

# MINUTES

The City Council of North Chicago met in a Regular meeting, Monday, September 16, 2024, at 6:02 p.m. in the City Council Chambers at 1850 Lewis Avenue with Mayor Leon 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: Coleman, Evans, Allen, Smith, Murphy, January

Absent: Jackson

Mayor Rockingham announced that Alderman Jackson was on vacation and would not be present.

## V. OMNIBUS VOTE AGENDA

5-1 Approval of Minutes for Regular Council Meeting, **September 3, 2024**

5-2 Approval of Standing Committee Meeting Minutes, **September 3, 2024**

5-3 Approval – Honorable Roadway – Deborah “Debbie” Richards located on Corner of **20<sup>th</sup> Street & Lewis Avenue**

**Alderman Allen moved, seconded by Alderman January to approve the Omnibus Vote Agenda Items 5-1 and 5-2 as presented and move Item 5-3 to Regular Agenda.**

### ROLL CALL:

Ayes: **Coleman, Evans, Allen, Smith, Murphy**

Nays: **January**

Absent: **Jackson**

### **MOTION CARRIED**

## VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

### Elder Faye Lewis

Ms. Lewis spoke in support of the honorary street sign for Debbie Richards. She stated that Mrs. Richards works hard within the surrounding communities.

### Debbie Richards

Mrs. Richards gave her background living in North Chicago and school attendance. She obtained her parents’ home and converted it to a real estate office on Lewis Ave.

### Robert Richards

Mr. Richards spoke in support of Debbie Richards honorary street sign. Did not see anything objectionable to Mrs. Richards having a sign. Subjectively there should be no personal feelings involved with voting for the sign. Many people have spoken in favor of having the sign.

### Claire Dietz

She introduced herself as the new Community Organizer with Direction and Action Program of Mano a Mano.

Tanya Garrett

She was a resident of Brookstone of Cole Park concerned with the amount of violence in that area. She was in hopes of opening the clubhouse of Brookstone for the children to do activities. Her son was tragically murdered in 2022. Children need to know that they have opportunities.

Mayor Rockingham stated that he, Alderman Allen and the Chief of Staff were in discussions with the management company of Brookstone about concerns with the complex. He agreed that the clubhouse needed to be opened. Alderman Allen noted there was a prayer walk there the next day.

Rayon Edwards

He said there was nothing the City could do regarding the management company at Brookstone. He stated that's the problem of allowing people to invest in our community. "The only time to see elected officials is during election time". He addressed his alderman (2<sup>nd</sup> Ward) that there was "partying" and disturbance on Hervey Ave. every night. The taxing bodies needed to work together for the children. He commended Alderman Evans for communicating and being present for the people.

Hardy Lewis

Spoke in support of the honorary street sign for Debbie Richards. He also spoke of Mrs. Richards mentoring children and real estate. "Home sales anchor the community". She came back to North Chicago where her heart is.

Tina Albright

Spoke in support of Mrs. Richards honorary sign. Mrs. Richards helped her through her addiction.

## **VII. REGULAR AGENDA**

**5-3 APPROVAL – HONORABLE ROADWAY – DEBORAH “DEBBIE” RICHARDS LOCATED AT CORNER OF 20<sup>TH</sup> STREET AND LEWIS AVENUE.**

**Alderman Evans moved, seconded by Alderman Coleman to move the honorable roadway – Deborah “Debbie” Richards located at corner of 20<sup>th</sup> St. and Lewis Ave. back to Committee Meeting.**

**ROLL CALL:**

Ayes: Coleman, Evans, Murphy, Mayor Rockingham

Nays: Allen, Smith, January

Absent: Jackson

**MOTION CARRIED**

**7-1 CONSIDERATION/APPROVAL OF FY 2023 AUDIT (LAUTERBACH PRESENTATION)**

**Alderman Evans moved, seconded by Alderman Murphy to approve FY 2023 Audit (Lauterbach Presentation).**

Mayor Rockingham clarified there needed to be an approval. Attorney David Silverman explained that it could be but was a presentation. The presentation was appropriate.

Courtney Moore Audit Principal of Lauterbach & Amen stated she was to present the April 30, 2023, Audited Financial Statements. She thanked the Comptroller's Office for their work assisting with the collection of information to complete the audit.

The purpose of audit was to perform tests and procedures on financial statements to form an unmodified opinion which is a "clean opinion", the highest that could be given. It states that the financial statements are presented fairly and can rely on internal control of the organization.

She touched on key financial highlights for the year. General Fund end with a fund balance of about \$20 million; of that \$20 million about \$730,000 was non-spendable, the remaining was unrestricted and could be used to meet the future need of the City. This was an increase of approximately \$5.6 million from the previous year. The other Water, Sewer, Refuse Fund was about \$23.6 million; of that amount about \$15.2 million was investment of capital assets. The remaining \$8.3 million were unrestricted funds to meet the needs of the City.

The note of the Financial Statement explains the audit. The Management Letter are recommendations of any policies, procedures and best practices that would have arisen from the audit process. GASB will require new information in upcoming years which was stated in the Management Letter. Highly recommended reviewing the Management Letter for some best practices modification (timecards and credit card procedures).

Alderman Smith questioned if the audit had a bearing on credit rating; Ms. Moore said that it did, and the audit determines credit rating. Alderman Smith asked how it looked. She could not give an opinion of credit rating but gave an unmodified opinion in the Financial Statements.

Treasurer Vance Wyatt explained that he and the Comptroller were in communication with the bond holders and the audit would be presented to them. The Mayor noted that the "clean audit" showed no deficiencies, and the City was doing everything properly; Ms. Moore agreed. Mayor Rockingham strongly suggested everyone review the information.

Alderman January stated that if there were recommendations there were deficiencies found. Ms. Moore explained that the opinion is about how the Financial Statements are presented, which were presented fairly and can be relied upon. Treasurer Wyatt said it was common to have recommendations.

Mayor Rockingham disagreed that there were deficiencies. He commended City staff. Comptroller Tawanda Joyner stated that there were generally recommendations; there were no deficiencies. If there were deficiencies, it would be stated differently.

Alderman Evans said the information was presented prior to the meeting and noted that it could be discussed with Comptroller prior.

Attorney Silverman noted no formal vote was required but that the vote was to accept the audit, not to approve it. It was of GASB standards.

**Alderman Evans amended motion, seconded amended by Alderman Murphy to accept the FY 2023 audit as is.**

**ROLL CALL TO ACCEPT THE AUDIT:**

Ayes: Evans, Allen, Smith, Murphy, January

Nays: None  
Recuse: Coleman  
Absent: Jackson

**MOTION CARRIED**

**7-2 CONSIDERATION/APPROVAL – RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT AND LOCAL COST SHARE NOT TO EXCEED AMOUNT OF \$68,250 FOR THE RECONNECTING COMMUNITIES PILOT PROGRAM**

**Alderman Evans moved, by Alderman Allen to approve the Resolution of support and local cost share not to exceed amount of \$68,250 for the reconnecting communities pilot program.**

Engineer Steve Cieslica explained that it was for support of Sheridan Corridor. Two communities partnering together with Waukegan as the lead agency to pursue funding for a feasibility study to reconstruct the corridor. Along term vision of 10 years or so. To approve safety and transverse access of the corridor.

Alderman Coleman stated that he had a vision of \$25 million reconstruction of Sheridan Road and asked how close to that number was it. Mr. Cieslica stated close to \$100 million. Alderman Evans questioned 2 lanes on Sheridan Road. Mr. Cieslica said the project would help in the traffic flow. Alderman January asked for clarification; Mr. Cieslica explained that the City was seeking another \$500,000 in grant monies. Alderman January asked if the monies were received previously; City Treasurer Wyatt said they were.

**ROLL CALL:**

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

**MOTION CARRIED**

**7-3 CONSIDERATION/APPROVAL OF CITY BILLS**

<b>General Fund</b>	<b>\$ 326,895.41</b>
<b>Motor Fuel Tax Fund</b>	<b>\$ 137.51</b>
<b>CDBG Fund</b>	<b>\$ 39,266.18</b>
<b>Water, Sewer &amp; Refuse Fund</b>	<b>\$ 700.00</b>
<b>Vision Fund</b>	<b>\$ 1,023,177.03</b>
 <b>TOTAL</b>	 <b>\$ 1,390,176.13</b>

**MOTION:**

**Alderman Allen moved, seconded by Alderman Smith to pay the bills of Council Run in the amount of **\$1,390,176.13** when funds become available.**

Alderman January asked if there were sufficient funds, when checks would be cut and sent, also amount in Water Fund. City Comptroller Tawanda Joyner said there were sufficient funds available, checks to be processed the following day and normally mailed on Wednesday. Alderman January asked the liquid amount; Ms. Joyner stated the amount liquid as of September

12<sup>th</sup> was **\$5,063,163.62**. Treasurer Wyatt said he non-liquid Water Fund cash balance was **\$1,201,112.75** as of that day.

Alderman January asked if funds disbursed from the Water Fund to pay bills. Ms. Joyner said yes for water related items; there were no more transfers.

**ROLL CALL:**

Ayes: Evans, Allen, Smith, Mayor Rockingham (broke tie)

Nays: Coleman, Murphy, January

Absent: Jackson

Alderman Murphy voted nay for reasons previously stated that were funds from the aldermanic account for political purposes.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**VIII. MISCELLANEOUS**

**VARIOUS CONCERNS AND COMMENTS**

\*Alderman Evans announced 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward Meeting and Fashion Show, October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2 p.m.-6 p.m. at the Foss Park Community Center. There were prizes given to winners.

\*Alderman Allen announced 4<sup>th</sup> Ward Meeting, September 28<sup>th</sup> in the Council Chambers starting at 11 a.m.

\*Alderman Smith announced an adult fishing trip September 28<sup>th</sup>, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. in conjunction with the Foss Park District. Food was included.

\*Alderman Coleman announced 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward meeting, September 21<sup>st</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> Street & Greenfield Ave., starting at 11 a.m. with lite refreshments.

**NORTH CHICAGO SCHOOL DISTRICT UPDATE**

School Superintendent Dr. John Price gave an overview of improvements in the school district. The Forrestal Redevelopment Project in progress, estimated completion in March of 2026 opening. Total cost approximately \$72 million; of which \$57.7 would come from the Department of Defense grant for schools on military property. The remainder would come from local matching dollars from the district. The \$14.5 million match would come from \$12.9 school board tax exempt funds, the bond sales would NOT raise property taxes for any home or business in North Chicago. The bonds mature in 2027; with a \$1.2 million to service them, not subject to referendum. They are 20-year bonds.

Alderman Coleman asked for clarity of Public Hearings regarding the Bill, the article of a Public Hearing requirement from Senator Price. Dr. Price explained; he added that Forrestal School would be a NetZero building. Mayor Rockingham thanked Dr. Price for his work with building a new school without burdening the residents in taxes.

Alderman January also thanked Dr. Price with the Forrestal project and his foresight. Alderman Allen appreciated his work also. Mayor Rockingham said that the City was also working on Halsey Village demolition.

**MAYOR'S COMMENTS**

Very good job with Mexican Independence celebration and there were no incidents. The City received the Daniel Burnham Award from the American Planning Association (Illinois Chapter) for the development of the Comprehensive Plan. Infrastructure funding for environmental and

climate community justice reimbursable grant in the amount of \$12.1 million for lead line replacement. He announced the Forrestal groundbreaking approaching.

## **IX. ADJOURNMENT**

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

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

The Council Meeting adjourned at 7:13 p.m.

### **ATTEST:**

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**Lori L. Collins, City Clerk**