

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
CITY COUNCIL OF CREST HILL
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS
April 20, 2026

1. OPENING OF MEETING

The regular meeting of the City of Crest Hill was called to order by Mayor Raymond R. Soliman at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 20600 City Center Boulevard, Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited in unison.

Mayor Soliman announced the passing of John Smith, age 84, who died on April 11, 2026. Mr. Smith was a retired Chicago police detective with 30 years of service who had lived in Carillon Lakes for 25 years with his wife Lorrie. Mr. Smith has served on the City of Crest Hill Police Pension Board since 2022. Mayor Soliman thanked him for his service and offered condolences to his family, requesting a moment of silence in his honor.

3. ROLL CALL

Roll call indicated the following present: Mayor Raymond Soliman, City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall, City Treasurer Jamie Malloy, Alderman Scott Dyke, Alderman Angelo Deserio, Alderman Darrell Jefferson, Alderwoman Claudia Gazal, Alderperson Tina Oberlin, Alderman Mark Cipiti, Alderman Nate Albert and Alderman Joe Kubal.

Also present were: City Administrator Blaine Wing, Police Chief Ed Clark, Finance Director Glenn Gehrke, City Engineer Ron Wiedeman, Assistant City Administrator/HR Director Ashley Monroe, Public Works Director Gary Richardson, Community & Economic Development Director Dan Ritter, Community & Economic Development Consultant Ron Mantzer, and City Attorney Mike Stiff.

4. CITIZEN/SPECIAL REQUEST/PUBLIC HEARINGS

4A. Conduct a Public Hearing for the City of Crest Hill's Fiscal Year 2026-27 Annual Budget

Mayor Soliman asked for a motion to open the public hearing.

Alderperson Oberlin made a motion to the open public hearing for the City of Crest Hill's Fiscal Year 2026-27 Annual Budget at 7:03 pm. Seconded by Alderman Deserio. Roll Call: Ayes: Dyke, Deserio, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal. Nays: None. MOTION CARRIED.

City Administrator Blaine Wing presented the budget overview, highlighting key points from his administrator budget memorandum. He noted that staff have been using conservative estimates for revenue with 3%

increases for vendor contracts. The general fund has estimated revenue of \$13.8 million and expenses of \$13.5 million, resulting in a \$295,569 surplus.

Administrator Wing explained that while the surplus appears large, various budget requests are expected during the fiscal year, including plumbing repairs at City Hall and police department, replacing windows, obtaining software programs, IT and AV equipment replacements, and potential canine facility improvements. He also noted upcoming union negotiations with Local 150.

Administrator Wing addressed several transparency improvements made to the budget, including creation of separate Mayor's office and Treasurer's office accounts, new Administrator budget memo, budget binders for elected officials, and enhanced website information.

Since the final budget was distributed, three requests were received that improve transparency without affecting the general fund amount: moving 50% of staff costs from administration to Mayor's office budget (\$40,000), creating a large format version of the budget document, and providing detailed breakdowns for special event line items.

Alderman Dyke questioned the location of previously discussed items like the drone and coffee service. Administrator Wing confirmed all items were incorporated, with the drone under capital replacement and coffee under office supplies in the administration budget at \$3,000 annually. Alderman Dyke expressed concern about tracking coffee expenses separately and stated his opposition to the coffee expenditure, indicating he would vote against the budget.

Finance Director Glenn Gehrke presented detailed budget information, emphasizing that the City maintains a balanced budget with total fiscal year spending of \$78 million across all funds. He highlighted the City's revenue sources, noting that state income tax and sales tax comprise over 50% of operating revenue, while property tax represents only 1.3% of revenue.

Director Gehrke demonstrated that Crest Hill collects only 7.01% of residents' total property tax bills (6.45% for city operations and 0.56% for road and bridge), compared to school districts which collect 36%. He showed that Crest Hill's property tax rates are competitive with other Will County municipalities.

The budget presentation outlined major capital projects totaling \$18 million for water infrastructure related to the Grand Prairie Water Commission, with \$10 million covered by grants and IEPA loans. Street improvement projects totaling \$1.7 million are planned. The police pension fund will receive the recommended contribution plus an additional \$150,000, bringing funding levels above 75%.

Alderman Cipiti asked about union contract negotiations and percentage calculations, but Director Gehrke requested this discussion occur in executive session to avoid revealing negotiation strategies.

No public comments were made regarding the budget.

Mayor Soliman asked for a motion to close the public hearing.

Alderman Oberlin made a motion to the close public hearing for the City of Crest Hill's Fiscal Year 2026-27 Annual Budget at 7:31 pm. Seconded by Alderman Albert. Roll Call: Ayes: Deserio, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke. Nays: None. MOTION CARRIED.

Mayor Soliman stated that Comcast/Xfinity/AT&T live broadcasts are down. The meeting is being recorded. Staff will collaborate with both vendors to get the meeting up as soon as possible. It will be on YouTube tomorrow for anyone who would like to watch it.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT FOR AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

No one approached the podium to make public comments on the agenda items.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Soliman asked if any of the Council members wished to have any items removed from the consent agenda for further discussion. There were no requests for removal.

Mayor Soliman proceeded to read the consent agenda items:

- 6A. Approve the Minutes from the Regular City Council Meeting Held on April 6, 2026.
- 6B. Approve the Minutes of the Work Session Meeting Held on March 30, 2026.
- 6C. Approval of Pay Request #39 from Vissering Construction Inc. with Direction to Send it to the IEPA for Approval and Disbursement for a Total Amount of \$198,875.00.
- 6D. Approve a Resolution Approving a Services Sales Order Form by and between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois and Comcast Business/Xfinity. **Resolution #1407**
- 6E. Approve Ordinance Amending the Budget Ordinance for the Fiscal Year Beginning May 1, 2025, and Ending April 30, 2026, for the City of Crest Hill for the Transfers of Interfund Balances within the City's Budget. **Ordinance #2057**
- 6F. Authorization of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Local 150 and Approve the Promotions of John Kemp to Water Crew Leader and Jim

Vogrin to West Wastewater Crew Leader Effective April 21, 2026, as well as Confirm the Current Water/Wastewater Crew Leader Matt Brown will Remain a Crew Leader, but Effective April 21st will become the East Wastewater Crew Leader.

- 6G. Approve a Resolution Approving the Content of Certain 2025 City Council Closed Session Meeting Minutes and Authorizing the Release and Retention of Certain 2025 City Council Closed Session Meeting Minutes. **Resolution #1408**
- 6H. Approval to Film for a TV Pilot by Theodore St. and Oakland Ave. for Thursday, April 30, 2026.
- 6I. Approval of the Regular and Overtime Payroll from March 23, 2026, through April 5, 2026, in the Amount of \$299,024.40.
- 6J. Approval of Additional Comp Time Buy Back in the Amount of \$6,463.69.
- 6K. Approval of the List of Bills Issued through April 30, 2026, in the Amount of \$2,732,149.09.

Mayor Soliman asked for a motion to approve the eleven consent agenda items.

Alderman Albert made a motion to Approve the eleven Consent Agenda items. Seconded by Alderperson Oberlin. Roll Call: Ayes: Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Deserio. Nays: None. MOTION CARRIED.

City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall provided the resolution and ordinance numbers:

- 6D: Resolution 1407
- 6E: Ordinance 2057
- 6G: Resolution 1408

7. REPORTS & COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENTS & ELECTED OFFICIALS

Mayor Soliman deviated from the agenda order to accommodate special guests, moving the review of the US Capital Development proposed Mather Farm project.

7J. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

1. Review of Conceptual Planned Unit Development (PUD) Plans for US Capital Development's (USCD) Proposed Mather Farm Annexation and Light Industrial Development.

Community & Economic Development Director Dan Ritter introduced the item, noting this represents over a year of collaborative work between the City and developer. He emphasized

that the PUD process is unique and starts with this conceptual plan, with extensive public process still ahead including planning commission hearings.

Community & Economic Development Consultant Ron Mentzer provided foundational context, explaining this meeting's purpose under city zoning ordinance requirements for projects over five acres. The 80-acre Mather Farm site would have 53 acres annexed and developed under PUD regulations. He outlined the pre-application collaboration process that has occurred over the past year.

Consultant Mentzer detailed the foundational planning work, starting with the 2014 comprehensive plan that identified this area for commercial and industrial development. The 2022 Weber Division business park sub-area plan provided detailed roadmap addressing existing truck traffic issues and laying groundwork for future development that wouldn't exacerbate problems.

Consultant Mentzer explained required special approvals: annexation of the 53-acre portion into Crest Hill, rezoning to M1 light manufacturing, PUD special use approval, height waiver for 50-foot maximum building height, and preliminary/final plat approval creating dedicated rights-of-way and easements.

Staff enthusiasm for the project stems from collaborating with an experienced developer, USCD's proven track record and financial resources, and their adaptability throughout the planning process. The project would dedicate right-of-way segments to address truck traffic issues, create backdoor access for Dayton Freight and Old Dominion to Weber Road, and provide additional right-of-way for Division Street/Weber Road intersection improvements.

Charlie Lebens, Director of Investments from US Capital Development (USCD) presented the company background, noting USCD's founding in 1997 and development of over \$1.5 billion in commercial real estate across 30 states. The project represents an \$80 million investment potentially creating 200 jobs and generating approximately \$1 million annually in property tax revenue.

The plan features two single-load industrial facilities totaling 753,000 square feet, with all truck activity on the western face to screen existing industrial uses. The eastern facade will be more corporate-oriented and buffered by the north-south roadway and pedestrian infrastructure. A stormwater management facility can be expanded for future commercial development.

Key dedications include right-of-way for future Division Street improvements, Enterprise Boulevard expansion, and an 80-foot

central east-west roadway with 40-foot span to be constructed and dedicated to the City at no cost, including dual pedestrian infrastructure and traffic signal at Weber Road.

USCD emphasized the facilities are designed as best-in-class industrial developments that can accommodate various user types from 100,000 to 750,000 square feet. The Chicago industrial market shows strong fundamentals with 5.8% vacancy rate. The company requested efficient entitlement process to begin construction before winter 2026-27.

Aldersperson Oberlin inquired about the frontage lots not being annexed, with Director Ritter explaining the landowners prefer to wait until they have development contracts before annexing.

Alderman Cipiti asked about estimated daily truck traffic, with responses indicating significant variation depending on tenants. Scott Haley, Managing Director of Development, stated that the truck traffic could range from 5-10 to 20-30 trucks daily, with traffic studies using worst-case scenarios.

Alderman Albert questioned traffic flow and connections to existing facilities like Dayton Freight and Old Dominion. The plan includes public roadways designed to provide back access, though final agreements with existing businesses are still being negotiated. USCD will extend roadway to property lines with cul-de-sacs if connections aren't completed. Alderman Albert also asked about the alignment of the future traffic signal on Weber Road and pedestrian-friendly information regarding this project. Mr. Lebens and Director Ritter explained pedestrian infrastructure along roadways, storm water management benefiting future commercial development, and right-of-way dedications along Division Street obtained through land sale negotiations. City Engineer Ron Wiedeman addressed traffic signal feasibility, noting county discussions about early installation despite development not necessarily triggering requirements. The signal location falls within the acceptable 300-foot window allowed by the county.

Mayor Soliman praised the collaborative process and potential benefits including Weber Road access and traffic relief for Division Street. He emphasized the project's location advantages near multiple interstate highways.

Alderwoman Gazal echoed support, noting benefits for Carillon Lakes and Zausa neighborhoods dealing with current traffic congestion. She referenced similar developments in Bolingbrook as examples of quality appearance.

Alderman Jefferson asked about who would own the new road coming from the annexed and developed area that will come out to Weber Road since it would be coming through unincorporated and private property. Director Ritter stated that it would be annexed into the City. Alderman Jefferson then asked if there would be parking allowed in that new street. City Engineer Wiedeman responded that parking would not be allowed.

Alderman Kubal acknowledged the project as appropriate use of the property, recognizing that full commercial development wasn't feasible and this provides good transitional use.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote for approval to keep moving forward with this project. Roll Call: Ayes: Dyke, Deserio, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal. Nays: None.

7A. MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Soliman announced the Grand Prairie Water Commission's Water Conservation Challenge competition, where Crest Hill currently ranks third among six communities. He encouraged residents to take the pledge at mywaterpledge.com and select Crest Hill, Illinois. The winning community will have someone selected for a gift basket.

Mayor Soliman also announced the 38th Annual Memorial Day program on May 25th, featuring the Frankfort Brass Band and guest speaker Calvin Lee, a 20-year Army veteran and ROTC program director at Joliet Central High School. The program will honor veterans and two slain police officers, with refreshments following in the community room. This event will be rain or shine.

7B. CITY CLERK'S REPORT:

City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall announced the City-wide garage sale which will be taking place Thursday, May 14th through Sunday, May 17th. Residents will need to purchase a \$5 permit from the Clerk's office at City Hall. Hours are Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 4:30pm. The deadline for having your address included is May 12th.

7C. CITY TREASURER'S REPORT:

There were no items to report.

7D. CITY ATTORNEY:

There were no items to report.

7E. CITY ADMINISTRATOR:

1. Approve an Ordinance Approving the Budget of the City of Crest Hill for the Fiscal Year Commencing May 1, 2026, and Ending April 30, 2027

City Administrator Blaine Wing noted this item requires approval and referenced the budget materials starting on page 149. He indicated that Alderman Cipiti's earlier question about union negotiations would need to be addressed in executive session. Discussion will commence after the executive session.

Alderman Cipiti asked about televising work sessions. Administrator Wing explained current equipment limitations, noting that tonight's broadcast equipment was down for both Xfinity Comcast and AT&T. New equipment would allow both broadcasting and streaming capabilities. He noted staffing challenges for work sessions and the need for an assistant to manage the technology, which he has had for only one month. Alderman Cipiti asked for this process to be expedited as the residents should be able to watch the work sessions.

7F. PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT:

Public Works Director Gary Richardson announced the Touch a Truck event at the public works facility at 2090 Oakland Avenue on Saturday, May 16th from 9:00am to 12:00pm. Over 20 trucks will be available in the front parking lot. Director Richardson states that he hopes everyone will stop by.

Mayor Soliman thanked Director Richardson for quick response to a Colony West resident's concern, noting Public Works employee Eric followed up immediately.

Alderman Cipiti also thanked Gary and his staff for addressing a previous request.

7G. CITY ENGINEER:

City Engineer Ron Wiedeman reported opening two more projects last week and opening the receiving stations for Grand Prairie on Friday with very favorable bids well under budget. He will present actual numbers and low bidders at the next May council meeting.

7H. FINANCE:

There were no items to report.

7I. POLICE DEPARTMENT:

There were no items to report.

7J. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

Community & Economic Development Director Dan Ritter noted extremely busy activity in the building department, expecting to set records for building permits this month. He reported that Seasons at Crest Hill apartments are working to obtain permits before month's end.

Director Ritter announced the start of dumpster enclosure code enforcement notices along main commercial corridors, acknowledging this hasn't been enforced recently but emphasizing willingness to work flexibly with businesses, associations, and nonprofits on compliance timing and permits.

Aldersperson Oberlin thanked Director Ritter and Building Commissioner Don Seeman for his help with the residents who had issues. She stated that Commissioner Seeman came out and then they talked to Director Ritter and got some great resolve for the people.

Residents appreciated their help. Director Ritter stated that resolutions can be costly and timely, especially for associations, churches and non-profits, so the City is being reasonable and respectful.

Alderman Albert asked about code enforcement compliance, noting the lengthy adjudication docket. Director Ritter explained his proactive approach has increased the docket from 35 to over 500 cases, focusing on worst properties and safety issues first. He noted significant compliance achieved through warning letters and working with property owners, with many citations dismissed due to achieved compliance.

Alderwoman Gazal noted ongoing parking problems at the apartments development, requesting continued police enforcement.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

9. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

10. COMMITTEE/LIAISON REPORTS

There were no reports.

11. CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS

There were no comments.

12. PUBLIC COMMENT

Resident Linda Dyke approached the podium and provided contact information for several companies that repair ADA doors, including Atlas, Wunderlich, Naperville door repair, and Elgin door repair. Ms. Dyke noted the building's entry doors with button activation have not been working for an extended period.

13. EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. 5ILCS 120/2 (c)(21) Discussion of minutes of meetings lawfully closed under this Act, whether for purposes of approval by the body of the minutes or semi-annual review of the minutes as mandated by Section 2.06

City Attorney Mike Stiff stated by virtue of the passage of resolution 1408 on the consent agenda, 5ILCS 120/2 (c)(21) is no longer necessary. Based on comments during the meeting, an executive session under 5ILCS 120/2 (c)(1) covering compensation and 5ILCS 120/2 (c)(2) covering both collective negotiation matters would be in order.

Mayor Soliman asked for a motion to go into executive session on 5ILCS 120/2 (c)(1) and 5ILCS 120/2(c)(2).

Alderwoman Gazal made a motion to go into executive session on 5ILCS 120/2(c)(1) and 5ILCS 120/2(c)(2) at 9:06 p.m. Seconded by Alderman Cipiti. Roll Call: Ayes: Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Deserio, Jefferson, Gazal. Nays: None. MOTION CARRIED.

Mayor Soliman asked for a motion to reconvene from the executive session on 5ILCS 120/2(c)(1) and 5ILCS 120/2(c)(2).

Aldersperson Oberlin made a motion to reconvene from the executive session on 5ILCS 120/2(c)(1) and 5ILCS 120/2(c)(2) at 9:19 p.m. Seconded by Alderman Albert. Roll Call: Ayes: Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Deserio, Jefferson. Nays: None. MOTION CARRIED.

Mayor Soliman stated that there is one item that needs to be addressed under the City Administrator for the budget for the year 2026/2027.

7E. CITY ADMINISTRATOR:

1. Approve an Ordinance Approving the Budget of the City of Crest Hill for the Fiscal Year Commencing May 1, 2026, and Ending April 30, 2027

City Administrator Blaine Wing stated, "We need the approval of the ordinance approving the budget for the City of Crest Hill for the fiscal year commencing on May 1, 2026, and ending April 30, 2027." Aldersperson Oberlin stated, "So moved, as presented." Alderman Albert stated, "Second." Mayor Soliman stated, "Motion by Aldersperson Oberlin and seconded by Alderman Albert for an ordinance approving the budget of the City of Crest Hill for fiscal year commencing May 1, 2026, and ending April 30, 2027. Questions or comments in regard to the motion?" Alderman Jefferson stated, "I had a conversation over the weekend with a person from the Attorney General's Office and they're kind of puzzled and they would like more information as to the Treasurer not being part of the budget. So, if there is any way we could get, I could get some information as to the exclusion of our Treasurer from the budget. I'd like to be able to forward that information." Administrator Wing responded, "You'd have to ask the Treasurer. I've invited her to meet with myself and the staff." Alderman

Jefferson stated, "But she's not part of the committee, so..." Administrator Wing stated, "The committee just got the information ahead of time from, from Council." Alderwoman Gazal asked, "Do you have an email that back up that that says you invited her for a budget specifically says budget in the email?" Administrator Wing responded, "Yes, I have an email asking her to talk about her budget." City Treasurer Malloy stated, "My budget, but not the entire budget." Administrator Wing responded, "Yeah." Alderwoman Gazal stated, "Yeah. There's a difference." Alderman Jefferson stated, "Yeah. I was talking about the entire budget. Not just her budget. That's the information I would be looking forward to." Administrator Wing stated, "There's no such information to share." Alderman Jefferson stated, "Then I guess my question would be is, how can we leave the Treasurer out of the budget discussion?" Administrator Wing answered, "Again, the Treasurer's responsibility is not specifically this budget. There's the oversight, but not the creation of the budget." Alderman Jefferson responded, "All right, but they should be included." Administrator Wing answered, "If Council would like to direct me and the staff, I'm happy to include that, but that is not in the responsibilities that the state statute, which is what the City follows has set out." Alderman Jefferson responded, "I don't know about that because the state statutes called a Treasurer a Chief Financial Officer. So that would kind of be inclusive." Alderwoman Gazal asked the Treasurer, "So, you were not at any of those meetings?" City Treasurer Malloy answered, "No, I asked to go into the meeting that was being held and was told that I was not invited, that there is now a Finance Committee being Alderman Dyke and Alderman Deserio and I wasn't invited." Administrator Wing stated, "So again, the Finance Committee oversees the setting policy does not set the budget. Council sets the budget. So, this is the group that sets the budget." Alderman Jefferson stated, "Okay, I understand that part. At some point in any financial business of the City, doesn't the Treasurer need to be included? We have a Finance Director; but that department doesn't operate without the elected official. It shouldn't." Administrator Wing stated, "Well, Council on the night that I was sworn in directed that department to report to me. So, it doesn't have an elected official." Alderman Jefferson stated, "The department to report to you, but responsibility of the Treasurer is still the same." Administrator Wing stated, "I've not taken anything away from the Treasurer." Alderwoman Gazal stated, "But this is the first time I've heard and since I've been elected and that every Treasurer has been involved with the finance of the City, regardless of their overseeing the part you're talking about, which is the office management that's totally different from a Treasurer responsibility. And the fact that we have a committee that you created the committee and she's not part of that meeting either. That's kind of like, I mean, because we sat here a lot of us fighting for the past Treasurer, you know, I was one of them. Tina, you were very vocal

about the past Treasurer. A lot of people here were vocal about that. And I think these are her duties. Just like the way we have a duty. She should put her input or her opinion into that budget. And the fact that we, I just find out right now, that she's not part of even the committee. So, when you guys all met together, she was not with them?" Administrator Wing responded, "Correct. Council voted on several committees that evening and the Treasurer was not included. The whole group voted on who is going to be on the Finance Committee. The Treasurer was not named as a person on the committee." Alderwoman Gazal stated, "But she doesn't need to be on a Finance Committee. She's its Treasurer, elected by the people of the City. Treasurer. It doesn't matter what I'm going to say this again and I keep repeating myself at every meeting and I sound like a broken record. But I'm going to keep repeating myself regardless of what hard feelings we have with her. You know, regardless of what hard feelings we have, we always have to put our hard feelings and differences on the side. And we have to let every person here. I've had a lot of hard feelings with the Mayor, but you know what? He's the Mayor and I have thought when he needed to be the Mayor, just like when I mentioned about he's a Mayor, he's the face of the City so you put him on the front of that newsletter. Regardless of what differences we have, the same thing that I will do for you, for the attorney, for every person in here. You know, what is right is right and what's wrong is wrong. Maybe we should just call that the Claudia Gazal saying what's right is right and what's wrong is wrong. Regardless of our differences, we need to respect people and understand their duties and what they were elected for." Administrator Wing responded, "I do. My understanding is the Treasurer responsibility is to verify, not create the budget, verify any of the issues. So, to me, that's not creation of the budget. If Council wants to..." Alderwoman Gazal stated, "Well, she's not created the budget and I'm going to interrupt you with all the respect. She should still have her opinion, her input, oversees the budget, just like everyone else. That's to me. That's what's called transparency and that's what the people of Crest Hill, I think, would like to see as well. That is mine and I'm going to leave it as that." Administrator Wing stated, "And again, I'm happy to follow Council's direction." Alderman Cipiti said, "I have a question. Just to add or follow up to everything that's already been said, she's the elected Treasurer, Chief Financial Officer of the City." Administrator Wing answered, "That is incorrect." Alderman Cipiti asked, "She's not responsible for..." Administrator Wing stated, "She's not responsible for..." Alderman Cipiti asked, "Doesn't her signature go on many many things that the City pays for?" Administrator Wing stated, "Yes, Council has a typical process. The Mayor's signature is the only signature that needs to go on the documents." Alderman Cipiti stated, "She has no and I guess the City Attorney, question for you. What involvement should the City Treasurer have in setting a budget for the City they're elected as a

Treasurer for? And by leaving them out, are we obviating anything that she has statutorily in under her name, under the office as an elected Treasurer? Can she be left out of that?" City Attorney Mike Stiff stated, "Municipal Treasurer shall receive all money belonging to the municipality and shall. First books and accounts in the manner prescribed by ordinance. These books and accounts shall always be subject to the inspection of any member of the corporate authorities. The municipality may, however, by ordinance designate person or institution, which as bond trustees shall receive from the county collector amounts payable to the municipality as taxes levied pursuant to a bond issuance. The Treasurer shall keep a separate account of each fund or appropriation and the debits and credits belonging to each fund or appropriation. The Treasurer shall give every person paying money to the Treasurer a receipt specifying the date of payment and upon what account they paid. The Treasurer shall file copies of these receipts with the Clerk with the Treasurer's monthly reports. If the Treasurer has possession of money properly appropriated to the payment of any warrant, lawfully drawn upon the Treasurer, the Treasurer shall pay the money specified in the warrant to the person designated by the warrant. At the end of every month or oftener, if required, by the corporate authorities, the municipal Treasurer shall render an account under oath to the corporate authorities or to an officer designated by ordinance showing the state of the treasury at the date of the account and the balance of money in the treasury. The Treasurer shall accompany the account with a statement of all money received into the treasury and on what account together with all warrants redeemed paid by the Treasurer. On the day on the Treasurer renders an account, these warrants with all vouchers held by the Treasurer shall be delivered to the municipal Clerk and filed together with the account in the Clerk's office. All paid warrants shall be marked paid. The Treasurer shall keep a register of all warrants which shall describe each warrant showing its date amount and number the fund from which paid the name of the person to whom paid and when paid. It goes on to talk about deposits of funds, but basically those are the statutory duties of the Treasurer." Alderman Jefferson asked, "And has that office done any of that?" Attorney Stiff responded, "With respect to this budget, I don't know that any of those things that I just read were a part of what..." Alderman Jefferson stated, "Every raise in there apply. You just said it. You just read it, every raise in there apply. So, have that office done any of that?" Administrator Wing stated, "I guess I'm confused with your question. Every raise applies?" Alderman Jefferson stated, "Yeah, I mean, it says any funds that any funds, let me read. Let me pull it up because I don't have that." Alderwoman Gazal stated, "Also, hey, I can turn around. Well, you're reading also the Treasurer traditionally responsible for managing cash, maintaining accounts and ensuring the legality of payments, maybe in some smaller municipalities that the Treasurer may also manage the budget." Attorney Stiff stated, "That is not

from the statute that is some AI-generated some statement as to what a typical Treasurer does. I was reading from the Illinois Municipal Code Statute. Again, the Treasurer has statutory duties none of which say that she has to do X, Y, or Z with respect to the budget.” Alderwoman Gazal asked, “But does it say she cannot?” Attorney Stiff replied, “I didn't say that. I said...” Alderwoman Gazal stated, “Answer my question. Does it say she cannot?” Attorney Stiff stated, “There is nothing in the municipal code that...” Alderwoman Gazal said, “It doesn't say that, exactly. We've always done it like that.” Attorney Stiff said, “Are you going to let me finish, ma'am?” Alderwoman Gazal stated, “We always have the Treasurer be involved in opinion or comments in the budget. And now we come to find out today the last minute that she was not involved at all.” Alderman Cipiti asked, “Is there a reason why she was not other than we didn't elect her to the Finance Committee which that night we chose who would be on it. I was under the assumption that was only open to members of Council not other elected officials. I was under the assumption that the Treasurer would be a part of budget discussions. I think probably in the past they always have been. And I just am concerned whether it's written statutorily stating specifically that they should be that it gives the appearance that she was left out. And with everything that's been going on, it could look like it was a personal decision.” Administrator Wing stated, “Yeah, so when Council last year took, I can't speak to prior years. I wasn't here. I still haven't been here a year. When Council took the action the night that I was appointed, they moved Council moved the authority of the Finance Department which underneath the City Administrator. City Administrator already had the direction to create the budget. So, if in the past that was shared with or additional information was shared with the Treasurer, I do not see it statutorily required that the Treasurer has any, I guess, responsibilities in the creation of the budget. There are duties that the Treasurer statutorily does need to provide the Treasurer's report. Monthly, quarterly and annually needs to sign it. She needs to get the proper bonding authority, which I am aware that she has done. And I believe there's maybe one or two other items, but it's not the creation of the budget. If Council would not have moved the Finance Department underneath the Administrator, I don't believe, I think it would have followed the course that would have been the previous course. The Treasurer then would be working with Council and myself to create a budget.” Alderwoman Gazal stated, “Well, I'm reading from the Illinois Municipal League, but I was told a little while ago by our Attorney that I'm reading some AI. I don't even have the application on my, I have it here from municipal league, Illinois Municipal League, and that's what it states. You know, outline the adoption and of the combined annual budget and operation. So that's from Illinois Municipal League. I don't know why we go to IML if it's not correct. Why we're going there, why we follow them. Maybe we pick and choose.” Mayor Soliman asked, “Any other comments

from Council?" City Attorney Mike Stiff stated, "In February of 2023, you also passed chapter 2.25, which I believe this was when Lisa Banovetz was here as the Finance Director and the Finance Director is your statutorily appointed budget officer for the City. It doesn't say anything that the Treasurer cannot be involved. It just says that you appointed the Finance Director as the budget officer for the creation of the budget. That's when you went to the budget system as opposed to an appropriation system." Alderman Jefferson stated, "Right, but our Treasurer don't even get any involvement in managing the debt or the spending of the City. And that's a key component to a Treasurer's duties." Administrator Wing stated, "I wouldn't disagree with you if Council did not change the duties." Alderman Jefferson stated, "Well, Council didn't change the duties of the Treasurer." Administrator Wing stated, "I'm sorry, maybe I misspoke. Responsibilities." Alderman Jefferson stated, "It did change who report? Who reports where? And to be honest with you, I think it was done out of personal reasons. And I think a lot that's being done now, you know, is personal. I don't think there's a professional bone in any of this. I don't get into personal agendas because it has no use at this table, but I've seen it. I've witnessed it several times. And when you're dealing with public ordinances and resolutions and you're managing the money, tax dollars for the citizens, no personal agendas should be involved. I mean, it shouldn't. But you know, we're using the words the Council did this Council did that, but the Council never took away any duties or responsibilities of that office. For whatever reason, they didn't want the Finance Department to report to this particular Treasurer, but it was fine for the last Treasurer. We need to correct ourselves because I can honestly say on the path we're going, we're going to get outside help, not hired outside help either. So, I think we need to adhere to whatever the duties and responsibilities of that office is and quit playing with the words of what the Council did because the Council didn't strip no office of any duties and responsibilities. And you may not like everybody you work with, but you need to respect them. And that's, you know, I think that's the avenue we need to go in. I'm not here to protect the individual about anything. I'm here to protect the integrity of the offices, the positions, the elected positions. And if it happened with one person who says it's not going to happen with two. And then so on. So, I'm a no vote." Mayor Soliman stated, "Okay, if there's no other comments. Before we call the roll, I have a couple comments to make. First of all, I've seen how much work has gone into this budget. I certainly want to extend my gratitude and thanks to Blaine Wing, to Ashley Monroe, to Glenn Gehrke, to all the department heads at Gary, Dan, who am I missing? Ron, I know how hard they worked on this budget to bring it to fruition. It was said earlier, we should be proud of what we did with \$150,000 annual payment that we made into the Police Pension Fund. And now we're at 74%. We should also be very proud of what you have before you this evening. You have a balanced budget with

a surplus of \$295,000. And if I was a betting man, I'd bet that \$295,000 is an increase by the time this year is over. Because it usually does. So, we should be proud of those facts that we have before us. We should also be proud of the fact that we have a healthy reserve that we are able to do all of these capital projects that we need to do right now for Lake Michigan, all the capital projects that we are doing throughout the City with road work and everything else. That's what we should be proud of at this table. Everybody has a right to vote what their conscience tells you, but when you look at the overall budget and what has been presented this evening and the direction that we are going, everybody should be proud of what you have sitting on your desk here that we are going to work with for the next year. And will it change going forward? Absolutely. Every budget changes. It is a working, living document that will change quite often over the years. So, with that, I am going to ask for a roll call for approval as the motion stated approval of the 2026/2027 budget." Alderman Jefferson stated, "But Mr. Mayor, you're not..." Mayor Soliman said, "Roll call please, Chris." Alderman Jefferson stated, "It's not, it's, it's not that simple." Mayor Soliman said, "Roll call please, Chris." Alderman Jefferson stated, "It's not that simple. I have a point of order. No roll call can overtake a point of order. Here's the book to prove it. I'm proud of..." Mayor Soliman stated, "You have your turn, everyone has their turn. I waited to speak." Alderman Jefferson stated, "I have a point of order, Mr. Mayor." Mayor Soliman said, "Go ahead." Alderman Jefferson stated, "I'm proud of the work that have been put into it, but the politics of it stinks. It stinks. It smells like elephant dung. And that's the part that nobody should be proud of. That's the part you keep trying to sweep under the rug and you know, kudos to the thing that we're going to accomplish. But I don't care how much gravel you lay on the street, how much water you try to bring from Lake Michigan. If you do it and it stinks, you're just as bad as a criminal sticking up a store." Mayor Soliman responded, "Thank you for your comments. Roll call please, Chris." Alderwoman Gazal stated, "I also would like to comment that thank you for the hard work and dedication as I said in my email. I will repeat that publicly as well. I know it took a lot of time and effort from everyone answering emails and trying to put this budget together. I also would like to make a comment to you, Mayor. Yes, we do have a healthy reserve and we have surplus, but that's my comment every year for the budget. We still have fractured streets that I'm hope that will start putting more money into that. That's my comment every year. I will repeat it again. I'm really happy that the Police Department funding is increasing and hopefully we can go up to 100% because that's one of my goals. As I told the City Administrator the other day, I set goals for myself and my next goal, hopefully it's been for the last almost two decades to fix all these broken streets. So, you can have all the money that you want in your reserve and in your surplus, but when you have backup sewer and broken streets, fractured street, I will question myself

that. In regard to my comments earlier, I will state again. Regardless of differences, if the Treasurer asked to be part of one discussion meeting that was done for the Finance Committee, the least we can do is grant her to sit and watch and listen, listen to it. That's my opinion. And I really hope we'll start taking all these personal issues outside the City of Crest Hill because we're never going to move forward, never. Some of you are just going to be quiet and you're always going to be quiet because this is who you are. But nobody can stop me from speaking. I have been speaking here for years, and I will always stand up for what's right. Always because that's what God put me here for reason because I pray about every election. And I will never stop speaking the truth and defend what needs to be defended, including you, Mayor. I will defend you." Mayor Soliman stated, "Roll call, please, Chris." City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall stated, "Mark Cipiti." Alderman Cipiti stated, "Well, I want to make a comment that I want to thank department heads for all their work that they put into this process. I'm not particularly thrilled with the discussions and the process that has brought us to this point. I know a lot of things were added at the end. I know it was stated by Mr. Wing that it was done for reasons of transparency. It was one reason, but it was added because it was questioned by Council. If it wasn't brought up by Council, it wouldn't have been added. Yes, we have a surplus. Yes, we have money in reserves, but I still hear from the residents that are not happy with the roads, with the water, with the water mains, the things that aren't getting taken care of. It's just interesting that some people up here that have been vocal in the past about other issues where they stand tall and they say, justice for all. But as of recently, they've been very, very quiet. And I'm just going to say that the saying, the end does not justify the means. I don't think the end of this where we got now, the means of which we got here does not justify it. So, I'm voting no." City Clerk Vershay-Hall asked, "Nate Albert?" Alderman Albert responded, "Yes." City Clerk Vershay-Hall asked, "Joe Kubal?" Alderman Kubal responded, "Yes." City Clerk Vershay-Hall asked, "Scott Dyke?" Alderman Dyke stated, "Just to go back, we had that for those five items. We never got that in paper given to us. We never got where we were told where those items were going to put in the budget. It was just put up there. Not all Council was here for that. And it was never like how anyone felt about those items being added. There was no straw poll vote or anything like that. And I don't feel comfortable with the coffee going in under office supplies. In the past, it showed coffee for the departments and all that kind of stuff. Now it's lumped in one. And I just don't feel comfortable with it under the office supplies. It's just like throwing in with paper and paper clips and pens and whatever else. And I think it can get lost in the shuffle. So, no." Administrator Wing stated, "If I can just note on March 30 in Council's packet on page 178. It was included in those four bullet points were included." Alderman Dyke said, "Well, I didn't see it..." Administrator Wing said, "March 30th." Alderman

Dyke said, "...in what I was handed here or in here. I didn't see it in here." Administrator Wing responded, "It was in the packet." Alderman Dyke stated, "The bullet points, because I looked through and couldn't find it, those bullet points. So" Administrator Wing responded, "I'm happy to show you it's on our website right now too." Alderman Dyke said, "Well, it's not in my paperwork, which was given to me. So maybe it was on what you had put up there. But when I looked in my tablet here, I didn't find it either. So, and like I said, everything wasn't addressed as to where it was being put or how it was input in the budget so my votes no." Clerk Vershay-Hall asked, "Angelo Deserio?" Alderman Deserio responded, "Yes." Clerk Vershay-Hall asked, "Darrell Jefferson?" Alderman Jefferson replied, "No." Clerk Vershay-Hall asked, "Claudia Gazal?" Alderwoman Gazal responded, "There's one more thing I wanted to add. Given the resolved discussion about a merit, the increase that was given without the Council approval. And I sat on Friday for two hours listening to an executive session tape. And since it hasn't become into a conclusion, I'm voting no." City Clerk Vershay-Hall asked, "Tina Oberlin?" Alderperson Oberlin responded, "Yes." City Clerk Vershay-Hall stated, "Mayor, I need your vote, please." Mayor Soliman stated, "Mayor votes yes." City Clerk Vershay-Hall stated, "Motion carries five to four." Mayor Soliman asked, "Ordinance number?" City Clerk Vershay-Hall responded, "Oh, I'm sorry. Ordinance 2058."

14. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Council, and no action needed from an executive session, a motion for adjournment was in order.

Alderman Dyke made a motion to adjourn at 9:49 p.m. Seconded by Alderman Albert. Roll Call: Ayes: Kubal, Dyke, Deserio, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert. Nays: None. Absent: None. MOTION CARRIED.

Approved this 4 day of May, 2026,
As presented ✓
As amended _____


CHRISTINE VERSHAY-HALL, CITY CLERK


RAYMOND R. SOLIMAN, MAYOR