

**JOURNAL OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE BLUE ISLAND CITY  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING  
NOVEMBER 15, 2023**

**1) Call to Order**

The Committee of the Whole Meeting of the City of Blue Island was called to order by Mayor Bilotto at 6:01 p.m. on November 15, 2023.

**2) Pledge of Allegiance**

**3) Roll Call**

Roll Call indicates the following:

Present:	4	Carr, Montoya, Rita, McGee (6:05 pm)
Absent:	3	Roll, Johnson, Fahrenwald
Present Also:	4	Raeann Cantelo-Zylman, City Clerk Jairo Frausto, Treasurer Erin Blake, City Attorney Thomas Wogan, City Administrator

**4) Presentation of Journal of Proceedings**

**a. Motion to approve the Minutes from the Committee of the Whole Meeting on October 11, 2023.**

There were not enough aldermen present to hold a vote.

**5) Public Comment**

The Mayor indicated that the City of Blue Island had given Forest View Mobile Homes notice that due to numerous unpaid water bills, the City intended to cease water supply on 11/20/23. He noted that Forest View had only made 13 payments in 31 months, the most recent payment being eight months ago. During that time frame, the City Attorney, City Department Heads, and City Administrators have attempted to engage with the owners to remediate this issue and avert having to shut off the water. Unfortunately, despite these attempts, the water bill was still not paid.

Additionally, the Mayor noted that during the summer, the administration advised prospective buyers of Forest View on the steps required to purchase the property, but no action was taken, until 48 hours prior to this meeting. The prospective buyer recently submitted an application for a special use to the City's Planning and Zoning Board; but this will not be enough to deter the shut off of the water to the trailer park home.

The Mayor informed City Council that the City would continue to provide resources to the residents of Forest View. He noted, that the City understands that it is not the residents' responsibility; rather, it is the property managers and owners of Forest View. He noted that this decision was not made lightly, and the City is very aware of the human effect of these decisions, as well as the need to preserve the interests of the City and its other 24,000 residents.

A Blue Island resident noted that he has lived in Forest View for the last 25 years and has receipts for every penny he has paid. He has nowhere to go. He noted the residents were blindsided by these circumstances. Who wondered who would defend his property if he was forced to leave due to the water shut off, if he is not present. He stated that they have already robbed the place. He wanted Forest View to pay their water bill.

A resident noted: I have lived in Blue Island for 14 years and work at the WIC office, fighting for all residents. She wondered how long the City waits to cut off water to regular residents. She asked that City Council try to understand their anguish. She also questioned why the City delayed in informing the residents regarding the water cut off.

A resident stated: Blue Island has been my home since 1991. I wish I had more time to move. My spouse is bedridden, and I am the only one who works. I am not making enough money. I do not have enough money for a down payment. I do not know where I am going if the water is turned off.

Mr. Mazurek has been a resident of Blue Island for the past nine years. There is so much that can be done to improve Forest View. They cannot blame the City of Blue Island, but he requested an extension of time to relocate and to assist the remaining residents. He stated that squatters and crime within Forest View have increased and something needs to change.

A non-Blue Island resident told City Council that the City could have decided or undecided that they would be shutting off the water to these residents. He stated that if an affected resident was a friend of yours, you would not have made such a rash decision.

A resident stated they have requested that Forest View clean; but they never follow through. In addition, water leaks were reported to Forest View; but they never paid attention to the residents, unless the resident was late on payment. We are requesting assistance from the city in order to avoid being thrown out.

The team leader of the Forest View residents stated that nobody wants to leave Forest View. But, they understand the decision being made by Blue Island. She expressed that the residents are the victims. And she questioned what we could do together as a community to solve this issue. She suggested placement of individual meters because Forest View is not doing their job. She stated that the residents love Blue Island and we want City Council to listen to us.

Mr. Mack Wolf stated that drinking water is a human right.

Mr. Keuhner presented a letter from the Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance, which expressed concern regarding the upcoming water shut off. The letter mentioned the Cook County residential tenant landlords action that was implemented in 2021 to safeguard rights, including safe living conditions in mobile homes.

Resident recently purchased her mobile home in February, thinking it would be her long-term home for her and her child. She doesn't know where to go if the water is turned off. She noted that she is the midst of the school year and that the residents are honest, hardworking folks. She asked if there was anything the city could do to assist the residents and give them adequate time to relocate.

A Forest View resident stated that she has resided in Blue Island for the past 11 years, and it has been a peaceful haven for her and her family. Her husband is currently the only one working and their family has paid all of their bills on time. She asked the City Council to be just, and recognize that Forest View did wrong.

A Forest View resident requested a delay in water shut-off, at least during the winter months, so she can find a place to relocate her and her elderly parents.

A Forest View resident notes she is a mother of three and was outraged she does not know where to go. She is not interested in going to church. Her family requires privacy and she does not want to be a bother to anyone. She requested that the City Council have some compassion.

Mr. Stevo inquired about what the City Council intended to do for these residents. He also noted that he does not agree with the PUD for Metro South and claims it is merely a short-term solution.

South Suburban Center Executive Director, John Petruszak, remarked that he was present to show his support for the residents of Forest View and he requested that the City give them as much time as they require prior to shutting off the water. He does not believe the residents received sufficient notice. He is a member of the Chicago Area Housing Alliance's Board of Directors and is keeping an eye on the situation.

A 71-year-old Blue Island resident noted that she was diagnosed with cancer. She lives alone and has no place to go. She cannot afford to pay a higher rent, especially given the treatment she must receive.

6) **New Business**

No new business.

7) **Mayor's Report**

**a. Lockwood PUD Application Staff Report and discussion regarding PZBA hearing.**

Attorney, Ryan Morton, stated he represents the City at the PZBA meetings. At the last meeting, a public hearing was held, wherein the PZBA heard the public's comments, and five people testified on behalf of the applicant, Lockwood Properties. The application was tabled and the PZBA asked the applicant to provide a revised plan to address their concerns, such as the size of the one-bedroom units. Lockwood returned to the PZBA with a revised plan, which addressed some of the PZBA's concerns, including an increase by 20% in the size of the 1-bedroom units.

Mr. Morton noted that this is the first applicant to go through the preliminary and final PUD process since the change in the ordinance. He explained that if the City Council is inclined to approve the preliminary PUD, they can condition that approval. Then, during the final PUD approval, if the City and Council were satisfied that Lockwood met the conditions required, it could then approve this massive development.

Alderman Carr wondered what would happen if they approved the preliminary PUD; but Lockwood couldn't get a food store. Mr. Morton explained that Lockwood would have two options, one of which is to pivot to another allowed use and the second would be to revise the PUD to include a new use.

Alderman Rita asked whether there was a time limit. Mr. Morton responded that City Council can impose a time limit as a condition, but there is no legal timetable for the ultimate approval of the final PUD per the ordinance. Lockwood has one year to begin special usage, but only after final permission.

Alderman Rita inquired about resident security. Mr. Morton replied that he does not have security details but that they are part of the condition that must be approved by the police and this was brought up by the PZBA.

Alderman Rita asked if there would be medical professionals available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and what retail businesses they had in mind. Mr. Morton indicated that only independent senior housing will receive help, not residents. He also stated that Lockwood has no idea what retail stores will show interest in the development at this time.

Alderman McGee wondered whether the developer had done any other similar developments. Mr. Morton confirmed that they have done a similar project in Aurora and that Lockwood extends an invitation to their Aurora facility.

The Mayor asked the typical square footage of a unit and what role the pavilion would play in the PUD. Mr. Morton responded that the pavilion has a separate owner and will not be part of the PUD. The Mayor asked how the underground tunnel connecting to the two buildings would be handled. Morton indicated that Lockwood would be

closing down the tunnel. The Mayor noted that permanently closing means digging it up and filling it.

The Mayor read concerns from Alderman Roll, who indicated that they have historically had poor standards of upkeep with current and previous owners, as well as past due water bills. He wanted to ensure that Lockwood would have the funds to move forward.

Both Alderman Rita and the Mayor agreed to read the PZBA packet thoroughly and bring it to the next Committee of the Whole for discussion.

**b. Zoning Code Amendment.**

Attorney, Ryan Morton, noted that a revamp of the zoning code has been in the works for a couple of years. The goal of the update is to make it easier to use and more comprehensive.

The Mayor inquired as to whether a company on Western that does not have off-street parking, like T&G's, which has been operating for 40 years, would need to locate parking if its owners changed and the restaurant remained open? Attorney, Ryan Morton stated no, it would be grandfathered in.

What if it was a clothing store instead of a restaurant, suggested the Mayor. Mr. Morton added that in residential/commercial zones, off-street parking shall be provided for all purposes in line with table land uses, and off-street parking shall be waived for the first 2,000 square feet.

The Mayor indicated that a daycare center in R-1 would have to go through planning and zoning, despite the fact that it has been there for 80 years. Mr. Morton replied that if a daycare had a new/different owner they would go through the zoning process.

**c. Special Use – Carlos Mendoza to (2240 Grove).**

The Mayor stated that the property, a former vacant lot, will be used as office space.

**d. Business License Fee Amendment.**

City Attorney, Erin Blake, noted that the present practice in the City is to charge approximately \$35-\$50 for new and/or renewed business licenses, which is relatively inexpensive in comparison to other towns. She noted that during the next meeting, she would present a table of comparable municipal business license fees and ask the City Council to consider increasing the fee in Blue Island similarly.

**e. Class 8 Incentive Renewal – VWSS Blue, LLC (2341 W. 135<sup>th</sup> Place).**

The Mayor stated VWSS is requesting a renewal of their Class 8. He noted that they have been a decent neighbor.

**f. Astound Cable Franchise Agreement.**

City Attorney, Erin Blake, informed Council that Astound Cable is entering the Blue Island market. They have decided to use a state franchise arrangement similar to Comcast, without a requirement for City Council approval. But, the company will be installing throughout the neighborhood and working with the Building Department.

**g. Mayor's Announcements/Comments.**

No announcements.

**8) City Clerk's Announcements/Reports/Comments**

**a. City Clerk's Announcements.**

City Clerk, Raeann Cantelo-Zylman, reminded applicable residents to sign up for a senior discount for their water bill.

City Clerk, Raeann Cantelo-Zylman, notified everyone that the Pentecostal Church is doing a coat drive starting now until 12/16/23 and the coat drop off will be at the Blue Island Public Library Monday to Saturday.

City Clerk, Raeann Cantelo-Zylman, stated the Mayor will light up the tree on December 2<sup>nd</sup> and in attendance will be the Eisenhower Choir at 4:30 pm.

City Clerk, Raeann Cantelo-Zylman, stated the activities for the kids at the Christmas Light Parade will begin at 2 pm. There will be rides, petting zoo, and the Kringle Mart.

City Clerk, Raeann Cantelo-Zylman, stated there is availability to participate in the parade as well as the Kringle Mart. For additional information, please contact the Clerk's office or visit the website.

City Clerk, Raeann Cantelo-Zylman, stated the parade will begin at 5:30 pm on 12/2/23.

City Clerk, Raeann Cantelo-Zylman, stated that Santa and his Reindeer are coming to town to York and Western on 12/16/23 from 12 pm until 2 pm.

City Clerk, Raeann Cantelo-Zylman, invited everyone to attend the New Year's Eve Ball Drop on 12/31/23 in front of the Lyric. There will be fireworks and music.

City Clerk, Raeann Cantelo-Zylman, stated the 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade is coming back. We encourage everyone to participate with a float, antique cars, etc. For more information, please contact the Clerk’s office.

**9) City’s Attorney’s Report**

**a. Attorney Announcements.**

No comment.

**10) City Administrator’s Announcements/Reports/Comments**

**a. City Administrator’s Announcements/Comments**

No comment.

**11) Aldermanic Announcements/Reports/Comments**

**a. Aldermanic Announcements/Reports/Comments**

Alderman Carr invited everyone to the Hattie B. Williams food pantry in Oak Forest this Saturday at 10 a.m. She also invited everyone to the Mission Covenant Church's 9th anniversary celebration on 12/3/23.

Alderman Rita stated she would like to see regular updates on water bills that are over \$5,000 and requested that that information be shared in Executive Session.

**12) Adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11) to discuss litigation that has been filed and is pending before a court or an administrative tribunal and actions of probable or imminent litigation.**

**Motion by Alderman Rita, second by Alderman McGee to enter Executive Session.**

Ayes:	3	Carr, Rita, McGee
Nays:	0	
Absent:	4	Roll, Johnson, Montoya, Fahrenwald
Abstention:	0	

There being three (3) Affirmative Votes, the Mayor declared the motion carried.

**Motion by Alderman Rita, second by Alderman Carr to Reconvene.**

Ayes: 3 Carr, Montoya, Rita, McGee  
Nays: 0  
Absent: 4 Roll, Johnson, Montoya, Fahrenwald  
Abstention: 0

There being three (3) Affirmative Votes, the Mayor declared the motion carried.

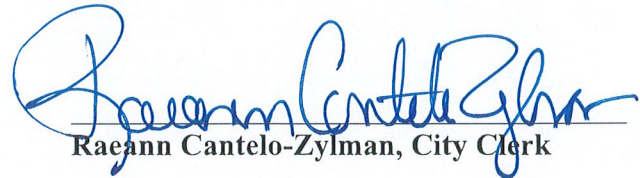
The Mayor stated the Council discussed possible litigation.

**13) Motion for Adjournment**

**Motion by Alderman Rita, second by Alderman Carr to adjourn the regular meeting.**

Ayes: 4 Carr, Montoya, Rita, McGee  
Nays: 0  
Absent: 3 Roll, Johnson, Fahrenwald  
Abstention: 0

There being three (3) Affirmative Votes, the Mayor declared the motion carried.

  
Raeann Cantelo-Zylman, City Clerk

**APPROVED BY ME THIS  
15<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF NOVEMBER 2023**

  
Fred Bilotto, Mayor