

**JOURNAL OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE BLUE ISLAND CITY
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
FEBRUARY 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 6:00 p.m. on February 15, 2023.

2) Pledge of Allegiance

3) Roll Call

Roll Call indicates the following:

Present:	6	Johnson (left early), Fahrenwald, Rita (6:10 pm), McGee (6:05 pm), Carr, Roll
Absent:	1	Montoya
Present Also:	5	Raeann Cantelo-Zylman, City Clerk Jairo Frausto, Treasurer Erin Blake, City Attorney Thomas Wogan, City Administrator Mark Patoska, Deputy City Administrator

4) Presentation of Journal of Proceedings

Motion by Alderman Roll, second by Alderman Fahrenwald to approve the Committee of the Whole Minutes of January 11, 2023.

Ayes:	4	Johnson, Fahrenwald, Carr, Roll
Nays:	0	
Absent:	3	Rita (6:10 pm), Montoya, McGee (6:05 pm)
Abstention:	0	

There being four (4) Affirmative Votes, the Mayor declared the motion carried.

5) Public Comment

A Blue Island resident inquired as to why the City Treasurer had no content on the agenda when the Treasurer's position is a very important component of the city.

The Mayor stated that "public comment" is exactly that, public comment, and that if any resident or person in attendance at City Council meetings has any questions, they can schedule an appointment with administration to discuss the same.

6) **New Business**

No comment.

7) **Mayor's Report**

a. Stony Creek Earth Day Clean-Up.

The Mayor stated that Alsip's Mayor, John Ryan, told him about Wilderness Restoration a few months ago. He explained that Wilderness Restoration is a nonprofit organization that wishes to assist the City with cleaning up Stony Creek. He requested that Wilderness Restoration draft a letter to the City detailing their expected expenses and dates of the clean-up to present to City Council at a subsequent meeting.

Alderman Fahrenwald emphasized the significance of liability and ensuring the City would not be liable for injury to any of the non-profit workers while they were cleaning out Stony Creek. Wilderness Restoration assured the City Council that they carry insurance of their own for those types of issues.

Alderman Johnson questioned them on the boundaries of Stony Creek. The Mayor stated that they begin at 127th and Kedzie and proceed southeast along the Cal Sag Channel, which starts at the back of Beggars and moves towards Eisenhower football field, Wahl Street, and what used to be the funeral home.

Alderman Roll asked Wilderness Restoration whether or not they needed volunteers. They answered that volunteers would be welcomed to assist with the clean up.

b. 127th Western Marquee.

The Mayor stated that the idea of having a marquee has been discussed with former aldermen and Community Development for several years to allow the City to streamline City alerts and advertisements for community events. The four corners of 127th Street is owned by IDOT. However the owner of the building at 12706 Western indicated a willingness to allow the City to install and display the marquee on the building located at 12706 Western, which is not owned by IDOT. The project would pay for itself in 6-12 months, as the City currently spends a significant sum of money advertising at that corner.

Alderman Rita asked if there would be an ordinance prohibiting the placement of any other signs. The Mayor stated that ordinances currently exist that restrict signage on these corners; and so, this will also have to go through PZBA.

Alderman Roll expressed concerns regarding perception of brightness. The Mayor stated this would be tested and brightness reduced accordingly. tr

Alderman McGee expressed concerns about what would happen should the building on which the marquee is placed is later sold. The Mayor stated that an agreement reached with the property owner will address that issue.

c. 1859 Burr Oak Judicial Deed and Sale of Property.

The Mayor stated that the City has taken official ownership of the property at 1859 Burr Oak and he does not want the City to sit on it due to liability concerns. He requested that Council allow the City's administrators to contact a real estate agent to list the property and expedite the sale.

d. Ordinance 2023-___: An Ordinance of the City of Blue Island, Cook County, Illinois Authorizing a Collective Bargaining Agreement By and Between the City and the Blue Island Professional Firefighters Association IAFF Local#3547.

Chief Haywood informed the Council about the details of the CBA. He noted that the transition to ALS would result in an increase in staffing; but that most of the ALS equipment had already been paid for.

Alderman Fahrenwald asked how they planned to pay for new hires. Chief Haywood stated that the Department's revenues increased in August when ambulance billing was increased and would increase further with the transition to ALS.

e. Ordinance 2023-__: An Ordinance of the City of Blue Island, Cook County, Illinois Amending Title XV "Land Usage," Chapter 150 "Building Regulations" of the Code of Blue Island, Illinois.

The Mayor stated the ordinance seeks to amend the language in the Code to better current practice.

f. Appropriations for compensation of City Aldermen and City Officials.

Alderman Johnson requested that the lawyers consult with neighboring cities to identify a reasonable middle ground that would allow the salaries of the elected officials to be comparable to neighboring municipalities. He noted that his research showed the City's elected officials to be underpaid and discussed his common out-of-pocket expenses.

The Mayor clarified that Alderman Johnson was referring to the increase in pay for City Aldermen and City Officials. The Mayor did not disagree that the City should investigate this every four years; and noted that it should really be performed every four years, as other towns do, especially since the City had not increased salaries since 1965.

Alderman Fahrenwald thanked City Treasurer Jairo Frausto for his efforts, but questioned the need for a Treasurer and noted his belief that the City would be better off with a finance director.

City Treasurer, Jairo Frausto, stated he did not take offense to Alderman Fahrenwald's comments. But, he believes there is value in having a Treasurer, who serves as a second pair of eyes, and monitors the administration's day-to-day operations.

The Mayor stated that the City is an older system of government, and the Treasurer is an elected position. However, he requested the attorney review the legalities/possibilities for removal of the Treasurer position.

Alderman Roll agreed that the City requires a Finance Director. He noted that the administration has done a better job than was done in the past, but in his opinion, a Finance Director was needed for future financial planning. Alderman Roll also asked Alderman Johnson if he was proposing a specific target or simply a discussion regarding elected officials' compensation. Alderman Johnson stated he wanted to discuss the topic so that the City could put it on the budget for the next term.

Alderman Fahrenwald inquired about the timeline for deciding about compensation. The Mayor believed the deadline would be in six to eight months.

Alderman Roll proposed that the treasurer give them a detailed account of his duties to give them a better understanding of his job duties.

g. Special Use – Banquet Hall: Bon Manger Catering (2601 Vermont Street).

Community Development Manager, Howard Coppari, introduced the special use and discussed the PZBA's findings recommending the special use.

h. Special Use – Catering Service: Bon Manger Catering (2601 Vermont Street).

Community Development Manager, Howard Coppari, introduced the special use and discussed the PZBA's findings recommending the special use. He noted that the owner would still need to apply for a business license within a year.

i. Special Use – Transitional Residence: Unlimited Potential NFP, Inc. (13811 S. Western).

Community Development Manager, Howard Coppari, introduced the special use and discussed the PZBA's findings recommending the special use.

Tangela Thornton, Executive Director, of Unlimited Potential NFP spoke to City Council regarding their new acquisition of the former Mother of Sorrows property, their business, and their goals in Blue Island. She informed City Council that the

facility only accepts young women between the ages of 18 and 23 who have aged out of the foster care system and have nowhere else to go. She noted that business provides these women with a 24-month program that aims to help them become contributing members of society. She noted that this is currently the only program in Illinois that houses females in this age group.

Bishop Kenneth Franklin, who also works with Unlimited Potential NFP, Inc. also spoke to City Council.

Alderman Johnson asked a question concerning safety. Bishop Kenneth Franklin stated said there would be a 24-hour security personnel.

Alderman Fahrenwald asked if they had another location, where the funding came from, and if they were licensed by the state. Tangela Thornton stated that they are located on Jackson Boulevard in the city and that they are licensed and funded by the Department of Children and Family Services. She explained that the young women in the program are emancipated at the age of 18, but that the state is legally responsible to keep them in school until the age of 21; therefore, provides funding for Unlimited Potential's programming.

Alderman Carr asked where the girls entering the program were coming from. Mrs. Thornton stated that in general, they are 18-year-olds who have come from foster homes or group homes in Illinois.

Alderman Roll asked if the program provided vocational services and how many girls were currently enrolled in the program. He was informed that there are eight females currently in the program. The Director of Education, Dr. Roter, explained the program's education initiatives.

Alderman McGee questioned why only women were receiving this service. Unlimited Potential stated that they did not want the young women in the program to become pregnant while on site attending the program.

The Mayor stated that it was his understanding that Unlimited Potential purchased the building/land; and were still attempting to comply with all of the city's building codes and regulations.

Community Development Manager, Howard Coppari, stated that they are not doing any reconstruction, but they are painting and adding new furniture.

Alderman Fahrenwald stated that although the idea sounded fantastic, the history of non-profits at that location had not good. Mrs. Thornton noted her awareness of the history of the property and stated that when they purchased the property there were still 121 people living on the premises, there was trash all over the place, abandoned cars, foul odors, and several other problems.

Alderman Johnson urged them to get in touch with him if they needed any assistance.

Community Development Manager, Howard Coppari, stated they have goals of creating a gym space that will also be made available to the community, a banquet hall, a teaching and training facility, a parking lot, signage, and lighting; but that these additional uses would all be discussed, possibly via a planned unit development application to the PZBA, at a later date. Unlimited Potential NFP indicated their goal was to preserve the Old Mother of Sorrows' historical significance.

Bishop Kenneth Franklin encouraged everyone to come and observe the development at the location where they have already invested \$1 million.

j. Evaluation/Creation of New Tax Increment Financing District in Blue Island.

The Mayor stated that currently, TIF 4 and TIF 6 do not touch. Further, the Thornton TIF was almost completely paid off. Therefore, at the next meeting administration would be seeking Council's approval of a feasibility study to investigate how to link two potential TIF districts.

k. City of Blue Island Wide Area Network (WAN)/SDWAN Connectivity Options.

City Administrator, Thomas Wogan, stated this agreement would allow the City to control network traffic while ensuring high availability, particularly given the likely increase in FOIA requests when body cameras are implemented in the police department. Further, the body cameras will need a reliable network with adequate storage to operate the body cameras system.

Alderman Roll stated this Agreement would connect different parts of the City, especially in a power outage.

Alderman McGee and Rita inquired about the cost? City Administrator, Thomas Wogan, stated the costs is covered with the current budget.

l. Mayor's Announcements/Comments.

No comments.

8) City Clerk's Announcements/Reports/Comments

a. City Clerk's Announcements.

City Clerk, Raeann Cantelo-Zylman, invited everyone to the Black History Month Program to be held at the John D. Rita Center on 2/26/23 at 3 pm.

City Clerk, Raeann Cantelo-Zylman, informed the City Council that the Blue Island Public Library is hosting Seed Saturday on 3/11/23 from 2-4 pm.

City Clerk, Raeann Cantelo-Zylman, notified the City Council that the Chamber of Commerce is hosting their annual Best of Blue Island event on 3/18/23 at 6 pm at the Lyric Theater.

City Clerk, Raeann Cantelo-Zylman, informed the City Council that the Clerk's office is accepting applications for the Hometown Heroes program.

City Clerk, Raeann Cantelo-Zylman, informed City Council that the Blue Island Park District will host a number of Easter activities.

City Clerk, Raeann Cantelo-Zylman, reminded everyone that the Community Cleanup will be on 4/29/23.

City Clerk, Raeann Cantelo-Zylman, stated that the American Legion Post 50 will be hosting their annual "Poppy Days" on 5/19/23 and 5/20/23.

City Clerk, Raeann Cantelo-Zylman, reminded City Council that they have mail at City Hall and that they should stop by.

9) **City's Attorney's Report**

a. **Attorney Announcements.**

City Attorney, Erin Blake, stated Ravens Place filed an administrative review complaint relating to the City's revocation of their business license. She indicated their request to stay the rulings and allow Raven's to operate was denied by the Court and that the next court date would be on 2/23/23.

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

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

City Administrator, Thomas Wogan, thanked the firefighters for their involvement in a very long and complicated meetings for ALS. He stated this by far the largest investment in the Fire Department that the City has made in many years.

City Administrator, Thomas Wogan, thanked Alderman Roll for his involvement and assistance with appropriations.

Alderman Rita inquired about the Blue Island ALS training program's three-year agreement and repayment terms. Chief Haywood stated that the majority of the firefighters are already trained paramedics; however, if any firefighters required paramedic training, the City would pay for the same, if the firefighter agreed to repay the training costs (if they failed the program) and committed to working for the City for three years after the program.

Alderman Roll stated that he can present the appropriations to be presented graphically, so if anyone wanted a better picture, they should contact him for the same.

The Mayor stated that he and the Building Commissioner were involved in the demolition of the building on Wireton Road, which had been in poor condition.

11) Aldermanic Announcements/Reports/Comments

a. Aldermanic Announcements/Reports/Comments

No comments.

12) Motion for Adjournment

Motion by Alderman Roll, second by Alderman Fahrenwald to adjourn the regular meeting.

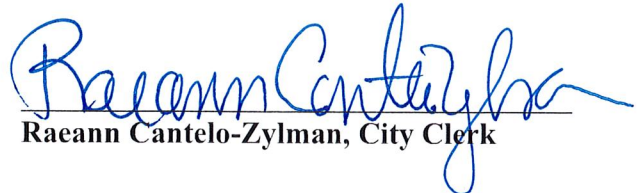
Ayes: 5 Fahrenwald, Rita, McGee, Carr, Roll

Nays: 0

Absent: 2 Johnson (left early), Montoya

Abstention: 0

There being five (5) Affirmative Votes, the Mayor declared the motion carried.


Raeann Cantelo-Zylman, City Clerk

**APPROVED BY ME THIS
15TH DAY OF MARCH 2023**


Fred Bilotto, Mayor