City of Pekin

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PEKIN, ILLINOIS,
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF CITY HALL
111 S. CAPITOL ST
ON MONDAY, JUNE 10, 2024 AT 5:30 PM
MAYOR PRO TEM HOHIMER PRESIDING**

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Council Member Nutter.

Call to Order

City Clerk, Ms. Sue McMillan, confirmed all Council Members were physically present and logged in except for Mayor Burress who was absent. Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer declared a quorum.

Attendee Name	Organization	Title	Status	Arrived
Rick Hilst	City of Pekin	Council Member	Present	5:30 PM
Karen Hohimer	City of Pekin	Mayor Pro Tem	Present	5:30 PM
Dave Nutter	City of Pekin	Council Member	Present	5:30 PM
Mary Burress	City of Pekin	Mayor	Absent	-:-- PM
Lloyd Orrick	City of Pekin	Council Member	Present	5:30 PM
John P Abel	City of Pekin	Council Member	Present	5:30 PM
Chris Onken	City of Pekin	Council Member	Present	5:30 PM

Approve Agenda

RESULT:	**PASSED (UNANIMOUS)**
MOVER:	Council Member Rick Hilst
SECONDER:	Council Member Lloyd Orrick
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Council Member Nutter, Council Member Hilst, Council Member Orrick, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer, Council Member Onken

Approval of Minutes

4.1. City Council - Regular Meeting - May 28, 2024 5:30 PM

RESULT:	**PASSED (UNANIMOUS)**
MOVER:	Council Member Rick Hilst

SECONDER:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem John Abel
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Council Member Nutter, Council Member Hilst, Council Member Orrick, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer, Council Member Onken

Public Input

Jacob Force spoke on behalf of himself and Fred Mazzaglia, who was unable to attend. Mr. Force expressed concerns about the city's agenda item to tax self-storage facilities based on their rent rolls. He highlighted that self-storage facilities are among the higher property tax contributors and most of them in Pekin were locally owned. Mr. Force, unprepared due to short notice, argued that a 5% tax on the rent roll was unethical. He mentioned that similar measures in places like Florida did not work well and are currently being phased out.

Rick Evans expressed strong opposition to the proposed storage unit tax. He considered the tax unfair and discriminatory, stating his willingness to hire an attorney and fight it vigorously. Mr. Evans emphasized that his income derives from rental properties and questioned why self-storage facilities were singled out when other commercial rentals in the city were not. He cited his experience in Florida, where a similar tax failed and was being phased out. Mr. Evans emphasized his substantial contributions to local and state taxes and declared his refusal to pay additional taxes or undergo audits. He shared his perspective on the challenges of building a business and his belief that the tax unfairly targets self-storage businesses.

Consent Agenda

Councilmember Hilst read the 4 items listed on the Consent Agenda.

RESULT:	**PASSED (UNANIMOUS)**
MOVER:	Council Member Rick Hilst
SECONDER:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem John Abel
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Council Member Nutter, Council Member Hilst, Council Member Orrick, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer, Council Member Onken

6.1. Accounts Payable To Be Paid Proof List thru May 10th 2024

6.2. Pekin Fire Department Monthly Incidents May 2024

6.3. Pekin Police Department Monthly Statistics- May 2024

6.4. Building Department Permit Report for May 2024

Public Hearing

7.1. Public Hearing on 2023 Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER)

Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer opened the Public Hearing at 5:40 PM for for the 2023 Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER). CDBG Program Manager, Ms. Tina Hawk presented the details of the report. She explained that the purpose of the public hearing was to comply with the city's citizen participation plan, as mandated by HUD, allowing public review and commentary on the use of CDBG program funds by the city to meet its goals. Additionally, the hearing adhered to HUD guidance requiring the submission of the CAPER after each program year. During the 2023 program year, the city used just over $60,000 to demolish one structure, addressing slum and blight. This represented a significant cost increase compared to previous years, influenced by higher procurement and legal costs. Initially projecting the demolition of ten houses, the city managed to complete only one. However, improvements have been made, with three houses currently scheduled for demolition and two more planned.

The city also made progress in reducing the debt of the Section 108 loan program, shortening the repayment period by ten years using $249,000 of program funds. Furthermore, a project to rehabilitate 4,000 linear feet of sewer pipe, benefiting approximately 200 residents, was completed at a cost of $354,000. An additional $75,000 was allocated to the Pekin Outreach Initiative to convert a space into a day shelter for homeless individuals, potentially impacting up to 15,000 visits.

Overall, these accomplishments, along with making regular Section 108 loan payments and covering administrative costs, were achieved with just over $800,000 in program funds. Ms. Tina Hawk concluded by inviting any questions or feedback.

Council Member Hilst directed attention to page eight of the CAPER, inquiring about the difference between goals and outcomes and the challenges in achieving them. Specifically, he referenced an owner-occupied rehabilitation project that was not executed, requiring the city to repay HUD. Ms. Hawk confirmed the repayment of $13,200 to HUD and assured that it would not affect future funding, as the money would be returned to the city's line of credit for program use.

Council Member Hilst questioned the lack of plans for owner-occupied rehab activities this year, noting the need for additional staff. Ms. Hawk explained that successful execution of these programs necessitates personnel with construction knowledge and the capability to perform inspections and income qualifications. Historically, only income qualifications were considered, but future programs would require more comprehensive staff involvement.

Council Member Hilst sought clarification on whether this need for additional staff would persist if the city resumed owner-occupied projects in the future. Ms. Hawk affirmed that either additional city staff or collaboration with other city departments would be necessary. She emphasized the need for clear policies and procedures to facilitate inter-departmental cooperation and ensure the program's success.

Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer closed the Public Hearing at 5:46 PM.

New Business

8.1. Ordinance No. 4193-24/25 Approving Purchase of Property at 909 Court Street

City Engineer Ms. Josie Esker introduced Ordinance No. 4193-24/25 concerning the property purchase at 909 Court Street. Ms. Esker explained that the property purchase is essential for the Court Street construction project, specifically to demolish a block addition encroaching on the sidewalk. This demolition is required to proceed with the federally funded project. Ms. Esker detailed the negotiation process, indicating that the property owner, who rents out multi-unit properties, was uninterested in retaining a single-family home. Consequently, the city offered the appraised value of $114,000 for the entire parcel, which the owner verbally accepted. Ordinance 4194-24/25 involves selling the original portion of the property back to the current tenant, pending their relocation during the demolition.

Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer inquired about the residents' ability to stay in the house during demolition. Ms. Esker clarified that for safety reasons, they must vacate during demolition but could return in the evenings.

Council Member Orrick raised questions regarding relocation costs, which Ms. Esker confirmed were under $10,000 and within her spending authority.

Council Member Nutter asked about the legal aspects and title documentation, to which Ms. Esker responded that Chicago Title was managing the title search and no issues had arisen so far. She assured the council that any problems found would be addressed before finalizing the purchase and that they would be informed of any significant developments.

RESULT:	**PASSED (UNANIMOUS)**
MOVER:	Council Member Chris Onken
SECONDER:	Council Member Lloyd Orrick
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Council Member Nutter, Council Member Hilst, Council Member Orrick, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer, Council Member Onken

8.2. Ordinance No. 4194-24/25 Approving and Authorizing The Sale of Real Property Located at 909 Court Street

City Engineer Ms. Josie Esker introduced the follow-up to the recently approved property purchase at 909 Court Street. She explained that the property would now be sold back to the tenant after demolition. The property was appraised at $114,000, which was the purchase price. Post-demolition, the remaining portion is valued at $57,000, with an estimated $6,000 in refurbishment costs, setting the sale price at $63,000. The current tenant has agreed to this price and is pre-approved for a loan.

Council Member Orrick asked if the Schipper & Block building was on the current right of way. Ms. Esker clarified that part of it might be close, and the city would be increasing the right of way to accommodate ADA-compliant sidewalks and necessary utilities, as outlined in the plat attached to the council's packet.

Council Member Hilst questioned the revenue handling in the capital fund, noting the absence of a line item for property sales in the budget. Interim Finance Director Mr. Bob Grogan explained that while the revenue would be recorded, it wouldn't require a budget amendment as the budget primarily limits spending. There was zero budgeted for the line item and $63,000 will be added in.

Council Member Nutter inquired about the demolition timeline and whether it was included in the sale agreement. Ms. Esker confirmed a temporary easement allowing demolition access within a two-year period, aiming to bundle this demolition with others on Kenmore to save costs.

8.3. Ordinance No. 4195-24/25 Amending Pekin City Code Chapters 3, 4, and 5 Regarding Fees and Charges for Activities in the Community Development Department and the Public Works Department

Chief Building Official Mr. Nic Maquet addressed the council regarding the current fees for permits, inspections, and licenses, noting that the fees have not been updated since 2004 and are scattered throughout the city code. He proposed updating these fees and consolidating them into a single fee schedule to improve transparency and efficiency. The average fee increase is 27%, with the most significant single increase being for new telecommunication tower permits, rising from $2,500 to $3,000, and the largest percentage increase being for residential electrical inspection fees, from $43 to $150.

Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer supported the fee increases, acknowledging that costs have risen over the past 20 years.

City Manager Mr. John Dossey added that even with the proposed increases, the city's fees would remain lower than those in neighboring communities, ensuring that development is not deterred.

Councilmember Orrick inquired about the financial impact of the fee increases on the department, to which Mr. Maquet responded that while the new fees would significantly improve revenue, they would not entirely cover the department's costs. Council Member Orrick also questioned the current right of way policies, and City Engineer Ms. Josie Esker explained that right of way openings had been updated more recently and would remain unchanged.

Council Member Nutter asked for clarification on sidewalk subspace permits, which Mr. Maquet described as permits for subspace vaults under sidewalks, mostly in the downtown area, used historically for coal deliveries and other access.

Council Member Abel inquired about vaults when the Schipper & Block buildings were demolished, and Mr. Maquet confirmed that it was the basement there and that was why it was fenced.

Council Member Hilst made a motion amending the fee schedule to read where it's the City Council that would have to approve any modifications or any fees that are being waived and to remove language regarding the spending authority. The motion was seconded by Council Member Orrick.

Economic Development Director Josh Wray and Council Member Abel discussed the impact of this change on negotiations with developers. Mr. Wray noted that major fee negotiations typically come before the City Council anyway. Councilmember Hilst emphasized his concern about consistency and transparency.

Council Member Nutter asked about the accessibility of the new fee schedule on the city's website. Mr. Maquet confirmed it would be listed under the community development building department for easy access.

Finally, Mr. Wray suggested an alternative to eliminating the city manager's authority, proposing setting a lower dollar limit. However, Council Member Hilst reiterated that his primary concern was not the dollar amount but ensuring Council oversight on fee modifications and waivers.

Motion to amend Exhibit A Scheduled Notes #4 to replace City Manager with City Council and to remove language regarding the spending authority.

RESULT:	**PASSED (UNANIMOUS)**
MOVER:	Council Member Rick Hilst
SECONDER:	Council Member Lloyd Orrick
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Council Member Nutter, Council Member Hilst, Council Member Orrick, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer, Council Member Onken

Motion as Amended.

RESULT:	**PASSED (5 TO 1)**
MOVER:	Council Member Chris Onken
SECONDER:	Council Member Lloyd Orrick
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Council Member Nutter, Council Member Orrick, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer, Council Member Onken
NAYS:	Council Member Hilst

8.4. Ordinance No. 4196-24/25 Approving Easement Lease Agreement with Civic Digital Displays, LLC for the Property Located at 1610 Broadway Street

City Manager Mr. John Dossey discussed Ordinance No. 4196-24/25, which approves an easement lease agreement with Civic Digital Displays, LLC for a property at 1610 Broadway Street. He explained that a 15-foot utility easement on the frontage of the property was discovered during the plan review process, and the lease agreement would allow the construction of an approved billboard within this easement. The lease term is 20 years, requiring a 3/4 vote for approval. Staff recommended approval.
Council Member Hilst questioned the lease amount of $1,000 for 20 years, seeking clarification on its basis and expressing concerns about the potential content displayed on the sign, given its location on city property. Chief Building Official Mr. Nic Maquet clarified that the amount was consistent with previous lease agreements and confirmed the sign was approved by the Council. He also explained the leasing arrangement and usage stipulations.

City Attorney Ms. Kate Swise explained the distinction between city property and a utility easement, emphasizing that the city can only lease its easement rights, not the property itself as it was not city property.

Council Member Hilst raised concerns about the lease's long-term fixed rate and compared it to other City fees, questioning the benefits to the City. Mr. Maquet highlighted the significant cost of the sign upward of $500K and noted an annual $500 fee paid to the City for the sign. He also explained that as long as the content is not vulgar, the City does not control what is displayed.

Council Member Nutter inquired about property ownership and transferability, which Ms. Swise confirmed, and Mr. Maquet adding that the sign was approved prior to a moratorium along with one others.

RESULT:	**PASSED (UNANIMOUS)**
MOVER:	Council Member Lloyd Orrick
SECONDER:	Council Member Dave Nutter
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Council Member Nutter, Council Member Hilst, Council Member Orrick, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer, Council Member Onken

8.5. Ordinance No. 4197-24/25 Amending City Code Chapter 7 to Adopt a Self-Storage Unit Tax

A Motion was made by Council Member Orrick to approve Ordinance No. 4197-24/25 Amending City Code Chapter 7 to Adopt a Self-Storage Unit Tax. The motion failed due to lack of a second.

8.6. Resolution No. 146-24/25 Approving Annual Contract with Magnet Forensics Software

City Manager Mr. John Dossey presented information about GrayKey, a digital forensics tool for law enforcement used to extract data from locked mobile devices, including Apple and Android phones. GrayKey employs a proprietary "Brute force" software to access data from locked devices, which is crucial as most seized devices are password-protected. Without GrayKey, law enforcement would have to use third-party services to unlock devices, costing approximately $2200 per phone and taking several months, potentially complicating the chain of custody for the prosecution. With GrayKey, data extraction is performed in-house, typically within a day, streamlining the process and maintaining the integrity of the evidence. Over the past year and a half, GrayKey has been used to download data from over 100 cell phones, aiding in solving major cases like drive-by shootings, double vehicular homicides, drug-induced homicides, and bomb threats. Mr. Dossey emphasized the effectiveness and recognition of the Investigations Unit's use of this system.

Council Member Orrick inquired if this was a one-time purchase or required annual renewal. Police Chief Seth Ranney confirmed it is an annual contract that the council reviews each year.

RESULT:	**PASSED (UNANIMOUS)**
MOVER:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem John Abel
SECONDER:	Council Member Dave Nutter
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Council Member Nutter, Council Member Hilst, Council Member Orrick, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer, Council Member Onken

Omnibus Vote 8.7-8.9

Council Member Nutter, seconded by Councilmember Orrick, motioned to vote omnibus for New Business Items 8.7 Resolution No. 147-24/25, awarding bid for contract to complete the demolition of residential structure at 107 Edds Avenue to Wayne Litwiller Excavating LLC., 8.8 Resolution No. 148-24/25 awarding bid for contract to complete the demolition of residential structure at 1214 Black Street to Wayne Litwiller Excavating LLC, and 8.9 Resolution No. 149-24/25 awarding bid for contract to complete the demolition of residential structure at 327 Park Avenue with Wayne Litwiller Excavating, LLC.

A discussion ensued before the vote. Council Member Hilst raised a concern about the funding sources mentioned in the notes for items 8.7 and 8.9, which indicated that the projects would be funded with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, leaving just under $10,000 remaining after covering the costs of all three resolutions. However, he pointed out a discrepancy in item 8.8, which suggested that there would be no remaining CDBG funds and that additional money from the property cleanup line item would be needed. This inconsistency prompted a need for clarification before proceeding with the vote.

The discussion continued with input from Police Chief Seth Ranney, who confirmed the funding details. He clarified that Agenda Items 8.7 and 8.9 would be fully funded through the CDBG funds, while Agenda Item 8.8 would use a combination of CDBG and other funds. After utilizing the CDBG funds for all three projects, there would be a remaining amount of $50,855. He explained that this situation arose because the current CDBG funds were from a prior grant year and were being exhausted, while the new CDBG funds would not be available for a few more months.

CDBG Program Manager Ms. Tina Hauk added that the statutory cap limits the amount of CDBG funds allocated for demolitions. While the demolition allocation would be exhausted, overall CDBG funds were still available.

Council Member Hilst clarified that this meant no more funds were available in the CDBG demolition line item for the rest of the calendar year. Ms. Hauk explained that the exhaustion related to the end of the last program year in 2023, aligning with their fiscal year 2024. They were awaiting the new grant agreement for fiscal year 2025, which would be available in approximately three months. Ms. Hauk confirmed that once the new grant agreement was in place, there would be additional money in the demolition line item for later in the year.

RESULT:	**PASSED (UNANIMOUS)**
MOVER:	Council Member Dave Nutter
SECONDER:	Council Member Lloyd Orrick
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Council Member Nutter, Council Member Hilst, Council Member Orrick, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer, Council Member Onken

8.7. Resolution No. 147-24/25 Awarding Bid for Contract to Complete the Demolition of Residential Structures at 107 Edds Avenue to Wayne Litwiller Excavating LLC

RESULT:	**PASSED (UNANIMOUS)**
MOVER:	Council Member Dave Nutter
SECONDER:	Council Member Lloyd Orrick
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Council Member Nutter,

	Council Member Hilst, Council Member Orrick, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer, Council Member Onken

8.8. Resolution No. 148-24/25 Awarding Bid for Contract to Complete the Demolition of Residential Structures at 1214 Black Street to Wayne Litwiller Excavating LLC

RESULT:	**PASSED (UNANIMOUS)**
MOVER:	Council Member Dave Nutter
SECONDER:	Council Member Lloyd Orrick
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Council Member Nutter, Council Member Hilst, Council Member Orrick, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer, Council Member Onken

8.9. Resolution No. 149-24/25 Awarding Bid for Contract to Complete the Demolition of Residential Structures at 327 Park Avenue with Wayne Litwiller Excavating LLC

RESULT:	**PASSED (UNANIMOUS)**
MOVER:	Council Member Dave Nutter
SECONDER:	Council Member Lloyd Orrick
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Council Member Nutter, Council Member Hilst, Council Member Orrick, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer, Council Member Onken

Any Other Business To Come Before The Council

City Manager Mr. Dossey informed the Council that an email with updates had been sent out and that Council Member Orrick had responded. He reminded everyone of the upcoming July 4th event at 9 AM, where they anticipate opening items from the time capsule. The time capsule had been opened to allow its contents to acclimate to current conditions. Mr. Dossey mentioned that the contents had been posted on the city's Facebook page and encouraged people to check there to see if their names were included. He invited anyone whose name appeared to reach out to the city. Mr. Dossey suggested that the council consider drafting a letter to include in a new time capsule, which will be buried and opened in 2074. He mentioned having some initial ideas for the letter but welcomed contributions and ideas from the Councilmembers.

Interim Finance Director, Mr. Bob Grogan announced that the lockbox account had been completely closed, resulting in a savings of $30,000 per year in bank fees. He noted this as a small but significant step toward greater efficiency in the city's financial management.

Council Member Onken mentioned receiving a small paper in the mail that indicated the start of the concert series downtown this Saturday, featuring the band Second Chance.

Council Member Nutter requested clarification on the vault opening, noting that the Chamber of Commerce has the vault at City Hall. City Manager Mr. Dossey clarified that the opening would be at 301 Broadway, stating that no one has shown any interest in transporting the vault back to the main building.

Council Member Nutter thanked Police Chief Ranney for the update on the reports, inquiring if the city is receiving funding for traffic stops and other items, noting that the state is getting the majority of funds. Chief Ranney responded that the city does receive funding, but it is a small portion that decreases every year, and this is standardized across the state. Councilmember Nutter also thanked Public Works Director Mr. Dean Schneider for getting the plants planted, and the enclosure cleaned up in time for the Street Faire. Councilmember Onken elaborated on the Street Faire, which will start at 10 a.m. with a veterans parade featuring three to four WWII veterans. All other events will begin afterward, with multiple stage events that have been widely advertised, including on TV.

Council Member Nutter mentioned that he will discuss a fee issue privately with City Manager Mr. Dossey.

Council Member Abel briefly highlighted the progress on the new sidewalk near Stadium Drive. He noted its impressive width of six feet, mentioned that the sidewalk looks great and anticipated that it would be appreciated by schools and attendees of football games and arena events.

Council Member Hilst brought up question regarding the ticket booth on Stadium Drive, asking Mr. Dossey about its relocation. Mr. Dossey confirmed the booth had been moved temporarily near the stadium parking lot for the 4th of July and will be relocated permanently later.

Council Member Hilst also inquired about the sidewalk grinding work in Sunset Hills, questioning why it started there despite not being highlighted in the ADA transition plan.

City Engineer, Ms. Josie Esker explained that there was no scheduled priorities listed in the ADA plan. This led to a discussion on the ADA transition plan's progress and the ongoing legal matters, with Mr. Swise mentioning a Notice of Deficiency and with regards to sidewalks in grassy areas. Ms. Esker stated they are awaiting a court date and believe they don't need to comply with that deficiency based on federal and state responses.

Further, Council Member Hilst asked about the payment status of their attorney, Austin Zimmer. Mr. Dossey confirmed they are current with payments, with additional costs anticipated for court preparations.

Additionally, Council Member Hilst requested updates on the North Pekin wastewater contract. Mr. Dossey mentioned needing further discussions with City Attorney Ms. Swise due to the court-ordered nature of the rates, indicating that any changes would likely require court approval and further council discussions to determine the best course of action.

Council Member Hilst then raised an issue regarding a statement made by the Mayor at the end of the last meeting about the removal of Keith Dunkelbarger from the Economic Development Advisory Committee. Council Member Hilst highlighted that the established policy for such removals was not followed. He inquired if any complaints against Mr. Dunkelbarger had been filed with the City Clerk. City Clerk, Ms. Sue McMillan confirmed that no such complaints had been filed. Council Member Hilst emphasized that according to the policy, a complaint should first be filed with the City Clerk, then referred to the Administrative Hearing Officer, and finally brought before the Council. He expressed a desire for this procedural oversight to be rectified by the Council in the future.

Council Member Hilst inquired about the city's electric aggregation contract, specifically if any updates or conversations had occurred since it went into effect in June 2023. Mr. Dossey confirmed that recent discussions had taken place, highlighting that the city was tied to the current agreement until its expiration next year. He explained the cost implications of opting out early, suggesting it might be more economical to complete the current term before considering a new broker.

Council Member Hilst expressed surprise at the associated costs of opting out, to which Economic Development Director Mr. Wray provided additional context, noting the city's obligation to continue paying the current broker through the contract's duration. He mentioned a mix-up with the previous firm, Good Energy, which continued to offer services without formal notice of termination. Mr. Wray clarified the complexity of the situation and emphasized the necessity for residents to do their due diligence before opting out, as they cannot re-enter the program immediately if they do so.

Council Member Hilst remarked on the significant drop in Ameren’s rates since June, advising residents to consider opting out to save money. Mr. Wray reiterated that while residents could opt out, the city was still bound by the current contract and could only change brokers after its expiration. He advocated for a shift from the current opt-out to an opt-in model in future agreements to reduce public confusion and complaints.

Council Member Orrick added that returning to Ameren could save nearly $30 monthly and urged the staff to consider potential savings despite the opt-out costs. Mr. Wray noted the importance of reviewing the financial implications and confirmed that the city itself receives bills from Ameren, not the aggregation program.

The council discussed the unusual conditions during the contract negotiation period, particularly the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on rates and the confusion surrounding the aggregation program. They agreed that any future decisions should carefully weigh the risks and benefits to avoid repeating past issues.

Mr. Dossey provided a brief update on the Grocery Tax, noting that the budget has passed with the State of Illinois and the tax is now part of the law. He mentioned receiving an email today stating that sample ordinances will be forthcoming if the council wishes to pursue that direction. The tax will not take effect until January 2026, but without it, the city stands to lose approximately $2 million. This issue will impact the next budget cycle for 2025-2026, and the council will need to decide whether to absorb the loss, replace it with other revenue, or adopt a hybrid approach. Although it does not affect the current budget cycle, planning and considerations are already underway.

Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer reported that Mayor Burress received an email highlighting the exemplary citizenship of Dana Sails, a resident of Sunset Hills. Dana regularly walks for exercise, carrying an empty garbage bag to pick up trash along the way, setting a positive example for the community. Inspired by Dana's actions, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer now does the same during her walks, collecting trash and properly disposing of it. She expressed gratitude to Dana Sails for her contributions to the community, emphasizing that every small effort makes a difference. Additionally, she reminded everyone about the upcoming Street Faire and Downtown Concert Series on Saturday.

Executive Session 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)

No Executive Session took place.

Adjourn

There being no further business to come to the Council a motion was made by Council Member Orrick seconded by Council Member Nutter to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried viva voice vote. Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer adjourned the meeting at 6:59 PM.

RESULT:	**PASSED (UNANIMOUS)**
MOVER:	Council Member Lloyd Orrick
SECONDER:	Council Member Dave Nutter
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Council Member Nutter, Council Member Hilst, Council Member Orrick, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer, Council Member Onken