

**OGLESBY CITY COUNCIL**  
**Monday, December 2, 2024**

The Oglesby City Council meeting was called to order by Mayor Jason Curran at 6 p.m.

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

There were no comments from the public.

Curran asked that the order of agenda items be amended to allow Lora Gramer from Suarez and Associates, and Brock Teichmiller from American Water to present their proposals at the start of the meeting. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran.

**A MOTION WAS MADE** by Stefanelli, **SECONDED** by McDermott to table the minutes from the November 18, 2024, regular session. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**A MOTION WAS MADE** by Stefanelli, **SECONDED** by McDermott to Approve Bills Presented for Payment in the Amount of \$236,940.41. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**Bills presented for payment:** Ameren Ip-01159-82892, \$1,673.14; Blue Cross & Blue Shield Of Il, \$2,125.00; Civicplus, Llc, \$2,675.00; Clegg-Perkins Electric, \$1,472.00; Comcast, \$756.84; Core & Main, \$3,497.79; Edens, Cathie, \$73.03; Eichelkraut, Patty, \$129.80; Eso Solutions Inc., \$1,333.85; Fedex Freight, \$87.00; Fletcher-Reinhardt Co, \$116,375.00; Hallam, Michelle, \$50.00; Halm's Auto Parts, \$99.95; Hawkins, Inc, \$820.81; Heartland Bank And Trust, \$500.00; Holloway's Portable Restrooms, \$875.00; Hr Green, Inc., \$2,875.25; Hy-Vee, Inc, \$395.00; Il Dept Of Healthcare And Family Service, \$48,077.60; Il Public Risk Fund, \$8,814.00; Il Valley Association Of Chiefs, \$90.00; Il Valley Excavating, In, \$23,272.50; Jcm Uniforms Inc, \$388.00; John Deere Financial, \$119.98; John Pohar & Sons Inc., \$3,185.00; Knoblauch Advertising, \$190.00; Lexipol Llc., \$5,592.40; Menards, \$217.25; Mertel Repair, \$715.00; Naas, Roger, \$65.00; Ncicg, \$400.00; Oscepinski, Austin, \$2,155.56; Osf Saint Elizabeth Medical Center, \$211.41; P.F. Pettibone & Co., \$227.50; Pace Systems, Inc, \$1,600.00; Roop, Olivia, \$50.00; Scott, Fatima, \$250.00; T.E.S.T Inc., \$300.63; Tension Envelope Corp, \$2,009.09; Teran, Carlos, \$4.27; Tri Cty Opportunities Council, \$541.34; United States Postal Service, \$959.56; Usa Bluebook, \$147.00; Wex Bank, \$4,016.10; **TOTAL: \$236.940.41**

**A MOTION WAS MADE** by Stefanelli, **SECONDED** by Finley to approve payroll for November 22, 2024, in the amount of \$69,411.71. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli. **ABSTAIN:** Curran. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Lora Grammer, Suarez & Associates, then went over the employee and retiree health insurance renewal proposal from United Healthcare. Gramer said the company initially offered a renewal package that increased by 33 percent, but after some negotiations, the increase will be 28.8 percent. The recommended package increases the deductible and out of pocket expenses for employees, but is similar in coverage to the current plan. The increase in the deductible costs will be paid by the city, as employees only pay the first \$550 and \$1100 of deductibles. Even with the increased liability, the city should still save money over the current plan.

**A MOTION WAS MADE** by Stefanelli, **SECONDED** by Baldrige to accept the renewal proposal from United Healthcare for health, dental and vision insurance. The monthly cost, based on current census would be \$33,618.28. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Brock Teichmiller and Holly Hunt from American Water Company then spoke to the council (at Commissioner McDermott's request) about the possibility of the city selling the city's wastewater and water infrastructure to them. The company would then run the plants and sell the services to the residents, taking the city out of the equation. Teichmiller spoke about the benefits of such a move – noting the looming \$35 million new waste water plant that the city is under and EPA order to build and have operational by the end of 2028. Teichmiller said the company could provide a “soft proposal” within a couple of months, with the process taking 12 to 18 months to complete after an agreement.

The representative then fielded questions from the council, with Stefanelli saying he would be interested in seeing the financial aspect of the proposal. He also asked about how the process would match up with the EPA mandate, noting that the city must go out for bid soon to stay on track. Teichmiller said that the city could continue working through the process while he worked on the proposal, but if the city wishes to continue talks after the soft proposal is permitted, he hinted that American Water's relationship with the IEPA is strong enough that they may be able to get those mandates changed.

Finley asked about whether the rates would be part of the soft proposal. Teichmiller said that they could share “what the rates might look like,” but that American Water, unlike the city, is regulated and has to have those rates approved by the ICC. Finley also asked who would run the plant and the representative assured him that the person would be local.

Baldrige asked how American Water would pay for the new plant and how that would affect the rates charged to Oglesby residents. Teichmiller and Hunt talked about the expertise the company has to prioritize projects, create capital improvement plans, etc. Baldrige then asked again how the company would recoup the \$30 million cost. Teichmiller told him that the company often reduces Operation and Maintenance costs by 40%. He also noted that American Water has more than “400,000 meters nationwide” and the cost of capital improvements would be “spread

around.”

McDermott asked if the residents would see an increase “right away.” Teichmiller said the process would take 12 to 18 months, but guessed that the cost of the new plant alone would add \$40 to a customer bill.

Curran then addressed his concerns, saying he felt a deeper conversation was necessary to determine if this was the right option to pursue. He talked about potential rates, saying that the city would lose control of rates if the operations were sold to American Water. Curran said the city has some flexibility (using other revenue sources) to keep the cost to residents down. He also questioned whether the city would be able to offer incentives to new developers under the new arrangement. Teichmiller said the company will work with the city to entice growth. American Water was encouraged to submit more information to the council on how this arrangement would work, what financial benefit the city would receive, and how residents’ rates would be impacted.

**A MOTION WAS MADE** by McDermott, **SECONDED** by Baldrige to approve Ordinance No. 1274-120224, Rossi Easement Agreement. McDermott said this was necessary for work on the new wastewater treatment plant. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**A MOTION WAS MADE** by Stefanelli, **SECONDED** by McDermott to approve Ordinance No. 1277-120224, IGA with Oglesby Public Library. Stefanelli explained that the library board had approved the agreement at its last meeting. He thanked the library for working so well with the city and also said he hoped that in five years when the agreement ended, that someone else in his position would consider extending the agreement because of the library’s value to the community. Curran said he was glad the current agreement removed the city’s help with janitorial duties. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**A MOTION WAS MADE** by Stefanelli, **SECONDED** by Finley to place Ordinance No. 1275-2024 Tax Levy on file. Stefanelli pointed out that the amount levied -- \$1,623,300 – was a little less than the estimated annual debt service payment (\$1.7 million) for the proposed new waste water plant. Curran noted that the levy rate was a “small amount less” than last year, but also cautioned that that didn’t mean taxpayer bills would be less. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**A MOTION WAS MADE** by Stefanelli, **SECONDED** by McDermott to approve Ordinance No. 1276-120224, 2013 Series Bond Abatement. Barry explained that this is an annual ordinance that abates the payment and interest costs. The city uses other funds to meet its

obligation. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **MOTION CARRIED.**

### **New Business**

The council received a letter from Union Church asking that Church Street be closed in front of their parking lot on December 14, 2024. They will be hosting a petting zoo and wish to eliminate any concerns about safety of the children and parents participating. **A MOTION WAS MADE** by Stefanelli, **SECONDED** by Finley to close Church Street during the December 14<sup>th</sup> Winter Wonderland Activities. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Finley told the council about the police department's need to get a new police radio console. The old one is outdated and replacement parts are not available. The cost, \$30,561.75, will be paid entirely with special funds, \$18,472.15 from the ETBS fund and \$12,089.60 from the Police Drug Fund. Finley was unsure if he needed council approval, but wanted to be transparent about expending the funds. Attorney Barry told him that because the item wasn't on the agenda, it should be approved at the next meeting. However, because it is an "emergency" expense, Barry advised Finley to order the equipment and place it on the December 16th agenda.

### **Public Comment**

**Lisa Carrico**, a resident and local business owner, then told the council that she agreed with Mark Schmandt, who spoke out against the We Are Oglesby sign at the last meeting. She said she thought there should have been much more thought into the design and placement of the sign. She also questioned how federal funds could be used to promote some businesses, but not others. She also said commented on "a secret meeting at a local bar," referred to at the last council meeting. Saying that there was nothing secret about the meeting: "the lights were on, the doors were open" and people were welcome to learn more about the movement to change the form of government. Carrico said people weren't sitting around "bashing the current council," but talking about issues that have arisen over many years of different councils. She then countered that she knew of several secret meetings in a local bar that was closed to the public, with the lights out and attended by commissioners who parked on side streets so as to not draw attention. Carrico made a point to mention that Commissioner Finley was not on the council when these meetings took place.

### **Commissioners Reports**

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

- Nothing to report

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

- Talked about the Oglesby Police Department's Shop with a Cop program and thanked local residents and businesses for their continued support of a program that helps local families have a nice Christmas.

### **Commissioner Gregory McDermott**

- Nothing to report

### **Commissioner Richard Baldrige**

- Thanked Augustyniak Construction and AAA Tree Service for their assistance with the WAO Christmas tree.

### **Mayor's Report**

- Announced the We Are Oglesby Winter Wonderland celebration to be held on December 14.
- Read a prepared statement as a rebuttal to a statements made by the commissioners at the last meeting, saying their "coordinated" statements filled were with "lies and deliberate untruths."

**A MOTION WAS MADE** by Stefanelli, **SECONDED** by McDermott to enter into executive session for the purpose of discussing *"The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees."* 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1), and *"the operation by a municipality of a municipal utility or the operation of a municipal power agency or municipal natural gas agency when the discussion involves (i) contracts relating to the purchase, sale, or delivery of electricity ... 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(23) at 7:08 p.m. AYES:* Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **MOTION CARRIED.**

The council reentered regular session at 8:43 p.m.

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

**A MOTION WAS MADE** by Stefanelli, **SECONDED** by McDermott to adjourn at **8:45** p.m. **AYES:** Baldrige, Finley, McDermott, Stefanelli, Curran. **MEETING ADJOURNED.**