

**CITY OF GALESBURG
CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 14, 2023
4 PM**

Mayor Marble called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll was taken, and the following members were present: Mayor Linda Marble, Judy Lemon, Glen Hawes, Stanley Chovanec, Carol Wortinger, Roger Frazee, and Ryan Harnden.

Also present: Sarah Joshi, City Manager; approximately six citizens.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

None.

POLICE DEPARTMENT PRESENTATION: COUNCILMAN ROGER FRAZEE

Councilman Frazee spoke about the possibility of reinstating a City police department. The contract with the Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Office calls for notification of intent to renew by March 1 each year. Frazee said he believes this is financially feasible. He explained the process of creating the department.

Mayor Marble said that she met with Councilman Frazee and City Manager Joshi last month to consider the creation of a police department. The initial proposal was to hire only a full-time chief and part-time assistant in the first phase, but she was interested in hiring a part-time officer during this phase as well. The City has \$113,225 remaining in ARPA funds, which can be used for startup costs such as vehicles and other equipment and budgets \$187,500 from the general fund for police protection.

City Manager Joshi spoke to the startup estimate information included in the packet, which included an approximate calculation of first-year expenditures. She indicated that savings can be achieved by purchasing low-mileage used police vehicles and attributing only half of the assistant's time to the new department. Second-year expenses are estimated at \$168,000, absent employee benefits.

Lemon asked whether estimates included retirement and health insurance. Joshi replied that retirement was included in the figures, but that health insurance expense was unpredictable, given that the premiums are age-rated and depend upon the number of dependents an employee may have. The startup estimates also did not include some items for which pricing was difficult to obtain, such as car cams and body cams. Marble stated she is concerned about not including health insurance costs in this budget, it is a big cost for families.

Marble also asked about weapons for two officers. Citizen Mau stated the city has 4, 6-hour 40 caliber, 2 portable radios, 4 handheld walkie talkies, so there would be no need to purchase radio equipment or guns. Marble asked if the walkie talkies were out of date. Mau and Frazee both said they were not.

Marble noted the concern that every six months the Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Office has shift bid and the city does not know which police officer we might have. Lemon wanted to know what coverage the City will have when the

fulltime chief and parttime officer are sick or on vacation. Frazee responded and said this is just phase one and that the city is working on that. Frazee stated he knows KDPS officers who want part-time work and with our savings we could have three to four part-time officers with us that are on standby during regular staff's vacation or sick time.

Lemon voiced the concern that used police cars may be in poor condition, so they should be thoroughly inspected prior to purchase. Frazee agreed, and Lemon asked about fuel and maintenance costs. Joshi estimated \$3,200 annually for fuel and car washes. Citizen Mau recommended a maintenance budget of \$10,000 per year.

Chovanec asked if we the fire department will be contributing to part of the fund for the police department since they will be working quite closely with them. Frazee stated they have their own budget, and the Fire Board is their own entity at this time.

Lemon compared the part-time police officer salary to that of a McDonald's worker. Frazee stated he believes that retired officers are often willing to work parttime for that wage.

Marble expressed that this is short notice for a decision to be made. She did not want Council to feel rushed or to vote if they are not feeling confident. If this does not pass, the City will have to wait another year for this to pass.

Referring to the discussion of special assessment districts later on the evening's agenda, Harnden said if the taxpayer is only paying minimally more for a local police department, he thought they would be in support of this. City Manager Joshi stated that a local police department is expected to cost approximately the same as contracting law enforcement services, whether it is funded under the current model or by special assessment. Frazee stated with the money that the city will save with the equipment the city already has, the budget is very doable. Hawes believes the city will come in under budget and if the city needs the money, we can move some money around.

Marble stated this is very exciting proposition. Residents and taxpayers would like to see a police department. Lemon commented the City's last police department abandoned its citizens, and she never wants to go through that again. Frazee emphasized he believes we can do better this time and get the right people to run a new department. The city has no police protection at night and the city needs that and the city can do this better ourselves.

A motion was made by Hawes to create the police department, seconded by Harnden.

Wortinger asked whether a department can be formed by July 1. Marble said that the City plans on getting it done that quickly. Frazee responded the city will post the position tomorrow if the motion passes.

Lemon asked about the interviewing procedure. Marble stated if the motion passes, the job would be posted immediately, and City Manager Joshi and Councilman Frazee would begin screening the applicants. Then Personnel Committee would conduct the interviews and recommend a candidate to Council. Wortinger asked what the plan would be if an appropriate candidate hadn't been identified by that date. Marble replied that there would have to be a special meeting to rescind the vote. Lemon reiterated that if there is not a qualified candidate identified by March 1, the City would renew its contract with the Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Office.

On a roll call vote, the following voted "Aye": Frazee, Chovanec, Hawes, Harnden, Lemon, Marble

The following voted "Nay": Wortinger

Motion passed.

Marble stated she would like at the March 6 council meeting to have this vote made into a resolution for the city's records. This will not change the motion passed tonight, but it will provide an official record. Marble asked for Councilman Frazee and City Manager Joshi to work together to move the screening of applicants forward and for this be done quickly so that at the March 6 meeting, it will be known whether Council should vote to rescind tonight's action and let the Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Office know we will renew the contract for another year.

SPECIAL ASSESSMENT PRESENTATION: ATTORNEY SETH KOCHES

Seth Koches, partner with Bauckham, Kaufman, Thall and Sparks, presented information regarding Public Act 33 which allows the City to create special assessment districts, a funding mechanism commonly used to fund police and fire services. The current funding practice hampers the general fund and limits the ability of the general fund to pay for other needs.

Koches indicated that Council could consider special assessments following two public hearings to determine the district boundaries, cost estimate, and to hear objection to the distribution of the special assessment levy on taxable properties in the district. If the special assessment districts were approved, each year Council could elect to not levy any amount of fire millage and would set the levy to reflect anticipated operating costs. Notices would be published as well as mailed to those in each district.

DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION: RESOLUTION TENTATIVELY DESIGNATING POLICE SERVICES SPECIAL ASSESSMENT DISTRICT AND FOR NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Council discussed whether or not to move forward with public hearings on the special assessment districts.

Frazee moved, Lemon seconded to pass a resolution to tentatively designate police services special assessment district and for notice of public hearing on March 6, 2023 at 6:00 pm.

On a roll call vote, the following voted "Aye": Frazee, Chovanec, Hawes, Harnden, Lemon, Marble.

The following voted "Nay": Wortinger

Motion passed.

DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION: RESOLUTION TENTATIVELY DESIGNATING FIRE SERVICES SPECIAL ASSESSMENT DISTRICT AND FOR NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Frazee moved, Harnden seconded to pass a resolution to tentatively designate fire services special assessment district and for notice of public hearing on March 6, 2023 at 6:00 pm.

On a roll call vote, the following voted "Aye": Frazee, Chovanec, Hawes, Harnden, Lemon, Marble

The following voted "Nay": Wortinger

Motion passed.

COUNCIL COMMENTS:

None.

There being no further business, Mayor Marble adjourned the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

Linda Marble, Mayor

Lisa McNees, City Clerk

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