MONDAY
July 20, 2026
City of North Chicago
1850 Lewis Avenue, North Chicago, IL 60064

Following City Council Meeting

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

6:26 p.m.

Mayor Leon Rockingham, Jr., called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL:
Present: Jackson, Evans, Allen, Wray, Murphy, Brooks
Absent: Coleman

DISCUSSION OF DEPARTMENT MONTHLY REPORTS:

- Finance Budget Report
- Economic & Community Development
- Human Resources
- Police
- Public Works
- Treasurer

No Discussion. Not opened

HUMAN RESOURCES
COMMITTEE MEETING

MONDAY
July 20, 2026
6:26 p.m.

Alderman Murphy called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL:
Present: Jackson, Evans, Allen, Wray, Murphy, Brooks
Absent: Coleman

1. DISCUSSION OF INSURANCE RENEWAL WITH BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD

Director of Human Resources Elizabeth Black explained that the new rate with Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) was a 23.9% increase and was negotiated to 13.6%, with no plan design changes. Dental would change to Blue Cross and Blue Shield. Vision would continue with EyeMed.

Mrs. Black briefly explained a survey conducted with other municipalities and the reasons for the rate increases were due to rising costs in the medical field.

Mark Smicky, a broker from Global Benefits, reiterated what Mrs. Black stated about the rate negotiations. Mr. Smicky expressed gratitude for the years he'd been able to work with the city. Explaining the type of services that he provided and how he could support the employees.

Mr. Smicky shared information about the rate adjustment over the past few years. He reflected on previous years providing details on rate changes. In 2025 there was a 5% increase for BCBS medical, with a few changes in vision and dental. In 2024, medical renewal was 3% increase, with no increases to vision or dental. In 2025, BCBS medical was a 10% increase before the negotiated amount of 22.6, 0% increase to vision, dental, and BCBS IL. Indicating it was a good place after negotiations.

He highlighted some of the details about changes and benefits packages.

Treasurer Vance Wyatt asked a few clarifying questions about rates in the benefit packet handout.

Dialogue and clarification were provided.

Mr. Smicky continued to share additional details, discount programs, and a possible proposal for additional changes.

Mayor Rockingham Jr. thanked him for negotiating the increase. he asked Mr. Smicky to clarify the reason for increase and what he observed. Mr. Smicky responded that he believed it was due to the doctors and hospital services cost was increasing**.**

Alderman Murphy indicated that the amount of everything that needed to be insured was increasing (medical, car, etc), stating that it was important not to change packages and the coverage, not just for the sake of current employees, but also for possible new hires. There was a fine line for budgetary reasons, the City also needed a desirable compensation package for potential new employees. There was a need to stay competitive as possible with benefit packages in order to attract and retain. the City needed to continue making the best choices. She felt Mrs. Black and team had done a great job negotiating.

Mrs. Black shared the next steps and Mr. Smicky's ability to meet with the staff with questions.

Alderman Allen moved, seconded by Alderman Brooks, that the Human Resources Committee Meeting stand adjourned.

ROLL CALL:
Ayes: Jackson, Evans, Allen, Wray, Murphy, Brooks
Nays: None
Absent: Coleman

MOTION CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 6:46 p.m.

Economic Development/Planning/Zoning Committee Meeting

MONDAY
July 20, 2026
6:47 p.m.

Alderman Brooks called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL:
Present: Jackson, Evans, Allen, Wray, Murphy, Brooks
Absent: Coleman

1. **DISCUSSION OF DENYING A VARIATION FOR A DETACHED GARAGE AT 1210 PARK AVENUE**

   Director of Economic and Community Development Taylor Wegrzyn explained that the petitioners were requesting a variation regarding the rear and side yard setbacks for a detached garage being placed too close to the boundary line. The violation occurred without the proper permits and the required inspection process. The company (Be Spoiled LLC) is well known in North Chicago for remodeling and renovating properties. The company applied for the permit after the detached garage was completed, and it was found to be noncompliant with the city's adopted codes, which is why they were applying for a variation. Staff's recommendation was to deny the request, on the basis that there is no hardship with the property itself. Stating that there may have been some hardship with the petitioner related to personal circumstances and situation, but it was not one in itself. It was a small deviation from the required 5 feet to 3 feet, but nonetheless, it was a deviation, and for that reason, the recommendation was to deny the request. The Planning and Zoning Committee voted 3-2 for denial. Taylor stated that, to his understanding, overturning the Planning and Zoning recommendation would require 2-3 votes.

   Attorney Joel Goldblad was representing Jemett Parker, owner of Be Spoiled LLC, and realtor Darrell Hayes. Stated the history that Mr. Parker had with the city. Indicating that the detached garage was about 2.5 feet away from the boundary line. Mr. Parker thought he had the proper permit, and it was not until Mr. Parker attempted to sell the property that he realized he did not have the correct permit. Mr. Parker rehabbed more than 15 properties in North Chicago, obtained the required permits, and spent significant funds. Attorney Goldblad explained the benefits that Be Spoiled had made to improve the properties in the city.

   Jemett Parker indicated that he missed some steps due to a personal matter; his mom was terminal, therefore, he missed the last step in the process. He indicated that though he chases perfection, he was not perfect and was taking accountability for his missteps. Mr. Parker explained that the need for the hardship was the cost of $17,000 -$20,000 to move the garage or to demolish it, which was roughly $14,000.

   Mr. Hayes stated that most homes in the area were older and one to three feet from the alleyway. Mr. Hayes explained his involvement to the contractors coming to measure and/or cut to align with the already established foundation. At that time, he was unaware that the required permits had not been obtained. Mr. Heyes explained that he originally tried to talk Mr. Parker out of purchasing the property because of rehab cost. Mr. Parker purchased the home, upgraded and modernized it to an exceptional standard. Prior to advertising the garage, there was no interest shown in the property. Once the garage was added to the scope, offers began. Unfortunately, due to current issue, there were no prospects.

Mr. Hayes and Attorney Goldblad shared some facts and purposes of Mr. Parker's history and goals to rebuild and provide homes that were above normal standards. Mr. Hayes shared photos of the property with the council. Allowing council members to ask questions about the pre-existing foundation that had been previously demolished.

Alderman Evans asked if Mr. Parker was aware that he needed the permit. Mr. Parker responded that he had completed the application to include the building of a garage. However, he mentioned that he missed some steps in the inspection process that would have caught the placement error. Mentioning again that it was done in error due to his mother's death and forgetting to follow the rough and final inspection steps, taking full responsibility for the mistake.

Alderman Evans asked for clarification on what was missed, mentioning that he was aware of Mr. Parker's work in the community. Asking whether he had spoken to the Zoning Board, if so, why wasn't the matter corrected prior to coming before the council?

Mr. Parker stated that he spoke to Director Wegrzyn, who suggested demolishing it, and to Building Inspector Manager Dean Cushing, who suggested obtaining a permit to properly place the garage. Restating that the hardship was the finances needed to do either. He desired to simply resolve the issue.

Alderman Murphy asked Director Wegrzyn about the initial plans in the council packet, which only included alterations to the existing home. Asking for clarification: no garage was mentioned. Director Wegrzyn reiterated that the original application did include the garage; however, no plans had been submitted for review and approval until after the project was complete.

Alderman Murphy asked additional clarifying questions about the inspection process, highlighting that more steps were missed. Director Wegrzyn stated that several steps were, in fact, missed.

Treasurer Vance Wyatt asked Director Taylor how many properties in the city currently have variances. Director Wegrzyn did not have that information at this time.

Director Wegrzyn mentioned, according to the petitioners' party, accurately stating there were several properties in that area that were grandfathered into older requirements, that did not meet the 5-foot current standard.

Treasurer Wyatt asked if desired upgrades were made to one of the older grandfathered properties, the property would have to be moved to meet current standards. Treasurer Wyatt asked for clarification on the purpose of the denial due to being two feet off. Director Taylor stated that denial would be for the setback.

Alderman Jackson mentioned concerns when violations occurs and a hardship was granted, and about possible future incidents that would require the same variations. Asking whether the allowance for the future would be on a case-by-case basis or what was being established when ordinances were?

Attorney Megan Mack explained that a hardship related to the land would be based on the land's shape, etc., rather than on the petitioner's financial hardship.

Alderman Jackson stated it needed to be investigated seriously because what was done for one needed to be done for all, or change the ordinance, grandfather it, and is unsure if that was possible. He felt that it could become a problem.

Mayor Rockingham Jr. asked how it was determined that this error had occurred. Mr. Parker stated that when the construction workers were near completion, the city was notified and issued a stop order on the property.

Mayor Rockingham Jr. asked additional clarifying questions to gather a full understanding of how the error was discovered. Attorney Goldblad indicated, during the sale of the home, the buyer asked for proof of all permits, and the garage permit was missing.

Mayor Rockingham Jr. indicated that, as contractors, inspections should have been evident. It appeared as if the city requirements were ignored.

Alderman Wray offered condolences and asked whether there had been a similar problem such as this and if not for Mr. Parker, there needed to be consistency in the future for others.

Mr. Parker expressed gratitude and took accountability for missteps. He said he invested for 26 years in North Chicago and the school district, however, due to personal matters with his mother, his vision was clouded. Mentioning that out of 7 major permits on this property, including HVAC, plumbing, and more, he dropped the ball pertaining to the garage. Apologizing to Director Wegrzyn and Mr. Cushing, indicating that no one was bigger than the program and that he understood they had jobs to do.

2. **DISCUSSION TO AUTHORIZE EXECUTION OF FIFTH ADDENDUM TO SERVICE AGREEMENT WITH SAFEBUILT FOR BUILDING INSPECTIONS AND PLAN REVIEW SERVICES**

Mr. Wegrzyn explained the purpose was to authorize an additional one-year service agreement with SafeBuilt. Explaining the inspection review staffing needed to assist with the current onsite inspectors and the scope of work that SafeBuilt provided, and the continued need for them. This was recommended by the staff.

Alderman Brook asked about cost details, inquiring whether it was based on the services provided or a flat rate. Mr. Wegrzyn indicated that the rate would remain the same; however, a CPI adjustment would occur after each calendar year.

Alderman Brooks and Mr. Wegrzyn discussed possibly recruiting staff for those needs in the future. Mr. Wegrzyn stated that research and discussion had been underway; however, for various reasons, nothing had been finalized.

Alderman Jackson moved, seconded by Alderman Evans and Alderman Murphy, that the Economic Development/Planning/Zoning Meeting stand adjourned.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE

The meeting adjourned at 7:19 p.m.

PUBLIC SAFETY
COMMITTEE MEETING

MONDAY
July 20, 2026
7:19 p.m.

Alderman Jackson called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL:
Present: Jackson, Evans, Allen, Wray, Murphy, Brooks
Absent: Coleman

1. **DISCUSSION TO AUTHORIZE THE PURCHASE OF A USED VEHICLE FROM THE VILLAGE OF MELROSE PARK TO START THE SECOND K9 UNIT**

   Police Chief Lazaro Perez emphasized the importance of another K-9 and of obtaining the vehicle. The vehicle would be equipped with air condition, heat, a remote, and all other necessary tools. The asking price was **$20,000**, but worth **$27,000**. Chief Perez asked to utilize funds from the drug forfeiture fund, and not to exceed **$25,000**, for the purchase, so that would not impact the city's finances.

   Treasurer Vance Wyatt asked if it would require wire transfer. Chief Perez responded possibly so.

   Treasurer Wyatt stated that he would need to speak with Comptroller Tawanda Joyner to work through details, because those funds do not have wire capacity.

Alderman Evans moved, seconded by Alderman Murphy, that the Public Safety Committee Meeting stand adjourned.

ROLL CALL:
Ayes: Jackson, Evans, Allen, Wray, Murphy, Brooks
Nays: None
Absent: Coleman

MOTION CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

PUBLIC WORKS
COMMITTEE MEETING

MONDAY
July 20, 2026
7:23 p.m.

Alderman Evans called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL:
Present: Jackson, Evans, Allen, Wray, Murphy, Brooks
Absent: Coleman

1. **DISCUSSION OF ADOPTION OF THE NEW AND UPDATED 2026 STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM PLAN (SMPP)**

   Interim Director of Public Works Bob Miller indicated that the Stormwater Management Plan had been updated to inspect additional items. There would be a public hearing where additional discussion and questions could be had. The plan needs to be reviewed, approved, and implemented annually.

   Alderman Allen moved, seconded by Alderman Jackson, that the Public Works Committee Meeting stand adjourned.

   ROLL CALL:
   Ayes: Jackson, Evans, Allen, Wray, Murphy, Wray, Brooks
   Nays: None
   Absent: Coleman

   MOTION CARRIED

   The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.