

**SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE
WORK SESSION CITY COUNCIL MEETING
PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE CITY COUNCIL
OF BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS
MONDAY, MARCH 14, 2016; 5:48 P.M.**

The Council convened in Work Session in the Osborn Room, 305 East St., at 5:48 p.m., Monday, March 14, 2016.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Meeting was called to order by Mayor Renner who directed the City Clerk to call the roll and the following members answered present:

2. ROLL CALL

Aldermen: Kevin Lower, David Sage, Amelia Buragas, Mboka Mwilambwe, Karen Schmidt, Scott Black, Diana Hauman, Jim Fruin, Joni Painter and Mayor Tari Renner.

Staff Present: David Hales, City Manager; Steve Rasmussen, Assistant City Manager; Cherry Lawson, City Clerk; Patty-Lynn Silva, Finance Director; Jay Tetzloff, Zoo Supervisor; Tom Dabareiner, Plan/Code Enforcement Director; Austin Grammer, Economic Development Coordinator; Nicole Albertson, Human Resources Director; Brian Mohr, Fire Chief; Jim Karch, Public Service Director; Jeff Jurgens, Corporate Counsel; Brendan Heffner, Chief of Police; Bob Yehl, Water Director; Clay Wheeler, Assistant Police Chief.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Renner opened the meeting to receive Public Comment. The following individual provided comments during the meeting.

Richard Buchanan

**4. LEGISLATIVE WORK SESSION TO DISCUSS RECOMMENDED
LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS, STATE OF ILLINOIS BUDGET & FINANCIAL
ISSUES, & MAJOR CITY CAPITAL NEEDS.**

RESOLUTION NO. 2016-05
A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE 2016 ILLINOIS MUNICIPAL LEAGUE'S
LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

David Hales, City Manager, introduced the Council Resolution endorsing the 2016 Illinois Municipal League's (IML) Legislative Agenda. Two (2) items for discussion were 1.) State Shared Revenue and 2.) Mutual Pension.

Mr. Hales stated the General Fund (GF) Budget received approximately \$55 million from the State of Illinois (State). Video Gaming Tax, Local Use Tax and State Motor Fuel Tax were not part of the automatic appropriation funds. The Illinois Municipal League (IML) and the City were requesting Senate consideration and support for same to be subject to an automatic appropriation.

Jeff Jurgens, Corporate Counsel, stated there were two (2) Bills which address pension spiking. Taxpayers helped fund public employee pensions. House Bill (HB) 4398 supported amending the Pension Code for public sector pension plans to prevent unused sick and vacation time compensation from being factored into employee pension benefits. The City supported the legislation and had taken measures to enact policy. HB4509 supported distributing accumulated vacation time payments at least ninety (90) days following an employee's separation from service. The employee would receive the payment, but it would not be applied to their pension benefit. The City had suggested adding an amendment to include sick time. October 2015, the Council adopted a Resolution which stated its position against pension spiking and increasing employee's earnings to enhance pensions. The City would continue to support increased legislation on these issues.

Pension spiking was highlighted last year due to \$26 million in accelerated payments that were required. This year the payments were approximately \$30 million. He noted that accelerated payments continue throughout the State. Mr. Jurgens believed accelerated payments could be incentives for public bodies to adopt better policies.

Mayor Renner believed the legal challenge was the impact to existing employees as these benefits were taken away. Mr. Jurgens stated the City had tried to change policies, but litigation threats were made at the same time law suits were filed. The City wanted to be fair to employees as well as taxpayers and have policies that made sense.

Bill Brady, Illinois State Senator, believed giving up a three percent (3%) guaranteed compounded Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) in exchange for pensionable pay raises was constitutional. One way to do this would be for an employee to give up sick leave rights for a pensionable pay raise. He believed there were only two (2) options: 1.) start over with the pension system or 2.) offer an exchange.

Representative Brady questioned the number of employees eligible for a lump sum pension. Mr. Hales stated a little over a hundred (100) employees were eligible. More were expected to retire within the next four (4) or five (5) years. Mayor Renner stated Springfield's legislative results were monitored prior to the City making a proposal for changes to accumulated sick leave.

Representative Brady noted previous benefit changes to Health Care were ruled unconstitutional. Pension changes were ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. There were theories that had not been tried and tested by court. Senator Bill Brady believed same should be initiated through IML. IML would advise on what to initiate or what to support.

Mr. Hales introduced two (2) major street projects: 1.) Fox Creek Bridge replacement at Union Pacific Railroad and 2.) Hamilton Rd. – Bunn St. to Commerce Pkwy.

Jim Karch, Public Service Director, stated that implemented Master Plans would be used to identify infrastructure requirements. Council had taken steps to fund the projects. Plans for additional maintenance and resurfacing were scheduled to begin within ninety (90) days. The Motor Fuel Tax (MFT) and the dedicated one percent (1%) sales tax had been approved as part of the funding. The City maintained current structures but needed to be strategic about adding new infrastructure when implementing new projects.

He noted that the majority of work on the Hamilton Rd./Fox Creek Corridor had been completed. There were two (2) projects that required completion: 1.) Fox Creek Rd. project and 2.) Hamilton Rd. to Commerce Pkwy project. The Fox Creek Rd. project would be discussed at the Regular Council meeting held on March 14, 2016. Council would consider approving Alternate 2 design for the Fox Creek Bridge replacement at the Union Pacific Railroad. The Project was due to begin spring 2018 or earlier if funding was available.

The Hamilton Rd. to Commerce Pkwy project impacted economic development in that area and would relieve traffic on Veterans Pkwy. The City would apply for a Tiger Grant for funding. In addition, a new grant, FASTLANE opened this year with a deadline to apply by April 4, 2016. He requested Council support for these projects.

Mayor Renner clarified Hamilton Rd. would be a four (4) lane roadway heading to State Farm Corporate South located at 1 State Farm Plz. Same would provide access to the Interstate without traveling on Veterans Pkwy and to the bike trails. Same was part of the criteria for the FASTLANE Grant. The project seemed to fit the FASTLANE Grant better but all Grants would be applied for.

Mr. Karch stated discussions were ongoing with Norfolk Southern Railroad to have an at-grade crossing. Same had an approximate \$10 to \$15 million cost. A bridge requirement would cost approximately \$25 million.

Senator Brady questioned the estimated completed road economic impact. Mr. Karch stated the numbers were not available. Dan Brady, State Representative, questioned whether the projects were part of the One Voice trip. Mayor Renner answered affirmatively.

Mr. Hales concluded the City's updates. He requested updates on the State's current budget.

Representative Brady cited the recent House and Senate proposals, were procurement and higher education funding. In particular, trying to direct funds from other sources to generate revenue for higher education and Monetary Award Program (MAP) Grants. He believed there were excess funds available for funding these projects but same would not be utilized.

Alderman Buragas believed higher education was important to the Community. The Colleges relied on the State to provide funding. She believed fund sweeping was not an appealing solution as it would undermine the City's efforts for a balanced budget.

Alderman Sage questioned the State budget passage. Representative Brady stated the Governor was clear in developing Plan A for the budget with possible revenues as part of the Plan. Keith Sommers, State Representative, believed the budget would be passed by Labor Day. He appreciated the work the City had performed on its budget in being transparent and honest.

Senator Brady believed a 2017 balanced budget would be impossible with the problems the State was facing. Alderman Sage questioned mandated rollbacks. Senator Brady stated the City would not receive as much funds as wanted or needed in the future.

Representative Brady believed Bills passed have been tied to a revenue source. The Emergency Budget Act which was established to transfer funds where needed but had not been utilized.

Alderman Black thanked Senator Brady and Representatives Brady & Sommers for attending. Council had determined that Economic Development was priority. Investors or Entrepreneurs were concerned with the State's budget. He questioned how to respond. Representative Brady cited the following: nine (9) state universities; our infrastructure; longevity of existing companies. The present impasse of the budget was not going to be permanent.

Representative Sommers believed negatives overshadow positives. Existing Entrepreneurs and businesses should talk about why they were still here in the City. Senator Brady stated obstacles were budget, Workers Comp and property taxes. Property taxes were one of the biggest.

5. WRAP UP & ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Renner asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion by Alderman Hauman, seconded by Alderman Schmidt, that the meeting be adjourned. Time: 6:43 p.m.

Motion carried, (Viva Voce).

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON

ATTEST

Tari Renner, Mayor

Cherry L. Lawson, City Clerk