MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
CITY COUNCIL OF CREST HILL
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS
September 8, 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 paid tribute to Crest Hill Officer James Nink and to Sergeant Timothy Simensen who were killed in the line of duty. Mayor Soliman also remembered retired Officer Ben Miller, who served the City of Crest Hill for 28 years as the City's first K-9 officer, and who passed away on September 2, 2026, at age 57. Finally, Mayor Soliman noted the upcoming 25th anniversary of the September 11th terrorist attacks and asked that the more than 3,000 individuals who perished, as well as those who have suffered in the years since, be kept in the community's thoughts and prayers. A moment of silence was observed.

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 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, Assistant City Administrator/HR Director Ashley Monroe, City Engineer Ron Wiedeman, Public Works Director Gary Richardson, Police Chief Ed Clark, and City Attorney Mike Stiff.

Mayor Soliman stated that he received a message from Alderman Deserio stating that he couldn't attend the meeting.

4. CITIZEN/SPECIAL REQUEST/PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. National See Tracks? Think Train Week Proclamation

The proclamation, which was read aloud, affirmed the City's commitment to rail safety awareness in partnership with the International Association of Chiefs of Police, National Operation Lifesaver, and the U.S. Department of Transportation. The week of September 21–27, 2026, was proclaimed National See Tracks? Think Train Week.

Alderwoman Gazal made a motion to Approve the National See Tracks? Think Train Week Proclamation. Seconded by Alderman Dyke. Roll Call: Ayes: Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke. Nayes: None. Absent: Deserio. MOTION CARRIED.

Mayor Soliman noted a clerical error in the proclamation regarding a year reference and indicated a corrected copy would be prepared and forwarded to the requesting organization. Mayor Soliman reminded residents and visitors of the two at-grade railroad crossings in Crest Hill, located on Oakland Avenue and Gaylord Road, urging patience and caution at those crossings.

B. Payroll Week Proclamation

The Payroll Week Proclamation was read aloud, stating that the Week of September 1-7, 2026, was proclaimed National Payroll Week in the City of Crest Hill.

Alderperson Oberlin made a motion to Approve the Payroll Week Proclamation. Seconded by Alderwoman Gazal. Roll Call: Ayes: Dyke, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal. Nayes: None. Absent: Deserio. MOTION CARRIED.

Mayor Soliman, in the absence of Finance Director Glenn Gehrke, invited City Treasurer Jamie Malloy and HR Director Ashley Monroe to the podium to receive the proclamation on behalf of the Finance Department. Mayor Soliman publicly thanked the members of the Finance Department for their daily efforts. Treasurer Malloy echoed the Mayor's sentiments and thanked the department for keeping operations running smoothly.

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. Alderwoman Gazal requested that item 6F (Approve a Resolution Approving a Residential Utility Billing Assistance Pilot Program) be removed from the consent agenda.

Mayor Soliman proceeded to read the consent agenda items:

6A. Approve the Minutes from the Regular City Council Meeting Held on August 17, 2026.

6B. Approve the Minutes of the Work Session Meeting Held on August 24, 2026.

6C. Approve the Notice of Intent to Award a Contract to DN Tanks of Illinois, LLC for the City of Crest Hill Eastern Receiving Station Reservoir and Execute all Required Documents and Direct City Staff to have Strand Associates, Inc. Prepare the Full IEPA Submittal Package and Submit the Package to the IEPA for Approval in the Amount of $5,793,000.00.

6D. Approve an Ordinance Approving Comprehensive Text Amendments to Chapter 15.12 Sign Code of the Crest Hill Code of Ordinances (Application of City of Crest Hill). ***Ordinance #2069***

6E. Approve an Ordinance Approving Final Plat of Subdivision, Special Use Permit, and Variations from the Crest Hill Zoning Ordinance with Respect to Certain Real Property Located at 20590-20660 City Center Blvd in Crest Hill, Illinois (City of Crest Hill - Crest Hill Commons). ***Ordinance #2070***

6F. Approve a Resolution Approving a Residential Utility Billing Assistance Pilot Program. (*REMOVED for Discussion*)

6G. Approve a Special Event Police Service Agreement with Carillon Lakes Homeowner's Association.

Mayor Soliman asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda items excluding item **6F**.

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

Mayor Soliman commented that they would now discuss the item that was removed from the Consent Agenda to discuss separately.

6F. Approve a Resolution Approving a Residential Utility Billing Assistance Pilot Program.

Alderwoman Gazal requested clarification on the program language, specifically regarding whether tenants—in addition to property owners—could request a one-time waiver of a utility late fee. She raised the concern that in many rental situations, the property owner may be located out of state and unresponsive, leaving tenants without recourse. City Attorney Mike Stiff confirmed that the City's current practice is to deal with the property owner as the account holder; however, City Administrator Blaine Wing suggested that amending the language to read "tenant or owner" would allow staff the flexibility to work with either party, particularly when a tenant is unable to obtain a response from an out-of-state landlord.

Alderwoman Gazal further requested that the utility billing supervisor be added to the list of officials authorized to approve a one-time late fee waiver, noting that the Finance Director and City Administrator may not always be immediately available. City Administrator Wing confirmed this addition would be made and acknowledged the utility billing supervisor had originally been included before a prior revision.

City Administrator Wing also noted a scrivener's error: three references to the pilot program's expiration date of January 15, 2027, were to be corrected to February 28, 2027, to allow for sufficient billing cycles as discussed at a prior work session. Alderwoman Gazal and Alderperson Oberlin incorporated the corrections into their motions.

Mayor Soliman asked for a motion to approve item 6F.

Alderwoman Gazal made a motion to Approve a Resolution Approving a Residential Utility Billing Assistance Pilot Program with agreed upon corrections. Seconded by Alderperson Oberlin. Roll Call: Ayes: Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti. Nayes: None. Absent: Deserio. MOTION CARRIED. ***Resolution #1448***

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

- 6D: Ordinance 2069
- 6E: Ordinance 2070
- 6F: Resolution 1448

7. REPORTS & COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENTS & ELECTED OFFICIALS

7A. MAYOR'S REPORT:
Mayor Soliman reported that he had accepted the resignation of Gordon Butler from the City's Plan Commission. Mr. Butler and his wife recently relocated to a 55-and-older community outside the City. Mayor Soliman thanked Mr. Butler for his service, noting this was his second tenure on the commission. Mayor Soliman announced that the resulting vacancy is open for applications which are available on the City's website and must be submitted with a resume.

7B. CITY CLERK'S REPORT:
City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall announced that the City of Crest Hill and Lockport Township Government will host a free community shred event on Saturday, October 24, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., in the front parking lot at City Hall. Residents are asked to limit materials to four boxes.

7C. CITY TREASURER'S REPORT:
City Treasurer Jamie Malloy read two items for approval.

A. Approval of the List of Bills Issued through September 9, 2026, in the Amount of $1,247,745.48.

Mayor Soliman asked for a motion to approve the list of bills.

Alderman Jefferson made a motion to approve the List of Bills issued through September 9, 2026, in the amount of $1,247,745.48. Seconded by Alderwoman Gazal. Roll Call: Ayes: Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Jefferson, Gazal. Nayes: None. Absent: Deserio. MOTION CARRIED.

B. Approval of the Regular and Overtime Payroll from August 10, 2026, through August 23, 2026, in the Amount of $327,454.02.

Mayor Soliman asked for a motion to approve the Payroll for August 10, 2026, through August 23, 2026.

Alderman Dyke made a motion to approve Payroll for August 10, 2026, through August 23, 2026, in the amount of $327,454.02. Seconded by Alderman Jefferson. Roll Call: Ayes: Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Jefferson. Nayes: None. Absent: Deserio. MOTION CARRIED.

7D. CITY ATTORNEY:
There were no items to report.

7E. CITY ADMINISTRATOR:

1. Approve Dan Ritter and Blaine Wing's Attendance to the 2026 IML Conference
City Administrator Wing brought forward a request for Council approval of his and Community Development Director Dan Ritter's attendance at the 2026 IML Conference. He noted that while the Council approved an elected officials conference attendance policy at the July 6th meeting, a separate employee conference policy had not yet been established and would be discussed at the September 14th work session. Given that the IML Conference falls before the next regular council meeting, City Administrator Wing felt it was appropriate to seek formal approval. Both attendees are bound by the City's personnel manual with respect to travel expenses and receipt requirements.

Alderman Dyke expressed support for bringing such expenditures before the Council for consistency in how attendance approvals are handled. Alderwoman Gazal noted that the Public Works Director had also typically been offered the opportunity to attend IML. City Administrator Wing confirmed that Public Works Director Gary Richardson had recently attended another national conference and was not planning to attend IML this time.

Alderman Dyke made a motion to approve Dan Ritter and Blaine Wing's attendance to the 2026 IML Conference. Seconded by Alderman Albert. Roll Call: Ayes: Kubal, Dyke, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert. Nayes: None. Absent: Deserio. MOTION CARRIED.

2. City Website Update
City Administrator Wing announced the official launch of the City's redesigned website and the transition to a .gov domain. A press release was planned for the following day, with a social media

rollout to follow. Key highlights of the new site include enhanced ADA Title II accessibility tools for individuals with reading impairments, streamlined navigation reducing the number of clicks to find information, and improved mobile responsiveness across devices. City Administrator Wing noted that additional modules are forthcoming, including expanded online payment capabilities through the Finance Department. He added that the .gov domain provides enhanced security, as it is available exclusively to government entities. Business cards with the new cresthill.gov email domain are being printed for elected officials, department heads, and staff. City Administrator Wing thanked HR Director Ashley Monroe, Administrative Intern Kishae White, and all department representatives on the website committee for their contributions.

Alderwoman Gazal expressed appreciation for the new site's appearance and suggested that the upcoming events section, which had been prominently featured on the former homepage, be made more visible above the scroll line. City Administrator Wing acknowledged the feedback and indicated that adjustments could be made as updated, seasonally appropriate photos are incorporated.

7F. PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT:

Public Works Director Gary Richardson reported that he attended the National American Public Works Association (APWA) conference the prior week, earning ten continuing education credits. He further reported that he was nominated for a position on the APWA Chicago Metro Chapter board and that the election would take place in November.

Alderman Dyke raised a concern regarding the growth of weeds along Oakland Avenue between the public works facility and the railroad track, as well as along the curbs and sidewalks up to Caton Farm Road. Public Works Director Richardson acknowledged the issue, noting that the area is mowed on a bi-weekly schedule. He explained that because the City is not licensed to apply herbicides, removal is limited to mechanical means such as weed whacking. He committed to looking into more thorough maintenance of those specific areas.

7G. CITY ENGINEER:

1. Approve a Resolution Authorizing and Approving a Reduction in the CIBC Bank USA Irrevocable Standby Letter of Credit No. 209023-420864 Dated September 28, 2023, from $977,280.00 to $195,456.00 (Midwest Industrial Funds Project Located at 21225 Lidice Parkway)

City Engineer Ron Wiedeman presented a request to reduce the project guarantee for the Midwest Industrial Building at 21225 Lidice Parkway. He explained that the original letter of credit in the amount of $977,280.00 covered all public infrastructure work, including water mains, sanitary infrastructure, and widening of Lidice Parkway. All work was inspected and approved by the City as of March 3, 2025. The delay in bringing the reduction forward was attributed to the property owner's bank taking six months to process the reduced letter of credit. The proposed reduced amount of $195,456.00 represents the warranty bond required under city ordinance.

Alderman Albert made a motion to approve a resolution authorizing and approving a reduction in the CIBC Bank USA Irrevocable Standby Letter of credit no 209023-420864. Alderperson Oberlin seconded. Roll Call: Ayes: Dyke, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal. Nayes: None. Absent: Deserio. MOTION CARRIED. ***Resolution #1449***

2. Approve a Resolution Approving a Design-Build Contract Agreement for Design and Construction Services for the Division Water Main Extension for the Illinois Crime Lab Services by and between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois and V3 Construction Group, Ltd in an Amount not to Exceed $1,932,200.00.

City Engineer Wiedeman presented a resolution for a design-build contract for the Division Water Main Extension serving the Illinois Crime Lab. The project was previously discussed at the August 13th workshop. He noted a cost increase of approximately $104,000 over the workshop estimate, attributable to staff's request that a contingency be included in the event that Well No. 11 could not be shut down during construction, as well as additional site restoration requirements identified in the project scope. A representative from V3 Construction Group was present to answer questions. No questions were raised.

Alderwoman Gazal made a motion to approve a resolution approving a design-build contract agreement for design and construction services for the Division Water Main Extension for the Illinois Crime Lab Services by and between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois and V3 Construction Group, Ltd in an amount not to exceed $1,932,200.00. Alderperson Oberlin seconded. Roll Call: Ayes: Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke. Nayes: None. Absent: Deserio. MOTION CARRIED. ***Resolution #1450***

7H. FINANCE:

There were no items to report.

7I. POLICE DEPARTMENT:

Police Chief Ed Clark reported two matters of note. First, he commended the success of the recent Neighbors Night Out event, praising the efforts of Officer Heidi Outlaw, who organized the event. He noted the event was well-attended despite extreme heat and provided a positive opportunity for residents, particularly children, to interact with law enforcement.

Second, Police Chief Clark provided an update on the homicide that occurred at the end of August. While he could not share specific details, he noted that over 25 recorded interviews had been conducted, ballistic evidence was being processed, and investigators were encouraged by the progress of the case. He extended the City's condolences to the families of the two 18-year-old victims. Chief Clark also reported that the Police Department is in discussions with the Park District regarding potential safety improvements at the park where the incident occurred, including a possible gate, additional lighting, and license plate reader (LPR) cameras.

Alderwoman Gazal inquired about police presence in City parks, expressing concern from residents about visibility of patrols. Chief Clark confirmed that both Park District police and Crest Hill officers regularly patrol park areas and that patrols in those areas would be increased.

Alderman Dyke raised a growing concern about electric scooters, golf carts, and similar vehicles failing to obey traffic laws, including running stop signs and traveling at high speeds in travel lanes. Chief Clark confirmed these vehicles are subject to the Illinois Vehicle Code and encouraged residents to report violations. Alderperson Oberlin noted that new state laws pertaining to these vehicles, including licensing and insurance requirements, are set to take effect January 1st. Chief Clark confirmed the legislation was passed.

Mayor Soliman publicly extended the City's condolences to the families of the homicide victims and recognized Officer Outlaw and the entire Police Department for their work at Neighbors Night Out.

7J. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

There were no items to report.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

There were no items to report.

9. NEW BUSINESS:

Alderwoman Gazal raised a concern regarding recurring electrical issues within City Hall, noting that problems had surfaced at events such as Neighbors Night Out, where the DJ experienced electrical difficulties. She suggested that a licensed commercial electrician be engaged to evaluate the building's electrical system, citing concerns that the building may be equipped with residential-grade rather than commercial-grade electrical infrastructure. City Administrator Wing acknowledged the concern and indicated that as the buildings and grounds function transitions back to Public Works oversight, a professional commercial electrician could be engaged to assess panel locations, load distribution, and overall capacity. Public Works Director Richardson was observed taking notes.

10. COMMITTEE/LIAISON REPORTS:
Alderwoman Gazal, as the committee liaison, reminded the Council, staff, and residents that planning for the annual Winterfest event is underway. She noted that suggestions, ideas, and feedback from all parties—including residents, department heads, and Council members—are welcome and should be submitted no later than October 1st, so that proposals can be reviewed and incorporated into planning.

11. CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS:
Alderman Albert thanked the community for attending the Crest Hill Lions Club Luau and Car Show held the previous Sunday, noting it was a successful and well-attended event with favorable weather.

Alderman Cipiti echoed appreciation for Neighbors Night Out, noting he had stopped by and observed many residents enjoying themselves, and thanked Chief Clark, Officer Outlaw, and staff for the event.

Alderwoman Gazal thanked the Police Department for their ongoing work and extended her support to Public Works Director Richardson in his upcoming APWA board election.

Alderman Dyke reminded residents that children have returned to school and urged drivers to watch for students at bus stops and crosswalks, and to obey school bus stop laws.

12. PUBLIC COMMENT:
A resident, Linda Dyke, addressed the Council with several concerns. She described a traffic visibility hazard she encountered on Saturday evening near the White Smoke and Ash business on Plainfield Road, where vehicles parked on grass and along the curb made it impossible to see around the corner at the intersection. She questioned whether a special event permit had been required for that gathering.

She also raised concerns about the condition of a property on Broadway, describing accumulated boats, tarps, and debris she characterized as resembling a junkyard. She further referenced a 2019 code enforcement letter she had received, which cited violations for tarped vehicles and parking on unpaved surfaces, and expressed concern that those same standards did not appear to be enforced consistently City-wide.

Mayor Soliman explained that the owner of White Smoke and Ash had notified the Mayor and Chief of Police approximately one week before the event, characterizing it as a fourth-anniversary celebration that remained a regular night of business. Chief Clark confirmed that officers who stopped at the event did so as part of community policing patrol, not under a special service agreement, and committed to following up with the business owner regarding parking and safety protocols for future events.

Alderman Cipiti and Alderwoman Gazal both emphasized that the City cannot selectively enforce parking-on-grass restrictions and that a formal special events ordinance should be revisited. City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall noted that the City's special events ordinance has been under a moratorium for several years and was never brought back for Council discussion. Several Council members expressed support for placing the topic on a future work session agenda. Alderman Dyke suggested that no-parking signage near the intersection could also help address the visibility hazard going forward.

13. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

1. 5ILCS 120/2(c)(1): The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body or legal counsel for the public body, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee of the public body or against legal counsel for the public body to determine its validity.

2. 5ILCS 120/2 (c)/(5): The purchase or lease of real property for the use of the public body, including meetings held for the purpose of discussing whether a particular parcel should be acquired.

City Attorney Mike Stiff noted that the second executive session item — 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(5) regarding the purchase or lease of real property — would not require a separate executive session, as no additional Council discussion beyond prior communications was requested, and the resolution could be acted upon in open session. Mayor Soliman asked for a motion to go into executive session on 5ILCS 120/2(c)(1).

Alderperson Oberlin made a motion to go into executive session on 5ILCS 120/2 (c)(1) at 8:10 p.m. Seconded by Alderwoman Gazal. Roll Call: Ayes: Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin. Nayes: None. Absent: Deserio. MOTION CARRIED.

Alderperson Oberlin made a motion to reconvene from the executive session on 5ILCS 120/2 (c)(1) at 8:43 p.m. Seconded by Alderwoman Gazal. Roll Call: Ayes: Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti. Nayes: None. Absent: Deserio. MOTION CARRIED.

14. APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEMS:

1. Approve a Resolution of the Mayor's Appointment of a Full-Time Building Inspector and Direction to the HR Director to Issue a Conditional Offer of Employment

No action was needed to be taken on this item at this time per City Attorney Stiff.

2. Approve a Resolution Ratifying the Commercial Real Estate Contract Dated June 25, 2026, for the Purchase of Real Property on Weber Rd. for

$300,000.00 and Authorizing the Closing to Take Place on September 9, 2026.

City Attorney Mike Stiff presented the resolution for Council action, noting that the resolution ratifies the commercial real estate contract dated June 25, 2026, for the purchase of real property on Weber Road in unincorporated Lockport Township for $300,000.00, with closing authorized to take place on September 9, 2026.

Alderman Albert made a motion to approve a resolution ratifying the commercial real estate contract dated June 25, 2026, for the purchase of real property on Weber Rd. for $300,000 and authorizing the closing to take place on September 9, 2026. Seconded by Alderperson Oberlin. Roll Call: Ayes: Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Jefferson. Nayes: None. Absent: Deserio. MOTION CARRIED. ***Resolution #1451***

15. ADJOURNMENT:
There being no further business before the Council, a motion for adjournment was in order.

Alderman Dyke made a motion to adjourn at 8:45 p.m. Seconded by Alderman Jefferson. Roll Call: Ayes: Kubal, Dyke, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert. Nayes: None. Absent: Deserio. MOTION CARRIED.

Approved this 21 day of SEPTEMBER, 2026,
As presented ✓
As amended ________

CHRISTINE VERSHAY-HALL, CITY CLERK

RAYMOND R. SOLIMAN, MAYOR