

# MINUTES

The City Council of North Chicago met in a Regular meeting, Monday, November 18, 2024, at 6:02 p.m. in the City Council Chambers at 1850 Lewis Avenue with Mayor Rockingham, Jr., presiding.

## **I. CALL TO ORDER**

## **II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

## **III. INVOCATION**

## **IV. ROLL CALL**

Upon Roll Call being taken, the following members were present:

Present: Jackson, Evans, Allen, Smith, Murphy, January

Absent: Coleman

- 4-1 Plague Presentation by the Northern Illinois Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board to the City of North Chicago for Adopting the **2021** International Residential Code, NFPA 13 D, Residential Fire Sprinklers in all New Homes

Mayor Rockingham stressed the need of sprinklers for pro-active safety measures which would be beneficial to the community. It was placed in the Fire Code NFPA 13 D. The residential sprinklers would be placed in all new homes.

The Mayor commended the Council for passing the requirement/ordinance.

## **V. OMNIBUS VOTE AGENDA**

- 5-1 Approval of Minutes for Regular Council Meeting, **November 4, 2024**

- 5-2 Approval of Standing Committee Meeting Minutes, **November 4, 2024**

- 5-3 Approval of SBA Cell Tower Lease Second Amendment

- 5-4 Approval of Solar Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment

- 5-5 Approval – Resolution to Join the Northern Illinois Land Bank and Name Taylor Wegrzyn as Community Representative

- 5-6 Approval to Ratify the RMA 2025 Risk Management Insurance Renewal in an Amount Not to Exceed **\$1,192,691.81**

- 5-7 Approval – Ordinance of the City of North Chicago Authorizing the Execution of the RMA Minimum/Maximum Contribution Agreement

**Alderman Allen moved, seconded by Alderman Evans to approve items 5-1 thru 5-7 as presented.**

### **ROLL CALL:**

Ayes: Jackson, Evans, Allen, Smith, Murphy

Nays: January

Absent: Coleman

## **MOTION CARRIED**

**Alderman Coleman entered the City Council Chambers at 6:12 p.m.**

## **IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Charles January Jr.

Mr. January was happy for the requirement of fire sprinklers in resident homes. He said that less than **30%** of North Chicago homes had blueprints; blueprints should have been priority. Concerned with Chief of Staff's salary was **\$180k, \$86.53/hr.**; average income in North Chicago was less than **\$40k**. The Water Department, which is the main source of revenue, wasn't being watched.

Mrs. Dora King – District 187

Mrs. King thanked Council for growth, partnered for **(12)** years at the school. She worked on behalf of the children, she was in support of Mr. Price who was on the right path and gave open invitation to the School Board meeting **December 17, 2024**.

Superintendent John Prince – District 187

Mr. Price said **November 11, 2024**, he was notified by the Mayor with a lingering problem of vacant schools. Lindberg would be demolished. Currently, there were resources to complete the task and would provide the update upon the detailed deadline.

Alderman January was appreciative of Mr. Price providing update on Forrestal School. Superintendent Price clarified **(3)** weeks ahead at this time, erected **December 2, 2024**, on schedule and within the budget. There was updated technology and supplies as needed including the library curriculum.

Alderman Smith questioned if it would be available for land purchase once demolished. Mr. Price stated the School Board would determine the best decision for the demolished properties and discussed various other plans including Lindberg, Novak and Hart Schools when demolished. It would be a multi-year process in determining the status. The Board required to weigh all options before any recommendations.

Alderman Allen asked from where the money was utilized from. Mr. Price provided itemization of taxes. The State; **60%**; State; **20%**; Federal **20%** and remaining local; **20%**. They have invested in sustainable programs and rehab, gradually building the reserves with surplus program previous **(8)** years, impact aid was incredibly reliable for both the State and Federal.

Alderman Coleman commended Mrs. King on the School Board efforts. He also recognized Alderman Smith, former Alderman Charles January, former Alderman Torrance Abrams and existing elected officials' assistance as a group effort returning the school board to the City of North Chicago. Superintendent Price clarified the process was already initiated; the candidates were invited to engage with him and the School District. He also openly invited the public to attend the board meetings. Alderman Coleman addressed the vacant buildings. Alderman Coleman recognized/commended Mr. Price on his tenure and have observed the change.

The Mayor commended the Board executives; Mrs. King and Dr. Price and would support grant funding if available. Mrs. King added the need of focusing on the future.

Brett Tewell

He was advocating to change the ordinance; **10-5-1**; No Parking Places. He read the ordinance and clarified currently, it was an undue burden on the taxpayers with no public purpose and an insignificant ordinance. The overnight exemption list only allowed **x4** monthly. Alderman January asked for it to be discussed on Judiciary Committee Meeting. Mr. Tewell was requesting a repeal.

Deborah Richards

Mrs. Richards continued the principal discussion, to her knowledge, nobody was ever turned down with an Honorable sign posting. She was involved mentoring in the school district for several years. She asked that she and her father's name was posted together. She asked to do what was right for the people. Alderman January has asked for discussion about Mrs. Richards street sign. The Mayor stated not at this time.

### Rayon Edwards

Mr. Edwards asked the number of students in the classroom and the amount of tax dollars allocated for the school district. The elected officials needed to know. Elected to speak for the people as we are hurting. He included himself, Billy Coleman, Mr. Vance Wyatt, State Representative Rita Mayfield and Thomas Coleman circulated-for signatures, went to Springfield and spoke to the State Board of Education. There was a negotiation to have 3 elected members in 2025 and 2027 the full Board **would be elected** with exception of financing. He also had concerns with items placed on the Omnibus Vote Agenda. He asked for the officials to conduct a townhall meeting to discuss current ordinances with the residents.

Alderman Coleman apologized that he didn't include Mr. Edwards and other names who lobbied in Springfield for an elected School Board. State Representative Rita Mayfield and others joined with lobbying.

Alderman Evans commented that there was someone who hadn't received an honorable street sign posting. Not sure what she was promised.

### Carmecia Hawthorne – Foss Park District

Ms. Hawthorne sent good tidings to everyone. Foss Park was hosting many events. She announced a comedy show, **December 13, 2024**, held at Foss Park Community Center, Holiday Home Decoration and brunch with Santa, **December 21, 2024**. She provided the contact: **847-689-7480**.

The Mayor welcomed her to place flyers in the City Hall and it would be placed on the city website.

Alderman Coleman thanked Ms. Hawthorne. Alderman January asked that she e-mail the council members.

### Mrs. Stallworth

Mrs. Stallworth was following up with a donation for the children in need of their hunger. She was asking for more than **\$500**.

### David Hood

Mr. Hood stated was informed the City was considering outsourcing the Water Department. He was concerned with potential setback by not having that control. There were currently qualified A License personnel in the department already. Outsourcing would take away jobs from voters and taxpayers within the community.

Alderman Coleman heard the same information. The Water Department was the city's pride and joy he recommended maintaining the water plant within North Chicago.

The Mayor clarified was false information and never discussed outsourcing the city water. We have some of the best employees, changes were being made but not outsourcing. Mayor Rockingham invited the alderman to ask any questions to the department or himself.

Alderman Coleman explained that there was discussion in Executive Session that could not be discussed. In 2010 there was a newspaper report about privatizing North Chicago the water. Mayor Rockingham said that it was "looked into"; he would investigate anything he felt was best for the residents. The department was currently functioning properly.

## **VII. REGULAR AGENDA**

### **7-1 CONSIDERATION/APPROVAL TO RATIFY PAYMENT TO MT. SINAI BAPTIST CHURCH IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$230,000 FOR THE PURCHASE OF LAND**

**Alderman Evans moved, seconded by Alderman Allen for approval to ratify the payment to Mt. Sinai Baptist Church in the amount Not to Exceed \$230,000 for the purchase of land.**

Alderman January asked for explanation to the citizens. The Mayor stated was in the process of seeking to build a water tower at the golf course. Because the property was initially donated to the Foss Park District by the Illinois Department of Recreation; to purchase the land, it had to be swapped with the Park District. The land had to be contiguous with Foss Park; the land currently owned by Mount Sinai Baptist Church was being utilized by Foss Park. There were negotiations for the past 2-3 years as the City offered to Illinois Department of Recreation to allow the swap. IDR agreed with the swap. The current tank on Green Bay Road was not a water tower; it is a bladder. A new water tower would be able to supply water through North Chicago for 2-3 days. Was in hopes of allowing to supply water to other sources. The original contract was less amount being approved vs. the current appraisal because land cost had inflated.

Mayor Rockingham said the City felt that the amount should be raised to its value.

Alderman Coleman explained that the original amount was \$200k and \$30k was to be given to "his, the Mayor's, church."

The Mayor explained the current appraisal was \$310k. He called for a question on the motion to overrule. Alderman Coleman objected to denying him to speak; he asked for Point of Parliament Question.

**ROLL CALL:**

Ayes: Jackson, Evans, Allen, Smith, Murphy, January

Nays: Coleman

Absent: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

Alderman Coleman asked for Point of Parliament Question. Alderman January agreed with Alderman Coleman and his questions should be addressed. Mayor said as Chair he had the authority. Attorney Simon asked what decision of the Chair he was appealing; Alderman Coleman said not recognizing the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward Alderman for Parliamentary Question.

**Alderman Coleman moved, seconded by Alderman January to overrule the decision of the Chairman for not recognizing Alderman Coleman's Parliamentary Question.**

**ROLL CALL:**

Ayes: Jackson, Coleman, Smith, January

Nays: Evans, Allen, Murphy

Absent: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

Alderman Coleman asked if a motion and second was on the floor, does it automatically force a roll call. Attorney Simon explained the Chair can close debate and Call the Question. Alderman Smith asked if there were other motions; Attorney Simon explained there were precedents.

**7-2 APPROVAL OF PERMIT FEE RELIEF FOR MIDWEST VETERANS CLOSET IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED AMOUNT \$4,898.71**

**Alderman Evans moved, seconded by Alderman Allen for approval of permit fee relief to the Midwest Veterans Closet in an amount Not to Exceed \$4,898.71.**

There was a video shown of veterans. Alderman Allen stressed the need to support our military town. The Mayor echoed his sentiments. Alderman January was very appreciative of the video and emphasized the need to take care of the veterans in North Chicago.

**ROLL CALL:**

Ayes: Jackson, Coleman, Evans, Allen, Smith, Murphy, January  
Nays: None  
Absent: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

7-3 CONSIDERATION/APPROVAL OF CITY BILLS

<b>General Fund</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>289,656.32</b>
<b>Motor Fuel Tax Fund</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>20,247.20</b>
<b>Federal Forfeiture Fund</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>700.00</b>
<b>Capital Project</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,789.98</b>
<b>Water, Sewer &amp; Refuse Fund</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>210,148.64</b>
<b>Vision Fund</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>2,002.35</b>
<b>Retiree Premium Fund</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>14,138.18</b>
<b>Library Fund</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>6,728.13</b>
<hr/>		
<b>TOTAL TO BE PAID</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>545,410.80</b>
<b>PMA (Ins) and Enterprise Trust Lease</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,287,298.14</b>
<b>TOTAL APPROVED</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,832,708.94</b>

**MOTION:**

**Alderman Allen moved, seconded by Alderman Evans to pay the bills of Council Run 11/18/24 in the amount of \$1,832,708.94 when funds become available.**

Alderman January asked if there were sufficient funds, when checks would be cut and sent, also amount in Water Fund. Comptroller Tawanda Joyner (via remote Zoom) said there were sufficient funds available, checks to be processed and mailed Wednesday. The liquid amount in the Water Fund as of Thursday was **\$4,710,834.09** liquid. Treasurer Vance Wyatt (via remote Zoom) gave the non-liquid amount of **\$1,510,902.48** at close of business that day.

**ROLL CALL:**

Ayes: Jackson, Coleman, Evans, Allen, Smith, Murphy  
Nays: January  
Absent: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

**VIII. MISCELLANEOUS**

VARIOUS CONCERNS AND COMMENTS

\*Alderman Evans announced the annual Christmas event, **December 14, 2024; 1-5 p.m.** It was election season and there was going to be unfamiliar actions by candidates. There are Committee Meetings to discuss items that are voted on in Council. It was the aldermen's duties to stay for both Council and Committee; if not present at Committee one would not be informed about what was being voted. There may be disagreements. Here to support the City.

\*Alderman Coleman had concerns of others stating lies of him. He claimed had never broke into the Water Department. He was arrested and went to jail. Attorney Simon explained that anything said in a public meeting was admissible in court.

**Alderman Murphy and Evans left Council Chambers at 7:42 p.m.**

**Alderman Coleman moved, seconded by Alderman Smith for discussion of Attorney Fees in Judiciary Committee.**

Alderman Coleman explained that he would like to discuss attorney fees the taxpayers were paying for. Making sure there was no frivolous spending on attorneys to prosecute a sitting alderman. Attorney Simon explained the law firm was not being paid to prosecute him. Alderman Coleman said there was payment for “advice”; nevertheless, a cost was associated. Alderman January called to Point.

**ROLL CALL:**

Ayes: Jackson, Coleman, Smith, January

Nays: Allen

Absent: Evans, Murphy

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Alderman Murphy returned to Council Chambers at 7:43 p.m.**

**Alderman Coleman moved, seconded by Alderman January for Judiciary Committee Meeting, December 2, 2024, to discuss a resolution addressing camera of alleged damage to property or be subpoenaed to court. Attempting to avoid subpoenaing all aldermen to court.**

Alderman Jackson as Judiciary Chairman emphasized that it be presented to him in a timely matter for his review, not the night before. Alderman Coleman said that he would provide the information a week prior.

Alderman Murphy asked if it would preclude a subpoena; Attorney Simon was unaware of State’s Attorney intention. Alderman Murphy said she did not want to know anymore information than necessary. Alderman Coleman said that actions were motivated by him going against Council’s wishes.

**Alderman Murphy left the Council Chambers at 7:45 p.m.**

Alderman Coleman said if discussed in Committee there would be no need to go court. Attorney Simon questioned the amount of transparency; it would be a public statement possibly used against him. Alderman Coleman said he did nothing wrong and there was nothing to hide.

**Alderman Murphy returned at 7:46 p.m.**

**ROLL CALL:**

Ayes: Jackson, Coleman, Evans, Allen, Smith, January

Nays: Murphy

Absent: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Alderman Evans returned at 7:48 p.m.**

**Alderman Murphy left at 7:50 p.m.** before Alderman Coleman had spoken

**Alderman Murphy returned at 7:53 p.m.**

\*Alderman Smith announced a fish fry and 5<sup>th</sup> Ward Meeting beginning at **11:00 a.m.** upcoming Saturday.

\*Alderman January asked for a FOIA request of all elected official's criminal records by Friday, **11/22/24**.

\*Alderman Jackson announced the Exchange Club at Culver's the next day; from **5-8 p.m.**; **10%** of proceeds go to the club. There were complaints of leaves blown in vacant areas, clarified had to bag the leaves and discussion of overnight parking.

\*Hombre Darby Community Information Coordinator explained the Hefty Renew Recycle Orange Bags for items difficult to recycle. It was a voluntary program and designed by Hefty. Alderman January asked if it excluded the military housing; Mr. Daby said they were included.

The Mayor discussed the North Chicago property values increased and the taxes decreased, Cultural District Designation on Sheridan Rd. from MLK to **10<sup>th</sup> St.**, Capital Projects approaching soon, CMAP Transportation needs, pedestrian arm crossing at Metra Station and the Tree Lighting, **December 3, 2024; 6:00 p.m.**

Alderman Smith stated the conference at the National League of Cities was very informative. The Mayor clarified was a great learning experience. He also noted that there were over 900 lead lines in North Chicago, addressing the issue and they were being replaced with copper when opportunity rises. Alderman January asked Alderman Evans to share what was learned. Alderman Coleman there were personal issues that prevented him from attending the conference.

**Alderman January left the Council Chambers at 8:19 p.m.**

Alderman Jackson stated that the elected officials bring a written report of the sessions attended at the conferences.

## **X. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Council; a motion was made by Alderman Allen, seconded by Alderman January that the meeting stand adjourned.

### **MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE**

The Council Meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

### **ATTEST:**

---

**Lori L. Collins**, City Clerk