



MINUTES
REGULAR SESSION CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2021, 6:00 P.M.

The City Council convened in regular session in-person in Government Center Chambers at 6:02 p.m., Monday, December 6, 2021. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Mboka Mwilambwe.

Roll Call

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Mboka Mwilambwe	Mayor	Present	
Jamie Mathy	Council Member, Ward 1	Present	
Donna Boelen	Council Member, Ward 2	Present	
Sheila Montney	Council Member, Ward 3	Present	
Julie Emig	Council Member, Ward 4	Present	
Nick Becker	Council Member, Ward 5	Present	
De Urban	Council Member, Ward 6	Present	
Mollie Ward	Council Member, Ward 7	Present	
Jeff Crabill	Council Member, Ward 8	Remote	6:03 PM
Tom Crumpler	Council Member, Ward 9	Present	

Council Member Mathy made a motion, seconded by Council Member Ward, to allow Council Member Crabill to attend the meeting remotely as he was traveling on business.

Mayor Mwilambwe directed the Clerk to call the roll, which resulted in the following:

AYES: Mathy, Boelen, Montney, Emig, Becker, Urban, Ward, Crumpler

Motion carried.

Council Member Crabill entered the meeting at 6:03 p.m.

Truth in Taxation Public Hearing - Bloomington Public Library Tax Levy

A. Call to Order

Mayor Mwilambwe opened the Public Hearing at 6:04 p.m.

B. Presentation of Tax Levy

City Manager Tim Gleason stated that a Public Hearing was required as part of the approval process.

Jeanne Hamilton, Director of the Bloomington Public Library ("BPL"), announced that the BPL had received the State Public Library Construction Act Grant in the amount of \$5.6 million. She explained that to receive the grant, the BPL needed to have a local share of \$15 million by June 30, 2022. She stressed the importance of the tax levy and bond. She stated that staff's recommendation was to reduce the proposed levy and bond but not by the full

amount of the grant. She cited uncertainty of construction cost and that grant funding was figured into the total cost as two of the reasons for the staff recommendation. Mrs. Hamilton reminded Council that the BPL cut \$5 million from the original proposed plan with the intent to make those improvements when funds became available.

Scott Rathbun, Finance Director, addressed Council and explained the federal requirement of a public hearing. He discussed the total estimated project cost of \$22.8 million and that the BPL proposed \$17 million of the total cost was funded through general obligation bonds. These bonds would create a \$1.1 million annual debt service which would be supported by the increase in its tax levy. He noted that the City approved a Resolution that supported the BPL expansion, renovation and levy increase on November 8, 2021 and the Estimated tax levy on November 22, 2021, which included the additional \$1.1 million for debt service. He explained that \$2.8 million of the grant received by BPL would be applied to the anticipated bond need, which lowered the estimated need to \$14.2 million and the estimated annual debt service to \$850,000. He compared the 2020 and 2021 tax levy amounts, which resulted in an aggregate levy increase of more than 5%, and therefore a Truth in Taxation Hearing was required per State statute.

D. Public Testimony

Mayor Mwilambwe welcomed public comment and the following spoke in-person:

Carol Koos, previous Bloomington Public Library Board Chair, spoke in favor of the levy. She described plans for the expansion and supported it through statistics, historical experiences during her tenure, and personal opinion.

Kurt Hudson, Resident of Ward 8, spoke in favor of the levy by discussing how the library expansion fit into the City's Vision. He expressed his belief that a library expansion would strengthen the Downtown and be an anchor of the community. He encouraged the BPL's consideration of contemporary technology. He stated that the City did not need to choose between road infrastructure and the library, and believed the minimal amount would increase the value of the City.

Ravi Duvvuri, Resident of Ward 3, spoke in favor of the levy. He described his experiences with BPL's programs and amenities. He believed that the BPL had become limited and discussed the need for upgrades which would result in additional programming. He believed that the BPL could become a place for teens. He compared the per household costs to the benefits.

Meri Helbig, Resident of Ward 6 and Program Director of LifeCIL, spoke in favor of the levy. She discussed her experiences as a former English as a Second Language instructor, noting that libraries were invaluable as they provided access to free resources. She also supported the Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility improvements.

Judy Stearns, Former Ward 4 Council Member and frequent BPL user, expressed that while she loved the library, the average hardworking citizen could not afford an additional tax. She stated that taxes and water bills continued to rise, and that the average citizen could not afford another tax increase.

Levi Champion, self-proclaimed average hardworking citizen, and Ward 6 resident, spoke in favor of the levy and supported it through statistics. He discussed personal research with the Champaign Public Library and compared it to the BPL's reduced program offers. He advised that the BPL and City should amend their messaging.

Linda Foster, Resident of Ward 1, and President of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (“NAACP”), spoke in favor of the levy. She believed an expanded library was necessary and highlighted the flexibility of the proposed amenities. She supported her position by noting that the proposed expansion included amenities that would be offered in a newly constructed building. She stressed the need for the expansion for the youth of the community.

Noah Tang, Resident of Ward 1 and history teacher at Bloomington Public High School, spoke in favor of the levy. He provided statistics to support his position and provided examples on how the BPL was creative in their proposed offerings. He noted that libraries were one of the last free places for community members of all ages. He then compared the BPL to the libraries of the City of Champaign and Decatur, noting that they value knowledge and access to resources.

Dr. Nicole Moore, Resident of Ward 3, spoke in favor of the levy. She discussed how her family frequented the BPL. She provided examples of how traditional libraries could be overwhelming for individuals on the autistic spectrum or other sensory disorders. She supported the implementation of sensory-friendly programs and discussed how it could enrich the lives for those individuals with sensory disorders.

Erica Tisdale, Employee of Heartland Headstart, spoke in favor of the tax levy. She stated that Heartland Headstart supported 275 families and explained that if all of the families participated in the literacy programs, the library could not accommodate their programs. She expressed the importance of the free access to resources.

Bill Bishop, Resident of Ward 3 and representative of the Harvest Pointe Subdivision, was not in favor of the levy and believed that the community should vote on the expansion. He discussed various reasons why he did not support the library expansion or the transition from a library to a community center. He recommended additional consideration of the Eastland Mall and supported it with reasons why he believed the option was viable.

Candice Byrd, Single Mom and Resident of Ward 6, expressed that while she could not afford the tax, she supported the expansion project. She explained that the expansion would provide free enrichment and expanded offerings, and stressed the importance of engaging community teenagers. She discussed the need for additional space within the BPL for expanded programming.

C. Public Hearing for the Bloomington Public Library 2021 Estimated Tax Levy, as requested by the Finance Department.

Council Member Boelen thanked the community members for voicing their opinions.

Council Member Montney complimented the BPL staff for their work. She stated that the decision reflected the City’s overall spending structure and stressed the need for strategic organization of capital projects along with the operation costs associated to each. She reported that the combined tax amount for the BPL expansion and the O’Neil Pool project exceeded the amount used for the Coliseum. She read portions of an article which cited increasing materials costs. She reiterated her position that a reprioritization of City spending could cover the cost of the proposed tax.

Council Member Becker encouraged efficiencies in City expenses in order to afford the improvements without the assessment of a tax.

Council Member Mathy agreed with the need to locate efficiencies in City expenses

and discussed multiple capital projects of aging infrastructure. He supported the expansion.

Council Member Emig supported the expansion and supported it with statistics on population growth and previous expansions. She believed the BPL was not an amenity but a necessity and stressed the importance of access to literacy resources. She noted that the BPL had considered Eastland Suites as a primary location but that after discussion with engineers, learned that it would cost just as much to retrofit the mall with the necessary substructure.

E. Close Public Hearing

Mayor Mwilambwe closed the Public Hearing at 6:56 p.m.

Recognition/Appointments

A. Recognition of Appointments to Various Boards & Commissions

Mayor Mwilambwe recognized the appointment of Uma Kailasam to the Human Relations Commission, and John Elterich to the Historic Preservation Commission.

Public Comment

Mayor Mwilambwe read a statement of procedure for public comment. Mary Carlisle provided in-person public comment and Bob Sampson provided emailed public comment. No remote public comment was received.

Consent Agenda

Items listed on the Consent Agenda are approved with one motion; Items pulled by Council from the Consent Agenda for discussion are listed and voted on separately.

Council Member Boelen made a motion, seconded by Council Member Crumpler, that the Consent Agenda, including all items listed below, be approved as presented.

Mayor Mwilambwe directed the Clerk to call the roll, which resulted in the following:

AYES: Mathy, Boelen, Montney, Emig, Becker, Urban, Ward, Crabill, Crumpler

Motion carried.

Item 8.A. Consideration and action to approve the Minutes of the October 25, 2021 Regular City Council Meeting, as requested by the City Clerk Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Minutes be approved.)

Item 8.B. Consideration and action to approve the Minutes of the November 8, 2021 Regular City Council Meeting, as requested by the City Clerk Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Minutes be approved.)

Item 8.C. Consideration and action to approve an Agreement, as a sole source, with Axon Enterprise, Inc. for 15 body-worn cameras for a 24-month fixed annual cost, to automatically renew each year contingent on the yearly expenditure being approved in the annual budget, as requested by the Police Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Agreement be approved.)

Item 8.D. Consideration and action on an Ordinance Approving a Site Plan for a Commercial Recreation Facility in the B-1 (General Commercial) District, for Property

Located at 404 Bronco Drive, as requested by the Economic & Community Development Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Ordinance be approved.)

Item 8.E. Consideration and action on an Ordinance Approving a Text Amendment to the Bloomington City Code, Chapter 44, Relating to Commission Schedules - Planning Commission, as requested by the Economic & Community Development Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Ordinance be approved.)

Regular Agenda

The following item was presented:

Item 9.A. Presentation and discussion of Public Works project updates, as requested by the Public Works Department.

City Manager Tim Gleason introduced the third Annual Public Works Roadwork Wrap-Up which highlighted street construction projects. He highlighted and thanked contractors, outside union labor, the Illinois Department of Transportation, and City Public Works employees for their work throughout the challenging year.

Kevin Kothe, Director of Public Works, reminded the community of online resources for infrastructure project updates. He provided an overview of the street resurfacing process. He then discussed road repairs completed by City's road crews and the 15 street projects that were pending completion. He noted that Public Works anticipated the replacement of 2.6 miles of sidewalks and 175 Americans with Disabilities Act ramps with a third of the year's projects completed. He went on to discuss the pavement presentation process and that Public Works was two-thirds completed with the resurfacing projects. Mr. Kothe provided an update with photos on both the Lutz Road and the Locust/Colton Combined Sewer Overflow projects. He then recognized the contractors for their continued work.

Council Member Crumpler asked if staff could provide maps and updates of sidewalk projects similar to road resurfacing.

Council Member Boelen recognized the work at the intersection of Veterans' Parkway, Hamilton Road, and Fox Creek Road. She recommended an earlier notice to residents.

Council Member Montney and Mr. Kothe discussed the process of how the City monitored and maintained sidewalks. She noted that three residents had injured themselves tripping on sidewalks and was concerned about safety. Mr. Kothe discussed sidewalk rating and the causes of vertical displacements.

Council Member Montney asked if there was a standard set number of sidewalks that were required to be completed annually. Mr. Kothe responded that the Sidewalks Master Plan listed approximately \$1.1 to \$1.2 million to be spent on renovations.

Council Member Montney and Mr. Kothe discussed the factors that contributed to varied response times to resident reported hazards. Factors included budget and availability.

Mayor Mwilambwe noted that the City had over 400 miles of sidewalk within the City.

Council Member Ward agreed that additional sidewalk reporting would be beneficial. She also requested information on the streets that the City was not responsible for in order to increase transparency.

Council Member Emig reminded the community of the MyBloomington App that should

be used to submit work orders on sidewalk or similar hazards. She then encouraged seeking additional information and data on the Safe Routes to School Grant to apply for additional funding to offset expenses associated with the implementation and maintenance of sidewalks near school bus stops.

Council Member Crabill encouraged transparency on sidewalk projects and more advanced notice to residents for projects on their streets. He then asked the amount of additional construction that could be completed if additional funding was provided so that projects were not postponed until the next season. Mr. Kothe responded that while some projects were not able to be completed during the calendar year, the Public Works Department based construction seasons off the City's fiscal year.

City Manager's Discussion

City Manager Tim Gleason recognized two new City employees. He then highlighted multiple upcoming Downtown events. He discussed the recent 1st Friday event and thanked all those that attended the tree-lighting ceremony.

Mayor's Discussion

Mayor Mwilambwe echoed comments on the recent tree lighting event. He then recognized City Manager Tim Gleason for his appointment to the FEMA Advisory Board and noted that City Manager Gleason had been the only City Manager from Illinois to be appointed. He discussed an upcoming event that would recognize the life and work of Barbara Adkins, a former City Employee.

Council Member's Discussion

Council Member Ward reported that McClean County ICU beds have been 100% full and encouraged residents to become vaccinated.

Council Member Boelen discussed streets that the City was not responsible for maintaining. She confirmed with Mr. Kothe that the City was able to fill potholes on those streets as a temporary fix.

Council Member Ward hoped for a graphic or other visual of those roads to be posted on the City's website.

Council Member Crumpler discussed an article from WGLT regarding former Council Member Tom Wieland, whose family donated 80 pool passes in his honor for children. He stated that he was so moved, that he would also donate 20 additional pool passes to the O'Neil Pool.

Council Member Mathy reported on his participation in the holiday parade and the Holiday Spectacular.

Executive Session

No Executive Session was held.

Adjournment

Council Member Boelen made a motion, seconded by Council Member Becker, that the meeting be adjourned.

Motion carried (viva voce).

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON

Mboka Mwilambwe
Mboka Mwilambwe, Mayor

ATTEST

Amanda Stutsman
Amanda Stutsman, Deputy City Clerk

