



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, DECEMBER 9, 2024 AT 5:30 PM
MAYOR MARY J. BURRESS PRESIDING**

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Council Member Abel.

Call to Order

City Clerk, Ms. Sue McMillan, confirmed all Council Members were physically present and logged in.

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	Present	5:30 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	Absent	-:--

Approve Agenda

Approval of Minutes

4.1. City Council - Regular Meeting - November 25, 2024 5:30 PM

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

Public Input

Mr. John McNish expressed several concerns, beginning with safety issues related to nonfunctional lighting on the ADA ramp at City Hall, which he stated violates compliance standards. He criticized various council actions, including resolutions allowing the destruction of historical buildings, increasing utility and waste rates, limiting public input, and diverting funds from police and fire pensions through TIF districts. He also questioned decisions related to property purchases, unbalanced budgets, and changes to purchasing policies. Mr. McNish expressed frustration with the relocation of homeless services to the South Side, claiming it burdens residents, and voiced skepticism about the hiring of the new city attorney and potential staff conflicts of interest. He encouraged residents to evaluate candidates in the upcoming election.

Consent Agenda

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

- 6.1. Accounts Payable Paid Proof List thru November 29, 2024**
- 6.2. Building Department Permit Report for November 2024**
- 6.3. Pekin Fire Department Monthly Incidents November 2024**
- 6.4. Receive and File Patrick Taphorn's Resignation with Regret from EDAC**
- 6.5. 2025 Schedule of Council Meetings**
- 6.6. Canceled Scheduled Regular City Council Meeting of Monday, December 23, 2024**

Unfinished Business

- 7.1. Ordinance No. 4242-24/25 Requiring the Registration of Properties that are Vacant or Foreclosed**

RESULT:	TABLED TO JANUARY 27, 2025 (UNANIMOUS)
MOVER:	Council Member Lloyd Orrick
SECONDER:	Council Member John Abel
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Mayor Burress, Council Member Nutter, Council Member Hilst, Council Member Orrick,

	Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer
ABSENT:	Council Member Onken

A motion was made by Council Member Nutter seconded by Council Member Orrick to adopt and approve Ordinance No. 4242-24/25 Requiring the Registration of Properties that are Vacant or Foreclosed.

City Manager John Dossey and Economic Development Director Josh Wray provided updates on revisions made in response to input from the Peoria Area Association of Realtors (PAR). Key changes included exemptions for properties actively for sale and ensuring registration applies to banks post-foreclosure, not to pre-foreclosure owners.

Council members raised questions about how the ordinance would address properties under renovation, rentals between tenants, and sale-by-owner situations. Additional concerns included clarity on property maintenance standards and the fairness of registration fees and outstanding fines when properties change ownership. Council members agreed more work was needed to refine the language.

Ultimately, a motion by Council Member Orrick, seconded by Council Member Abel, passed to table the ordinance for further review, with plans to revisit it during the January 27, 2025, Council Meeting.

New Business

8.1. Ordinance No. 4261-24/25 Approving a Third Amendment to the Agreement for Purchase and Sale of Real Property with Illinois American Water for the City-Owned Property Generally East of the Current Terminus of Brenkman Drive

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

The Council considered Ordinance No. 4261-24/25, which proposes a third amendment to the purchase and sale agreement with Illinois American Water for city-owned property east of the current terminus of Brenkman Drive. City Manager John Dossey explained that Illinois American Water has not yet completed the necessary soil boring to confirm the site’s suitability for a water tank. They anticipate completing the assessment by February 15, 2025, and have requested an extension of the due diligence period until that date. Staff

recommended approval of the ordinance to accommodate the request.

8.2. Resolution No. 218-24/25 Approving Agreement with Middle America Government Consulting, Inc for Consulting Services

RESULT:	PASSED (4 TO 2)
MOVER:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem John Abel
SECONDER:	Mayor Pro Tem Karen Hohimer
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Mayor Burress, Council Member Hilst, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer
NAYS:	Council Member Nutter, Council Member Orrick
ABSENT:	Council Member Onken

The Council considered Resolution No. 218-24/25, which proposes extending the agreement with Middle America Government Consulting, Inc. for consulting services to address ongoing financial challenges and process improvements. City Manager John Dossey outlined the consultant's critical role over the past two years, particularly in resolving audit backlogs, improving financial processes, and addressing compliance risks. He emphasized the importance of maintaining the consultant's expertise until the finance department is fully stabilized and a junior accountant can be hired. Staff recommended extending the contract by up to 12 months, with a two-week termination clause if needed.

Mayor Burress stated significant progress made under the consultant's guidance, including addressing pension debt and improving the city's financial standing, and expressed gratitude for their contributions.

Council Member Orrick suggested modifying the contract to a six-month term ending on June 30, 2025, instead of the proposed 12-month extension. Council Member Orrick emphasized that shorter deadlines could improve efficiency while allowing flexibility for future extensions if necessary. Council Member Nutter seconded the motion, emphasizing the need for clear goals and accomplishments within the contract term.

RESULT:	Failed (4 TO 2)
MOVER:	Council Member Orrick
SECONDER:	Council Member Nutter
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Mayor Burress, Council Member Hilst, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer
NAYS:	Council Member Nutter, Council Member Orrick
ABSENT:	Council Member Onken

Finance Consultant Bob Grogan provided an in-depth update on the Finance Department's progress and ongoing challenges. He noted that the department, under Finance Director Eric Drubowski's leadership, is well-positioned to sustain operations but continues to address historical backlogs

and procedural improvements. Mr. Grogan explained the need for further policy development, including the completion of a reserve policy and enhancements to internal procedures, which are essential for long-term stability. He also discussed compliance with the 2023 Audit, citing work related to new Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) requirements for leases, which requires extensive research and adjustments for accurate financial reporting. Mr. Grogan continued to explain the importance of streamlining processes, such as payroll, to enhance efficiency. He outlined the plan to transition to a junior accountant once foundational improvements are complete, reducing the need for his expertise. Mr. Grogan stated that the consulting agreement allows for flexibility, with a two-week termination notice and task-based assignments, ensuring cost control. He acknowledged a natural decline in his hours as the department stabilizes, given other professional commitments.

8.3. Resolution No. 219-24/25 Approving a Second Amendment to the Agreement with Cruce Aviation, LLC for Contract Operation of the Pekin Municipal Airport

RESULT:	PASSED (4 TO 2)
MOVER:	Council Member Dave Nutter
SECONDER:	Council Member Lloyd Orrick
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Mayor Burress, Council Member Nutter, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer
NAYS:	Council Member Hilst, Council Member Orrick
ABSENT:	Council Member Onken

Resolution No. 219-24/25 was presented for the approval of a second amendment to the agreement with Cruce Aviation, LLC for managing operations at the Pekin Municipal Airport. City Manager John Dossey explained the need for an interim manager as the City's permanent Airport Manager remains on military leave. He stated that Mike Cruce, the owner of Cruce Aviation, has performed satisfactorily and recommended extending the contract for up to two years. The terms include a weekly pay increase from \$1,275 to \$1,375 starting January 1, 2025, and up to \$1,400 starting January 1, 2026, with a provision to adjust to an hourly rate as needed.

Council Member Hilst raised concerns regarding the salary increases, noting they average about 8% annually, which he deemed high compared to other city employees. He questioned whether 15 hours a week is sufficient for managing airport operations, given that the position historically required full-time hours. City Manager Dossey acknowledged the concern but stressed the need for a transitional period when the permanent manager returns to ensure they are up to speed on current projects.

Mayor Burress commended Mr. Cruce for his contributions, emphasizing that the airport is growing and improving under his management. Mr. Dossey

further explained the complexities of managing agreements with IDOT and the FAA, supporting the need for Mr. Cruce to remain involved during the transition.

Council Member Orrick questioned the contract's language, specifically that it names Cruce Aviation, LLC rather than Mike Cruce personally. He expressed concerns that the business could designate someone else to perform the airport manager's duties. Interim Airport Manager Mike Cruce clarified that while his business can delegate non-managerial tasks, he is solely responsible for management duties.

City Attorney Jim Vasselli proposed amending the contract to state that Mr. Cruce himself would perform management duties, with pre-approved designees handling other tasks. Council Member Orrick agreed with the amendment and made a motion, seconded by Council Member Nutter to amend the contract. However, the motion to amend resulted in a tied vote and therefore failed.

RESULT:	Failed (4 TO 2)
MOVER:	Council Member Dave Nutter
SECONDER:	Council Member Lloyd Orrick
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Mayor Burress, Council Member Nutter, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer
NAYS:	Council Member Hilst, Council Member Orrick
ABSENT:	Council Member Onken

Council Member Nutter inquired about succession planning if unforeseen circumstances prevented Mr. Cruce from fulfilling the contract. City Attorney Vasselli explained that the contract would terminate in such cases, as no other representative could perform the duties. Further clarification addressed Council Member Orrick's concern about a potential sale of Cruce Aviation, with City Attorney Vasselli confirming that the agreement's no-assignment clause prevents such a transfer.

8.4. Resolution No. 220-24/25 Amending City of Pekin Policy No. 21, Procurement Policy

RESULT:	FAILED (3 TO 3)
MOVER:	Council Member Dave Nutter
SECONDER:	Council Member Lloyd Orrick
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Mayor Burress, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer
NAYS:	Council Member Nutter, Council Member Hilst, Council Member Orrick
ABSENT:	Council Member Onken

In the discussion regarding Resolution No. 220-24/25, Mr. Josh Wray, Economic Development Director, outlined updates to the city's procurement policy, developed collaboratively with key staff, including the CDBG Manager, City Engineer, and finance team. The revisions aim to resolve contradictions and improve clarity without altering spending thresholds or core processes. He noted key changes, including the City Manager's authority to enter energy contracts under specific conditions, with Council notified and retaining oversight. A new retail purchasing provision allows direct purchases of publicly priced items, such as equipment, without requiring a formal RFP process, maintaining transparency through documentation. The policy also removes the requirement for mandatory newspaper notices for procurement postings, favoring a centralized online page and other digital platforms to reduce costs and expedite processes. Mr. Wray invited Council feedback on these adjustments and noted the option to reinstate newspaper notices if preferred. Mr. Wray also added that a revision to Section 4.1.7 of the procurement policy, which introduces a requirement for the purchasing agent to determine predetermined weights for evaluating goods or services in sealed bid processes. This ensures that items or services with higher importance or cost in a contract, such as significant construction components, are given appropriate consideration in bid evaluations. This change was initially intended as an amendment but has now been incorporated into the broader policy update for clarity and fairness in the evaluation process.

Council Member Nutter raised concerns about eliminating newspaper notices, questioning the effectiveness of relying solely on the city website for procurement postings and suggesting the need for a standardized RFP process and centralized records managed by the City Clerk.

Council Member Hohimer supported modernizing procedures, emphasizing that businesses should adapt to digital methods.

Finance Consultant Bob Grogan added that the changes would also reduce the administrative burden on the Clerk's office, while City Clerk Sue McMillan and Mayor Burress echoed concerns about the costs and limited effectiveness of newspaper notices.

Discussions also addressed energy procurement, with Council expressing frustration over past vendor miscommunications and emphasizing the importance of clear communication with residents about opt-out options for aggregation programs.

Additional feedback centered on procurement thresholds for service contracts, with a preference for basing evaluations on the total contract value rather than annual costs.

After extended discussion and input, the motion to approve the policy update

failed.

8.5. Resolution No. 221-24/25 Adopting City of Pekin Policy No. 28, Outstanding Check Policy

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

City Manager John Dossey presented Resolution No. 221-24/25, which proposes adopting City Policy No. 28, the Outstanding Check Policy. He explained that the policy is based on a recommendation from external auditors and aligns with state law, which mandates unclaimed checks be transferred to the State Treasurer after three years. Claimants may recover funds from the State Treasurer's Office after the transfer. While the City already complies with these requirements, this policy aims to formalize the process.

8.6. Resolution No. 222-24/25 Initiating a Public Question for Advisory Referendum for the April 1, 2025, Consolidated Election Regarding the 1% Grocery Tax

RESULT:	FAILED (3 TO 3)
MOVER:	Mayor Pro Tem Karen Hohimer
SECONDER:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem John Abel
AYES:	Council Member Nutter, Council Member Hilst, Council Member Orrick
NAYS:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Mayor Burress, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer
ABSENT:	Council Member Onken

City Manager John Dossey introduced Resolution No. 222-24/25, proposing a public question on the April 1, 2025, consolidated election ballot regarding whether the City should retain the 1% grocery tax previously approved by the City Council. This tax, which does not impose a new burden on grocery shoppers, generates approximately \$1.5 million annually for the City. Mr. Dossey emphasized that eliminating the tax would result in significant revenue loss, compounding reductions in state disbursements and increasing pension obligations. He noted that further revenue reductions could necessitate cuts to public services or delays in projects.

Council Member Hilst, who made the motion to put the referendum on the ballot, argued in favor of giving the public an opportunity to express their opinion through the advisory referendum. He emphasized that this would

provide a better understanding of community sentiment. Council Member Hilst cited Illinois Department of Revenue data suggesting that the revenue impact might be less severe than projected, as not all taxable goods would be affected by the grocery tax elimination. He also expressed frustration that past attempts to solicit public opinion on various matters had been dismissed and criticized some Council Members for being unwilling to hear constituent views.

Mayor Burress responded strongly to Hilst's comments, defending the Council's commitment to making hard decisions and rejecting the suggestion that they were afraid to hear public input. Mayor Burress acknowledged past financial challenges and affirmed the necessity of current policies, including the utility taxes, as hard but necessary decisions.

Council Member Hohimer expressed a strong stance against the referendum, sharing detailed reasoning with the public. Council Member Hohimer emphasized that the grocery tax is modest but essential, contributing to infrastructure improvements, public safety funding, and pension obligations. She pointed out that many non-residents also contribute to this tax, amplifying its benefit to Pekin. While acknowledging the appeal of tax relief, Council Member Hohimer argued that the long-term consequences of losing this revenue would hinder the City's progress and is not a trade-off she supports. She stated her intent to vote against the referendum, prioritizing what she believes is best for the community.

Council Member Abel also opposed the referendum, citing public misconceptions about the grocery tax and its importance to the city's financial stability.

Council Member Orrick provided a broader perspective, reminding attendees that the referendum is advisory. He reflected on past financial decisions, including high salaries for city managers, raises for department heads, and suggested that the City Council's prior choices may have contributed to some of the City's financial challenges.

Council Member Nutter questioned whether the Council would act on the referendum results if a majority of voters opposed the tax. He challenged the Council to identify potential budget cuts to offset the lost revenue, asserting that tough decisions may soon be unavoidable.

Mayor Burress concluded by thanking Council Members Abel and Hohimer for their dedication to making difficult decisions and called for a vote. The motion failed.

Executive Session 5 ILCS 120/2

9.1. c(8) Security Procedures and the Use of Personnel and Equipment to

Respond to an Actual, Threatened, or a Reasonably Potential Danger to the Safety of Employees, the Public or Public Property

A motion was made by Council Member Orrick seconded by Council Member Abel to move into Executive Session to discuss 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(8) Security Procedures and the Use of Personnel and Equipment to Respond to an Actual, Threatened or a Reasonably Potential Danger to the Safety of Employees, the Public or Public Property at 7:15 PM. On roll call vote all present voted Aye. Motion passed.

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

9.2. c(1) Appointment, Employment, Compensation, Discipline, Performance or Dismissal of Specific Employees of the Public Body

City Attorney Vasselli announced Council would not be discussing 5 ILCS 120/2 c(1) Appointment, Employment, Compensation, Discipline, Performance or Dismissal of Specific Employees of the Public Body.

New Business Continued

10.1. Resolution No. 223-24/25 Approving a Service Agreement with IT360 for Security and Compliance Consulting

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

Council Member Nutter inquired whether the costs associated with the agreement would be addressed in the current budget or postponed until the next budget cycle, potentially requiring a budget amendment.

Finance Director Eric Dubrowski responded that a budget amendment might be necessary and stated that planning for the agreement would be integrated into the upcoming budget cycle. He also mentioned exploring options to either centralize or decentralize various related costs.

Any Other Business To Come Before The Council

Police Chief Seth Ranney took a moment to thank everyone involved in recent

community events, including Shop with a Hero and Battle of the Bells with the Fire Department supporting the Salvation Army. He noted that through generous donations, gifts were purchased for 100 children, and highlighted the participation of police officers, firefighters, and EMT representatives. He praised the generosity of Pekin residents, stating the events showcased the community's spirit of giving.

City Manager John Dossey wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, reflecting on the year's swift passage and inviting individuals to stop by before his office closes for the holidays on December 23.

Council Members Hilst, Abel, Hohimer, Nutter, and Orrick joined in expressing holiday wishes, encouraging safety, enjoyment, and supporting local businesses during the shopping season.

Mayor Burress echoed the holiday sentiments and shared an update about a major grant secured for a \$3.6 million street project on Broadway Street, from Parkway Drive to 14th Street. She noted that the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission approved \$2.88 million in funding for the project.

Adjourn

There being no further business to come to the Council a motion was made by Council Member Orrick seconded by 1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried viva voice vote. Mayor Burress adjourned the meeting at 7:24 PM.