



**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, MARCH 23, 2026 AT 5:30 PM
MAYOR MARY J. BURRESS PRESIDING**

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Mary Burress.

Mayor Burress presented a challenge coin and a Proclamation to Pastor Sean Peters for Pekin First United Methodist Church Bicentennial Day. Pastor Peters and Val Moele expressed appreciation and welcomed all to the church's festivities.

Call to Order

City Clerk, Ms. Nicole Stewart, confirmed all Council Members were physically present and logged in except Council Member Phillips who was absent.

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	Absent	--:-- PM

Approve Agenda

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, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer, Council Member Fletcher
ABSENT:	Council Member Peg Phillips

Approval of Minutes

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, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer, Council Member Fletcher
ABSENT: Council Member Peg Phillips

4.1. City Council - Special Meeting Minutes Budget Work Session - February 27, 2026

4.2. City Council - Regular Meeting Minutes - March 9, 2026

Public Input

City Attorney Mr. James Vasselli, presented a power point presentation discussing navigating municipal contracts and the city's exposure under Illinois law. Mr. Vasselli presented an overview of the WHP contract, emphasizing that the developer must still obtain all necessary zoning and site plan approvals, and that no data center can proceed under the current zoning. He cautioned that while council decisions are generally protected, actions deemed in bad faith could expose individual council members to personal liability.

Public input was provided by Zoey Carter, Julianne McLaughlin, Kim Bowers, Douglas Arrowsmith, Adam Rogers, Ethan Wheland, Marc Stevens, Dan Taylor, Justin Smeltzer, Lynn D., Matthew Johnson, Madison Psinas, Gary Lambert, John McNish, Terry Johnson, Sherry Faulk, Elaine Ritchey, Gayle Miller, Dave Milum, Steve Dennis, Todd Carroll, and Dale Meischner. Speakers largely opposed the data center project, expressing concerns about transparency, financial impacts, utilities, environmental effects, and decision-making processes, with several calling for termination of the agreement, additional public involvement, and clearer communication from City officials. Additional comments included suggestions for alternative economic development such as a community grocery store, housing, and park or conservation uses, concerns regarding solid waste changes, budgeting, and utility billing, as well as general support for staff on unrelated items and appreciation for the Council's consideration of community input.

Consent Agenda

Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer read the 6 items listed on the Consent Agenda.

RESULT: PASSED (UNANIMOUS)
MOVER: Mayor Pro Tem Karen Hohimer
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 Fletcher
ABSENT: Council Member Peg Phillips

6.1. Financial Reports through February 28, 2026

6.2. Accounts Payable Paid Proof List through March 23, 2026

6.3. Receive and File FY 2025-26 Budget Transfers through March 19, 2026

6.4. Receive and File Quotes for 1,000 96-gallon Recycling Totes

6.5. Proclamation Women's History Month

6.6. Proclamation for Pekin First United Methodist Church Bicentennial Day

Unfinished Business

7.1. Ordinance No. 4375-25/26 Approving and Authorizing the Termination of a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District Redevelopment Agreement with Olivia's Playhouse and Lisa Fuller

A motion was made by Council Member Hilst seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer to approve Ordinance No. 4375-25/26 Approving and Authorizing the Termination of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District Redevelopment Agreement with Olivia's Playhouse and Lisa Fuller.

Council Member Nutter made a motion, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer, to table the item indefinitely until an agreement can be reached.

RESULT:	TABLED INDEFINITELY (5 TO 1)
MOVER:	Council Member Dave Nutter
SECONDER:	Mayor Pro Tem Karen Hohimer
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Mayor Burress, Council Member Nutter, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer, Council Member Fletcher
NAYS:	Council Member Hilst
ABSENT:	Council Member Phillips

City Manager John Dossey stated that this item had been tabled several times previously. Economic Development Director Josh Wray explained that staff's current recommendation was to terminate the agreement, noting that Ms. Fuller had agreed to pursue an amended agreement, and that the Council could table the item indefinitely while a new proposal is developed for future consideration.

Council Member Nutter made a motion, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer, to table the item indefinitely until an agreement can be reached.

Council Member Hilst inquired whether the business would remain within a TIF district, prompting discussion with Mr. Wray and Mr. Vasselli, who clarified that an agreement could exist outside of the TIF district and that the new agreement would effectively end the current one, as the business is relocating outside the district.

Council Member Hilst referenced the original stipulation requiring the business to remain at its location for five years, while Mr. Wray reiterated that the intent of the

TIF was for building renovation, continued operation within corporate limits, and maintaining the improved property.

Council Member Fletcher commented that the overall goal of the project was to renovate two buildings.

New Business

8.1. Resolution 391-25/26 Directing the City Attorney to Review and Report on the Status of the Real Estate Purchase Contract with Pekin I Developer (WHP)

RESULT:	PASSED (UNANIMOUS)
MOVER:	Council Member Rick Hilst
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 Fletcher
ABSENT:	Council Member Peg Phillips

City Manager John Dossey read the request for the resolution.

City Attorney James Vasselli explained that the purpose of the resolution is to provide a detailed report outlining the City's obligations under the real estate purchase contract and to identify the various steps and "hoops" required, giving the City Council a clearer timeline of when approvals would be triggered by WHP's applications and when votes would be required to either move the project forward or stop it.

Council Member Hilst inquired about the effective date of the contract, to which Mr. Vasselli responded that it is the date of the last signature, noted as June 2025, and added that one extension had been exercised unilaterally under the contract terms, providing nine months to submit earnest money. Council Member Hilst stated that approximately six months remain on the extension, and Mr. Vasselli confirmed that additional approvals would still need to come before the Council.

Council Member Nutter referenced April 24th as the date the agreement was entered into and noted provisions for two three-month extensions, while Mr. Vasselli acknowledged the clarification and indicated a timeline would be provided. Council Member Nutter also referenced the requirement for the earnest money deposit within ten working days, and Mr. Vasselli confirmed the deposit had been made.

Council Member Fletcher requested the date and a copy of the check, to which Mr. Vasselli responded that it was submitted via wire transfer.

Council Member Nutter expressed confusion regarding the effective date, and Mr. Vasselli reiterated that the effective date is the date of the final executed contract.

8.2. Resolution No. 392-25/26 Approving a Collective Bargaining Agreement with the International Association of Firefighters Local #524 for a Term May 1, 2026 – April 30, 2031

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

City Manager John Dossey read the request for approval of the collective bargaining agreement with the International Association of Firefighters Local #524.

Council Member Hilst directed a question to Finance Director Eric Dubrowski regarding whether all salary increases included in the contract were accounted for in the proposed budget, noting the budget reflected an increase of approximately \$2.4 million and a General Fund deficit of \$1.2 to \$1.3 million. Mr. Dubrowski explained that, as discussed during budget workshops, the figures include costs associated with the first year of the Lutticken payment and the use of reserves, and that the budget was developed in accordance with Council's direction, including identified cuts. Council Member Hilst further inquired whether this also included the two one-time transfers from the tourism and bus departments, to which Mr. Dubrowski confirmed that it did.

8.3. Resolution No. 393-25/26 Authorizing the Temporary Waiver of Pekin City Code Section 6-4-2 to Allow Deer Hunting within the City Limits in Conjunction with a Farm Lease with Jeff Yergler

A motion was made by Council Member Hilst seconded by Council Member to approve the resolution.

A motion was made by Council Member Nutter seconded by Council Member Fletcher to table the item.

RESULT:	Passed (5 TO 1)
MOVER:	Council Member Dave Nutter
SECONDER:	Council Member Jimmie Fletcher
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Mayor Burress, Council Member Nutter, Council Member Hilst, Council Member Fletcher
NAYS:	Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer
ABSENT:	Council Member Phillips

Economic Development Director Josh Wray introduced the request, noting that Mr. Jeff Yergler was present and explained that, in conjunction with his farm lease, he is seeking authorization to allow deer hunting on the property to reduce crop loss, which is currently prohibited within city limits. Mr. Wray stated the proposal would require a \$1 million insurance policy to be included in the lease,

that state law provides liability protections for the City, and that hunting would be limited to bow or shotgun.

Mr. Yergler provided background on his experience since 1999, noting no history of injury or lawsuits, and indicated the plan would involve approximately six to seven hunters. He described the significant deer population and associated crop damage and stated that excess deer would be donated to food banks.

Council Member Fletcher inquired about the City's potential share, and Mr. Yergler estimated approximately 50 percent in an ideal year, noting typical yields and losses due to deer damage.

Council Member Nutter stated he was not opposed to the concept but referenced a recently passed state bill and recommended tabling the item.

Mr. Yergler raised concerns regarding timing in relation to the lease and the pending state legislation, while Mr. Vasselli indicated a preference to provide a memorandum with additional information.

8.4. Resolution No. 394-25/26 Publication of the Zoning Map as of December 31, 2025

RESULT:	PASSED (UNANIMOUS)
MOVER:	Council Member Dave Nutter
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 Fletcher
ABSENT:	Council Member Peg Phillips

8.5. Resolution No. 395-25/26 Approving an Intergovernmental Agreement to Accept a Recycling Grant from Tazewell County

RESULT:	PASSED (UNANIMOUS)
MOVER:	Council Member Dave Nutter
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 Fletcher
ABSENT:	Council Member Peg Phillips

8.6. Resolution No. 396-25/26 Approving the Purchase of 1,000 96-Gallon Recycling Carts

RESULT:	PASSED (UNANIMOUS)
MOVER:	Council Member Dave Nutter
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 Fletcher
ABSENT:	Council Member Peg Phillips

City Manager John Dossey presented Resolution No. 396-25/26 for the purchase of 1,000 96-gallon recycling carts, noting that over 700 carts had already been requested prior to the meeting.

Public Works Director Simon Grimm stated the carts are of good quality, though Council Member Fletcher raised concerns about opting for cheaper alternatives. Mr. Grimm indicated that lid pins often snap but wheel issues have not been observed. Mr. Dossey added that the City maintains an inventory of replacement parts, though the exact quantity on hand was uncertain.

8.7. Resolution No. 397-25/26 Authorizing the City to Enter into a Joint Purchasing Agreement with the State of Illinois for Rock Salt

RESULT:	PASSED (UNANIMOUS)
MOVER:	Council Member Dave Nutter
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 Fletcher
ABSENT:	Council Member Peg Phillips

City Manager John Dossey presented Resolution No. 397-25/26, explaining the request to enter into a joint purchasing agreement with the State of Illinois for rock salt, and Public Works Director Simon Grimm confirming that delivery costs are included in the purchase price.

8.8. Resolution No. 398-25/26 Approving the FY2027 Tourism Event Sponsorships

A motion was made by Council Member Abel seconded by Council Member Hohimer to approve the resolution.

A motion was made by Council Member Fletcher seconded by Abel to table the resolution to the April 13, 2026 Council Meeting.

RESULT:	TABLED TO APRIL 13, 2026 (UNANIMOUS)
MOVER:	Council Member Fletcher
SECONDER:	Council Member Abel
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Mayor Burress, Council Member Nutter, Council Member Hilst, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer, Council Member Fletcher
ABSENT:	Council Member Phillips

A motion was made by Council Member Nutter seconded by Council member Abel to amend the Pekin Pride Soccer Club Tournament grant from an award of \$5,000 to \$10,000.

RESULT:	(UNANIMOUS)
MOVER:	Council Member Nutter

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 Fletcher
ABSENT:	Council Member Peg Phillips

Council Member Hohimer and Council Member Abel spoke in support of the economic benefits of events such as the Balloon Fest and tournaments.

Council Members Hilst, Fletcher, and Nutter expressed concerns regarding the review process and requested more detailed, individual consideration of sponsorships.

8.9. Resolution No. 399-25/26 Approving a \$2,500 Beautification Grant with Gary and Crista Flynn for a Building Mural at 525 Court Street

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 Fletcher
ABSENT:	Council Member Peg Phillips

City Manager John Dossey presented the request to Council.

Council Member Nutter suggested the City look at Pocket Park for clean up and beautifying.

8.10. Ordinance No. 4385-25/26 Repealing and Replacing Divisions 2 through 9 and Division 11 of Chapter 4, Article 1 of the Pekin City Code Regarding the Adoption of the 2024 International Codes, the 2023 National Electrical Code, and Affirming Applicable State of Illinois Construction Codes

RESULT:	PASSED (6-0)
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 Fletcher
ABSENT:	Council Member Peg Phillips

8.11. Ordinance No. 4386-25/26 Amending Chapter 4, Article 1 of the Pekin City Code by Creating Division 16-Accessibility Code

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 Fletcher
ABSENT:	Council Member Peg Phillips

8.12. Ordinance No. 4387-25/26 Amending Pekin City Code Chapter 3, Article 2, Division 3 Regarding Sewer Contractor Licensing Requirements and Establishing Denial, Suspension, Revocation, and Appeal Procedures

RESULT:	PASSED (UNANIMOUS)
MOVER:	Council Member Jimmie Fletcher
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 Fletcher
ABSENT:	Council Member Peg Phillips

Council Member Nutter noted that Section 10 of the code was very important and took effect May 1, 2026.

8.13. Ordinance No. 4388-25/26 Amending Pekin City Code, Chapter 3, Article V Fire Prevention and Protection Regarding the Adoption of the 2024 International Fire Code and Repealing the Previously Adopted 2015 International Fire Code, Amending Chapter 3, Article IV, Division 2, Section 3-4-2-10 Regarding Key Boxes and Creating Chapter 3, Article IV, Division 4 Lift Assistance

RESULT:	PASSED (UNANIMOUS)
MOVER:	Council Member Jimmie Fletcher
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 Fletcher
ABSENT:	Council Member Peg Phillips

8.14. Ordinance No. 4389-25/26 Amending Pekin City Code by Creating and Adopting a Fee Schedule Regarding Fees and Charges for Activities in the Fire Department

RESULT:	PASSED (UNANIMOUS)
MOVER:	Council Member Jimmie Fletcher
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 Fletcher
ABSENT:	Council Member Peg Phillips

8.15. Discussion: Solid Waste Request for Proposal

Mr. Dossey reviewed the solid waste RFP, noting only one proposal was received and, after analysis and discussions with GFL, the cost savings to residents would be minimal initially and increase over time, ultimately exceeding current City costs,

while emphasizing the importance of local control and indicating a potential senior discount beginning May 1. Council Members Fletcher, Nutter, Abel, and Hilst raised concerns regarding long-term costs, equipment replacement, operational efficiencies, billing, and potential outsourcing impacts, with discussion on truck ownership, staffing, and administrative inefficiencies, while Mr. Grimm and Mr. Wray provided clarification on costs and financial planning.

Council Member Hohimer and Mayor Burress expressed support for maintaining services in-house, with additional discussion on complaints, service quality, and operational control, and Council Member Hilst requested moving the matter toward a vote, while Mayor Burress indicated a preference to keep services in-house and further evaluate potential amendments.

Any Other Business To Come Before The Council

Mr. Dossey announced upcoming City events and updates, including the groundbreaking for House of Hope, temporary road closures, the Spring Cleanup event, and acknowledged the one-year anniversary of former City Clerk Sue McMillan's passing and her upcoming birthday.

Mr. Wray provided updates on electric aggregation, noting an updated website for opt-outs, and shared that grant applications were submitted through Congressman LaHood for Derby Street and a new fire station.

Council Member Nutter referenced the anticipated ethics update, while Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer reflected on the passing of a community volunteer, Gloria Ranney, and ongoing charitable efforts.

Mayor Burress discussed plans to commemorate the nation's 250th anniversary, including potential flags or banners, encouraged community involvement in Fourth of July activities, and noted plans to include a letter in a future time capsule.

Executive Session 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)

A motion was made by Council Member Fletcher seconded by Council Member Abel to move into Executive Session to discuss 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(1) The Appointment, Employment, Compensation, Discipline, Performance, or Dismissal of Specific Employees and (5)The Purchase or Lease of Real Property for the Use of the Public Body, Including Meetings held for the Purpose of Discussing Whether a Particular Parcel Should be Acquired at 9:28 PM.

RESULT:	PASSED (UNANIMOUS)
MOVER:	Council Member Jimmie Fletcher
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 Fletcher
ABSENT:	Council Member Peg Phillips

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

Council returned to open session at 9:57 PM.

10.1. 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(1) The Appointment, Employment, Compensation, Discipline, Performance, or Dismissal of Specific Employees

10.2. 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(5) The Purchase or Lease of Real Property for the Use of the Public Body, Including Meetings held for the Purpose of Discussing Whether a Particular Parcel Should be Acquired

Adjourn

There being no further business to come to the Council a motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer seconded by Council Member Abel to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried viva voce vote. Mayor Burress adjourned the meeting at 9:57 PM.