost of healthcare line item found on page 28, fund 1, department 63, account number 451.0 in the amount of \$2,557,850 and the continuing burden health care costs has on the bottom line of the City to balance the budget.

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9. Discussion on Video Gaming as requested by Alderperson Klemm

Alderperson Klemm stated he asked to place this item on the agenda as an open discussion as to whether we should limit gaming devices or how we can change to code to handle. Discussion was held that in order to limit gaming devices a separate liquor license would need to be created and then that number would need to be specified by the council. Discussion was held as to the effect it would have to cap the devices because if people want to play the machine they will drive out of town to go to a casino and this way at least the money stays in in town. Mayor Gitz stated he will look into information from the Illinois Municipal League on this topic and sample ordinances.

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS – AGENDA OR NON-AGENDA ITEMS

There were no public comments at this time.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion (Bush) duly made and seconded (Koester), the meeting was adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

S/ Meg Zuravel

Meg Zuravel, City Clerk