

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

8/11/2025 - Minutes

**1. Call to Order**

Mayor Harris called the meeting to order at 5:45 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, Bill Healy and Mayor Ashley Harris.

Alderman Randy Hurt arrived at 6:41 p.m.

Absent: None.

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

**3. Presentations**

a. Land Bank Update

Community Development Director and Quad Cities Land Bank Authority (QCLBA) Chairperson Miles Brainard said the QCLBA was formed in 2022 by Rock Island, Moline, and East Moline. He explained that land banks are a tool used to stop the abandonment cycle of properties by acquiring them, clearing any title issues and returning them to productive, local ownership.

Mr. Brainard said the challenges of land banks include apprehension by counties to sell to or collaborate with land banks due to the Supreme Court ruling of *Tyler v. Hennepin County*, as well as the high costs of insurance and auditing services, staffing costs and the slow and time-consuming legal process to acquire properties. He remarked that, despite the challenges, the QCLBA has had several successes. Properties within all member cities are being held and marketed by the land bank, and positive media attention has increased interest from local investors.

Mr. Brainard said the QCLBA is looking to make some changes to the model. The agency is considering moving to a model with a smaller flat fee per member community to cover basic operation costs and transitioning the land bank manager from a salary role to one based primarily on commission. He said the agency hoped to expand its fees for service offerings in anticipation of recruiting more member communities with different needs. The agency plans to continue to position itself as a focal point for housing conversations, especially around infill housing on vacant lots.

Mr. Brainard said the agency is currently working with an IHDA grant to acquire ten properties in Rock Island. Future plans for the agency include increasing capacity and networking with partners interested in investment opportunities or acquiring properties, as well as advocating for more state resources and creating a workable

auction arrangement with Rock Island County.

Alderspersion Parker said he would like the agency to explore local solutions for funding.

b. Project NOW Presentation

Project NOW Executive Director Dwight Ford said Project NOW had gathered data after opening their former location as an emergency overflow winter shelter and introduced their Chief Operating Officer, Ron Lund.

Mr. Lund provided a brief history of local emergency winter shelters. King’s Harvest originally operated a shelter serving about 400 individuals before closing in 2018. From 2018 to 2024, Humility Homes in Davenport expanded its winter capacity from 88 to 130 beds but has not increased it further since. With the short notice from Humility Homes, Project NOW quickly opened an emergency shelter in its former administration building in downtown Rock Island. Due to the short timeline, neighbors were not notified in advance. The shelter operated for 90 days, averaging 26 individuals per night. Mr. Lund said the Good Neighbors initiative was created after hearing concerns from neighbors. Mr. Lund noted that the shelter will not reopen next year in the same location, as the property is being sold, and Project NOW is seeking another location. He introduced Northwestern Illinois Continuum of Care (CoC) Coordinator Amanda Erwin.

Ms. Erwin explained that the Northwestern Illinois CoC is a network of homeless service providers spanning over 15 counties and that it is the only recognized body to report homeless numbers to HUD and is required by federal law to work with municipalities and elected officials. The CoC sets strategic planning goals, examines service gaps and ensures provider agencies abide by best practices.

Ms. Erwin reported that there are 224 shelter beds currently in the Quad Cities but 488 identified homeless individuals. Limited housing options, the need for specialized care, and client choice are challenges in reducing homelessness.

Dr. Ford said the street outreach operation concluded in July and clarified that an agreement designating the Rock Island Downtown Alliance as a point of contact for neighbors had not been finalized. He said he would like to find a solution where each municipality has a shelter in place, so homeless individuals would not need to uproot themselves and travel to a different city or state. He added that 488 is just the visible number of homeless individuals, and there are many more individuals in the area experiencing homelessness.

**4. Public Comment**

Alderspersion Healy said he owned the Stern Center but was not in any way affiliated with Matt Stern.

Andrew and Paige Burke spoke about the frequency of car accidents on 38 Street between 18 and 20 Avenues.

**5. Adjourn**

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

MOTION:

Aldersperson Poulos moved to adjourn; Aldersperson Swanson seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Parker, Poulos, Healy, Evans, Hurt, Barnes, Swanson. Nay: None. Absent: None.

The Study Session concluded at 6:45 p.m.

[MIN\_SIGNATURES]