**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, NOVEMBER 24, 2025 AT 5:30 PM
MAYOR MARY J. BURRESS PRESIDING**

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Mary Burress.

Call to Order

City Clerk, Ms. Nicole Stewart, confirmed all Council Members were physically present and logged in. Mayor Buress declared a quorum was present and opened the meeting at 5:30 PM.

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
Jimmie Fletcher, Jr.	City of Pekin	Council Member	Present	5:30 PM
John P Abel	City of Pekin	Council Member	Present	5:30 PM
Peg Phillips	City of Pekin	Council Member	Present	5:30 PM

Approve Agenda

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, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer, Council Member Phillips, Council Member Fletcher

Approval of Minutes

4.1. City Council - Regular Meeting Minutes - November 10, 2025

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, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer, Council Member Phillips, Council Member Fletcher

Public Input

Ms. Zoe Carter addressed the Council regarding the City's recent purchase of the Lutticken property, expressing enthusiasm for the project's future potential. She also commented on the proposed Data Center project, stating that while she supports the economic benefits it may bring, she is concerned about the strain on Illinois' electrical grid, noting the state's ranking as the fourth-largest producer of electric energy and largest producer of nuclear energy in the country. She urged the City to thoroughly evaluate potential impacts on electric supply and costs to taxpayers. Mayor Burress responded that the City conducts thorough due diligence on such matters.

Mr. Matthew Johnson spoke regarding the tax levy, expressing concern that the current pension system is unsustainable even with a 4.9% increase in the levy. He stated that the constitutional protections for pensions restrict needed reform and suggested that new hires should not enter the pension system. He further commented that Ms. Carter's concerns regarding the Data Center were valid, warning that increased demand on the electric grid could negatively impact supply and cost stability.

Mr. John McNish addressed the Council on several topics including home rule, homelessness, property taxes, inflation, and the City's crime-free housing program.

Ms. Lori Schopp of Mackinaw addressed the Council regarding Kratom sales. She shared that after attending a Morton Village Board meeting, that community subsequently passed an ordinance banning Kratom. She noted that six or seven businesses in Pekin currently sell the substance and that similar bans have been enacted in East Peoria, Morton, and Tinley Park. She referred to Kratom as "gas station heroin" and urged action. Mr. Dossey responded that, contrary to earlier assertions, Home Rule authority does allow the City to regulate this issue. He stated that staff have been meeting with the Health Department, are aware of actions taken by neighboring communities including Morton, Creve Coeur, and East Peoria, and are preparing to bring forward options, including zoning considerations, for a future meeting.

Consent Agenda

Council Member Fletcher read the 16 items listed on the Consent Agenda.

RESULT:	**PASSED (UNANIMOUS)**
MOVER:	Council Member Jimmie Fletcher
SECONDER:	Council Member Peg Phillips
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Mayor Burress, Council Member Nutter, Council Member Hilst, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer, Council Member

Phillips, Council Member Fletcher

6.1. Financial Reports through October 31, 2025

6.2. Accounts Payable Paid Proof List through November 14, 2025

6.3. Receive and File FY 2025-26 Budget Transfers through November 18, 2025

6.4. Receive and File Greater Peoria Economic Development Council Quarterly Report

6.5. Receive and File Quotes for the Installation of a 3-inch RPZ Backflow Device at City Hall

6.6. Receive and File Request for Proposal for Property and Liability Risk Management and Insurance Consulting Services

6.7. Cancel the Regularly Scheduled City Council Meeting of December 22, 2025

6.8. Ordinance No. 4355-25/26 Approving a First Amendment to the Agreement for Purchase and Sale of Real Property with JPG Commercial Real Estate, LLC to Extend the Due Diligence Period

6.9. Ordinance No. 4356-25/26 Approving a Variance at 1021 Hamilton Street to Reduce Building Setbacks for a Swimming Pool (Case V 2025-12)

6.10. Ordinance No. 4357-25/26 Approving a Variance at 1221 Maple Street to Reduce the Front Building Setback to Allow for Construction of a Porch (Case V 2025-13)

6.11. Ordinance No. 4358-25/26 Approving a Variance at 1 Rosewood Lane to Allow for the Construction of a Shed on a Residential Non-Conforming Lot (Case V 2025-14)

6.12. Ordinance No. 4359-25/26 Approving a Special Use Permit for Katana Hibachi & Sushi for the Operation of an Open Front/ Walk Up Food Trailer at 1201 North 8th Street (Case SU 2025-08)

6.13. Ordinance No. 4360-25/26 Approving a Special Use for Pekin Alignment

& Autobody Inc. for the Operation of an Automobile Repair Shop with Short-Term Auto Storage at 716 Court Street (Case SU 2025-09)

6.14. Ordinance No. 4361-25/26 Approving a Site Plan for the Center for Prevention of Abuse for the Construction of a Commercial Building at 121 South 2nd Street (Case SPR 2025-06)

6.15. Ordinance No. 4362-25/26 Approving a Site Plan for Epic Pharma Solutions Inc. for the Construction of a Commercial Building Located at 405 Hanna Drive (Case SPR 2025-07)

6.16. Resolution No. 361-25/26 Amending the City of Pekin Procurement Policy No. 21 Regarding Contracts with Entities Not in Good Standing

New Business

7.1. Resolution No. 362-25/26 Approving Illinois Municipal League Risk Management Association for Year 2026 Renewal Invoice

RESULT:	**PASSED (6 TO 1)**
MOVER:	Mayor Pro Tem Karen Hohimer
SECONDER:	Council Member Peg Phillips
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Mayor Burress, Council Member Hilst, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer, Council Member Phillips, Council Member Fletcher
NAYS:	Council Member Nutter

City Manager John Dossey presented the request, noting that the City has utilized IMLRMA for workers' compensation and general liability insurance for several years. At the direction of the Council, an RFP was issued on June 23, 2025, resulting in the following three responses:

- Illinois Municipal League Risk Management Association: $1,297,576
- Illinois County Risk Management Trust (Unland Group): $1,923,623
- Travelers Insurance (Worthy Insurance): $1,847,188

A full proposal packet and summary were provided to Council on November 10, 2025. Due to substantial differences in pricing, coverage limits, deductibles, claim handling, defense counsel expertise, available training, and contract review services, staff recommended remaining with IMLRMA. Upon approval, the City will remit its annual contribution for coverage beginning January 1, 2026.

Mr. Dossey noted the invoice included three payment options. The City secured approval to receive a 1% discount, totaling $12,975.76, if paid in full by November 26, 2025. After applying the discount, the amount due is $1,284,600.24, plus $2,000 for annual Illinois Municipal League dues, for a total of $1,286,600.24.

Council Member Nutter noted that this was the first insurance RFP in six years and stated that several questions raised during the review process should be made clear to the public. He expressed concerns regarding the low $500 deductible, the relatively low cybersecurity coverage, and whether the 1% discount was based on a written agreement or a handshake understanding.

Human Resources Director Shelly Costa confirmed the discount would be honored if payment was overnighted the following day.

Council Member Nutter then raised an additional concern regarding what would happen to the premium if the City were to disband the bus department, asking whether a written agreement existed with IMLRMA to renegotiate the contract.

Mr. Dossey responded that, as with many matters, no final commitment exists until the change is completed. He stated that the City has an email providing an estimated adjustment, but final numbers cannot be confirmed until the department is fully dissolved. Ms. Costa reported an estimate of $125,000, while Mr. Dossey stated that it could be higher.

City Attorney Jim Vasselli stated that the budget includes capacity for adjustments.

Council Member Phillips added that if the City later realizes permanent savings from departmental changes, Council could reauthorize the remaining funds elsewhere by budget amendment.

Council Member Nutter shared an example related to prior workers' compensation issues. Mr. Hill explained that the City previously participated in a "mid/max" program but is now on a standard premium model like other insurance policies, meaning no additional bills are incurred from new claims. Older mid/max claims remain open until fully resolved, though many have already been closed.

Council Member Nutter asked why the deductible remained so low. IMLRMA representative Eric Hill explained that IMLRMA's Board of Directors, comprised of mayors, intentionally sets low deductibles as a member benefit, noting that few traditional insurers offer comparable terms. Council Member Nutter asked whether the deductible structure applied to most municipalities, and Mr. Hill confirmed that it does, with only a few large, formerly self-insured communities opting for higher deductibles.

Council Member Nutter also reiterated concerns about the low cybersecurity coverage limit. Mr. Hill agreed that the limit is likely insufficient and noted recent discussions at the Safety Committee level. He stated that coverage could be increased up to $1 million, though doing so requires an extensive application process. He also noted that the City contracts external specialists for cybersecurity functions.

Mr. Dossey added that the City considers cybersecurity needs carefully, particularly with outsourced expertise and CJIS-related backup and security requirements.

7.2. Resolution No. 363-25/26 Approving and Adopting a Classification and Compensation Plan for Non-Bargained Positions

RESULT:	**PASSED (4 TO 3)**
MOVER:	Mayor Pro Tem Karen Hohimer
SECONDER:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem John Abel
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Mayor Burress, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer, Council Member Phillips
NAYS:	Council Member Nutter, Council Member Hilst, Council Member Fletcher

City Manager John Dossey presented the request, noting that between 2022 and 2025 several key non-bargained positions remained vacant for extended periods, including City Manager, Finance Director, HR Director, Assistant City Engineer, City Engineer, and Risk Manager. In response, the Council approved a contract with MGT of America Consulting on January 13, 2025, to complete a comprehensive compensation study for non-bargained positions. Over seven months, MGT analyzed 42 positions, surveyed comparable communities, developed recommended salary ranges and 11 pay grades, and drafted updated job descriptions. The findings and supporting materials were provided to the Council, and staff recommended adoption of the proposed plan.

Council Member Hilst asked for clarification regarding the stated financial impact and what specifically was being approved. Human Resources Director Shelly Costa explained that the action is limited to adopting the structure of the plan, specifically the salary ranges and job classifications, not implementing raises. She noted that five employees currently fall below the proposed minimum ranges, and three additional positions were recommended for further review.

Council Member Hilst expressed concern that approving the plan would inevitably carry financial implications and questioned language allowing the

Fire Chief to participate in labor negotiations, which he believed could be a conflict of interest. The Mayor, Council Member Abel, and Police Chief Ranney clarified that department heads routinely participate in negotiations as subject matter experts, while attorneys lead the bargaining process, which is standard practice in most municipalities.

Council Member Phillips stated that after review with another CPA, the proposed ranges appeared reasonable and aligned with comparable public sector roles. She emphasized the need for competitive compensation to recruit and retain qualified employees.
Mayor Burress reiterated that the Council was voting on the framework only, not individual increases.
Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer added that failure to maintain competitive ranges leads to turnover and continual retraining.
Council Member Nutter sought confirmation that the action did not authorize pay grade movement or raises. Ms. Costa confirmed that pay grades are embedded within the ranges but no salary adjustments are authorized by the resolution.
Economic Development Director Wray further noted that any individual pay increase would require separate Council approval. Council Member Hilst observed that next year’s projected payroll is approximately $500,000 higher and that the wage study contributes to this increase. Mr. Wray explained that Council could adjust the budget accordingly during the FY26 process.

Council Member Nutter expressed concern about timing. Mr. Dossey responded that recruitment challenges have persisted since his arrival in 2023 and that the upcoming budget process makes this the appropriate time to establish a formal framework. Several members, including Mayor Burress and Nutter, agreed that the City has delayed addressing compensation for too long and commended MGT for its work.

Council Member Fletcher confirmed that adoption of the plan merely establishes classifications and ranges and does not authorize raises.

City Attorney Jim Vasselli reiterated that the plan functions as a structural and educational tool, while any actual salary adjustments remain a separate action.

Council Member Fletcher asked whether raises could occur before the next budget. Mr. Dossey advised that any individual adjustments would depend on Council direction and available budget capacity, with larger adjustments likely deferred to budget deliberations.

7.3. Resolution No. 364-25/26 Approving the Quote for Installation of a 3-Inch RPZ Backflow Device at City Hall with Wiegand Plumbing Inc. of Illinois

RESULT:	**PASSED (UNANIMOUS)**

MOVER:	Council Member Rick Hilst
SECONDER:	Council Member Dave Nutter
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Mayor Burress, Council Member Nutter, Council Member Hilst, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer, Council Member Phillips, Council Member Fletcher

City Manager John Dossey explained that a recent inspection of the City Hall plumbing system revealed the lack of a required backflow prevention device on the domestic water line. To address the issue, staff solicited three quotes from qualified plumbing contractors, with Wiegand Plumbing, Inc. of Illinois submitting the lowest proposal. He noted that while all quotes fall within the City's minor purchasing threshold, the total cost exceeds the City Manager's spending authority, necessitating Council approval. The resolution authorizes installation of a 3-inch RPZ backflow prevention device, along with all associated copper piping, valves, insulation, and testing as outlined in Exhibit A. Mr. Dossey stated that staff recommends approval.

7.4. Resolution No. 365-25/26 Authorizing Additional Spending Authority for FY26 Sewer Lining Project

RESULT:	**PASSED (UNANIMOUS)**
MOVER:	Council Member Rick Hilst
SECONDER:	Council Member Dave Nutter
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Mayor Burress, Council Member Nutter, Council Member Hilst, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer, Council Member Phillips, Council Member Fletcher

City Manager John Dossey reported that the FY 2026 Sanitary Sewer Lining Project was awarded to Hoerr in September for $97,250 to complete lining work on Hermann Street, West Shore Drive, and Summer Street. He noted that the bid also included alternative pricing for any unforeseen additional work. Since that award, staff has identified two additional segments on Rose Court and an area on Main Street that require lining. He stated that adding these locations now is the most efficient approach, allowing all work to be completed under the existing contract without incurring a second mobilization cost. To address the additional sections, staff is requesting $30,000 in additional spending authority. Mr. Dossey emphasized that the total project cost, including this increase, will remain within the $250,000 budget allocated for sewer lining this fiscal year. Staff recommends approval.

7.5. Resolution No. 366-25/26 Amending the Agreement with Fire Trucks Unlimited for the Refurbishment of a Fire Engine

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

	Member Nutter, Council Member Hilst, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer, Council Member Phillips, Council Member Fletcher

City Manager John Dossey explained that the Fire Department initially planned to refurbish the 2007 Pierce fire engine under the agreement previously approved with Fire Trucks Unlimited. However, due to notable changes in the condition of the fleet, staff now recommends substituting a different but comparable fire engine for refurbishment. He noted that the Sourcewell contract is not tied to a specific apparatus, and Fire Trucks Unlimited has agreed to honor all pricing and terms under the existing agreement.

Mr. Dossey reiterated that the refurbishment, quoted at $521,773, with 50% already paid in FY25, will extend the useful life of the apparatus by restoring and upgrading major components. Council had previously authorized up to $600,000 to cover the contract amount and any unforeseen change orders, and this amendment does not alter those financial terms. The work is expected to take approximately six months once initiated.

During Council discussion, Council Member Hilst expressed appreciation for the information provided in advance and sought clarification regarding the use of ARPA funds. He recalled that the original approval indicated ARPA dollars needed to be spent by year-end. Fire Chief Trent Reeise confirmed that the ARPA funding portion has already been exhausted and that the City is now utilizing local funds, noting that the initial down payment was made using ARPA dollars and fully met the deadline.

7.6. Ordinance No. 4363-25/26 Abatement of Taxes On Waste Water Treatment Plant Bonding of $4,385,000 (Ordinance No. 2870-19/20)

RESULT:	**PASSED (UNANIMOUS)**
MOVER:	Council Member Dave Nutter
SECONDER:	Council Member Peg Phillips
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Mayor Burress, Council Member Nutter, Council Member Hilst, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer, Council Member Phillips, Council Member Fletcher

Finance Director Eric Dubrowski explained that the City's wastewater treatment plant bonds, originally issued in 2020 for $4,385,000, are paid through user fees rather than general taxation. As a result, a tax levy is no longer necessary, and staff recommends abatement of the taxes associated with these bonds.

Council Member Phillips clarified the rationale, noting that when the bonds were issued, the City guaranteed repayment, potentially through taxation if needed. However, because the wastewater treatment plant operates as an enterprise fund, the costs are now being covered by user fees, making

repayment more equitable by charging only those who use the system. Mr. Dubrowski confirmed this explanation.
Council Member Nutter asked about the remaining balance on the bonds, and Mr. Dubrowski reported that approximately $2,320,000 will be owed at the end of April 2026.

7.7. Ordinance No. 4364-25/26 Making, Levying and Assessing Municipal Taxes in the City of Pekin, Tazewell and Peoria Counties, Illinois, for the Fiscal Year from May 1, 2025 to April 30, 2026 and Known as the Annual Levy Ordinance

RESULT:	**TABLED TO DECEMBER 8, 2025 (UNANIMOUS)**
MOVER:	Council Member Jimmie Fletcher
SECONDER:	Council Member Rick Hilst
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Mayor Burress, Council Member Nutter, Council Member Hilst, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer, Council Member Phillips, Council Member Fletcher

A motion was made by Council Member Phillips seconded by Council Member Abel to approve Making, Levying and Assessing Municipal Taxes in the City of Pekin, TAzewell and Peoria Counties, Illinois, for the Fiscal Year from May 1, 2025 to April 30, 2026 and Known as the Annual Levy Ordinance.

Finance Director Eric Dubrowski reviewed the proposed annual tax levy for the City of Pekin for May 1, 2025, through April 30, 2026. He explained that the levy primarily supports police and fire pension contributions as well as the library fund. Pension costs exceed what the levy can fully cover even with an increase; total contributions are approximately $7.6 million, with a minimum of $6.18 million needed. Rising costs and inflation prompted staff to recommend a 4.9% increase in the city portion of the levy to maintain the real value of revenue.

Council Member Phillips questioned whether pension liabilities should be funded through the levy or other revenue sources, asking for discussion among Council members.

Mayor Burress expressed a preference for passing the levy along with the budget. Council Member Hilst suggested keeping the levy flat at 0%, noting that recent fee and tax increases, such as utility taxes, were implemented for mandates including the ADA transition plan and pension funding. He suggested using utility taxes instead of increasing property taxes.

Council Member Nutter sought clarification on the library board’s process for preparing a budget and levy recommendation. Jeff Brooks, Library Director, explained that 78% of library funding comes from the levy and that the board and finance committee had reviewed and tweaked the draft budget in

September and October. Council Member Nutter also noted challenges in obtaining full property assessments to ensure all revenue sources are considered.

Council Member Fletcher requested more time to review the levy, citing insufficient information to make an informed decision. Council Member Abel noted that whether the levy is set at 0% or 4.9%, the City will need to supplement the general fund from other sources.

After discussion, Council Member Fletcher moved to table the ordinance until the December 8th meeting, with Council Member Hilst seconding. On roll call vote all present voted Aye. Motion carried.

Any Other Business To Come Before The Council

Elaine Ritchey acknowledged the passing of Bob Riley, who had worked for many years on the City's police cars, fire trucks, and buses, and requested recognition of his service.
City Manager John Dossey reminded the Council of upcoming events: a Center for Prevention of Abuse mural unveiling on December 2 and a mental health and wellness center ribbon cutting on December 4. He also noted City Hall will be closed Thursday and Friday, and referenced letters sent from Lauterbach & Amen regarding the audit.

Council Member Hilst asked about the kratom issue mentioned in public input, questioning whether cities without home rule can ban it. City Attorney Jim Vasselli clarified that non-home rule units cannot enforce a ban and would be vulnerable to legal challenges, while home rule authority provides the City of Pekin the ability to regulate or ban kratom. Mr. Dossey affirmed that the City is acting within its home rule authority and that an ordinance is in progress, with Mr. Vasselli noting it will be drafted by December 8. Police Chief Seth Ranney emphasized that the ordinance must be defensible.

Mr. Dossey also reminded residents that the last day of yard waste pickup will be December 19.

Council Member Nutter noted upcoming holiday traffic control matters on Court Street, and Public Works Director Simon Grimm confirmed removal of traffic control through Christmas.

Council Member Phillips extended condolences to citizens affected by recent losses and addressed concerns about the data center project, specifically zoning, noise, water, and public input.

Economic Development Director Josh Wray explained that large projects like this proceed in phases, with public awareness and oversight through the Zoning Board of Appeals, although conditions cannot be imposed beyond code compliance.

Council Member Fletcher thanked the Mayor and Council for extending the levy vote and looked forward to staff meetings.

Council Member Abel expressed hope that the upcoming ordinance would not require revisiting shortly after passage.

Council Member Hohimer noted a FOIA request regarding IMRF pensions and emphasized transparency while focusing on Pekin employees, offering to answer questions directly without reading individual pension details.

Mayor Burress commented on City property improvements, noting a desire to refresh the City of Pekin logo and signage on water company reservoir. She also thanked the public for their participation and reiterated the challenge of balancing levy decisions with maintaining police and fire pension obligations, stressing a commitment to public safety while managing financial responsibility.

Executive Session 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)

9.1. Executive Session 5 ILCS 120/2 (c) 6. The setting of a price for sale or lease of property owned by the public body

A motion was made to move into Executive Session to discuss 5 ILCS 120/2 (c) 6. The setting of a price for sale or lease of property owned by the public body at 7:38 PM. On roll call vote all presented voted Aye. Motion carried.

RESULT:	**PASSED (UNANIMOUS)**
MOVER:	Council Member Peg Phillips
SECONDER:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem John Abel
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Mayor Burress, Council Member Nutter, Council Member Hilst, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer, Council Member Phillips, Council Member Fletcher

Mayor Burress announced that no action would be taken after Executive Session.

Council moved back into open session at 8:04 PM.

Adjourn

There being no further business to come to the Council a motion was made by Council Member Phillips seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried viva voce vote. Mayor Burress adjourned the meeting at 8:04 PM.

RESULT:	**PASSED (UNANIMOUS)**
MOVER:	Council Member Peg Phillips
SECONDER:	Mayor Pro Tem Karen Hohimer
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Mayor Burress, Council Member Nutter, Council Member Hilst, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer, Council Member Phillips, Council Member Fletcher