

**JOURNAL OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY OF BLUE ISLAND
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
FEBRUARY 13, 2025**

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 February 13, 2025.

2) Pledge of Allegiance

3) Roll Call

Roll Call indicates the following:

Present:	4	Fahrenwald, McGee (6:15 pm), Roll, Ruthenberg
Absent:	3	Carr, Johnson, Montoya
Present Also:	5	Raeann Cantelo-Zylman, City Clerk Nancy Rita, Treasurer Erin Blake, City Attorney Thomas Wogan, City Administrator Mark Patoska, Deputy City Administrator

4) Public Comment

No comment.

5) New Business

a. Presentation by Burke Engineering.

Travis Parry of Burke Engineering revealed that the City is seeking CBG financing for the 119th project. The 2025 road maintenance program is for roads paved in recent years and has gone out to bid with two contractors currently on board. First, reclaimer will be applied, which is a pavement rejuvenator that protects newly surfaced roads that are three years or younger. Second, crack sealing for roadways four to six years old will begin in the spring.

Treasurer, Nancy Rita, questioned the 12 streets and which ones are being restored. Mr. Parry identified them as Wood, Irving, York, Francisco, Longwood, Orchard, Burr Oak, 121st Street, 120th Street, 120th Place, Irving, and Gregory. There will be 60 streets in

total, with a little more than 30 being rejuvenated and another 30 or so getting crack sealing.

Alderman Roll inquired regarding whether there were any pre-conditions that locals should be aware of, such as the period of time cars are not allowed on the road. Mr. Parry stated when the sealer is applied, the contractor will provide educational materials.

Alderman Fahrenwald indicated that \$2 million was allocated to the streets for rejuvenator and crack sealing, and that he is satisfied with the City's current situation. The Mayor indicated that he spent six hours going line by line through appropriations, and that upkeep on all of those streets will cost less than \$1 million. The alleyways had been previously bid, approved, and budgeted. Mr. Parry indicated that the road maintenance program is less than \$250,000.00.

Mr. Parry indicated that the streetscape renovation at Olde Western is 95% complete. They need signage and to restore the damage to Western Avenue. They also need to work on Broadway for IDOT's light installation delay permit. Phase 1.5 for James, York, and Olde Western North is 95% complete. The York park is awaiting ownership transfer and will be in line like Olde Western. That design is currently in the works. The Council authorized all IDOT agreements for Phase 2 of Western Avenue, from 119th to 127th. This project is partially funded by a TIF and the City submitted an expedited engineering request to attempt to speed things up as much as possible. A state budget forecasts the construction start date of 2027.

Three green alleys will be built in conjunction with Cook County and Green Fifth Partners on 123rd Street, Grunewald, Artesian, New to Vermont, Chicago Street, and Vermont to Grove, with construction beginning in the spring. They will also propose another round of MWRD green alleys, one block west of Western, York and New, Vermont, High, and York, which will commence this year. Alderman Fahrenwald inquired about the installation of a speed bump. Mr. Parry stated this alley is a regular alley.

Mr. Parry also stated that the water system is relatively old and that the EPA recommended specific needs such as inspections, maintenance, repairs, and painting, as well as improvements to the raised water towers. He noted the City must treat the metal in the tanks as well. Several meters require replacement, and each residential route costs \$2 million to modify. The lead service line replacement program obtained a grant to conduct inventory two years ago. The City applied for IEPA financing, received it, and plans to host a public hearing. It will receive a forgivable low-interest loan for \$5 million, although it is unclear how much of that loan will be forgiven. The City is also eligible in June/July 2025, and he will begin work as soon as he knows the number. Last year, there was \$3 million in forgiveness.

Treasurer Nancy Rita inquired about the loan application process and advantages. Mr. Parry added that they have completed the process, inventory, and the created plan

indicates that they are suitable for a loan. The benefits would include free money from the State of Illinois.

Alderman Roll asked how the City engineers would prioritize lead line replacement services in the City. Treasurer, Nancy Rita asked if the prioritization would move from oldest to newest. The Mayor, Parry, and Mike Schroeder agreed that the City would prioritize replacement based on the water mains that are continuously breaking.

Supervisor of Public Works, Michael Schroeder, noted that if you do not know what you have in your home, it is lead. Each administration has handled this issue differently, and the present administration intends to make the necessary reforms. The IEPA does not give the City a choice. The Mayor remarked that almost the entire city is the same age and the water lines were placed at the same time.

Alderman Fahrenwald wondered whether it was true that the sewer pipe is close to the water line. Supervisor of Public Works, Michael Schroeder, noted that the neighborhood is old, the laws and regulations have changed.

Treasurer, Nancy Rita, inquired as to what this encompassed. Supervisor of Public Works, Michael Schroeder, indicated that residents meter to the main on the street in front, parkway, and across the street, with the cost varying based on the situation.

Alderman McGee reported that he went to check out the main break at Paul Revere and found that the lead lines were old. Supervisor of Public Works, Michael Schroeder, noted that the EPA requires the City to replace these lines, and you have 120 days in the winter to replace the lead and 30 days in the summer. The current goal is for residents not spend \$12,000 to \$15,000, and that grant money be used for the same.

Alderman Ruthenberg asked whether all of the mains were lead. Supervisor of Public Works, Michael Schroeder, indicated that all of the mains are not lead, but the connections to the main are lead, as lead was the most cost-effective and commonly utilized pipe.

The Mayor noted last year only 100 residences had their lead lines replaced. The City intends to handle between 1,000 and 1,100 houses this year, depending on the bid and the best use of this grant. Certain roadways would need to be torn up to determine make these replacements, so the City would also focus on replacing pipes in areas wherein the streets have not yet been completed.

Mr. Parry noted that a study of sewer cleaning and televising in conjunction with the road program indicated that the sewers need to be replaced. Longwood's flooding problem would be addressed by applying for a \$32 million grant from FEMA and NAIMA. Long-term 10-year plan infrastructure improvements would include water mains, dependent on age, number of breaks, and pressure, and would likely cost \$12 million to upgrade.

The Mayor indicated that the required maintenance period for water tanks is 20 years, and the City has taken loans to demonstrate to the EPA that it is beginning the required maintenance process, allowing the City to receive extensions while remaining in compliance.

6) **Mayor's Report**

a. Ordinance 2025-___: An Ordinance of the City of Blue Island, Cook County, Illinois Granting a Special Use to Allow a "Daycare for Children" on the Property Located in the UTOB District at 2418 Vermont Street.

City Attorney, Erin Blake indicated that the PZBA approved this special use; nonetheless, there were several issues the City Council needed to address, including potential parking difficulties. She noted the City can impose any requirements on the special use they found necessary.

Alderman Fahrenwald wishes to confirm the entrance of the daycare.

The Mayor mentioned that he would be concerned regarding liability on an IDOT Street.

Alderman Roll said that the daycare does not allow pick-up, drop-off, or employee parking on Vermont Street.

b. Ordinance 2025-___: An Ordinance of the City of Blue Island, Cook County, Illinois Granting a Special Use to Allow a "Truck and Repair Business" in the I-1 (Limited Industry) District.

The Mayor noted it was approved by the PZBA and had limits such as not being utilized for storage and being unable to repair anything outside.

c. Discussion regarding Browntown Communications Proposal.

City Administrator, Thomas Wogan, announced that the City will have a new website in April. Kevin and Sara Brown have been transferring all the information to the new website. Moving forward, the City is planning to engage in more aggressive digital marketing communication, a community calendar, and website administration at 127th and Olde Western.

Alderman Fahrenwald is concerned about the number of hours proposed and believes that they will exceed those hours.

Alderman Roll noted that website marketing is not the same as all other marketing.

City Administrator, Thomas Wogan, spoke about the website, social media sites, and principal control communication, as well as the visual design work that goes with it.

Alderman Roll remarked that the previous website requires maintenance and relies on several vendors, and that historically, players involved have a lot to do and focus on, as well as clear regulations and obligations. This is more appropriate for the context and how to manage the new infrastructure which is more process-based.

Alderman Ruthenberg inquired as to how this new idea differed from their current practices. City Administrator, Thomas Wogan, noted that the City is mostly reactive, with insufficient staffing and resources. The plan is to become proactive with weekly check-ins and more product-related activities.

Alderman Roll indicated they would only update the website, not maintain it.

c. Discussion regarding the Sale of City-Owned Property.

Deputy City Administrator, Mark Patoska, stated the City intends to place 2133 136th Street out for bid, which is a vacant lot.

d. Mayor Announcements.

No comments.

7) City Clerk's Announcements/Reports/Comments

a. City Clerk's Announcements.

City Clerk, Raeann Cantelo-Zylman wished a happy belated birthday to Alderman Candace Carr and Treasurer Nancy Rita.

City Clerk, Raeann Cantelo-Zylman, informed everyone that the Community Clean Up will take place on 4/26/25. Let's try to top last year's record of more than 300 volunteers.

City Clerk, Raeann Cantelo-Zylman, encouraged everyone to be on the lookout for the Flower Sale, TGIF, and Farmer's market in the coming months.

City Clerk, Raeann Cantelo-Zylman, noted that the Black History luncheon will take place 2/24/25 at noon.

City Clerk, Raeann Cantelo-Zylman, wished everyone a Happy Valentine's day.

City Clerk, Raeann Cantelo-Zylman, informed everyone that City Hall will be closed 2/17/25 for President's day.

8) City's Attorney's Report

a. Attorney Announcements.

No report.

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

- a. **Presentation of Appropriation to be Discussed at Public Hearing on February 25, 2025 at 6:45 pm and made available to the public hereafter in the City Clerk's office.**

City Administrator, Thomas Wogan, indicated that the first draft of the appropriation is nearly finished and that they spent a significant amount of time going over each line item with the Mayor. The draft copy will be ready for public viewing tomorrow and will be available in the Clerk's office. He noted that the City can deliver copies to the council. He wanted the Aldermen to be aware that drafts are subject to change. We did not use one-time financing or provide balanced appropriations to address the previously discussed needs of completing streets, alleys, maintenance, and updating vehicles at Public Works and the Building Department. There is possibility for bonding to address infrastructure, and the IEPA reminds us on a quarterly basis that the water tanks need to be maintained. The IEPA loan is quite likely to forgive \$6 million.

- b. **City Administrator's Announcements/Comments.**

City Administrator, Thomas Wogan, noted there is not enough public interest, so they are thinking of eliminating the Saturday schedule for the Clerk's office. The final decision is still pending.

10) **Aldermanic Announcements/Reports/Comments**

- a. **Aldermanic Announcements/Comments.**

Alderman Fahrenwald suggested that an ordinance be considered in the future that prohibits blowing snow on neighbors' property. Secondly, he wondered whether or not senior water renewals could be completed by phone. Deputy City Administrator, Mark Patoska, does not see an issue with updated the process and noted the goal is to ensure that the identity matches and that senior discounts are not being taken advantage of.

Treasurer, Nancy Rita, thanked Public Works for a fabulous job.

- 11) **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 Roll, second by Alderman Ruthenberg to enter Executive Session.

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

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

Motion by Alderman Fahrenwald, second by Alderman Roll to Reconvene.

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

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

The Mayor stated discussed workers compensation.

13) Motion for Adjournment

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

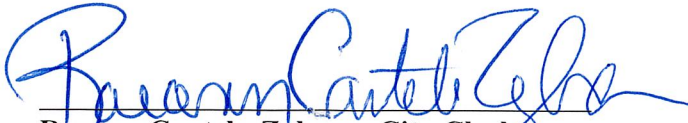
Ayes: 4 Fahrenwald, McGee, Roll, Ruthenberg
Nays: 0
Absent: 3 Carr, Johnson, Montoya
Abstention: 0

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



Fred Bilotto, Mayor

**APPROVED BY ME THIS
11TH DAY OF MARCH 2025**



Raeann Cantelo-Zylman, City Clerk