

**OGLESBY CITY COUNCIL  
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2024**

The Oglesby City Council meeting was called to order by Mayor Jason Currant at 6 p.m. on Monday, November 18, 2024.

**ROLL CALL:** Commissioners 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.

**Public comment (agenda items only)**

Ken Ficek, Chairman of the Plan Commission told the council about the recent Plan Commission meeting in which they discussed updating the comprehensive plan. Ficek asked the council to approve the commission's request to engage the services of North Central Council of Governments to assist in updating the plan, noting that the board had determined that the services they provided were beyond the board's capabilities. He also spoke on the petition to change the form of government. The goal to look at other forms of government had been in the plan since 2009, Ficek said, but "that was never accomplished," and the goal was pulled from the plan in the 2020 update. Ficek said that felt the Plan Commission should be involved in the review and recommendation of whether to pursue a different form of government and what that form might be.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY** Stefanelli, **SECONDED BY** Baldrige to approve the minutes from the November 4, 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 \$636,035.19. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**BILLS PRESENTED FOR PAYMENT:** Altorfer Industries, Inc, \$3,858.00; Ameren Illinois-8218382099, \$345.72; Aplington,Kaufman, McClintock, Steele, \$219.23; Bernardoni, Kaitlin, \$100.00; Bhmg; Engineers, \$11,155.69; Bound Tree Medical Llc, \$370.45; Chamlin & Associates Inc, \$8,820.50; City Of Oglesby, \$118.58; Clinard, Becky, \$349.56; Comcast Business, \$669.56; Comcast Business, \$951.74; Connecting Point, \$5,285.50; Conway Shield, \$62.50; Core & Main, \$132.18; Country Kids Farm Fresh Produce, \$569.00; De Lage Landen Financial Services, \$571.36; Debo Ace Hardware, \$333.98; Dresbach Distributing, \$134.85; Electrical Power Products, \$77,960.00; Esmurria, Dora, -\$76.49; Esmurria, Dora, \$76.49; Frazier, Shelby, \$50.00; Gurtowski, Christopher, \$61.86; Halm's Auto Parts, \$192.38; Hawkins, Inc, \$1,002.20; Heartland Bank Visa, \$5,583.90; Il Labor Law, \$99.50; Il Municipal League, \$450.00; Il Valley Regional Dispatch, \$7,461.12; Illinois Municipal Electric Agency, \$378,528.85; Irby Electrical Distributor, \$623.43; Kendrick Pest Control Inc., \$225.00;

Knoblauch, Heather, \$50.00; Mautino Distributing Co Inc, \$38.75; Maze Nails, \$82.74; Menards, \$1,413.92; Mertel Gravel Co, \$728.25; Mosca Design, \$653.78; Mtco, \$174.87; Ncpers Group Life Ins, \$16.00; News-Trib, \$936.38; Northern Illinois Ambulance Bi, Inc, \$2,930.57; Northwest Lineman College, \$126.81; Osf Medical Group -- Occupational Health, \$80.00; Ottawa Office Supply, \$57.49; Payment Service Network, \$135.55; Peerless Network, Inc., \$1,457.32; Pomp's Tire Service, Inc., \$776.76; Quick , Erin, \$100.00; Ray O'herron Co. Inc., \$22.92; Republic Services -- Allied Waste, \$32,770.77; Ro Pros, \$12.20; Ruppert Concrete, \$9,622.00; Rush Power Systems, \$1,032.00; Smart Source Llc, \$3,435.36; Smith's Sales And Service, \$1,043.00; Standard Equipment Co, \$896.16; Starved Rock Media, Inc., \$1,200.00; Stratus Networks, \$3,544.83; Sunbelt Solomon, \$5,494.20; Superior Lighting, \$747.00; T.E.S.T Inc., \$20,267.16; Thurman True Value Hardware, \$233.91; United Healthcare Insurance, \$32,330.60; United Rentals, \$378.21; Universal Utility Supply, \$3,279.94; Usa Bluebook, \$690.70; Verizon, \$1,543.40; Water Products Company, \$1,364.00; Wth Technology, Inc, \$81.00; **Total, \$636,035.19**

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY** Stefanelli, **SECONDED BY** Finley to approve the payroll for November 8, 2024, in the amount of \$146,216.54. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY** McDermott, **SECONDED BY** Baldrige to approve Resolution R-11182024, Cost-sharing Agreement with County for Dry Bridge Replacement. McDermott explained that the city had already passed the agreement with LaSalle County, but also needed to pass the funding resolution. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY** Stefanelli, **SECONDED BY** McDermott to approve and place on file the recommendation from Plan Commission to update the Comprehensive Plan with North Central Council of Governments leading the effort at a cost of \$10,500. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **MOTION CARRIED.**

An apparent misunderstanding led to the tabling of the next item. Barry said he was not aware that an ordinance was needed for this meeting for the Rossi easement agreement, noting that he thought the agreement would be presented to the Rossi's before coming to the council for approval. He said he would have the ordinance available for the December 2, 2024, meeting. Barry also asked Jim Clinard, if the Buzzi agreement would be available at the same time, with Clinard saying he did not know.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY** McDermott, **SECONDED BY** Baldrige to table Ordinance No. 1274-111824, Rossi Easement Agreement. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY** Baldrige, **SECONDED BY** Stefanelli, to award the bid for conduit and cable for the Mallick Substation Project at a cost of \$36,676.00. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Stefanelli then told the council it was time to renewal the city's liability insurance, and like the health insurance, there was a cost increase this year. Stefanelli said the city can keep increases in check by lowering the amount and frequency of claims, as well as providing training to lower risks.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY** Stefanelli, **SECONDED BY** Finley to approve the liability insurance renewal with Illinois Municipal Insurance Co-Op (IMIC) at a cost of \$306,370.00. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY** Stefanelli, **SECONDED BY** to approve the raffle license for Oglesby Public Library. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **MOTION CARRIED.**

McDermott then asked the council to approve a proposal from Robinson Engineering, Frankfort, IL, for the review of the plans for the new waste water treatment plant. McDermott said that he felt it was in the best interests of the city and its residents to get a second opinion. Both Stefanelli and Baldrige expressed support for the review, while Curran expressed concerns about the timing of the review and the \$44,300.00 cost. Barry said his only concern was that the city was under a consent decree, and he wouldn't want anything to throw the project off schedule.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY** McDermott, **SECONDED BY** Stefanelli to seek a review of the plans for the new waste water treatment plans by Robinson Engineering. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **MOTION CARRIED.**

McDermott then asked council to approve the lease agreement on a center-pivot backhoe. He said that the annual cost was close to what the Street Department spent recently on repairing the backhoe and the "equipment" is able to accept different types of attachments (such as a street sweeper available for rent from Altofer) which makes it more than just a backhoe. Baldrige and Stefanelli were concerned about the costs. Stefanelli, Finley and Curran asked to consider putting off the purchase until more information was available.

**A MOTION WAS MADE** by McDermott, **SECONDED BY** Baldrige to table the request to approve a lease agreement with Altofer for a center-pivot backhoe. McDermott said he would gather the information requested for the next meeting. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **MOTION CARRIED.**

After reading his concerns about the petition that is being circulated to change the city's form of

government, McDermott said he believed residents should be presented with information about the different forms of government. McDermott then asked the council to approve his recommendation to send the issue to the Plan Commission. Curran noted that the agenda item did not match McDermott's request. McDermott said his agenda request was altered by the clerk. Curran asked the commissioners for comments, and a lengthy discussion ensued with council members voicing their concerns about the way the petition came about and the reasons for it that have been presented to the public. Stefanelli expressed concerns with the attention the matter takes away from important issues the council should be focused upon. The mayor countered that he had approached the council about the manner but no one had expressed an interest in discussing it. Baldrige questioned whether he (Curran) was involved in the effort. Curran acknowledged a part in the petition drive, but said it was a grassroots effort led by residents.

Curran then questioned the assertion that the issue had to go to the Plan Commission, citing examples from other communities and whether McDermott could make a motion to send it to the Plan Commission when that is not what was on the agenda. Barry said that if it wasn't on the agenda, it couldn't go to the council for a vote. McDermott then agreed to table the issue.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY** McDermott, **SECONDED BY** Baldrige to table the request to request the Illinois Municipal League give a presentation on the different forms of government. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli **NAYS:** Curran. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Stefanelli then told the council that he and Commissioner Baldrige had met a while ago with the Oglesby Public Library to discuss the inter-governmental agreement. The agreement was entered into in 2009 and was an attempt to lessen the loss of tax monies through the TIF districts. Stefanelli said the new agreement is much the same as the old, only that the city will no longer perform regular janitorial services. He said that he would prefer -- much like the other agreements with the schools -- that the agreement be sent to the library board for their review before the council votes on the matter.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY** Stefanelli, **SECONDED BY** McDermott to send the IGA with the Oglesby Public Library to the library for review. Clerk Clinard is to forward the library a copy of the agreement. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **MOTION CARRIED.**

### **Public Comment on Any Topic**

Dom Rivara, former mayor, thanked the Oglesby Police Department for assisting in the Veterans Day ceremony. The police department escorts the veterans who march from the Post to the park. He also thanked Holy Family School for including the ceremony in their curriculum. They also donated \$515 to the Illinois Valley Veterans Association.

Mark Schmandt, 4 Ed Hand Highway, expressed his displeasure with the sign erected near the entrance to the canoe landing. Schmandt says he does not oppose a sign there, but he does not like the “nature” of the sign and likened it to a 1990’s strip mall sign. Schmandt asked that the sign be removed or relocated.

Michelle Kwiatek, We Are Oglesby marketing officer, talked about the group’s response to Mr. Schmandt’s concerns, noting that members of the group met with him and have responded to his texts and calls. Removing the sign, she said, would not be in the best interest of the group and would be costly. The group believes the sign is in line with their mission statement to promote economic development in the city. Kwiatek asked Schmandt to refrain from contacting them about the matter unless he has a signed petition or verifiable complaints from others to substantiate his concerns.

Elizabeth Mettillie, a resident of the neighborhood and a local business member, spoke in favor of the sign. She told of her grandson, someone who uses the disc golf course often, and is very much in favor of the sign. She also said that she posted a photo of the sign to her Facebook page, and not one of the 2020 “friends” had commented negatively about it.

Austin Cullinan, a resident and a member of the Oglesby Library Board, addressed several issues. He countered Schmandt’s claims that the new sign takes away from the aesthetics of the woody neighborhood by noting that having homes in the area does the same thing and encouraged Schmandt to be involved and engaged in the community, noting that there are many community groups – like WAO – who would welcome members. Thanked the council for their willingness to work with the library board and commended Curran’s new approach to comments by the council during the meetings.

As far as the change of government, Cullinan said he agreed with Ficek that the issue should be discussed by the Plan Commission. He said he felt the persons circulating the petitions have an obligation to start a dialogue on the issue, rather than rush to a referendum.

Jay Baxter, a 30-year resident and business owner, said that while Oglesby has progressed, he believes the form of government has inherent flaws. He questioned the need to send the issue to the Plan Commission, noting that the mention of changing the form of government was removed by the city council in the 2020 version. “Sometimes, when the powers that be do not respond as they should, you have to go down to a grassroots level.” Baxter then talked about his reasons for wanting a change to the city manager/commission form of government. Baxter said continuity and having a person who has the appropriate skill set running the city are his two main reasons for promoting the change.

Patty Eichelkraut, a resident and city employee, voiced her concerns about the petition. Eichelkraut told the council that continuity starts with good leadership and management, not a high salary. She said she first learned of the petition from the radio and was grateful to WLPO

for bringing the matter to the public's attention. Eichelkraut expressed her concerns about how the position would be funded and what impact adding a high-paid position to the payroll would have on future projects and existing employees' wages. Eichelkraut encouraged citizens to become informed about the matter and decide whether the change is good for the city, rather than to allow someone's desire to "stick it to somebody," prompt such a change.

#### Commissioners Reports:

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

- Told the council he met with the treasurer and city clerk to discuss the levy, which will be placed on file at the Dec. 2, 2024, meeting.
- Addressed comments by Jay Baxter, noting that the two live in the same neighborhood, and invited him to sit down and talk about the petition.
- Said he hoped that going forward, discussions about a change in the form of government could be "brought back down to a civil discussion."

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

- Read a lengthy statement on the petition for change of government taking Curran to task and noting that good things happen when public officials put their personal agendas aside and work for the common good of the community.

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

- Said that an informed voter is the best kind of voter.
- Commented on the WAO sign, saying he thought a second one was needed.
- Leaf vacuuming will continue through the next week.

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

- Took issue with those who say the council is not professional, saying that the Mayor is at the center of every controversy or stunt and is unable to work not only with the current commissioners, but former council members and city employees as well.
- Thanked WAO for the sign at the canoe landing.
- Announced the military banners would be taken down and Christmas lights put up the week after Thanksgiving.
- Thanked Cathie Edens for her 18 years of service to the city and residents of Oglesby.

#### Mayor's Report:

- Turkey Trot kicks off at 9 a.m. Thanksgiving day.

- Talked about retiring ambulance director Cathie Edens, noting not only her dedication to the position, but the expertise, knowledge and care she shared with Oglesby residents.
- Announced that Santa's Magic Mailbox is now open for business
- Responded to Commissioner Finley's remarks, calling much of Finley's comments "complete falsehoods" or that Finley is simply "mis-informed."
- Answered the question about his involvement with the petition to change the form of government. "I guess that could be true," he said. Curran said he had a lot of residents ask him about how to go about changing the form of government and he did a lot of research on the topic. "Whatever the residents want to do, I'm 100% on board with it."

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY** Stefanelli, **SECONDED BY** McDermott to adjourn at 7:45 p.m.

**AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott,