

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

5/22/2023 - Minutes

1. Call to Order

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

2. Roll Call

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

Present: Alderpersons Randy Hurt, Judith Gilbert, Jenni Swanson, Mark Poulos, Bill Healy, and Mayor Mike Thoms.

Alderperson Moses Robinson arrived at 5:05 p.m.

Absent: Alderperson Dylan Parker.

Staff: City Manager Todd Thompson, City Attorney Dave Morrison, City Clerk Samantha Gange, and other City staff.

3. Public Comment

Mayor Thoms asked if there was anyone in the audience that wished to comment. No residents volunteered to speak.

4. Presentations

a. Presentation from the Public Works Department - Refuse Collection Efficiencies

Municipal Services Superintendent Luke Vanlandegen addressed Council regarding proposed efficiencies for the City's refuse collection. He provided a brief history of waste collection in Rock Island and background of currently available services. The City currently offers automated and manual refuse pickup, yard waste, recycling, special pickups, and leaf collection.

Mr. Vanlandegen discussed the differences between automated and manual refuse pickup. Automated pickup is the primary pickup service offered by the City with 14,034 customers, and manual pickups account for 443 stops. Yard waste accounts for 1,020 customers, and recycling is for 3,708 customers. He said the special pickup program is a popular service that accounts for 20 to 25 stops per day, and City-owned location stops that account for 20 to 25 stops per day as well. Leaf collecting is also done seasonally in the Spring and Fall, which requires special equipment rental and seasonal labor. Mr. Vanlandegen reviewed available City resources for refuse, which

includes many new Council-approved vehicles. He noted the employees that work within the refuse department.

Mr. Vanlandegen reviewed current operational inefficiencies, beginning with the variety of pickup days for different City services. He explained the issues involved with the current collection schedule, including more misses, resident confusion, more wear and tear on equipment, more phone calls to Public Works, and additional costs. He discussed additional inefficiencies within leaf and yard waste collection schedules. He noted that since equipment is utilized daily, there is little down time for preventative maintenance.

Mr. Vanlandegen reviewed staff recommendations and benefits to the proposed changes. These include a modified collection schedule spanning Monday through Thursday, and 10-hour days for three automated truck employees. He said these recommendations would affect 6,820 customers, or 46 percent of the customer base. Benefits include the syncing of solid waste, yard waste, and leaf collection, utilizing Friday for preventative vehicle maintenance and special pickups or miscellaneous functions, better employee retention, and no weekend pickups for most holidays. He said it would improve efficiency with leaf season collection, and there would be no equipment rental, less overtime, and less seasonal labor. Mr. Vanlandegen noted that refuse collection jobs are very difficult to perform.

Mr. Vanlandegen fielded questions from Council. Alderperson Robinson asked how any potential change would be communicated with residents. Mr. Vanlandegen said staff would hope to implement the syncing prior to leaf season in the fall and work with Community Engagement Manager Sarah Hayden and the administrative team to communicate it to the public, including mailers. Alderperson Healy asked what would happen if a pickup was missed on a Thursday. Mr. Vanlandegen confirmed they would come on Friday. Alderperson Healy asked if the current refuse operators approved of the proposed changes. Mr. Vanlandegen said the bargaining units also understood the current inefficiencies, and they have been amenable.

Alderperson Swanson asked if recycling would be on the same day as trash pickup. Mr. Vanlandegen replied that the current contract does not allow for that, but something could be discussed in the future with a new recycling contract.

b. Presentation from Augustana College and the Public Works Department - Lead Service Line Replacement Project

Utilities Superintendent Jason Upton addressed Council regarding a partnership with Augustana College to prepare an inventory of all lead-based water systems as mandated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). He noted a grant had been applied for to cover collection of data for the inventory. He introduced Dr. Michael Reisner, Director of the Upper Mississippi Center for Sustainable Communities, Dr. Kimberly Murphy, Director of the Center for Advancement of Community Health and Wellness, and Dr. Jenny Arkle, Program Manager of the Upper Mississippi Center for Sustainable Communities.

Dr. Murphy addressed Council, noting that 12 to 14 Augustana College students were also part of the inventory study, but were not present at the meeting. She provided an outline of the presentation including goals of the partnership, the progress to date since August 2022, highlights of the inventory, discussing the next steps, and help requested of the City. She next discussed objectives of the partnership with the City. These objectives include compiling and integrating all existing information and data on Lead Service Line (LSLs) materials, building and evaluating a predictive model of unknown LSLs (in progress, and determining LSL material by collecting data via self-verification and student-led verification. The students will sample low, moderate, and high risk homes, then validate and refine the predictive model. An updated inventory will be due back to the state in April of 2024.

Dr. Murphy discussed the main focus of the presentation, lead exposure, including what problems it can cause and

the inherent associated challenges. One of these challenges is the cost to mitigate the service line, which can be between \$5,000 and \$12,000. She described what a water service line was and how it relates to water mains and private properties. She noted students compiled information for over 4000 historical inspection reports.

Dr. Reisner addressed Council and discussed a map illustrating the predictive model and what the team believes are the unknowns. He broke down the map by ward and age of homes, and the likelihood of the existence of LSLs. The highest likelihoods of lead in the ground exists in Wards 1, 5, and 6 based on the age of the housing stock. He described other maps illustrating vulnerable populations and median household incomes.

Dr. Reisner discussed the next steps in the inventory process. During the summer of 2023, residents will be able to self-verify service line material via a survey sent in the water bill cycle. Also, student researchers will verify representative samples of residences, and a model will be developed and validated for any remaining unknowns. He said phase two of the process would be in the winter of 2023, which would begin the discussion of fair financing and replacement plans for water service lines. A replacement and financing plan needs to be submitted to the state by the April 2024 deadline. He provided a link to the City website that will eventually have the survey and self-verification listed for the public.

Dr. Reisner said the next steps in the fall of 2023 will be to evaluate alternative sources of financing to fund replacements in an equitable manner while prioritizing the highest risk and most vulnerable areas. He noted that the team will need help getting the word out to engage the public about the survey and verification. Alderperson Healy said the team should ensure that students going to homes know how much repairs might cost, as it will be asked of them. Mr. Upton said the important part will be getting the word out to the public about the dangers of lead, and staff may go to church or ward meetings to assist in that. He said the survey will likely be available beginning in June. He added the state is having people sign a waiver if they do not want to make repairs.

Alderperson Robinson noted the barriers in his ward to getting residents to complete the survey, including language and trust differences. He encouraged working with various organizations to assist, and expressed concern about getting notice to the many renters in the area. Mr. Upton encouraged Council members to inform himself or the Augustana team as to which individuals or groups to contact in order to better facilitate the inventory.

Alderperson Robinson said he holds town halls and works with Community Caring Conference for cleanups, which present two opportunities to inform the public.

Alderperson Swanson asked if the survey would be detailed enough to assist residents, or would the information be based on the age of the house. Mr. Upton said he would be bringing pipe examples to show differences in copper, lead, and galvanized pipes, and details are available on the website, as well as the option in the survey to ask for help in identifying lead.

Alderperson Gilbert asked if residents currently enrolled in the Water Service Repair Program could use that insurance for assistance. Mr. Upton said revisions to that program would need to be made, as it would increase participation in the program. Alderperson Gilbert said the City's cultural liaison would hopefully be able to help with the refugee communities. Community and Economic Development Director Miles Brainard said this is a good example of why such a position is important, as many residents in vulnerable populations may not be aware that lead is dangerous. Alderperson Gilbert noted an upcoming ward meeting on June 19, and a Rock Island County NAACP Housing Committee on June 10 as opportunities to reach residents.

Mayor Thoms asked if the Augustana students were participating as part of a class, or if they were paid for their time. Dr. Murphy said the students in question were paid in the amount of the state minimum, and both an engineering and sociology and anthropology class were integrated as part of their curriculum. Mayor Thoms thanked everyone for their partnership with the City.

c. Presentation from Family Resources and Rock Island Police Chief Landi - Group Violence

Intervention (GVI)

Mayor Thoms noted that the City of Davenport, Iowa has been outstanding in collaboration on this partnership, referencing his trip with Police Chief Rich Landi to Washington, D.C. to learn more about addressing gun violence through Group Violence Intervention (GVI). Chief Landi said the types of violence seen require a different approach to divert individuals away from being victims or some away from committing the crimes. He worked with the City of Davenport and hoped to bring the program to Rock Island, and initial funding through the state helped in hiring personnel to begin. He noted collaboration with Family Resources in 2022 for victim assistance, and GVI is the next step.

Deputy Chief Tim McCloud addressed Council and said GVI data has provided a better picture of shots fired issues in the City. He noted the large increase from 2021 to 2022, and 2023 numbers are staying consistent. He pointed to an analysis that shows there are a small number of people involved in violent crimes going back and forth across the river. He provided a heat map or spatial concentration of confirmed shots fired in 2022.

Davenport Police Chief Jeff Bladel addressed Council, noting again that data shows a small number of people involved in most of these crimes, and it is not the geographics, but group dynamics causing them. He said GVI brings together law enforcement, service providers, and the community to bring prevention and intervention together to slow the cycle of crimes. He thanked the Rock Island Police Department for doing good work.

Sarah Ott, Chief Strategy Officer with the City of Davenport addressed Council regarding the Davenport GVI program. She said GVI is an evidence-based and proven approach to dramatically reduce homicide and gun violence. Victims today are often perpetrators tomorrow, and the problem analysis shows that less than two tenths of the population is driving over 50 percent of the gun violence in the community. She said GVI identifies individuals at high risk of victimization and reaches out as a partnership to end violence.

Ms. Ott said GVI is led by law enforcement on the front end with information on the instigators of violence. That information can be passed to community members who can reach out to the individuals before violence occurs. Direct lines of communication are opened to these individuals through the aforementioned partnerships, and clear messages are provided that identify what consequences would be. Social services can then provide meaningful help to individuals to prevent violent actions. She described the methods of direct communication through GVI. She discussed the involvement of community partner Dwayne Hodges in the GVI strategy. She noted that GVI is not a law enforcement or social service strategy, but rather a community strategy. Messaging resonates with other community members more than the law enforcement, and building these relationships within the neighborhood resonates in a way that they don't hear from other institutional leaders.

Ms. Ott discussed the framework of support and outreach. She said traditional social services are not applicable to those at high risk of violent victimization, and GVI is an option to address that risk. She noted that Davenport is nearly a year into the GVI strategy, and 90 custom notifications have been completed thus far. 86 of the highest risk have not used a weapon in the community since then, and 16 are actively engaged in social services.

Ms. Ott referenced the services offered through Family Resources that were listed in the presentation. She fielded questions from Council. Mayor Thoms asked if Davenport Schools were involved with GVI, and Ms. Ott replied affirmatively. She added that a number of individuals that are at high risk are under 18 and in schools, and they have a good partnership with the school district to determine the best way to bring notifications to juveniles. Chief Landi said juveniles are a risk, but they are working with the Rock Island School District to bring a Community Service Officer to the schools, and that agreement should come before Council soon.

Aldersperson Gilbert noted the differences between Iowa and Illinois with regards to consequences, and asked if that was a challenge. Chief Landi said getting judges and prosecutors together to explain these differences has been helpful, as judges occasionally were unaware of the histories of offenders. He said he has been in contact

with the State’s Attorney to set up a meeting with her, probation officers, and judges to explain the GVI process. Chief Bladel added that if law enforcement can communicate with judges and prosecutors about individuals driving the crime, certain individuals can be held longer.

Aldersperson Robinson asked how custom notifications would work with individuals going in between both cities. Chief Bladel said the Quad Cities law enforcement community does collaborate to compare notes on every shooting that occurs, and therefore cooperation helps in identifying the small group. City Attorney Morrison said presenting other options to individuals is more important than the threat of more prison time. Aldersperson Robinson said he is excited to get this program started in Rock Island.

5. Adjourn

Motion to Adjourn

Motion:	Motion whether or not to adjourn.
RC	Roll Call vote is needed.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Poulos moved to adjourn; Aldersperson Healy seconded.

VOTE:

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

Samantha Gange, City Clerk