



City Council

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

MINUTES REGULAR MEETING Monday, March 16, 2015

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Freeport, Illinois, City Council was called to order in council chambers by Mayor James L. Gitz with a quorum being present at 6:00 p.m. on March 16, 2015.

ROLL CALL

Present on roll call: Mayor Gitz and council members Tom Klemm, Shawn Boldt, Ronnie Bush, Jennie DeVine, Dennis Endress, Sally Brashaw, and Andrew Crutchfield (7). Alderperson Michael Koester was absent. Corporation Counsel Sarah Griffin was present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Alderperson Brashaw.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Alderperson Endress moved for approval of the agenda, seconded by Alderperson DeVine. Motion prevailed by voice vote without dissent.

MINUTES

The minutes of the February 23, 2015 special meeting and the March 2, 2015 regular meeting were presented. Alderperson Brashaw moved for approval of the minutes, seconded by Alderperson Crutchfield. Motion prevailed by voice vote without dissent.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – AGENDA ITEMS

Signed on the sheet for public comments was:

- Colton Haven, 617 E. Shawnee, Freeport, Illinois, stated he is a Freeport native, Freeport High School graduate, and student at Highland Community College and he is pursuing a degree in community leadership and civic engagement. Mr. Haven stated he is looking forward to job shadowing with Mayor Gitz this week in order to see how local government works. He encouraged people including his generation to step up and play an active role in their community.

PRESENTATIONS

Mayor James L. Gitz presented the State of the City speech which included acknowledgement to council and members of the public. His goal this evening is to offer his assessment of where we are as a city, what our challenges are and to offer what are our immediate things that are before us on the road ahead. He thanked the City Council and the department staff for their hard work on behalf of the people of Freeport.

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
Monday, March 16, 2015

He spoke about the importance of moving forward with the Rental Property Registration program by approving a permanent fee structure.

Mayor Gitz reviewed accomplishments over the most recent years including addressing health care costs for city employees by raising premium costs and increasing the co-pay for non-bargaining employees. He stated at the same time we have streamlined our expenses by refinancing twelve million dollars in bonds accounting for a savings of \$1.4 million through the life of those bonds. Over the last year we have reduced the City's portion of property taxes to reflect lower tax base. He stated we have improved our City streets by adopting a pavement preservation program and state funding sources by expanding the Jane Addams Trail to downtown Freeport. The City expanded the public transportation program into the County with the assistance of Illinois Department of Transportation grants and partnering with the Senior Resource Center.

Mayor Gitz stated the City has taken major steps to upgrade our water and sewer system. He noted there has been a completion of a new water tower, a new well drilled and relining of miles of sanitary sewer. He stated the City will commence this coming year the improvements of conductivity to the water tower and well in order to make it more functional and to network two different water sources.

Mayor Gitz stated over the last year, the City has partnered with the County on Mill Race Crossing with the hope and to assist in capturing this region's first medical marijuana production plant. The administration also commenced discussions with the county on how to make Mill Race Crossing a more effective business and industrial park. Mayor Gitz stated we partnered with the developer to reconfigure and improve the JoAnn Fabrics Shopping Center and, in the process, created a new TIF district in the City's chief commercial zone.

Mayor Gitz stated we have explored various City Hall alternatives and scenarios with a special eye on the existing City Hall and Carnegie Library buildings. If this council approves, we will shortly stabilize the City Hall building and utilize the former Carnegie Library building for City's new home for City services.

Mayor Gitz stated we have taken down and demolished twenty-three dangerous and unsafe buildings as compared to 16 in 2013, and those demolitions continue as we speak. He stated we have saved an estimated \$75,000 by using ownership agreements, grants and other techniques with the court system and utilized the public works department to stretch every available dollar of the program.

He stated these are just some of the issues this council and administration have addressed together over the last few years. He stated for those of you who say there is nothing going on in the City of Freeport, you need to check the council agenda's on the City website or the newspaper or the radio or tune into the council meetings on the television or check social media. The reality is we have accomplished a lot but there is still much to do.

Mayor Gitz reviewed rumors and coffee shop banter and dispelled the myths floating around by pointing out statistics about our current state of affairs. He stated since 2005 the unemployment rate of Freeport has ranged from a low of 5% in October 2006 to a high in January 2010 of 15.1%. The current

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
Monday, March 16, 2015

unemployment rate for Freeport was reported at 7.5% in December 2014. Some recent statistics show that it has gone lower than 7.5% at the existing time. He stated the 7.5% is not cause for self-congratulations but it is an improvement over the 15.1%. It is an indication that we can move forward and move to a better state of the economy and that is not simply all gloom and doom. While we can lament the exodus of corporations, such as MetLife, there are other companies hiring employees such as Tri-Star, Snak King, and so are many of our banking and insurance entities. Obviously some are hiring if our employment rate is trending down and not up.

Mayor Gitz stated he recently had a conversation with a local employer who had an employee survey done throughout their entire system. It determined that the highest employee satisfaction and their greatest commitment to the job was based on the operation they had right here in Freeport, Illinois. It has in turn motivated them to think about new ways to upgrade their facilities and even to begin discussion about expanding their operations because it is also one of the most cost efficient parts of their system.

Mayor Gitz stated in recent years there has been an expansion of stores in downtown Freeport, there is an additional set of business in the Rawleigh buildings, there is a new Farm Credit building being constructed on the south side, there is a new local brewery called Generations Brewery, not to mention the JoAnn Fabric Shopping Center which has now moved on to Phases II and III in their expansion. This expansion is an example of what we can do and should do in other commercial shopping centers in our community. These are citizens and companies that are investing in Freeport and they clearly believe in our future.

Mayor Gitz explained that the economy is foundational and there is more to a City than what companies are located here it is also about being comprised of people, organizations, groups, neighborhoods, houses, schools, parks, utilities, streets, and many other features combined to what we call a City. He stated if we want to address our economy, if we want to expand, we also have to pay attention to our neighborhoods, our downtown, our police force, our public safety, our corridors, the state of our people, and the state of our buildings. If we want Freeport to return to prosperity we have to redefine our city and improve its livability.

Mayor Gitz stated we need to recognize that community building is a team sport that the City itself cannot be the only player. So we have made a down payment on community improvement by tearing down dangerous and unsafe buildings. We are starting to hold absentee owners accountable for their properties. We have endorsed and embraced community policing. We are improving the corridors leading into the City. We are working with community groups to clean up and beautify the downtown. We are utilizing State and Federal grants to clean up environmentally troubled properties and expand the trail system into this part of the community. He stated, truthfully we have not gone far enough. We need to do more than just demolish dangerous and unsafe buildings. We need to find new sources of capital to keep them from getting that way. In order to make our neighborhoods safe and inviting, regardless of location, it is going to take more than the Police Department. It is going to take all of us working together. It is going to take a shared responsibility that he senses is still one of the missing ingredients in our present efforts. Mayor Gitz stated, although he feels we have made substantial strides to improve this City over the last two years, he does not believe that the job is done and we have not enlisted the full measure of every

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
Monday, March 16, 2015

community organization, every church, every boy scout troop and every retiree – all the talent that is available to us. Candidly, neither do most other cities. We are not alone in this. His point is that we need to rethink our model as we go forward to make sure that it is clear and have a progressive city government, it cannot possibly be done alone. We have to have the help of citizens, groups, and others with ideas enlisted in the effort to make the City really move forward. Mayor Gitz reviewed the project list of the City in efforts to define our future and the challenges ahead of the City.

Note from clerk: The aforementioned is an excerpt of the speech. A copy of the video (37 minutes) of the State of the City has been provided for viewing on the City of Freeport website.

CONSENT AGENDA

The following items were presented on the Consent Agenda in the council packet and Mayor Gitz read the listed items into the record: [Consent Agenda PDF](#)

A. Approval to receive and place on file:

- 1) Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Public Notice Proposed Renewal of the Clean Air Act Permit Program (CAAPP) Permit – Titan Tire Corporation
- 2) Freeport/Stephenson County Convention and Visitors Bureau – 2014 Semi-Annual Report for July 2014 through December 2014
- 3) Police Department Report of Activities for January 2015
- 4) Building Permits for January 2015

B. Approval of Water and Sewer Bills Payable (Registers #308) --- \$119,262.88

C. Approval of Payroll for pay period ending March 7, 2015 --- \$416,923.11

D. Approval of Finance Bills Payable (Registers #301 through 307) --- \$258,630.50

Aldersperson Brashaw moved for approval of the consent agenda as presented, seconded by Aldersperson Boldt. The motion prevailed by a roll call vote of;

Yeas: Klemm, Boldt, Bush, DeVine, Endress, Brashaw, and Crutchfield (7)

Nays: none

The Consent Agenda items were approved.

COMMUNICATIONS TO COUNCIL

The financial report for ten month period ended February 28, 2015 was presented by Finance Director Cynthia Haggard. Director Haggard reported that as of February 28, 2015, revenues and expenditures should be at 83.33 percent of the year's total budget. The General Fund is in balance, but the end of the fiscal year balance will depend upon medical claims to the employee's healthcare expenses.

The highlights for revenue include:

- Property Taxes should come in at \$9K over budget by fiscal year end. Technically, property taxes are roughly \$400K over budget to date, but since they are fully collected by the end of November, this overage is meaningless because property taxes are not collected on a monthly basis.
- Cable Television Franchise Tax roughly \$50k over budget but down \$900.00 from prior year. The franchise tax depends on the number of people subscribing to service.

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
Monday, March 16, 2015

- Video Gaming Tax is roughly \$40K over budget and \$88K over prior year. However, most studies indicate that video gaming will stabilize in coming months because we do not have a growing population or an increasing number of visitors. The video gaming audience is fairly stable, and the City has capped the number of video licenses.
- Liquor Licenses are roughly \$50K over budget. Originally budgeted \$75K for the Fiscal Year and currently at \$113K.
- Natural Gas is under budget by roughly \$30K. January through April has historically been the highest therm months representing roughly 64% of the total revenue. A historical chart was provided.

The highlights for expenditures include:

- Street Department over budget by roughly \$125K. The offage is primarily attributed to snow removal supplies at \$62K over budget and contracted infrastructure repair and maintenance of \$44K over budget.
- Street Lights Division over budget by roughly \$22K. Motor Fuel Tax Reimbursement usually offsets during the month of March. The budget for the reimbursement is \$45K.
- Community Development is over budget by roughly \$45K. Reimbursement for grant administration has yet to be posted offsetting the personnel services expenditure. The reimbursement is budgeted at \$52K.

Also provided were reports showing the revenue actual to budget for the funds, expenditures actual to budget for ten months ending on February 28, 2015.

Aldersperson Klemm moved to place the financial report for the ten month period ended February 28, 2015 on file, seconded by Aldersperson Endress. Motion prevailed by voice vote without dissent.

RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION #R-2015-09:

RESOLUTION URGING THE GOVERNOR & ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO PROTECT LOCAL GOVERNMENT DISTRIBUTIVE FUND (LGDF) REVENUES

WHEREAS, cities and villages are front-line providers of government services to citizens, and these services include police and fire protection, street infrastructure, water & sewer utility services, neighborhood services, demolitions, tree trimming, snow removal, and any other services; and

WHEREAS, Illinois municipalities have shared in State income receipts through the Local Government Distributive Fund (LGDF) since the inception of the state income tax in 1969 in order to provide vital services to citizens; and

WHEREAS, Illinois cities like Freeport rely on the LGDF funding that the State collects to fund vital services like public safety, fire protection, street maintenance and neighborhood improvements; and

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
Monday, March 16, 2015**

WHEREAS, the General Assembly increased the State income tax in 2011 without providing any of the new revenues to municipalities and this loss of revenue has left the municipal share at levels collected during the 2008 Recession; and

WHEREAS, the Governor recently proposed a 50 percent reduction in the local share of the income tax during his FY 2016 Budget Address, thereby reducing local revenues by over \$600 million throughout the State;

WHEREAS, the City of Freeport has already cut its budget, reduced its headcount, and reduced its property tax levy two years in a row in recognition of local economic conditions; and

WHEREAS, the City of Freeport will lose an estimated \$1.23 million through the proposed cuts contained in the Governor's budget recommendations and this level of cuts will clearly impact both Police and Fire services since all other departments are already minimally staffed.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FREEPORT, ILLINOIS:

Section 1. The foregoing Recitals shall be and are hereby incorporated in this Section 1 as if said Recitals were fully set forth.

Section 2. That the Mayor and City Council does hereby formally urge the Governor and the General Assembly to maintain the present full funding of the Local Government Distributive Fund and other revenue sources that allow local governments to provide for the health, safety, and general welfare of our communities and our residents.

Section 3. That the Mayor and City staff are authorized and directed to carry out all actions necessary to implement the provisions of this Resolution and that the Mayor and City staff are authorized and directed to provide copies of this Resolution to State and Local officials as appropriate in order to further the intent hereunder.

(The remaining sections were standard for resolutions)

Alderpersion Klemm moved for approval resolution #2015-09, seconded by Alderpersion Endress. The motion prevailed by a roll call vote of;

Yeas: Klemm, Boldt, Bush, DeVine, Endress, Brashaw, and Crutchfield (7)

Nays: none

Resolution #R-2015-09 was adopted.

OTHER

REPORTS OF DEPARTMENT HEADS

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
Monday, March 16, 2015

Finance Department

Director Haggard had no further report.

Public Works

Director Dole reported that crews have been working on patching potholes by working their way through the plow routes. The intent to use the plow routes is to assure inspection of every street. Director Dole encouraged citizens to call the department to turn in locations of potholes (815-235-8210). Other crew members are street sweeping in order to pick up sand from the winter. They will not pick up leaves in the spring. Other members of the Public Works Department are working on demolitions. First they cleared the last of the debris from 608 E. Stephenson. Today they brought down 325 American.

Alderman Brashaw asked about the number of demolitions to this year. Director Dole stated so far, he estimated there have been 23 or so demolitions in the last year and over forty since 2013.

Alderman Brashaw asked about the storm damaged hangar at Albertus Airport and whether he could provide an update. Director Dole stated we have an estimate on the rebuild of the facility and we are working on a bid packet for demolition as a separate contract for removal of the old building. He stated they are looking at how to design or redesign the new facility. He stated there is an Airport Commission meeting scheduled tomorrow and that is an item for discussion. Alderman Brashaw asked Mayor Gitz about the March 17th date which he would like to have work done. Mayor Gitz stated considering there has been question on how to bid and the salvage value of the building there are some things that need to be addressed but getting that building down is of highest priority.

Fire

Fire Chief Scott Miller reported that recently, over a ten day window, there were four significant fires. Of those four fires, two buildings suffered total losses. During these fires, there were four firefighter injuries. As of today he is pleased to report, the last firefighter was cleared to report back to duty and we are grateful for that. He thanked council for their support of the Local Government Distributive Fund Revenue resolution since those funds are critical to public safety services.

Police

Chief of Police Todd Barkalow provided a reminder about the Civilian Police Academy beginning on March 19, 2015 and there is no cost to attend and he encouraged the council members to join the sessions. Chief Barkalow stated the canine unit is entering its third week of the academy and things are going smoothly. Handler Matt Anderson has canine, Otto, and they are working on training through the academy.

Water and Sewer

Water and Sewer Executive Director Tom Glendenning had no report

Library

Freeport Public Library Director Carole Dickerson provided an update on community programs to celebrate the One Book One Freeport, titled "Rocket Boys" by Homer H. Hickam, Jr. On Thursday a program will be given titled, "The Cold War as Told in the Battle Over the Novel Doctor Zhivago" and

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
Monday, March 16, 2015

this is all leading up to the showing of the movie “October Sky” shown at the Lindo Theatre on April 1, 2015. So far they have distributed 1,100 copies of the One Book, One Freeport 2015, due to the generosity of two grants and sponsors. She noted on April 14th there will be a presentation by the author. The library is hosting children’s activities sponsored by FHN coming up next Saturday.

City Engineer

City Engineer Gallagher stated there is work being done at Tutty’s Crossing to install lighting in the area and they are pouring the bases today. There will be a six to eight weeks before the light bulbs are installed for the lights to be online. That is the final piece of the Jane Addams Trail.

City Engineer Gallagher reported that crack sealing bid packets were publicized and this project is the first project of many to be bid this season in order to get us on a proper schedule for completion. The oldest street on this list is a 2002 street to be on the schedule for crack sealing. We are covering a lot of ground on the schedule including twenty city blocks. He estimated in the pie chart presented to council that 20% would be eligible for the crack sealing program and we will end up with 21% when we are all done. Then we will be on streets that are 2010 and newer which is more where we should be in order to follow the pavement maintenance program he outlined for council. The goal is to get us back on track for pavement maintenance.

Approval of bids and alternates for three municipal 4-wheel drive cab trucks

City Engineer Gallagher provided a written memorandum per the following:

“On March 11th City staff held a bid opening for three (3) municipal mid-sized 4WD extended cab trucks for use by the City Engineer, GIS Specialist and Building Inspector. The two (2) bids received were submitted by Fairway Ford and Bocker Auto Group, both of Freeport, IL. The apparent low bid was submitted by Fairway Ford for the amount of \$75,615, to include title and municipal plating for three (3) 2015 Ford F150 Super Cab 4x4 trucks. As shown in the attached decisions matrix, it was our intent to receive bid alternatives for new, used, and leased combinations for mid-sized trucks. Due to an estimated budget of \$75,000, it was not anticipated that a full-sized truck package would be within reach, nor was it expected that we would not receive bids for used vehicles. Based on this low bid and extensive review of other pricing alternatives throughout the bidding process, it is my recommendation to award Bid # 515-01 to Fairway Ford for \$75,615 for three (3) 2015 Ford F150 Super Cab 4x4 trucks. Alternate products will be discussed at the Council meeting, following further review by City staff. Due to the number of minor bid irregularities and the warranty not meeting the specifications, we note that we need a 2/3’s majority vote to override the bidding requirements and approve the bid of Fairway Ford:

Minor irregularities

- Late filing of the Certificate of Eligibility
- Minimum requirement of a 3.6L V6 engine to a 3.5L V6 engine
- Dealer history
- May 4th delivery deadline
- Failure to meet minimum specifications

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
Monday, March 16, 2015

- Minimum 5 year/100,000 mile warranty to a 5 year/60,000 mile warranty”

Alderson Klemm moved to approval of the recommendation to move forward with the joint collaboration for purchase in an amount of \$75,615.00 and to waive the irregularities in bidding per the memo, seconded by Alderson Endress. Motion prevailed by roll call vote of:

Yeas: Klemm, Boldt, Bush, DeVine, Endress, Brashaw, and Crutchfield (7)

Nays: none

MAYOR’S REPORT

Mayor Gitz had no further report at this time.

NEW BUSINESS/COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Council members were provided an opportunity to discuss matters of public concern or to make announcements for their wards.

- Alderson Brashaw provided an update on moving forward with a council retreat and they agreed that it should be held after the election and before the swearing in so that the new members can be included.
- Alderson Crutchfield recommended because of the recent spring weather it would be a good time for residents to do what they can to clean up, fix and paint their properties to help make the City look better.
- Alderson Klemm referred to the public comments by Colten Haven and agreed that we should encourage people to work together to get the community in action. He also recommended getting involved in City government.
- Alderson Boldt spoke about community projects in Milwaukee. He spoke about the message provided by Dean Wright at the Hunger Luncheon and was encouraged to hear about projects that FACC has in the works. He was encouraged to hear about volunteer groups working together. He thought the idea to have a central location for signups was a move in the right direction.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AGENDA OR NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Doug Wilkin, 902 S. 16th Avenue, Freeport Illinois stated that he listened to the Mayor Gitz’s radio show and did not think he heard right so he listened to the rebroadcast on Sunday and now hearing the speech tonight to hear the mayor say that the cost of rehabilitation for the City Hall building is estimated at \$6.0 million. He stated he does not know where that dollar figure came from. Mr. Wilkin stated the Gary Anderson estimates came in a \$2.9 million and he is not sure where this \$6.0 million figure came from.

Jack Hooker, 30 E. Jefferson, Freeport, Illinois, spoke as a small business owner and pilot. He spoke about his concerns with the delay in resolution to the the storm damaged hangar. He stated it needs to be torn down and get the issued resolved.

Andy Dvorak, 1211 W. Stephenson, Freeport, Illinois, stated he would like to add to Mr. Wilkin’s comments about the City Hall building. He stated the Carnegie building does not have enough space for

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
Monday, March 16, 2015

City business. He asked how the price went up to \$6.0 million when Gary Anderson provided an estimate of almost \$3.0 million, Shaun Gallagher provided an estimate of \$4.0 million, and now Mayor Gitz reported \$6.0 million.

Tom Teich complimented Mayor Gitz on his speech for the State of the City and asked for a further update on the canine unit.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

s/ Meg Zuravel

Meg Zuravel
City Clerk