



MINUTES
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - REGULAR SESSION
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2022, 6:00 P.M.

The City Council convened in regular session in the Government Center Chambers at 6:00 p.m., Monday, September 19, 2022. Mayor Mboka Mwilambwe called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance ending with a moment of silent prayer/reflection.

Roll Call

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Mboka Mwilambwe	Mayor	Present
Grant Walch	Council Member, Ward 1	Absent
Donna Boelen	Council Member, Ward 2	Present
Sheila Montney	Council Member, Ward 3	Present
Nick Becker	Council Member, Ward 4	Present
Julie Emig	Council Member, Ward 5	Absent
De Urban	Council Member, Ward 6	Present
Mollie Ward	Council Member, Ward 7	Present
Jeff Crabill	Council Member, Ward 8	Present
Tom Crumpler	Council Member, Ward 9	Present

Public Comment

Mayor Mwilambwe read a public comment statement of procedure. Marita Landreth registered to speak in person, but was not present. No emailed public comment was received.

Recognition

The following item was presented:

Item 4.A. Recognition of Firefighters Paul "Charlie" Murphy, John Hutchinson, and Emilio Domingo, who have completed one-year probation, as requested by the Fire Department.

Fire Chief Eric West introduced each of the Firefighters/Paramedics and provided a brief background.

Amanda Stutsman, Deputy City Clerk, then swore in the Firefighters/Paramedics while Fire Chief West presented them their Firefighter Commission Certificates.

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 Crabill, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Item 5.A. Consideration and action to approve the Minutes of the July 18, 2022, Regular Committee of the Whole Meeting, as requested by the City Clerk Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Minutes be approved.)

Mayor Mwilambwe directed the Clerk to call roll:

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

Motion carried.

Regular Agenda

The following item was presented:

Item 6.A. Presentation of Welcoming Week Testimony, as requested by the Administration Department.

Michael Hurt, Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer, introduced the Item. Rosio Peralta, Welcome Center Manager with the Immigration Project, made opening remarks and asked each of the speakers to share their name, country of origin, and story.

Camila Graunke, who immigrated from Ecuador, explained that she first came to the United States with her parents when she was young. She discussed her past, how she came to Bloomington, and her efforts to advocate and create programs for Hispanics in Bloomington. She expressed her love of the United States (U.S.) and Bloomington, Illinois. She hoped to one day become a United States citizen.

Zhanna Shypulia, who immigrated from Ukraine, explained that she was a refugee who had come to the U.S. in April of 2022. She spoke positively about her experience in Bloomington and was very happy with all the education and family-oriented opportunities. She expressed difficulty in not being able to work as she waited for her work permit. She stated that she was excited to work and become a part of the working community.

Judayne Castillo, who immigrated from Venezuela, explained that she arrived in 2019 with some of her family. She expressed troubles of her home country including many economic and social crisis and the lack of healthcare. She shared struggles and fears her family had experienced and that, for those reasons, she and her family had sought a better life in the U.S. She was proud to be a permanent resident and enjoyed working with the Immigration Project to assist others. She expressed her love for the City of Bloomington.

Mrs. Peralta shared that she had immigrated from Guatemala and explained that she had come to the U.S. after meeting her husband, who was in the Peace Core in Guatemala.

Mayor Mwilambwe spoke to the difficulties immigrants face with education from their countries of origin compared to the jobs they could receive in the U.S.

Mrs. Peralta discussed her education background in Guatemala and the difference in her professional life in the U.S. She explained that immigrants looked at situations as opportunities.

Ms. Graunke discussed her parent's level of education in Ecuador and spoke about immigrants with degrees after immigrating to the U.S. having to work multiple jobs, some at less than minimum wage to support their families.

Ms. Shypulia shared that she has a master's degree in economics and owns her own chain of coffee shops. She is also a fluent in Russian and often teaches Russian to Europeans and Americans.

Mrs. Castillo is a teacher and a college professor of accounting in Venezuela. She was able to work in school in the U.S., as well, and now works for the Immigration Project. She hoped to go back to school in the future.

Council Member Boelen thanked the speakers for sharing their stories and asked them to reach out if there was more the Council could do to assist.

Council Member Ward echoed appreciation to the speakers for sharing their stories. She commented to Ms. Shypulia's statements, and that Ward 7 could use a coffee shop.

Mayor Mwilambwe spoke to his experience as an immigrant.

City Manager's Report

Deputy City Manager Billy Tyus discussed upcoming Downtown events and concerts. He then recognized several new employees.

Executive Session

Personnel - Section 2(c)(1) of 5 ILCS 120

Council Member Ward made a motion, seconded by Council Member Crumpler, to enter into Executive Session to discuss performance/salary of a specific employee under Section 2(c)(1) of 5 ILCS 120.

Mayor Mwilambwe directed the Clerk to call roll:

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

Motion carried.

Return to Open Session and Adjourn

Council Member Boelen made a motion, seconded by Council Member Ward, to return to Open Session and Adjourn.

Mayor Mwilambwe directed the Clerk to call roll:

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

Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON


Mboka Mwilambwe, Mayor

ATTEST


Amanda Stutsman, Deputy City Clerk

