

## **MINUTES OF REGULAR HARVEY CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

**Monday – August 28, 2023 – 7:00 P.M**

Mayor Christopher J. Clark called the City of Harvey Regular Council Meeting to order Monday – August 28, 2023, at 7:02 p.m.

Mayor Clark asked Deputy City Clerk Liliana Gonzalez to call the roll of Council members.

Present: Alderwoman Shirley Drewenski, Alderwoman Chapman, Alderwoman Telanee Smith, Alderman Tracy Key, Alderman Tyrone Rogers, and Mayor Christopher J. Clark.

Absent: Alderman Dominique Randle-EI

Alderman Rogers gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** August 14, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes

Alderman Rogers made the motion to approve the Minutes. The motion was seconded by Alderwoman Smith.

Voting Aye: Alderwoman Chapman, Alderwoman Telanee Smith, Alderman Tracy Key, Alderman Tyrone Rogers.

Voting Nay: None

Abstain: Alderwoman Shirley Drewenski

Absent: Alderman Dominique Randle-EI

**CITY TREASURE REPORT:** Treasurer Pickett stated questions and concerns have not been addressed and there will be no report.

**APPROVAL OF BILLS PAYABLE:** August 24, 2023

Alderman Rogers made a question about what the \$27,000 expenditure regarding the 154<sup>th</sup> Street Reconstruction and whether Antero Group did the work.

Mayor Clark stated the expenditure was for the engineering services.

Alderwoman Chapman asked a question regarding what was being reconstructed on 154<sup>th</sup> Street.

Mayor Clark stated that the funds came from the grant money awarded to the City to make an assessment for possible reconstruction. Mayor Clark explains that the assessment must be made in order to evaluate any problems and identify what needs to be done. Once the assessment has been completed the City will go back to procure funds to complete the project.

Alderwoman Chapman asked about requests for invoices for the Finance Meeting.

Mayor Clark stated that if there is a request from the Finance Committee, Alderman Rogers as Chair of the Finance Committee can e-mail those requests.

Alderman Roger agreed and recommended to approve the Bills List.

Alderman Rogers made the motion to approve the Bills List. The motion was seconded by Alderwoman Smith.

Voting Aye: Alderwoman Shirley Drewenski, Alderwoman Chapman, Alderwoman Telanee Smith  
Alderman Tracy Key, Alderman Tyrone Rogers.

Voting Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Alderman Dominique Randle-EI

## **ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS FOR THE CITY OF HARVEY**

### **Old Business- None**

### **New Business**

**Ordinance - # 3477** - An Ordinance making appropriations for corporate purposes for the City of Harvey fiscal year beginning May 1, 2023, and ending April 30, 2024.

Alderman Rogers stated that the Ordinance hasn't been voted by this Council as a Resolution. The Ordinance cannot be voted on if the Resolution has not been voted on. The Ordinance was tabled at the last meeting, but the Council did not vote on it.

Mayor Clark asked for additional questions before answering Alderman Rogers.

Alderwoman Chapman asked for the explanation of Corporate Purposes.

Mayor Clark responded that in 1981 the City of Harvey was established as a corporation and as a corporation handles business such as paying the bills, handle the public streets, provide police and fire protection. As well as handle the finances, enter into agreements, or provide permits.

Mayor Clark responded to Alderman Rogers that Appropriations Ordinance has always been the Appropriations Ordinance.

Alderman Roger stated that there were no issues or concerns in the Finance Meeting regarding the Ordinance.

Alderman Rogers made the motion to approve the Resolution. The motion was seconded by Alderwoman Smith.

Voting Aye: Alderwoman Shirley Drewenski, Alderwoman Chapman, Alderwoman Telanee Smith.  
Alderman Tracy Key, Alderman Tyrone Rogers.

Voting Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Alderman Dominique Randle-EI

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Resolution - #** - A Resolution approving and authorizing the execution of a professional service agreement for the collection of debts owed to the City of Harvey by and between the City of Harvey and Municipal Collection Services, LLC.

Alderman Rogers requests further information and recommends the resolution moved to Finance Committee to ask the necessary questions.

Mayor Clark asked for the questions.

Alderman Rogers asked why did the City want to bring in MCS and what will their fees be. That information was not included in the packet.

Mayor Clark agreed that the information was not included and with the permission of the Council, can be sent to the Committee. The Mayor added that MCS has been providing the services to City for several administrations and this new refined agreement works better for the City now. This allows MCS to be engaged and start to collect the money owed to the City.

Alderman Rogers stated that if the Resolution goes to the Finance Committee, they plan on having a brief discussion.

Alderman Rogers made the motion to approve the Resolution sent to Finance Committee. The motion was seconded by Alderwoman Smith.

Voting Aye: Alderwoman Shirley Drewenski, Alderwoman Chapman, Alderwoman Telanee Smith. Alderman Tracy Key, Alderman Tyrone Rogers.

Voting Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Alderman Dominique Randle-EI

#### **MOTION CARRIED**

Mayor Clark stated that the Finance Committee will take into consideration that the next Council Meeting will be on September 11, 2023, and asks that the Committee hold their meeting before that time, otherwise the Resolution will not be on the Agenda until September 25, 2023.

Alderman Rogers stated he will discuss with committee members to have a meeting before the 11<sup>th</sup>

Alderwoman Drewenski stated that MCS has been dealing with City since 2012 and did not do a wonderful job with collection. However, in the past the City was also at fault for not providing the information they required.

**Resolution - # 3055** - A Resolution authorizing the city of Harvey to participate in the cook county no cash bid program by applying to the cook county board of commissioners for certificates of purchase qualifying delinquent real estate taxes on certain parcels of real property.

Mayor Clark reminded the Council that the Mayor will ask for a motion. Once there is a motion and a second, then the floor will be open for debate. Then a decision can be made at that time.

Alderwoman Smith made the motion to approve the Resolution. The motion was seconded by Alderwoman Drewenski.

Alderman Rogers stated that this is out of the ordinary. He does agree that property owners should pay their taxes but needs some clarity on the PIN numbers and addresses provided. He asks that the resolution be sent to the Legislative Committee.

Mayor Clark stated due to the time frame set by Cook County, it is necessary to get it passed or not passed. He asked the council to ask any questions.

Alderman Rogers stated that there are several businesses that reached out to claim they are current on their property taxes. He requests this Resolution be sent to the Legislative Committee to review and confirm the information.

Alderwoman Drewenski explains that in the No Cash Bid Program, Cook County will not approve the property if there is a mistake by the City. If a property has been current on their property taxes or not, Cook County will still provide a notice and allow the owner an opportunity to provide receipts or pay the past due amount to keep their property.

Alderwoman Chapman asked what the timeline was for the Cook County Commissioners on the process.

Mayor Clark stated that if the council recalls when the City tried to call a Special Meeting last week. That was no longer needed due to the County extending the time. There is no time to call a Special Meeting, so a decision would need to be made today.

Alderwoman Chapman asked what the plans for the properties are, and if there will there be another Reactivation Program to get the properties back on the tax roll.

Mayor Clark stated that the properties would be used for redevelopment.

Alderwoman Chapman asked for a further explanation for the intended redevelopment.

Mayor Clark stated that until the City gets site control the properties won't be open for redevelopment. Once the City has site control it can be opened for prospective investors to decide what they want to invest in. It is the purpose of the No Cash Bid Program to gain site control, redevelop, and put back on the tax roll.

Alderwoman Chapman asked, if possible, what retail redevelopment is planned and if there is a specific development planned for the properties such as commercial or capital improvement.

Mayor Clark stated that the investor would decide what to develop. Some properties are zoned as highway commercial and will be used for those purposes.

Alderwoman Drewenski asked what is the average back taxes and how many years.

Alderwoman Smith stated she printed out the information. Stating the rounded amount of 2021-2022 back taxes for some of the properties are \$120,000, \$52,000, \$418,000, \$12,000, \$434,000, \$28,000, \$461,000, \$203,000. The City should not continue to live the way it does, and the property owners should pay their taxes.

Alderman Roger asked if the properties were abandoned.

Alderwoman Smith stated some are. Some parcels have businesses that have not paid property taxes and that is not fair to the City. The City needs to bring businesses that pay their taxes and care about the City. This has been going on for too long.

Alderman Key asked if once Cook County finishes the process and the owners can pay the back taxes, the City will inherit the property.

Mayor Clark confirmed.

Alderman Key asked if the process will be affected if the City is currently in court with some of the property owners.

Mayor Clark asked if Alderman Key was referring to American Kitchen Delight.

Alderman Key stated he spoke with a representative of the Entrance Club who stated they paid their taxes. Also asked if there will be no ramifications to the program for being in court.

Counsel stated they are independent legal processes and can continue at the same time.

Alderwoman Smith stated taxes not paid in all this time need to be squashed. This will bring new investors who see clean titles and will want to do business here and bring the City up. Dixie Highway is horrible and the City needs their money.

Mayor Clark stated that if he does not pay his property taxes he cannot stay in his house. There would be fees, fines, and penalties. These businesses use City Services. The City cannot stop services if properties don't pay their taxes. They need to pay.

Alderman Rogers stated that a similar discussion was had in the Finance committee meeting.

Mayor Clark begins to read PINs and addresses from the Resolution and the amount of back taxes for each. States the City has 164 million dollars in debt, and this is one of the reasons. He continues to read PINs and the amount of back taxes owed. Mayor states one street takes about \$200,000 to fix. He continues to read PINs and the amount of back taxes. Mayor states some of the properties are still making money while they are not paying their debt to the City.

Alderman Rogers stated this discussion is one he wanted to have in Committee. Now that it has been discussed it is done.

Mayor Clark states back taxes for 302 W 151<sup>st</sup> St has not been paid taxes since 2002.

Alderwoman Drewenski asked for Business names.

Mayor Clark stated he only has the PINs and addresses available at the moment.

Mayor Clark reads the amount in back taxes excluding 2023 & 2022. \$360,094.40 for the first installment, \$370,041.85 in the second installment

Alderman Key states he recognizes the address as one in his ward and believes it to be the Gas Depot.

Mayor Clark states Gas Depot is next and reads 15100 Dixie Highway has not paid taxes since 2007 \$1,006,757.46 in the first installment. \$1,024,581.48 second installment. Gas Depot owes more than \$2,000,000. Mayor Clark reads one more 15101 Dixie Highway has not paid since 2018 \$65,101.66 for the first installment. \$396,096.52 for the second installment. The City is trying to submit this information to Cook County for their review. Upon their review they will validate whether the information provided is correct or not. If they are not delinquent in their taxes, then those PIN numbers will not pass through. If they are delinquent, the Cook County commission will vote on whether those PIN numbers will pass through. With the Council's permission these PIN numbers will be submitted to the county for their review in the No Cash Bid.

Voting Aye: Alderwoman Shirley Drewenski, Alderwoman Chapman, Alderwoman Telanee Smith, Alderman Tracy Key, Alderman Tyrone Rogers.

Voting Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Alderman Dominique Randle-EI

## **MOTION CARRIED**

**Resolution - # 3056** - A Resolution approving and authorizing the execution of an independent contractor agreement for construction services, not to exceed \$37,400.00 by and between the city of Harvey and Czervik construction.

Mayor Clark stated that this Resolution may sound familiar and has City Administrator Corean Davis explain why.

City Administrator Davis stated when the Council last passed the agreement it wasn't to approve the execution of the contractor's contract. The contract must be approved to start the work.

Mayor Clark stated that it is for the reconstruction of 154<sup>th</sup> Street, where the two vaults are located.

City Administrator Davis stated the sidewalk was reconstructed but the vaults or holes seen on the sidewalk need to be filled. This contractor would fill the holes that are a danger to the community.

Alderwoman Smith made the motion to approve the Resolution. The motion was seconded by Alderman Rogers.

Alderwoman Chapman asked for details on exhibit A as it was not included in the packet.

Mayor Clark stated that the council has been receiving packets earlier than normal and that it is his expectation from his staff that the exhibits will be included. The Council did previously pass this but if Alderwoman Chapman wants to do something else, he understands.

Alderwoman Chapman asks for further incite. When provided the specifics it allows for a decisive decision. This provides the people and Council with a full understanding to make the best decision.

Mayor Clark agreed and added that they will attempt to continue to provide the packets before the Friday before.

City Administrator Davis stated that when new sidewalks were completed on either side of 154<sup>th</sup> Street, there are two areas where there are vaulted sidewalks. When new sidewalks were originally built, they were done so incorrectly, and the stairwells were not filled in and secured. This is the only contract that was received for the bid and the Council has already approved the contractor. This is to approve the contract.

Counsel stated that the Council approved the proposal previously. This is an agreement to approve the contractor to complete the work.

Alderman Tracey Key stated that it is not that they are in agreement or disagreement, but they need to have precise information before a decision is made.

Alderman Roger asked how soon the construction will begin on the project.

Mayor Clark stated that they are waiting on the council and the contractors are ready to go.

Voting Aye: Alderwoman Shirley Drewenski, Alderwoman Chapman, Alderwoman Telanee Smith, Alderman Tracy Key, Alderman Dominique, Tyrone Rogers.

Voting Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Alderman Dominique Randle-EI

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Discussion and possible action to approve settlement agreement for Michael Johnson vs. COH and Rick Seput.**

Mayor Clark stated the settlement still isn't settled and the item is withdrawn.

**ALDERMAN ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Alderwoman Drewenski stated the 1<sup>st</sup> ward will be hosting their meeting on Oct 28. The turkey raffle is for 1<sup>st</sup> ward residents only, but anyone is welcome to attend. Cops must be called for noise, nuisance neighbors. There were two parties that had large bands in residential areas. People are scared to call the police, so they call her number. Calls are handled by Cook County dispatch, and you can always remain anonymous. Please call the police and then call your alderman. Residents who are having the parties can have a good time but no live bands.

Alderwoman Chapman wanted to remind everyone that office hours are Wednesday from 5pm – 8pm. On Sept. 23 at 10am the Harvey School District 152 will be hosting their back-to-school parade. September 30 will be the next 2<sup>nd</sup> ward meeting from 12pm - 2pm at 15446 S Lexington. Alderwoman Chapman asked if the groundbreaking for Harvey Lofts would be this weekend. Mayor Clark responded it has not been scheduled yet. Alderwoman Chapman stated for any questions and concern she can be reached at 708-320-9214.

Alderwoman Smith asks her 3<sup>rd</sup> ward warriors for any volunteer to be block captains. She can be contacted at 708-990-8026. In hopes to not only police but be her eyes and ears in her ward. Next ward meeting will be in November and robo calls will be sent.

Alderman Key stated that his ward meeting will be September 2 from 12pm - 2pm in council chambers. Everyone is invited.

Alderman Rogers stated he had a back-to-school gift card giveaway at Bryant School. It had a great turn out and was a great success. He will be having a town hall breakfast that will be scheduled in September at Council Chambers. Kudos are given to the Street Department, even with a short staff they are doing a good job of keeping grass cut at the vacant properties and there are few more that need to be cut. Residents of the 6<sup>th</sup> ward know there is a door policy. Calls and e-mails are always answered 708-516-2276.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Ryan Sinwelski – Regarding the possible demolition of the historic Ascension St. Susana campus and forced relocation of residents from their homes for the propose of a central park. Some of those residents were not able to make it tonight. How can anyone allow this to happen. WRD says it's the only location possible for the retention pond. WRD has had closed door meetings with the Mayor. The Mayor is choosing to demolish these buildings and force the residents to leave their homes. Aldermen support this too with their silence. There should be alternatives with so many vacant lots in the City. WRD isn't going to fight this because the Mayor chose the location. It is up to the residents to say no to these demolitions. Everyone must fight for what is right. Asking people to leave their homes is a big deal. Mr. Miller, a local black entrepreneur, is interested in investing and saving these old historic buildings across the street. The Mayor's office has yet to contact Mr. Miller. Aldermen are formally invited to talk. We must get investors into the City to get rid of the dilapidated buildings repaired and back on the tax roll. Aldermen must use their votes and influence to stop buildings from being demolished and stop investors from investing in other communities. As all these empty properties sit undeveloped our taxes go up.

Mayor – The comments and opinions of the person expressing them are their own opinion. Their allegations are not necessarily true nor are they false. We will not respond to them. The purpose of the public comment is to keep their comment on the record.

Melville King – There are two dedicated veteran memorials located outside that look disgraceful. We want Harvey to look "come up". It needs to look right when you pull into Harvey. Going toward the Fire department in the 6<sup>th</sup> ward there are tall weeds all over. You can't say we don't have employees to take care of that or residents. The 1964 class of Thornton Township Vietnam Veterans has a memorial that looks disgraceful. The Mayor, the aldermen, and City that field should be cut before any other field. Anyone available to work or talk, we need to do something about that. There is burned down business at 147<sup>th</sup> and Halsted that looks disgraceful. There are 6 community centers that have tall weeds. Take care of that first. Let the City look good. We're spending money on things, we don't get our money back. Let's work with the community. We as citizens have to stand up. One more thing, stop using alderman and alderwoman. The state of IL says the correct term is alderperson. The women and men are all one and have equal rights to being legislators.

**ADJOURNMENT: 7:23 p.m.**

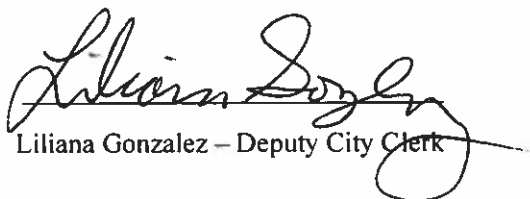
Alderwoman Shirley Drewenski made the motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Alderwoman Smith.

Voting Aye: Alderwoman Shirley Drewenski, Alderwoman Chapman, Alderwoman Telanee Smith, Alderman Tracy Key, Alderman Tyrone Rogers.

Voting Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Alderman Dominique Randle-El

  
Liliana Gonzalez – Deputy City Clerk

**MOTION CARRIED**