

**CITY OF ROCK ISLAND**  
**CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION**  
City Council Chambers, City Hall, 3rd Floor,  
1528 Third Avenue, Rock Island, IL

7/28/2025 - Minutes

**1. Call to Order**

Mayor Harris called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

**2. Roll Call**

Mayor Harris asked City Clerk Samantha Gange to call the roll.

Present: Alderpersons Glen Evans, Linda Barnes, Jenni Swanson, Dylan Parker, Mark Poulos and Mayor Ashley Harris.

Alderperson Randy Hurt arrived at 6:30 p.m.

Absent: Alderperson Bill Healy

Staff: City Manager Todd Thompson, Attorney Leslie Day, City Clerk Samantha Gange, and other City Staff.

**3. Presentations**

a. Finance Department 2026 Budget Preview Presentation

Finance Director Jessica Sager said one of the primary goals is to balance the budget. Over the last few years, there have been challenges preparing the budget, but staff's goal is to keep financial impacts to a minimum while still maintaining the same level of service to businesses and residents. She added that fiscal responsibility remained a top priority and stressed the importance of not only maintaining the City's current financial position, but also improving its future financial position.

Ms. Sager explained that some assumptions were built into the preliminary budget, and those items will be adjusted after the final numbers are received. Staff estimate health insurance will increase by 10%. For police and fire pensions, they assumed 100% funding as per the actuary's recommendation. The estimated Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund employer rate is 5.98%. A 2% overall merit increase and a 3% general wage increase (GWI) are also assumed.

Ms. Sager discussed the challenges staff faced while preparing the budget. Continual decreases in the personal property replacement tax and use tax are expected. Personnel make up the largest budget expense category, causing GWI and minimum wage increases to have a large impact on the general fund budget. Ms. Sager said staff are continuing to work on closing negative fund balances and turning funds positive. In consideration of aging infrastructure, an amortization fund was established in late 2024. Approximately 78% of budgeted revenues are in categories with restrictions, creating another challenge.

Ms. Sager went over the 2025 property tax allocation: 64% for the police and fire pensions, 15% for the library, 14% for parks and recreation and 6% for the general fund. Expenses staff will consider while budget

planning include general obligation bonds and Illinois Environmental Protection Agency loan payments, which total over \$10 million.

Ms. Sager said the remaining general fund surplus for 2024 was \$6.7 million and \$2.8 million was used to balance the 2025 general fund and parks budgets. The 2024 general fund surplus is \$1.17 million, and the remaining general fund surplus is \$3.98 million.

Ms. Sager discussed the timeline of the budget schedule. The proposed 2026 budget and the capital improvement plan (CIP) budget will be presented in October and November, respectively. The second readings of the budget and property tax levy ordinances and the CIP adoption are scheduled for December.

City Manager Thompson said Council can modify the budget schedule and include department presentations.

#### **4. Public Comment**

Mayor Harris asked if anyone in the public wished to speak.

Sebastiana Freiburg, Curtis Lundy, Shaelyn Dean, Tim Murphy, Norah Brenny, Nina Struss and Mary Lou Pearson spoke about the proposed Casino West project and the Rock Island wetlands.

Barb Wlaskolich spoke about Big Island and TIF.

Kristie Engerman spoke about the proposed amendments to Chapter 4: Building Regulations of the Municipal Code and the International Residential Code.

#### **5. Adjourn**

- a. Motion: Motion to adjourn.
- VV Voice vote is needed.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Parker moved to adjourn; Aldersperson Poulos seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 6-0-1 voice vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Evans, Hurt, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Healy.

The Study Session concluded at 6:43 p.m.

[MIN\_SIGNATURES]