

Fairfield, Illinois
Council Chambers, City Hall
Regular Meeting, 6:00 P.M.
Tuesday, February 11, 2025

Meeting called to order by Mayor Gary Moore at 6:00 P.M.

Prayer led by Doug Skaggs followed by the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

City Clerk Tina Hutchcraft called the roll:

Mayor: Gary Moore
City Clerk: Tina Hutchcraft
City Attorney: Darrin Rice
Aldermen: Terry Stahl; Allen Marsh; Sheryl Eckleberry; Bruce McKibben; Clifford Reever; Dewey Eckleberry; Cody Attebery

Absent: Alderman Eugene McGill

Also Present: Tom Mathews, Wayne County Press; Mark Wells, WFIW Radio; Keith Colclasure, Police Chief; Ben Lewis, Assistant Police Chief; Andrew Miller, Fire Chief; Doug Skaggs; Dian Downs; and other citizens from the community.

The minutes of the meeting of January 28, 2025 were sent out to those entitled to receive them. Mayor Moore asked for approval of the minutes for the January 28, 2025 meeting. Motion by Alderman McKibben, seconded by Alderman Marsh to approve the minutes of the meeting of January 28, 2025.

Vote yes: 7

Vote no: 0

Absent: 1

Mayor Moore declared motion carried.

Mayor Moore asked if there were any corrections or objections to the bills for the February 11, 2025 meeting. Motion by Alderman Dewey Eckleberry, seconded by Alderman Attebery to approve the bills.

Vote yes: Reever; Stahl; Attebery; Dewey Eckleberry; Sheryl Eckleberry; Marsh; McKibben

Vote no: none

Absent: McGill

Mayor Moore declared motion carried.

Transition of Trash Service to Republic – Mayor Moore reminded everyone that beginning March 1 the city will be changing trash service from Sunrise to Republic. The week of the 24th will be the last week for Sunrise and they will be picking up totes and dumpsters during that week. Republic will begin distributing new cans that same week. He reported the pickup days for each ward and discussed what items Republic will accept during the bulk item pickup days. He also reminded everyone that trash rates will be going up.

Discussion Concerning Hotel – Mayor Moore gave an update about the problems that have come up concerning the construction of a new hotel here in Fairfield. The developer is having second thoughts about construction after hearing the proposed cost of property tax that has been quoted by the supervisor of assessments. Mayor Moore stated the assessor has said the property tax estimate will be \$256,000 a year. That is \$21,000 a month, \$711 per day. Mayor Moore has researched other communities that have had hotels built. Grayville has a Super 8 hotel and their tax is \$57,000 per year and the Windsor Oaks pays \$53,000 per year. The Richland County assessor said the taxes assessed for a new Best Western hotel in Olney is \$77,000. Mt. Vernon has a new Holiday Inn Express with 117 rooms and the tax is assessed at \$142,000 per year. Mayor Moore stated our assessment here is way too high. In a recent Wayne County Press publication the assessor blamed the high taxes on the TIF District. Mayor Moore said this is just not true. He feels our properties are being over assessed here and feels that something needs to be done to correct it. Everyone says we need new factories here but the fact is no one will ever want to locate here until this changes. He would like to know what is going on here if our surrounding communities are not being assessed the same. He stated that in order for our county to grow something has to be done to correct this issue. Mayor Moore has been asking some of the taxing bodies in TIF if they might be willing to offer a tax abatement to this project. Everyone he has spoken to so far seems to agree that Fairfield is in need of a new hotel. If things here don't change we will just have to be satisfied with being a bedroom community.

Discussion/Approval – Sale of Property at 303 NE 7th Street – We recently acquired this property in order to demolish the house that was becoming dangerous and unsightly. Mayor Moore stated that we have no need for this property and asked the Council if they would like to offer this property for sale. We have spent about \$13,000 in order to acquire the property and demo the house. Mayor Moore has discussed with Attorney Rice about the possibility of donating the ground to someone who might be interested in building a home on the property. Alderman Eckleberry asked if we could donate the property to the park district to be used as overflow parking. Attorney Rice stated we would be able to do that. After some discussion a motion was made by Alderman Reever, seconded by Alderman Dewey Eckleberry to approve seeking bids for the sale of this property with a minimum bid of \$5,000 required. We would have the right to reject or accept any or all bids.

Vote yes: Stahl; Attebery; Dewey Eckleberry; Sheryl Eckleberry; Marsh; McKibben; Reever

Vote no: none

Absent: McGill

Mayor Moore declared motion carried.

Financial Report – Mayor Moore presented the financial report for the month of January.

Miscellaneous – IDNR is still working through some funding expectations for the Lakeside Park project and they hope to have a report back to us sometime in May.

Executive Session – A motion was made by Alderman Dewey Eckleberry, seconded by Alderman McKibben to go into Executive Session to discuss Section 2(c)(21) – minutes of closed session meetings and Section 2(c)(2) – collective negotiating matters between the public body and its employees.

Vote yes: Attebery; Dewey Eckleberry; Sheryl Eckleberry; Marsh; McKibben; Reever; Stahl

Vote no: none

Absent: McGill

Mayor Moore declared motion carried.

Return to Regular Session – Alderman Stahl made a motion, seconded by Alderman Dewey Eckleberry to return to regular session.

Vote yes: 7

Vote no: 0

Absent: 1

Mayor Moore declared motion carried and Council returned to regular session at 7:07 p.m.

Adjourn Meeting – Motion by Alderman Stahl, seconded by Alderman Dewey Eckleberry to adjourn the meeting.

Vote yes: 7

Vote no: 0

Absent: 1

Mayor Moore declared meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Tina Hutchcraft, City Clerk

Gary Moore, Mayor