

**OGLESBY CITY COUNCIL  
MONDAY, JANUARY 6, 2025**

The Oglesby City Council meeting was called to order by Mayor Jason Curran at 6 p.m. on Monday, January 6, 2025.

**ROLL CALL:** Commissioners Richard Baldrige, Don Finley, Gregory McDermott, Tony Stefanelli and Mayor Jason Curran were present. Attorney Pat Barry and City Clerk Becky Clinard were in attendance as well.

After the Pledge of Allegiance, Curran asked the council to go into executive session to discuss *“the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees ... 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1).”*

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY** Finley, **SECONDED BY** Stefanelli to go into executive session at 6:01 p.m. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **MOTION CARRIED.**

At 6:13 p.m., the council resumed the regular meeting:

**ROLL CALL:** Commissioners Richard Baldrige, Don Finley, Gregory McDermott, Tony Stefanelli and Mayor Jason Curran. Attorney Pat Barry and City Clerk Becky Clinard were also present.

There was not comments from the public on agenda items.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY** Stefanelli, **SECONDED BY** Baldrige to approve the minutes from the December 16, 2024, regular meeting. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY** Stefanelli, **SECONDED BY** McDermott to approve the bills presented for payment in the amount of \$714,863.54. Stefanelli told the council that engineering bills for the WWTP and parts for the Mallick Substation project are the reason for the higher-than-normal expenditures. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**BILLS PRESENTED FOR PAYMENT:** A & B Garage, \$105.37; Air One Equipment Inc., \$877.00; Airgas Usa, Llc, \$272.10; Alatheia LLC, \$250.00; Altorfer Industries, Inc, \$147.00; Ameren Illinois-7419559858, \$34.47; Ameren Illinois-8218382099, \$0.24; Ameren Ip-01159-82892, \$6,655.11; Arrow Sales & Service Inc, \$377.00; Beck Oil Co, \$1,780.00; Bob Johnson's Computer Stuff, Inc, \$1,258.70; Bound Tree Medical Llc, \$580.27; Chamlin & Associates Inc, \$63,438.00; Cigna Claims Dept, \$187.56; City Of Oglesby, \$52.74; Comcast Business, \$134.90; Conway Shield, \$1,675.00; Core & Main, \$2,311.20; Econo Signs, \$852.35; Feece Oil Co, \$3,112.57; Ficek Electric, \$750.00; Fletcher-Reinhardt Co, \$12,300.00; Flock Safety,

\$25,000.00; Foster Coach Sales Inc., \$153.48; Green Dragon Environmental, Ltd, \$418.10; Halm's Auto Parts, \$483.36; Haskell Landscaping, \$550.00; Hawkins, Inc, \$1,236.50; Hy-Vee, Inc, \$107.99; Il Fire Chiefs Association, \$125.00; Il Public Risk Fund, \$8,817.00; Il State Police, \$141.25; Il Valley Community College, \$8,780.85; John Pohar & Sons Inc., \$154,248.30; John's Service & Sales, \$179.00; Kendrick Pest Control Inc., \$225.00; Kittilson's Garage, \$3,570.46; Lasalle-Peru Hs #120, \$22,472.02; Loft Av, Inc, \$1,000.00; Longbons, Barb, \$50.00; Mautino Distributing Co Inc, \$65.50; Menards, \$551.57; Mertel Gravel Co, \$12,013.52; Mississippi Valley Pump, Inc, \$10,370.00; Ncicg, \$6,097.57; Ncpers Group Life Ins, \$16.00; News-Trib, \$256.61; Oglesby Grade School #125, \$24,466.00; Omnisite, \$1,672.00; Osf Occupational Health - Peru, \$200.00; Osf Saint Elizabeth Medical Center, \$962.60; Ottosen Dinolfo, \$82.50; Peerless Network, Inc., \$1,458.29; Querciagrossa, Nancy, \$50.00; Quicket Solutions, \$5,800.00; Ragazincky, Pete, \$62.98; Rasani, Muhamet, \$127.52; Republic Services -- Allied Waste, \$32,770.77; Ruppert Concrete, \$14,750.00; Saltus Technologies, Llc, \$8,982.71; Springfield Electric Supply, \$837.12; Sunbelt Solomon, \$16,704.00; Surf Internet, \$85.00; T.E.S.T Inc., \$1,362.50; Tesco-The Eastern Speciality Company, \$13,903.14; Thurman And Sons, \$843.17; Tonica Ambulance And Fire Dept, \$75.00; United Healthcare Insurance, \$32,330.60; United States Postal Service, \$959.56; V & S Schuler Engineering, Inc, \$189,562.32; Verizon, \$1,543.65; Verizon, \$166.02; Vollmer, Richard & Mary Ann, \$685.32; Water Products Company, \$7,035.00; Wex Bank, \$3,305.11. **Total, \$714,863.54**

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY** McDermott, **SECONDED BY** Baldrige to approve the payroll for January 3, 2025, in the amount of \$67,028.13. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Police Chief Mike Margis then addressed the council about the appointment of a deputy chief and a sergeant. Margis explained the need for a second-in-command and also stressed that this was not a new position, but one that had been unfilled since his promotion to chief. Margis said the position would enhance the operational efficiency, leadership continuity and overall effectiveness of the police department. Margis also stressed the importance of promoting from within, noting that this opportunity “ensures that “experienced individuals are prepared to assume greater responsibilities” in the future.

Margis also introduced the force’s newest sergeant, Randy Oscepinski, who is also the city’s first female sergeant. “This achievement reflects the ongoing efforts of our community to promote diversity, equality, and excellence within our department. Sergeant Oscepinski has demonstrated exemplary dedication, leadership, and commitment to the safety and well-being of our citizens, making her highly deserving of this appointment,” Margis said.

Finley then congratulated Evan Duttlinger and Oscepinski, saying that the police, fire and ambulance departments are one of the best in the area. Finley said he was “privileged” to make the motions for both promotions.

Stefanelli congratulated both candidates, saying he was “absolutely thrilled” for both.

McDermott thanked the pair for their hard work. Baldrige congratulated the pair and said he would address the issue further in his Commissioner's Report. Curran said he was very excited for Duttlinger, saying that the two-year gap (of not having a second in command) gave Duttlinger the chance to prove his readiness for the appointment.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY** Finley, **SECONDED BY** McDermott to approve the appointment of Evan Duttlinger to the position of Deputy Chief. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Chief Margis then administered the oath of office to Duttlinger and Duttlinger's girlfriend, pinned his badge on while friends and family looked on.

**A MOTION WAS MADE** by Finley, **SECONDED BY** Stefanelli to appoint Randy Oscepinski to the rank of sergeant. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Chief Margis then administered the oath of office to Oscepinski. Her husband, Austin, pinned her badge on.

The council then addressed the request from Rich and Shelly Greening who sought a variance that would allow them to separate a parcel into two parcels, one of which would become non-conforming because it contained only an accessory structure.

**A MOTION WAS MADE** by Stefanelli, **SECONDED BY** Baldrige to place on file the recommendation from the Zoning Board of Appeals to approve the variance request. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**A MOTION WAS MADE** by Stefanelli, **SECONDED BY** Baldrige to approve Ordinance No. 1276-010625, which grants the variance request from Rich and Shelly Greening. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **MOTION CARRIED.**

The Mayor then asked Commissioner Finley if he would like to say anything before the council accepted his resignation effective January 7, 2025. Finley declined to make any comments.

**A MOTION WAS MADE** by McDermott, **SECONDED** by Stefanelli to accept the resignation of Don Finley, effective January 7, 2025, as commissioner of Public Health and Safety. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**A MOTION WAS MADE** by McDermott, **SECONDED** By Stefanelli to appoint Hilary Moyle to the office of Commissioner of Public Health and Safety. Hilary would have been the lone candidate for the office in the April 1, 2025, election. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott,

Stefanelli, Curran. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Curran then told the council he had had a conversation with Building Inspector Brian Spelich. He thanked Spelich for his 13 years of service to the city and announced he was appointing the current electrical inspector, Burton Lavens, to the position. Stefanelli also thanked Spelich for his service and said he looked forward to working with Lavens.

**A MOTION WAS MADE** by Stefanelli, **SECONDED** By Finley to accept the resignation of Brian Spelich as Building Inspector and to appoint Burton Lavens in his place. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**Old Business (none)**

**New Business**

Stefanelli told the council that he and the City Clerk, who also serves as the zoning administrator, had gone through the building code ordinance to update it to meet state requirements and address local concerns. Stefanelli also discussed minor changes to clean up language in the current code. Stefanelli addressed the fire code requirement for sprinkler systems, noting that the changes he suggested were “reasonable and feasible” for our community. For example, requiring sprinklers in new home construction for homes over 3,000 square feet only, requiring new commercial buildings to have sprinkler systems, outside water hookups for the fire department and alarm systems that alert the fire department when the sprinkler system goes off. Stefanelli also suggested that language be adopted to give the city authority to lessen code restrictions when it is safe to do so on a case-by-case basis. There are also minor changes to the fees and processes language.

Curran asked about the dates of the code the city is adopting, asking if the codes were the most recent. Stefanelli told him that its best practice to adopt the second recent version. Curran asked if there was anything in the codes that was “too stringent” for a small town. Stefanelli said that that was the reason for the language that allows for review of requirements that might be restrictive and the ability to modify the requirements to fit the situation.

Curran then asked about the requirement for new home construction escrow. A recent change required the escrow at the time the occupancy permit is issued for any unfinished improvements that may be weather related. That change requires the homeowner to place an amount equal to 150% of the cost of the improvements in escrow. Stefanelli pointed out that he believes it best to get the escrow up front because it would be difficult to enforce after the home is built. Clinard also said she had also had concerns and believed that the escrow should be collected when the permit is issued. If the previous amount, \$2,500, is not enough, Clinard suggested that be addressed in the changes. Stefanelli said that he was willing to meet with the city attorney to go over the proposed changes and stressed again that he was not interested in making changes to the

Land Development Code, but did want to mirror the language that exists in the LDA about the zoning administrator also be included in Chapter 2 of the Municipal Code.

**A MOTION WAS MADE** by Stefanelli, **SECONDED** by McDermott to table the discussion on changing the building codes until he has an opportunity to meet with the city attorney. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **MOTION CARRIED.**

### **Public Comment**

JP Rose, IBEW Union Steward, then read a prepared statement outlining the union's concerns about the change in city government from commissioner to manager form. Most the city's IBEW workforce stood behind Rose at the podium. Rose shared statistics about the average city manager's tenure for cities the size of Oglesby (3-4 years) and larger (7-8 years). Rose cited a statistic that of 33 city managers, only three cited no conflict. Thirty of the 33 managers surveyed were either fired or resigned from their positions.

Rose said he did not feel the costs associated with the position could be absorbed without significant impact on other areas of the city, including the Dickinson House and swimming pool, which operate at a loss each year, could be closed to meet the salary and benefits required for a city manager. Rose said he did not think it was unrealistic to expect that maintenance of Oglesby's baseball and softball fields (which Oglesby is known for) could become the responsibility of the leagues to cut the city's costs.

According to the ILCMA, ten communities with a population of 6,000 or less use the manager form of government, Rose said. Of those, seven placed all employees in a public works department, which would mean doing away with a Parks Department. Doing so, said Rose, would eliminate winter and summer rec programs and other "quality of life" services the city offers.

Rose then asked the Mayor for an apology to the city employees for a December 13 social media post in which Curran said that "most employees enjoy an elected official who is less engaged and isn't even really looking at timesheets in close detail, or as in the most recent incident, would have their (employee) interests ahead of the city taxpayers." Rose said that to accuse employees of falsifying timesheets is "dangerous and a disgusting act for a public official" and questioned whether city employees, who respond to calls at any hour, are putting their best interests ahead of the public. Rose ended the speech with a plea to area residents to vote no on the upcoming proposal to change the form of government.

Ken Ficek, Chairman of the Plan Commission, then addressed the council, telling the council about the Plan Commission's work of putting together a public forum for residents to learn more about the proposed change. The event will be held January 22 at 6 p.m. at the Elks Lodge. Barry spoke about his work reaching out to find speakers for the meeting. Ficek said this meeting

would likely be the first of either two or three.

Curran questioned why the meeting was being held at the Elks Lodge, saying he was worried that the Elks didn't have the same technology set up to allow for streaming and showing documents.

Jay Baxter then spoke on the importance of attending the Plan Commission meeting to learn more about the proposed change to government. Baxter said it was important to focus on the facts, not lies.

### **Commissioners Reports:**

#### **❖ Commissioner Stefanelli, Accounts and Finance**

- Thanked Don Finley for stepping up and filling in when the commissioner seat was vacated by Terry Eutis, saying there is no doubt that Finley is genuinely concerned about what 's best for the city.
- Congratulated City Engineer Jim Clinard on his retirement and welcomed Ross Baker into the role.
- Said he was still waiting for either Curran or Baxter to answer the questions he posed at the last meeting. Stefanelli asked whether they had done any research on the financial and logistical impact the change to manager form or government would be to the City and if such research had been done, why it wasn't shared with the many stakeholders (elected officials, residents, business owners, city employees, etc.). He also questioned why the Plan Commission wasn't engaged early on in the conversation. And if there wasn't any such research, how the petitioners knew this was the right form of government for the city and why residents should support such a change.

#### **❖ Commissioner Don Finley, Public Safety**

- Thanked the council and community for the chance to serve again. Finley said that the council may not always agree on an issue, but that "you always try to do what's best for the city." Finley, acknowledging that he and the Mayor "never got along," shared the last email from Curran: "Finley, thank God you're leaving."

#### **❖ Commissioner Greg McDermott, Public Safety**

- Thanked Ken and the Elks Club for hosting the forum.
- Thanked Finley for his time on the council
- Congratulated Deputy Chief Duttlinger and Sergeant Oscepinski on their promotions.

#### **❖ Commissioner Richard Baldrige, Public Property and Electric**

- Gave updates on the Parks Department BB Gun and Basketball Camps
- Congratulated Duttlinger and Oscepinski, saying Oglesby is "lucky to have you."

- Recognized Chief Mike Margis and his efforts to restore stability in the department.
- Thanked Finley for his many years of service to the city and his leadership.

**Mayor's Report:**

- Acknowledged his comment to Commissioner Finley, but said it was part of a larger email. He thanked Finley for his service.
- Wished City Engineer Clinard well and welcomed Ross Baker, promising more information on that in the future.
- Said he was surprised by the “disinformation” put out by the city employees concerning the switch to a form of government and addressed some of those points, such as the cost of the position, privatizing city services, labor contracts, layoffs, etc.
- Said he did not believe he needed to make an apology to city employees, saying he didn't say anything negative about any city employee and that he believed “in fact, we have fantastic city employees that work very hard ... but to say that there haven't been timesheets in the past that haven't been abused, would be an understatement.” Curran said he could provide examples, but didn't want to do that.
- Curran talked about his excitement for the city's future in 2025. He specifically mentioned the upcoming meeting with IDNR, multiple land deals, and three RFPs from 2024 that Oglesby is still involved in talks about. He said that he doesn't remember a time when some many positive things were in the works.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY** Finley, **SECONDED BY** McDermott to adjourn at 7:14 p.m.  
**AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **MEETING ADJOURNED.**