

CITY OF LAWRENCEVILLE, ILLINOIS
MAY 8, 2025
MINUTES

The Council of the City of Lawrenceville, Lawrence County, Illinois met in regular session in the City Council Chambers of the City Hall Building on Thursday, April 10, 2025 at the hour of 7:00 p.m. The following Aldermen were present on roll call: Brewer, Dunn, Fritch, Greene, Waldrop, Stevens, Volkman and Goins.

Mayor Courtney called the meeting to order. Waldrop gave the prayer. All present then recited the Pledge of Allegiance while facing the flag.

The Council had earlier received copies of the minutes of the regular Council meeting of April, 2025. Mayor Courtney asked for questions or comments. Waldrop motioned to approve the minutes of the meeting of April, 2025. Dunn seconded the motion. Motion passed on a voice vote.

Council had earlier received copies of the bills of the City's Sewer and Water Departments for April, 2025. Mayor Courtney asked for questions or comments. Brewer made a motion to approve paying the bills for April, 2025. Greene seconded the motion. Motion passed on a roll call vote 8-0. Yeas: Fritch, Brewer, Greene, Waldrop, Dunn, Goins, Volkman and Stevens. Nays: None.

Mayor Courtney reported the City's accounts to the Council. The city working budget is on line after 11 months of the 24-25 fiscal year.

Louie Campbell, Paul Waller, David Whitherspoon, Eric Irvin and Scott Durrant requested to speak to the Council. When later given the opportunity to speak, Waller declined.

Campbell urged the Council to consider and thoroughly vet other sites while deciding upon the placement of a proposed wastewater treatment plant besides the property at the old Lawrenceville High School. Otherwise, Campbell also requested the Council to consider live-streaming Council meetings. The meetings could be broadcast on YouTube and equipment would cost roughly \$3,100, Campbell said. He also pushed for publishing the Council's phone numbers on the City website. Volkman also asked Campbell about harassment he's received after publishing the Mayor's number.

David Whitherspoon spoke about an interaction with the Lawrenceville Police Department. He was pulled over for failure to stop at a stop sign, according to Whitherspoon. The department later searched his car and found nothing illegal, Whitherspoon said. He wasn't given a ticket, But Whitherspoon asked why the department has no material to help a resident fill out of Freedom of Information Act request and felt the department should have dash cameras.

Eric Irvin lives adjacent to the old high school and deals with the east side of the high school, including tall grass and trash. The night the school burnt, Irvin kept a hose running on his office building the entire night to keep his property from catching fire. Irvin feels if the City doesn't

take advantage of the opportunity to tear down the building for a place to build the proposed wastewater plant, the decaying structure will probably never be torn down. He asked for the City to move forward with acquiring the property, tearing down the building and building a wastewater plant on the property.

Scott Durrant spoke to the Council about flooding in his basement during a recent heavy rain. Despite attempts to call the water department and reaching county dispatch, Durrant felt was given no advice on how to proceed. He pushed for better communication between the City and residents. When Durrant asked about plans moving forward with the infrastructure, the Mayor also advised the City has already met with engineers and planned to run cameras through the sewer system to find any possible problems, such as blockages and holes in the pipe, throughout the area that includes Durrant's residence.

After engaging with legal counsel, the Mayor was advised to enter into an agreement with William Lawson, a labor attorney who previously represented the City. Waldrop motioned to engage in hiring Lawson. Brewer seconded. Motion passed on a roll call vote 8-0. Yeas: Fritch, Brewer, Greene, Waldrop, Dunn, Goins, Volkman and Stevens. Nays: None.

The Mayor asked for a resolution for approval of funds for Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission. Greater Wabash serves as the City's grant writers and offers advice on how to move forward with a myriad of projects. The Mayor asked for \$2,500 for Greater Wabash. Brewer motioned for a resolution to send money to Greater Wabash. Dunn seconded. Motion passed on a roll call vote 8-0. Yeas: Fritch, Brewer, Greene, Waldrop, Dunn, Goins, Volkman and Stevens. Nays: None.

Brian Bucheit, from HMG Engineers, provided an update to the Council on engineering work for the proposed wastewater plant. According to Bucheit, the best suitable site for the new plant is the property where the former Lawrenceville High School stands. With the current collection system running from west to east, the proximity to existing pipes and the Embarras River, the old high school site is best suitable. Other possible sites would cost more money and create more challenges with pumping for long distances and uphill or create great cost by drilling under the river. The cost of remediating the property could be rolled into overall cost of the project. Any concerns over odor would be mitigated by design of the plant, fencing and landscaping. A Chicago suburb with a similar project by HMG never used the anti-odor mechanisms, Bucheit said. While the plant could be built elsewhere, it would take more money, Bucheit said.

Neal said the City initiated an abandonment suit due to the owner's delinquency on taxes, the building sitting unoccupied and the public safety hazard from the building's condition. Courts initiated the abandonment. When the owner brought the property current on taxes, the court ordered the current owner to demolish the property within 60 days. If the owner doesn't comply with the order, Neal said, the City will renew its request for abandonment proceedings.

Following the presentation, Mayor Courtney asked for a motion to select the old high school property as the preferred site for the wastewater project. Stevens motioned. Brewer seconded. Motion passed on a roll call vote 7-1. Yeas: Fritch, Brewer, Greene, Waldrop, Dunn, Goins and Stevens. Nays: Volkman.

With stormwater issues in the Lincoln Heights neighborhood, the Mayor advised it's a good idea to determine the cause of the problem. HLR engineering advised the City to hire a firm to inspect roughly 2,600 feet of sewage pipe in the neighborhood to look for issues, whether blockages or damage to the pipes. The cost of the project would be roughly \$14,000. Brewer motioned to proceed with the project. Stevens seconded. Motion passed on a roll call vote 8-0. Yeas: Fritch, Brewer, Greene, Waldrop, Dunn, Goins, Volkman and Stevens. Nays: None.

In continuing the discussion on golf carts within the City limits, the Mayor said Illinois Department of Transportation advised the City for golf cart crossings at 11th and 12th on State Street and Lexington on 15th Street. IDOT felt there should be no other crossings where golf carts should be allowed. Volkman asked why the proposed City policy would require each potential operator for each golf cart on file. Neal said it was an issue with liability. No vote was held on the matter.

Greene reported Sumner would hold a city-wide garage sale on May 31. Greene said it would be a good idea to hold a similar sale in the City, then perhaps start a city-wide clean up the following week. The Mayor said Republic Services quoted a price of \$28,800 for the cleanup. Volkman motioned to have Republic work a curbside cleanup program throughout the City. Dunn seconded. Motion passed on a roll call vote 8-0. Yeas: Fritch, Brewer, Greene, Waldrop, Dunn, Goins, Volkman and Stevens. Nays: None.

The Mayor advised the City will likely have to consider raising rates on weekly trash service. The City is about \$4 lower per month than any other municipality in the county.

The Mayor reported Charles Gentry is undergoing training off site as he prepares to become a full-time patrolman.

Greene encouraged participation in a fundraiser at the VFW on May 17 for the Senior Citizens Center, which faces a short-fall of funds. Stevens provided photographs on sewer issues to help educate the Council. The Mayor read a letter of thanks from Lawrence County CEO. Debi Tewell, who will retire from the Water Department after more than two decades of service, sent a letter of gratitude. Danielle Chaplin was hired as her replacement.

Stevens was awarded a proclamation and a key to the City upon his retirement from the Council.

Following the April election, Courtney was sworn in as Mayor, followed by Nolan (clerk). Council members Lewis, Waldrop, Brewer, Dunn and Green were also sworn in.

Waldrop made a motion to adjourn. Greene seconded the motion. The motion was approved by voice vote. Time: 8:46 p.m. The next city council meeting is June 12, 2025.

Rodney Nolan, City Clerk