

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

12/18/2023 - Minutes

1. Call to Order

Mayor Thoms called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

2. Roll Call

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

Present: Alderpersons Moses Robinson, Randy Hurt, Judith Gilbert, Jenni Swanson, Dylan Parker, Mark Poulos and Billy Healy and Mayor Mike Thoms.

Absent: None.

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

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Thoms led in the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. Moment of Silence

Mayor Thoms requested a moment of silence. A moment of silence was observed.

5. Public Comment

Carl Brannon addressed Council regarding a rezoning request on the agenda. He asked Council members to approve the request and allow the Jerusalem Free Methodist Church to be a congregation at this location. He said there are many vacant lots around the property and parking should not be an issue or nuisance to surrounding property owners. He said the church would positively impact the community.

Jake Meisenbach addressed Council regarding a Special Use Permit request on the agenda. He said he made a large investment in improving the dilapidated property he purchased from the City, including adding a new building. He said he met with City staff several times, and he was clear about his intent to add a rental storage building on the property to offset the cost of the investment. Building permits were issued, he was allowed to pour the concrete foundation and build the building. He said he was confused when the City sent a letter stating that the request.

6. Minutes

- a. Minutes from the December 11, 2023 Study Session and City Council Meeting.

Motion:	Motion whether or not to approve the minutes as printed.
VV	Voice vote is needed.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Gilbert moved to approve the minutes as printed; Aldersperson Swanson seconded.

VOTE:

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

7. Update Rock Island

Celebrate Martin Luther King Day with the community

The 41st Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Service and Awards will be held January 15 at 10:30 a.m. at the MLK Community Center, 630 9th Street, Rock Island. With a theme of “Walk Together, March Forward,” the event will also be streamed on Facebook and YouTube. Nominations are being accepted for the “I Have a Dream Award.” The deadline is this Friday, December 22. Go to MLKcenter.org for nomination requirements and the application.

Holiday closings

City Hall will be closed over the holidays on Monday, December 25th; Tuesday, December 26th and Monday, January 1st.

Rock Island Public Library branches will be closed for Christmas from December 23rd through the 26th and over New Year’s from December 30th through January 2nd.

Don’t forget to check out the Library of Things if you need a cake pan, muffin tin, cookie cutters or candy molds for the holidays. Your Rock Island Public Library card also gives you access to great online content such as eBooks, audiobooks, movies, music, magazines and more.

Would you or someone you know make a great firefighter?

The Rock Island Fire Department is accepting applications now through December 31. If you have a passion for serving others and a willingness to be part of a team, this is your chance. Call 309-732-2800 to be connected with the recruiting team or apply at rigov.org.

And finally ...

Congratulations to Wastewater Plant Supervisor Lisa Perry for her nomination as “Outstanding Operator of the Year” by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency’s Division of Water Pollution Control, Field Operations Section.

8. Ordinances

- a. An Ordinance adopting the budget for the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2024 and ending December 31, 2024. (Second Reading)

Motion:	Motion whether or not to adopt the ordinance.
RC	Roll Call vote is needed.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Hurt moved to pass the ordinance; Aldersperson Gilbert seconded.

VOTE:

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

- b. An Ordinance for the levy, assessment, and collection of property taxes for the City of Rock Island for the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2024 and ending December 31, 2024. (Second Reading)

Motion:	Motion whether or not to pass the ordinance.
RC	Roll Call vote is needed.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Healy moved to pass the ordinance; Aldersperson Swanson seconded.

VOTE:

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

- c. An Ordinance for the property tax levy of the Downtown Special Services Area (SSA), providing \$310,633 in property taxes for collection in the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2024 and ending December 31, 2024. (Second Reading)

Motion: Motion whether or not to pass the ordinance.

RC Roll Call vote is needed.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Parker moved to pass the ordinance; Aldersperson Robinson seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 6-1-0 roll call vote. Aye: Healy, Robinson, Hurt, Swanson, Parker, Poulos. Nay: Gilbert. Absent: None.

9. Claims

- a. Claims for the week of December 1st through December 7, 2023, in the amount of \$318,308.20 and payroll for the weeks of November 13 through November 26, 2023, in the amount of \$1,698,148.99.

Motion: Motion whether or not to allow the claims and payroll.

RC Roll Call vote is needed.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Gilbert moved to allow the claims and payroll; Aldersperson Robinson seconded.

VOTE:

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

- b. Report from the Public Works Department regarding payment in the amount of \$108,766.60 to McClintock Trucking & Excavating, Inc. of Silvis, IL for the Water Service and Sewer Lateral Repair Contract.

Motion: Motion whether or not to allow the claim.

RC Roll Call vote is needed.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Hurt moved to allow the claim; Aldersperson Gilbert seconded.

Aldersperson Parker recused himself from the vote due to the nature of his employment.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 6-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Healy, Robinson, Hurt, Gilbert, Swanson, Poulos. Nay: None. Absent: None.

10. Contracts / Agreements

- a. Report from the Community & Economic Development Department regarding bids for the demolition of five (5) residential properties, recommending the contract be awarded to Miller Trucking & Excavating of Silvis, IL in the amount of \$169,989.00.

Motion: Motion whether or not to award the bid as recommended and authorize the City Manager to execute the contract documents.

RC Roll Call vote is needed.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Gilbert moved to award the bid as recommended and authorize the City Manager to execute the contract documents; Aldersperson Swanson seconded.

Aldersperson Parked recused himself from the vote due to the nature of his employment.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 6-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Healy, Robinson, Hurt, Gilbert, Swanson, Poulos. Nay: None. Absent: None.

- b. Report from the Community & Economic Development Department regarding a bid for the demolition of the Klass Buildings, recommending the contract be awarded to Coopman Trucking & Excavating of Moline, IL in the amount of \$198,062.00.

Motion: Motion whether or not to award the bid as recommended and authorize the City Manager to execute the contract documents.

RC Roll Call vote is needed.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Hurt moved to award the bid as recommended and authorize the City Manager to execute the contract documents; Aldersperson Poulos seconded.

Aldersperson Parker recused himself from the vote due to the nature of his employment.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 6-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Healy, Robinson, Hurt, Gilbert, Swanson, Poulos. Nay: None. Absent: None.

- c. Report from the Community & Economic Development Department regarding an Option to Purchase the 31st Street Site with Community Home Partners.

Motion:	Motion whether or not to approve the option to purchase as recommended.
RC	Roll Call vote is needed.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Gilbert moved to approve the option to purchase as recommended; Aldersperson Poulos seconded.

VOTE:

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

11. Ordinances with Reports from Departments

- a. Report from the Community & Economic Development Department regarding a rezoning request from Etoke Abwe at 830 14 1/2th Street. (First Reading)

Motion:	Motion whether or not to deny the request.
RC	Roll Call vote is needed.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Robinson moved to consider the ordinance; Aldersperson Swanson seconded.

DISCUSSION:

Community & Economic Development Director Miles Brainard discussed the details of the rezoning request. He noted the map of where the property was located and said it is located in a residential area and does not have adequate parking and the rezoning could create potential conflict down the road if the church vacates the property and another business moves in. He noted the Planning Commission recommended approving the request.

Mr. Brainard said that because this is a rezoning request, and if the church does vacate in the future and another business with a higher intensity takes over, there would be a conflict with the parking as the zone remains the same and does not go away with the property owner. He said staff concern is the long term impact of the rezoning to a business in a predominately residential area.

Aldersperson Robinson said adding a church to this specific area would be advantageous to the surrounding community. He said many members of the congregation reside in the surrounding area and parking would not be an issue.

Aldersperson Gilbert asked Mr. Brainard to clarify whether churches are allowed in residential areas. Mr. Brainard responded they were no longer allowed in residential areas under the new zoning code as they are considered an O1 district.

Aldersperson Parker asked if a Special Use Permit (SUP) was considered for this request. Mr. Brainard responded that staff discussed which of these would be more appropriate, and based on this specific request, a rezoning was recommended. He said generally speaking, this type of request is more suited for a rezoning given the more intense use. If Council members wished to have this request be considered as a Special Use Permit, then it would need to go back through the Planning Commission for consideration. He noted that the congregation also plans to make renovations to the interior of the building, which typically isn't allowed under a SUP.

Several Council members discussed whether the Special Use Permit process for this request would be appropriate given the time constraints that could be burdensome on the church. Aldersperson Parker noted this is only a first reading and would still need a second reading at the January meeting.

Alderspersons Robinson and Swanson withdrew their motion to consider the ordinance.

Aldersperson Robinson made a motion to consider, suspend the rules, and pass the ordinance; seconded by Aldersperson Swanson.

VOTE:

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

- b. Report from the Community & Economic Development Department regarding a Special Use Permit request from Jacob Meisenbach at 1229 2nd Avenue. (First Reading)

Motion:	Motion whether or not to deny the request.
RC	Roll Call vote is needed.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Poulos moved to suspend the rules, consider and pass the ordinance; Aldersperson Healy seconded.

Aldersperson Robinson remarked he wanted additional information on this item before passing the ordinance.

Mr. Brainard explained that staff's concern is the use of the word storage, as staff were under the impression storage was specific to his business equipment and supplies. However, staff did not ask Mr. Meisenbach if he were renting space out to others, as all the information received by staff indicated he would not be. When staff saw the social media posts advertising the property for mini-warehousing storage facilities, they were surprised.

Mr. Brainard said there was discussion among Council members a few years ago about storage units in the City and the need to find a way to regulate them, including collecting taxes. At that time, the Council gave direction to staff that storage units were not a desirable use and to be limited to the industrial districts. Staff have been consistent with following Council direction on limiting storage units to industrial districts.

Council members discussed the area of the property and noted it was a dilapidated and blighted area and the investment of adding a new storage unit building was an improvement.

Aldersperson Robinson said he is in favor of placing this item for a second reading at the next Council meeting to allow members to get more information.

Aldersperson Poulos moved to amend the motion to consider the ordinance; seconded by Aldersperson Healy.

VOTE:

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

12. Resolutions with Reports from Departments

- a. Report from the City Clerk regarding a Resolution approving the partial release of Closed session minutes and the destruction of audio recording the the same Closed Session minutes.

Motion:	Motion whether or not to approve the partial release of Closed Session Minutes as recommended and adopt the Resolution.
RC	Roll Call vote is needed.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Gilbert moved to approve the partial release of Closed Session minutes as recommended and adopt the Resolution; Aldersperson Swanson seconded.

VOTE:

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

13. Budget/Finance Items

- a. Report from the Finance Department regarding a budget adjustment in the amount of \$199,892.00 in the TIF Locks Fund (208).
- b. Report from the Finance Department regarding a budget adjustment for the MLK Activity Fund (901).

Motion:	Motion whether or not to approve budget adjustments a and b as recommended.
RC	Roll Call vote is needed.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Robinson moved to approve budget adjustments a and b as recommended; Aldersperson Poulos seconded.

VOTE:

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

- c. Report from the Finance Department regarding amendments to the Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for CY 2024 through CY 2028.

Motion:	Motion whether or not to approve the amendments to the CIP for CY 2024 through CY 2028.
RC	Roll Call vote is needed.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Parker moved to approve the amendments to the CIP for CY 2024 through CY 2028; Aldersperson Swanson seconded.

VOTE:

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

14. Department Reports

- a. Report from the Human Resources Department regarding a General Wage Increase (Non-Affiliated Employees).

Motion:	Motion whether or not approve the General Wage increase as recommended.
RC	Roll Call vote is needed.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Gilbert moved to approve the General Wage increase as recommended; Aldersperson Healy seconded.

VOTE:

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

- b. Report from the Community & Economic Development Department regarding a three-year Economic Development Partnership Agreement with the Development Association of Rock Island (DARI) through December 31, 2027.

Motion:	Motion whether or not to approve the three-year agreement and authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement, subject to minor attorney modifications.
RC	Roll Call vote is needed.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Gilbert moved to approve the three-year agreement and authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement, subject to minor attorney modifications; Aldersperson Swanson seconded.

VOTE:

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

- c. Report from the Community & Economic Development Department regarding a six-month contract extension for consultant services with Two Rivers & Associates, Inc through July 1, 2024.

Motion: Motion whether or not to approve the six-month contract extension and authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement, subject to minor attorney modifications.

RC Roll Call vote is needed.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Hurt moved to approve the six-month contract extension and authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement, subject to minor attorney modifications; Aldersperson Gilbert seconded.

VOTE:

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

- d. Report from the City Manager regarding Freedom of Information Act and Open Meeting Act Officer appointments for CY 2024.

Motion: Motion whether or not to approve the appointments as recommended.

RC Roll Call vote is needed.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Gilbert moved to approve the appointments as recommended; Aldersperson Healy seconded.

VOTE:

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

15. Appointments to Boards/Commissions/Committees

- a. Report from the Mayor's Office regarding appointments to the Arts & Beautification Commission and Planning and Zoning Commission.

Motion: Motion whether or not to approve the appointments as recommended.

RC Roll Call vote is needed.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Parker moved to approve the appointments as recommended; Aldersperson Robinson seconded.

VOTE:

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

16. Events/Misc Requests

- a. Report from the City Clerk's office regarding a request from the St. Patrick Society Quad Cities USA to hold their annual parade on Saturday, March 16, 2024.

Motion:	Motion whether or not to approve the event as recommended.
RC	Roll Call vote is needed.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Gilbert moved to approve the event as recommended; Aldersperson Healy seconded.

VOTE:

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

17. Other Business/New Business

Aldersperson Gilbert said she was not in favor of investing money in a Citizen Satisfaction Survey at this time. She said an ARPA survey was conducted last year and there were many comments that provided interesting ideas and data on how to improve, but nothing has been done with the information.

Several Council members expressed that a survey was not desired at this time, but could be considered in the future.

Mayor Thoms said that this survey is more statistically significant. The survey can also serve as a data point and tool for Council to track whether there has been improvement or progress.

Aldersperson Swanson said she would rather apply the money that would be used for the survey towards several Unplugged events each year. She said she a survey could be implemented in the future, like five years down the road, but now is not the right time. Aldersperson Parker commented that these events only attract a small portion of the makeup of Rock Island and are not representative of the entire community.

Aldersperson Parker remarked that the survey is a tool to coincide with the strategic planning process. The City has never used data or quantified how goals are met. Surveying would allow the City to collect meaningful data and provide accountability measures. He said he was not in favor of conducting another strategic planning process without a survey.

Aldersperson Gilbert said she sent out information to residents in her Ward regarding the proposed street maintenance tax fund and received lots of feedback. She encouraged staff to schedule a public forum soon to allow the public the opportunity to comment.

City Manager Thompson said he would provide Council with additional information about the survey. He noted this survey is different from others like the ARPA survey as it is truly a random sample making it a statistically valid survey. Mr. Thompson said the cities he worked for utilized a survey like this.

Mayor Thoms wished Terry Tilka, owner of RIBCO, a happy retirement and thanked him for his service to Rock Island's downtown district over several decades.

18. Adjourn

- a. Motion: Motion to adjourn to January 8, 2024.
VV Voice vote is needed.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Parker moved to adjourn the meeting; Aldersperson Swanson seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 7-0-0 voice vote. Aye: Healy, Robinson, Hurt, Gilbert, Swanson, Parker, Poulos. Nay: None. Absent: None.

The meeting concluded at 7:44 p.m.