

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

8/25/2025 - Minutes

1. Call to Order

Mayor Harris called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

2. Roll Call

Mayor Harris asked Deputy Clerk Amanda Torres to call the roll.

Present: Alderpersons Jenni Swanson, Dylan Parker, Mark Poulos and Mayor Harris.

Alderperson Glen Evans arrived at 5:04 p.m. and Alderperson Linda Barnes arrived at 5:05 p.m.

Absent: Alderpersons Randy Hurt and Bill Healy.

Staff: City Manager Todd Thompson, Attorney Leslie Day, Deputy Clerk Amanda Torres, and other City Staff.

Mayor Harris announced that public comment would be moved to after the presentations.

3. Public Comment

Ron Lund from Project NOW spoke about the Continuum of Care.

Annika O'Melia spoke about the Third Place.

Brian Ritter spoke about Milan Bottoms.

Mollie Thies spoke about the moratorium on homeless shelters.

4. Presentations

- a. Presentation from Christian Care.

Executive Director Frank Roe provided an overview of Christian Care, which has served the community for 106 years. He noted there are only two facilities on the Illinois side of the river that provide shelter to individuals experiencing homelessness: Christian Care and Martha's House. Christian Care offers 42 beds for men, six beds dedicated to Veterans' Transitional Living, and three beds for the court system, serving approximately 200–250 individuals annually. Martha's House provides housing for up to 20 women, including women with children, and serves about 100 individuals annually.

Mr. Roe explained that Christian Care provides case management services through a holistic approach, addressing basic needs, connecting clients with mainstream resources, removing barriers to housing, and supporting transitions into permanent housing of choice in collaboration with other nonprofit partners. He noted that the Rescue Mission is projected to serve approximately 45,000 meals this year. In partnership with Project NOW, Christian Care also provides street outreach services to individuals living unsheltered. Additional

services include chapel services, a warming and cooling shelter, a parish nurse program, Prairie State Legal assistance, a public resource lab and library, and public showers.

He clarified that the showers and meals are available to anyone free of charge and confirmed that Christian Care is part of the Coordinated Entry System. He further explained that the street outreach team is comprised of staff familiar with the local area and the locations where unsheltered individuals may be found. The team also builds relationships with hospitals, law enforcement, and other community partners to ensure connection to services. He said 40-45 percent of the population they serve suffers with mental health issues and they can assist with getting their medications, etc.

Mr. Roe explained the distinction between an emergency shelter and a homeless shelter, noting that an emergency shelter's primary purpose is to provide temporary housing in response to either general homelessness or specific emergencies. He further stated that Christian Care operates as a dry shelter rather than a wet shelter and utilizes a hybrid model.

b. Presentation from Humility Homes.

Executive Director Ashley Williams of Humility Homes and Services provided an overview of the organization's history and mission, noting their commitment to ending homelessness by offering housing opportunities and supportive services throughout the greater Quad Cities. She reported that between July 2024 and June 2025, more than 1,300 individuals were served through shelter or housing programs. Ms. Williams stated that Rock Island County has experienced a 25 to 40 percent increase in the number of individuals experiencing homelessness. She also explained the methodology used to count homeless populations and presented a chart illustrating the number of housing beds required to achieve functional zero in the State of Illinois.

Ms. Williams next discussed Coordinated Entry, or COC, describing it as a system-wide process designed to quickly and equitably connect individuals with needed services. She noted that in the Quad Cities, Scott County and Rock Island County collaborate to develop solutions for those experiencing homelessness, with Project NOW managing the Illinois side and Humility overseeing the Iowa side. Ms. Williams highlighted their street outreach coordination in Rock Island, noting limited staffing capacity. She stated that the recommendation is to provide a 30-hour-per-week street outreach worker dedicated to covering the City of Rock Island and partnering with the downtown area in a model similar to Davenport. Additionally, she explained that two shelter beds would be reserved for Rock Island Police Department drop-offs and outlined the funding required for the next three years. Ms. Williams further noted ongoing collaboration with the Quad Cities Open Network to secure funding for a full-time Library Social Worker to assist individuals seeking access to coordinated entry and other resources. Ms. Williams noted additional recommendations, including expanding community policing efforts and a day center, among other recommendations.

Executive Director Cecilia Bailey of the Quad Cities Open Network reported that the organization is a collaborative entity working with approximately 84 partner agencies in health and human services to provide a shared referral system for individuals in need. She stated that the Network works collectively across multiple areas to identify service gaps and barriers within the Quad Cities and highlighted ongoing behavioral health initiatives.

Ms. Bailey reviewed opportunities identified through several focus groups conducted in 2023, emphasizing the importance of collaboration among service agencies and the value of creating neutral, easily accessible access points to community resources. She stated that by expanding the structure of the referral system and

broadening its scope, this system can have a measurable impact on our community.

Ms. Bailey discussed the funding and said there wasn't a specific formula, but suggested amounts that the City could contribute funds towards, such as a library social worker position.

Ms. Williams discussed the need to expand street outreach and add low-barrier shelters to strengthen and expand services and increase community impact. She also highlighted the shortage of affordable housing in the Quad Cities.

It was noted that achieving functional zero will require greater collaboration among agencies on both sides of the river and a more coordinated team approach is needed.

5. Adjourn

a.

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

MOTION:

Aldersperson Evans moved to adjourn; Aldersperson Poulos seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 5-0-2 voice vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Evans, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Healy, Hurt.

The study session concluded at 6:09 p.m.

[MIN_SIGNATURES]