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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 OCTOBER 23, 2023 AT 5:30 O'CLOCK P.M.
MAYOR MARY BURRESS PRESIDING

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PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Council Member Cloyd.

Mayor Burress presented a Letter of Condemnation during the Council Meeting, condemning the attacks that occurred on October 7th, 2023. She strongly denounced the coordinated, unprovoked attack by Hamas terrorists on Israel from the Gaza Strip. The attack involved the firing of thousands of rockets toward Israel's major population centers, infiltrations, kidnappings, and the loss of innocent lives, including Americans. The Mayor emphasized that such acts of terrorism have no justification and are an affront to society. She expressed solidarity with Israel and recognized Israel's right to defend itself. The Mayor also acknowledged the rise of anti-Semitism during these events and expressed hope for eventual peace in the region. The Letter of Condemnation was signed on October 23, 2023.

Illinois State Representative Travis Weaver addressed the council regarding the tragic events in Israel. He shared a poignant story of three individuals: Hirsch, Honor, and the Bedouin man. These three individuals found themselves at a music festival in Israel on October 7th, a day that turned tragic when targeted by Hamas terrorists. Hirsch's mother was desperate to find her son, describing him as the perfect son and affectionately calling him "sweet honor." Mr. Weaver highlighted the courage displayed by these individuals in the face of danger. The Bedouin man's attempt to protect others and Honor's heroism in defending the shelter against grenades and gunfire were particularly notable. Mr. Weaver emphasized the idea that there is no greater love than laying down one's life for friends, as found in John 15:13. Their bravery saved the lives of eight people. Despite the grim circumstances, Mr. Weaver encouraged everyone to hold these stories in their hearts, send love to the affected families, and live in a way that honors the bravery and sacrifice of individuals like the Bedouin man and Honor.

Pastor Heather Robertson spoke about the challenging times and the need for empathy. She shared a story of a conversation with a peace leader in Israel who dreamt of a day when children from both sides could play together. She also highlighted the futility of identifying a single enemy and stressed the importance of putting humanity first. Pastor Robertson called for a shared community moment and led a prayer with Travis Weaver for guidance and unity.

Roy Pageant, an elected official from Tazewell County, expressed his support for Mayor Mary Burress and commended her for her bold leadership in presenting a letter of condemnation. He briefly mentioned his experiences in the Middle East, emphasizing the need to stand with Israel. Mr. Pageant called for a collective effort to send a message of solidarity with Israel, especially if the federal government did not act. He requested permission for a group of officials to add their names to the letter and assured that Pekin would not be alone in this endeavor. Mr. Pageant thanked the mayor for her time.

CALL TO ORDER

City Clerk, Ms. Sue McMillan, confirmed all Council Members were physically present except Council Member Nutter who was absent. On roll call vote all present voted Aye.

Attendee Name	Organization	Title	Status	Arrived
Rick Hilst	City of Pekin	Councilman	Present	5:15 PM
Karen Hohimer	City of Pekin	Councilwoman	Present	5:20 PM
Dave Nutter	City of Pekin	Councilman	Absent	
Becky Cloyd	City of Pekin	Mayor Pro tem	Present	5:28 PM
Mary Burress	City of Pekin	Mayor	Present	5:20 PM
Lloyd Orrick	City of Pekin	Council Member	Present	5:19 PM
John P Abel	City of Pekin	Councilman	Present	5:20 PM

APPROVE AGENDA

Council Member Nutter announced that the draft minutes of October 9, 2023 were distributed to the Council and will be accepted at the November 13, 2023 Council Meeting.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Lloyd Orrick, Council Member
SECONDER:	Becky Cloyd, Mayor Pro tem
AYES:	Hilst, Hohimer, Cloyd, Burress, Orrick, Abel
ABSENT:	Dave Nutter

PUBLIC INPUT

Ms. Ann Witzig addressed the Council expressing her concern regarding the elimination of the code enforcement officer position and the transition to a chief building official. Ms. Witzig was worried that the new role seemed to primarily focus on buildings, potentially leaving out responsibilities related to ensuring an attractive, lawful, and safe community.

Mayor Burress interjected, offering Ms. Witzig the opportunity to have the Interim City Manager, Mr. Dossey, provide an immediate response to her question. Mr. Dossey clarified that the code enforcement position would not change and that the chief building official, Nic Maquet, would primarily handle plan reviews and ensure new construction adheres to building codes. In essence, he emphasized that the two positions served different functions.

Ms. Witzig appreciated the clarification and moved on to her second concern regarding the meeting minutes. She mentioned her difficulty in obtaining a copy of the minutes and inquired whether it was because they were still in draft form. Ms. Witzig was provided a copy of the draft minutes.

CONSENT AGENDA

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Lloyd Orrick, Council Member
SECONDER:	Becky Cloyd, Mayor Pro tem
AYES:	Hilst, Hohimer, Cloyd, Burress, Orrick, Abel
ABSENT:	Dave Nutter

5.1. Financial Reports September 2023

5.2. Accounts Payable To Be Paid Proof List thru September 29, 2023

5.3. Ordinance No. 4118-23/24 A special use request submitted by Jacob & Jill Flynn for the operation of an Automotive Repair Shop at 300 N. 5th St.

5.4. **Ordinance No. 4119-23/24 Amending Chapter 4 Articles I, II and III Changing Chief Code Enforcement Officer to Chief Building Official**

5.5. **Receive and File Bids for City Hall Exterior Repairs**

DISCUSSION

6.1. **Police Pensions and Fire Pensions**

Financial Consultant Mr. Bob Grogan presented a detailed overview of the Fire and Police Pensions, offering key insights into their financial status and funding sources. The purpose of the presentation was to provide the council with a comprehensive understanding of these pension funds prior to the budget process.

In the case of the Police Pension Fund, Mr. Grogan highlighted the normal cost, which represents the current year's expenses for the active workforce. The unfunded actuarial liability amounted to approximately $24 million, resulting in a 63-64% funded level. The recommended contribution from the actuaries stood at around $2.3 million, equivalent to 44% of the police department's payroll. Additionally, members of the police force contributed roughly half a million. To address past underfunding, an extra payment of $400,000 was necessary. An alternative contribution option of about $1.9 million was also presented. Historical asset performance, membership statistics, monthly benefit payments, and the city's policy to contribute 103% of the required payment were discussed in detail.

Turning to the Fire Pension Fund, Mr. Grogan pointed out that the normal cost was approximately $1.1 million, higher than that of the police pension. The unfunded actuarial liability for the fire pension was about $46 million, resulting in a 40-43% funded ratio. The recommended contribution from actuaries stood at around $4.5 million, while member contributions amounted to about half a million. To address underfunding and poor asset performance, a catch-up payment of $3.8 million was necessary. An alternative contribution option of about $3.7 million was also presented. Historical asset performance, membership statistics, monthly benefit payments, and the city's policy to contribute 105% of the required payment were discussed.

Mr. Grogan also provided insights into the various funding sources for the pensions, including the Personal Property Replacement Tax, Real Estate Tax, Cannabis Tax, and Video Gaming License Fee. There was a significant reduction expected in the Personal Property Replacement Tax for the upcoming year, as communicated by the state.

The presentation included a historical perspective on the council's levy decisions over the years and indicated fluctuations in contributions to the pension funds.

Mayor Burress inquired about potential changes in Tier One and Tier Two pensions, and Mr. Grogan and Deputy Fire Chief Tony Rendleman provided insights into legislative developments and concerns about Social Security.

Council Member Orrick raised questions about the duration of the 2040 funding requirement, levy fluctuations, and the consistency of contributions from the Personal Property Replacement Tax.

6.2. **RFP for City Owned Commercial Properties 04-04-34-451-001, 04-04-34-451-002, 04-04-34-451-003, 04-04-34-451-004, 04-04-34-451-005, 04-04-34-451-006 , 04-04-34-451-007, 04-04-34-451-008, 04-04-34-446-001, 04-04-34-446-002 04-04-34-446-007, 04-04-34-446-008, 04-04-34-446-009, 04-04-34-446-010, 04-04-34-446-011**

Police Chief and Interim City Manager, Mr. John Dossey led the discussion regarding the Request for Proposal (RFP) for city-owned commercial properties, Mr. Randy Price presented his response to the proposal. Mr. Dossey, provided context, explaining that Mr. Price had responded to the RFP, focusing on the Second Street property. Mayor Burress invited Mr. Price to the podium, where he elaborated on his proposal.

Mr. Price emphasized that his plans for the Second Street property were similar to those previously discussed for the Court Street location, particularly regarding the gymnasium's size and purpose. He highlighted some key differences, including the absence of the need for city parking as they had ample space for parking and the ability to manage rainwater. The property was already zoned as B-3, aligning with their gym's intended use. The only variance required would be for his son to continue living on the premises.

Mr. Dossey pointed out some minor omissions in the proposal, specifically related to PIN numbers and deed details, which could be addressed if the council decided to proceed. Mayor Burress expressed her belief that the Second Street location might offer better parking options, and Mr. Price agreed, emphasizing the room for expansion and the absence of children crossing the street, addressing potential parking concerns. He also mentioned plans for creating a park area by the riverfront.

Council Member Orrick commended Mr. Price for his commitment to using local businesses for materials whenever possible and inquired about potential outside vendors for food. Mr. Price confirmed the intention to incorporate local businesses, possibly having a food court or special events involving Pekin's unique food offerings. He described a concept similar to the "Taste of Pekin" event, showcasing local businesses' specialties. In his closing remarks, Mr. Price highlighted that his proposal aimed to offer solutions to various challenges and provide an attractive opportunity for the city.

NEW BUSINESS

7.1. Resolution No. 73-23/24 Award City Hall Exterior Cleaning to Otto Baum Company

Police Chief and Interim City Manager, Mr. John Dossey, introduced the agenda item regarding the City Hall Exterior repairs project, proposing to award the bid to Otto Baum Co. He outlined the scope of work, which includes pressure washing, re-pointing damaged mortar joints, re-caulking joints, repairing damaged brick, and resealing the brick at City Hall. This maintenance is essential for the long-term preservation of the building and will result in cost savings for taxpayers. After receiving three bids, with Otto Baum having the lowest bid, it was recommended by the staff to award the project to Otto Baum.

Council Member Hilst raised a question about the project's budget, specifically the allocation from the BDD funding. City Engineer, Ms. Josie Esker clarified that the line item currently reflects the public properties budget, but adjustments can be made as needed, either within the public properties budget or by reverting to BDD funding, as initially agreed upon during the budget approval.

Council Member Hilst sought further details on the budget, inquiring about a lump sum of $97,200 designated for car cleaning and ceiling handicapped ramp access and inquired if this amount covers the entire ramp or just a section. Public Works Director, Mr. Dean Schneider confirmed that it applies to the entire length of the ramp leading to the second floor of the building. Council Member Hilst also asked about the scope of work involving caulking and cleaning the exterior brick, to which Mr. Schneider clarified that it encompasses the entire outside of the building.

Council Member Orrick questioned allowable BDD expenses and stated it was only to entice or do infrastructure to locate or relocate a business and requested Ms. Swise's opinion. Ms. Swise stated that she would have to inquire and get back to the Council.

Mr. Schneider stated that the funding was coming from public property and not BDD.

Ms. Esker added that you can use BDD for infrastructure repairs.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Rick Hilst, Councilman
SECONDER:	Karen Hohimer, Councilwoman
AYES:	Hilst, Hohimer, Cloyd, Burress, Orrick, Abel
ABSENT:	Dave Nutter

7.2. Resolution No. 74-23/24 Approve Spending Authority for ADA Repairs

Police Chief and Interim City Manager Mr. John Dossey presented the resolution to Council to grant the City Engineer additional spending authority for sidewalk repair projects. The current procurement policy limits this authority, and are requesting up to $25,000 of spending authority per project, not to exceed a cumulative budget of $100,000 per fiscal year without direct council approval. Each area of sidewalk repair will be treated as a separate project. The purpose of this request is to streamline the sidewalk repair process, take advantage of cost savings, and coordinate with Ameren, who has an ongoing project in the area.

Council Member Orrick expressed his support for the resolution. He emphasized that he believes this initiative will ultimately save the city money, echoing the goal of Ms. Esker, the City Engineer, who is dedicated to cost-efficiency. Council Member Orrick conveyed his trust in Ms. Esker's honesty and commitment to financial responsibility, stating that he stands behind her wholeheartedly.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [5 TO 1]**
MOVER:	John P Abel, Councilman
SECONDER:	Lloyd Orrick, Council Member
AYES:	Hohimer, Cloyd, Burress, Orrick, Abel
NAYS:	Rick Hilst
ABSENT:	Dave Nutter

7.3. Resolution No. 75-23/24 Approve Annual Support for Greater Peoria Economic Development Council

Police Chief and Interim City Manager Mr. John Dossey introduced Chris Setti from the Greater Peoria Economic Development Council to discuss their annual request for continued collaboration. The collaboration aims to promote economic growth through targeted business assistance, workforce development, and regional marketing. The City of Pekin has a long-standing partnership with the Greater Peoria Economic Development Council, focusing on sharing data related to regional marketing, project and business assistance. The collaboration benefits Pekin by generating leads from site selector conferences and trade shows, with a specific focus on manufacturing and healthcare industries. The GPEDC also helps streamline responses to site search requests by adding regional data and resources for development projects. The cost for this collaboration is $20,000.

During the discussion, Council Member Hilst raised a question about the membership year for which the $20,000 contribution is intended. Mr. Setti clarified that it covers the entire calendar year, from January 1, 2023, through the end of the year.

Council Member Orrick asked about the specific benefits the collaboration has brought to Pekin in the past 12 months. Mr. Setti outlined numerous initiatives, such as marketing Pekin's industrial park, hosting events like Career SPARK, assisting local businesses in accessing grants, and building partnerships with local entities and state and federal partners. Additionally, a video commercial showcasing Pekin's assets is employed in marketing efforts to attract potential investors and site selectors.

Mr. Dossey also commended the assistance provided by Mr. Setti in terms of job searches and the wealth of information he brings to the city.

Council Member Cloyd appreciated a video commercial highlighting the industrial park and asked about its use in marketing efforts. Mr. Setti explained that the video is a valuable tool used in the region's marketing strategy, especially for attracting businesses to Pekin.

Additionally, Mr. Setti discussed the methods of marketing and how the video is shared through email, postcards, and the website, targeting site selectors and potential investors. The video serves to showcase Pekin's assets and capabilities to potential businesses.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	John P Abel, Councilman
SECONDER:	Karen Hohimer, Councilwoman
AYES:	Hilst, Hohimer, Cloyd, Burress, Orrick, Abel
ABSENT:	Dave Nutter

7.4. Resolution No. 76-23/24 Approve Illinois Municipal League Risk Management Association Renewal Invoice

Mr. Bob Grogan, Interim Finance Director, presented the annual insurance payment for the City of Pekin, covering workman's compensation and general liability for the entire calendar year 2024. He noted that there was an increase in the premium compared to the previous year. In the past, the city had opted not to use a Min/Max policy, and this approach was recommended once again. Mr. Grogan discussed the city's historical claims record, explaining that the city has experienced multiple "bad years" in terms of claims, which puts it at a financial disadvantage for Min/Max policies. He mentioned that while there are alternative options, there's insufficient time to explore these alternatives for the 2024 calendar year.

Mr. Dossey expressed his intention to reinstitute or implement a safety committee. Council Member Orrick inquired whether the city had ever bid out its insurance policy, suggesting it might be worth exploring to ensure the city is receiving competitive rates. Mr. Grogan indicated he would investigate when the last time this was done, acknowledging there are competitors in the market, although the current insurance provider is standard for municipalities.

Council Member Hilst raised concerns about the available funds in the specific line items designated to cover the insurance payment. He noted a substantial shortage, approximately $357,000, which raised questions about where the rest of the funds would be sourced. Mr. Grogan acknowledged the budgetary shortfall and mentioned that some prior claims, which were not originally budgeted, had affected the budget allocation.

In response to Council Member Hilst's concern about the insurance budget shortage, Mr. Grogan discussed the overall insurance budget and how expenses are apportioned across various funds to maintain a balance. He acknowledged the specific line items for workman's compensation and general liability were facing a shortage, but the entire insurance budget was still within acceptable limits. Mr. Grogan offered to provide a detailed plan for the remainder of the year and potential budget amendments if needed, to address the shortfall. The discussion emphasized the importance of ensuring the insurance payment is made in a timely manner to avoid potential penalties in the amount of $12,000.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Becky Cloyd, Mayor Pro tem
SECONDER:	John P Abel, Councilman
AYES:	Hilst, Hohimer, Cloyd, Burress, Orrick, Abel
ABSENT:	Dave Nutter

7.5. Resolution No. 77-23/24 Adopt Non-Discrimination Policy for City Services and Programs

City Attorney Ms. Swise presented the need for a new policy to comply with a grant received by the Fire Department from the Department of Homeland Security. The grant comes with requirements for the city to establish certain nondiscrimination policies and procedures. The previously adopted Limited English Proficiency (LEP) policy was the first part of this compliance, and the current proposal is the second part.

The new policy aims to prevent unlawful discrimination in the provision of city services and programs. While the city already has nondiscrimination policies related to employment, this policy is specifically geared toward nondiscrimination in the services offered to residents and program participants. It establishes a clear commitment to nondiscrimination and tasks the city manager with creating procedures to handle complaints of unlawful discrimination in the provision of city services and programs.

Deputy Fire Chief Tony Rendleman mentioned that the grant received was approximately $81,000 and had already been used to purchase new breathing apparatus for the hazmat and technical rescue teams. Council Member Orrick inquired about the connection between this policy and the need for interpreters. Ms. Swise clarified that the policy is a requirement for the city to receive the grant funds, and it encompasses a broader range of nondiscrimination, including aspects such as race, religion, national origin, and sex. The policy ensures compliance with the grant's conditions and provides a mechanism for handling complaints related to unlawful discrimination in the provision of city services and programs.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Becky Cloyd, Mayor Pro tem
SECONDER:	Lloyd Orrick, Council Member
AYES:	Hilst, Hohimer, Cloyd, Burress, Orrick, Abel
ABSENT:	Dave Nutter

7.6. Ordinance No. 4120-23-24 Amending Chapter 5, Article I, Division 4, Section 6-4 of the Pekin City Code

A motion was made by Council Member Hohimer seconded by Council Member Abel to approve and adopt an ordinance Amending Chapter 5, Article I, Division 4, Section 6-4 of the Pekin City Code regarding the video gaming terminal fee.

Police Chief and Interim City Manager Mr. John Dossey presented a proposal to exempt non-profit organizations from the $1,000 fee for each gaming terminal, citing the potential hardship it could pose on organizations like the Pekin Park District, Elks, American Legion, and others. The proposal sought to ensure that the city continued to collect approximately $200,000 annually from this source, primarily earmarked for police and fire pensions.

Council Member Hohimer expressed the opinion that the fee should be applied uniformly, regardless of an organization's status as a non-profit or its revenue, arguing that the machines were meant to generate revenue for the owners.

During the discussion, local business owners and stakeholders, including George Hunter and Cathy LoBello from Jaimie's Place, voiced their concerns. They emphasized that many small businesses contribute significantly to the community and argued against what they perceived as a discriminatory approach based on revenue.

Council Member Orrick proposed an amendment to reduce the terminal fee to $200 for video gaming terminals. He clarified that this fee reduction was intended for all businesses, not just non-profits.

The discussion became complex and the Council struggled to reach a consensus on the proposed changes. Eventually, Council Member Orrick suggested laying over the issue to gather more input and clarity on how the resolution should be crafted. Council members and the city staff agreed to revisit the issue and discuss potential changes to the fee structure and exemptions in preparation for the November 13th Council meeting.

RESULT:	**LAYED OVER [5 TO 1]** **Next: 11/13/2023 5:30 PM**
MOVER:	Lloyd Orrick, Council Member
SECONDER:	Rick Hilst, Councilman
AYES:	Hilst, Cloyd, Burress, Orrick, Abel
NAYS:	Karen Hohimer
ABSENT:	Dave Nutter

ANY OTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE COUNCIL

Council Member Dossey mentioned attending the station dedication and expressed appreciation for Heather Robertson's contributions.

Fire Chief Trent Reeise thanked the community and staff for their support during the dedication and mentioned the successful event with over 130 attendees.

City Attorney, Ms. Kate Swise discussed the use of business development district funds, highlighting the municipality's authority to renovate, rehabilitate, reconstruct, repair, locate, remodel any existing building and construct public buildings.

Public Works Director, Mr. Dean Schneider shared positive feedback about the new garbage trucks, emphasizing their efficiency. He commended the skilled drivers and their ability to navigate challenging neighborhoods.

Council Member Abel expressed the need to reach out to Mr. Zeller regarding the Avanti's Dome and its future plans.

Council Member Hohimer addressed concerns about gambling addiction, urging businesses with gaming machines to contribute the relatively small annual fee of $1,000 per machine. She argued that businesses benefiting significantly from these machines should not find this fee burdensome.

Council Member Orrick inquired about the recent cleanup event, and Mr. Schneider provided a positive update but mentioned that the final cost figures were not available yet.

Council Member Hilst inquired about the Clark Street Project and questioned the posting of the Police Pension agendas on the City website.

City Engineer, Ms. Josie Esker clarified that there was a delay regarding the Clark Street Project and stated that the contract was now signed.

Deputy Fire Chief Tony Rendleman explained the historical practice of not posting Fire Pension meetings and that they are now posted since he had taken over. Mr. Dossey noted that the pension boards were separate entities from the city.

Hilst discussed the importance of conducting citizen satisfaction surveys to gauge public opinion on services and priorities. He expressed a desire to distribute such surveys via wastewater bills in the near future.

Council Member Cloyd praised the Pekin High School's class that teaches students how to build houses and highlighted their ongoing project.

Mayor Burress shared her experience with a home built by Pekin High School students and commended Fire Chief Reeise for his work on the new fire truck and station dedication.

EXECUTIVE SESSION 5 ILCS 120/2 (C)

ADJOURN

Seeing no further business of the Council a motion was made by Council Member Hohimer seconded by Council Member Orrick to adjourn. Motion carried by voice vote. Mayor Burress adjourned the meeting at 7:30 PM.