

Minutes of the Regular City Council Proceedings of the City of Chicago Heights, Cook County, Illinois held Wednesday, January 20, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. at 1601 Chicago Road, Chicago Heights, IL.

***To be conducted remotely by telephone conference pursuant to Governor Pritzker’s Covid-19 Executive Order #8 dated March 9, 2020 and extension thereof set forth in Executive order 2020-39. Meeting to be broadcast at City Hall with opportunity made available for public attendance and/or participation subject to social distancing regulations. Attendees must be attired in mask and gloves and may not be experiencing any symptoms of the COVID virus, i.e., fever, cough, sore throat, or uncommon fatigue.**

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Gonzalez called the regular meeting of the Chicago Heights City Council to order at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL BY DEPUTY CLERK RACHEL VEGA

Mayor:	David Gonzalez	Present
Council:	1st Ward Renee Smith	Present
	2nd Ward Sonia Perez	Present
	3rd Ward Wanda Rodgers	Present
	4th Ward Christopher Baikauskas	Present
	5th Ward George Brassea	Present
	6th Ward Vincent Zaranti	Present
	7th Ward Kelli Merrick	Present

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

COMMUNICATIONS

Alderman Smith - no announcements

Alderman Perez - no announcements

Alderman Rodgers - no announcements

Alderman Baikauskas - no announcements

Alderman Brassea announced that his next ward meeting would be held on January 27 at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom. Alderman Brassea asked the administration to look into the issue of accidents at the intersection of Vollmer Road, Dixie Highway, and Ashland Avenue.

Alderman Zaranti - no announcements

Alderman Merrick - no announcements

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

Corporation Counsel T. J. Somer was in the council chambers and stated that there was no public present for the meeting.

REPORT OF CHIEF OF STAFF - KAREN ZERANTE

None

REPORT OF THE CORPORATION COUNSEL - T.J. SOMER

None

1. MINUTES: MEETING OF JANUARY 6, 2021

Alderman Merrick moved, and Alderman Zaranti seconded, a motion to approve the minutes.

Ayes: Smith, Perez, Rodgers, Baikauskas, Brassea, Zaranti, Merrick

Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: none

Motion to approve carried.

2. BILLS: APPROVAL OF FIRST RUN OF JANUARY 2021.

Alderman Smith moved, and Alderman Zaranti seconded, a motion to approve the bills.

Ayes: Smith, Perez, Rodgers, Baikauskas, Brassea, Zaranti, Merrick

Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: none

Motion to approve carried.

3. ORDINANCE # 2021 - 1 : APPROVING A PLAT OF SUBDIVISION FOR THE REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1333 WESTERN AVENUE. (Food4Less).

Alderman Smith moved, and Alderman Perez seconded, a motion to approve the ordinance.

Ayes: Smith, Perez, Rodgers, Baikauskas, Brassea, Zaranti, Merrick

Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: none

Motion to approve carried.

Corporation Counsel Somer explained that the owner of the property was requesting to subdivide his property for future development purposes. The matter had come before the Plan Commission on January 16, 2021. There was brief discussion on the matter.

4. RESOLUTION #2021 - 4 : REJECTING ALL BIDS RECEIVED FOR THE WEST SIDE DRAINAGE PROJECT SANITARY SEWER REPAIR AND AUTHORIZING THE CITY CLERK TO PUBLISH A NOTICE SEEKING NEW BIDS. (Tabled this meeting from council meeting of 1/6/21).

Alderman Zaranti moved, and Alderman Baikauskas seconded, a motion to approve the resolution.

Ayes: Smith, Perez, Rodgers, Baikauskas, Brassea, Zaranti, Merrick

Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: none

Motion to approve carried.

COS Zerante noted that the matter was tabled at the previous council meeting. Andrew Smith, City Engineer, stated that he reviewed the original estimate of costs, and was in the process of revising it, as needed, in order to re-bid the project. The council asked questions on the matter before the vote.

5. RESOLUTION #2021 - 5 : APPROVING A RENEWAL OF THE CITY'S EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE POLICY AND PREMIUM.

Alderman Zaranti moved, and Alderman Perez seconded, a motion to approve the resolution.

Ayes: Smith, Perez, Rodgers, Baikauskas, Brassea, Zaranti, Merrick

Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: none

Motion to approve carried.

Karen Zerante addressed the council on the Blue Cross Blue Shield employee health insurance renewal coverage. Paul Mesirow, the City's benefits advisor with Alliant/Mesirow Finance, gave the council an analysis of the renewal and its costs. The council asked questions to which Mr. Mesirow responded.

6. RESOLUTION #2021 - 6 : OMNIBUS RESOLUTION APPROVING THE SALE AND REDEVELOPMENT OF THE FOLLOWING PROPERTIES PURSUANT TO THE CITY'S ABANDONED PROPERTY ACQUISITION PROGRAM (APAP):

1. 280 W. 15TH Place
2. 417 W. Hickory
3. 1842 Euclid Avenue
4. 174 E. 23RD Street
5. 1214 Otto Boulevard
6. 310 Concord Drive

Alderman Merrick moved, and Alderman Perez seconded, a motion to approve the resolution.

Ayes: Smith, Perez, Rodgers, Baikauskas, Brassea, Zaranti, Merrick

Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: none

Motion to approve carried.

Corporation Counsel Somer reported that the City was in possession of the deeds. Next step was to obtain the elimination of the delinquent taxes, in order to close on the properties when ready. The council discussed the matter before the vote.

7. RESOLUTION #2021 - 7 : APPROVING DEED IN LIEU OF FORECLOSURE AGREEMENTS FOR ACQUISITION OF THE REAL PROPERTY AT 1633 LOWE AVENUE; 141 EAST 17TH STREET AND 417 W. HICKORY STREET.

Alderman Rodgers moved, and Alderman Merrick seconded, a motion to approve the resolution.

Ayes: Smith, Perez, Rodgers, Baikauskas, Brassea, Zaranti, Merrick

Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: none

Motion to approve carried.

Corporation Counsel Somer stated that the acquisitions were a result of collaboration between the City's Economic Development and Legal Departments, who identified abandoned properties throughout the City, in order to return them to the tax rolls after rehabilitation.

8. RESOLUTION #2021 - 8 : APPROVING HBK ENGINEERING AS SPECIAL CITY ENGINEER FOR ASSIGNED PROJECTS AND 2021 HOURLY RATES.

Alderman Smith moved, and Alderman Zaranti seconded, a motion to approve the resolution.

Ayes: Smith, Perez, Rodgers, Baikauskas, Brassea, Zaranti, Merrick

Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: none

Motion to approve carried.

COS Zerante remarked that HBK Engineering was the City's consulting engineer for several years now. Its services were for projects related to the City's infrastructure, particularly for sewer improvement and reconstruction projects. There was brief discussion on the matter.

9. RESOLUTION #2021- 9 : APPROVING AN INTER - GOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT WITH THE COUNTY OF COOK & STATE OF ILLINOIS GOVERNING THE CITY'S PARTICIPATION IN THE "INVEST IN COOK" GRANT AND PROGRAM.

Alderman Perez moved, and Alderman Smith seconded, a motion to approve the resolution.

Ayes: Smith, Perez, Rodgers, Baikauskas, Brassea, Zaranti, Merrick

Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: none

Motion to approve carried.

COS Zerante reported that the City had identified the project, prepared the specs, and was ready to submit whenever a grant opportunity became available. The Invest in Cook Program opened up, the City submitted and qualified for a \$ 477,900 grant. Project area was Euclid Avenue south of the railroad tracks to 26th Street. There was some discussion before the vote.

10. RESOLUTION #2021 - 10 : APPROVING AN AGREEMENT WITH NEWMAN ARCHITECTURE FOR A DESIGN/BID/BUILD SERVICES FOR REDESIGN AND REHABILITATION OF THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS.

Alderman Smith moved, and Alderman Merrick seconded, a motion to approve the resolution.

Ayes: Smith, Perez, Rodgers, Baikauskas, Brassea, Zaranti, Merrick

Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: none

Motion to approve carried.

Mayor Gonzalez stated that plans to update the council chambers and sound system had been in the works for a long time. The City would explore the Cares Act to see if there was federal stimulus money available to assist with the costs. The project would move forward as funds became available. The council discussed the matter before the vote.

11. RESOLUTION #2021 - 11 : APPROVING THE SETTLEMENT OF CERTAIN CIVIL LITIGATION (Case # 20 WC 007734) AS PRESENTED FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION OF THIS DATE (and by memorandum).

Alderman Zaranti moved, and Alderman Smith seconded, a motion to approve the resolution.

Ayes: Smith, Perez, Rodgers, Baikauskas, Brassea, Zaranti, Merrick

Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: none

Motion to approve carried.

Corporation Counsel Somer stated that he had communicated with the aldermen, and that there was no indication that anyone was interested in moving into closed session.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:03 pm. Alderman Rodgers moved, and Alderman Perez seconded, a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Ayes: Smith, Perez, Rodgers, Baikauskas, Brassea, Zaranti, Merrick

Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: none

Motion to adjourn carried.

Lori Wilcox, City Clerk