

**Observer:** Betty Hayford

**Aldermen present:** Eight; Alderman Wynne absent

**Media present:** Three; Evanston Now, Evanston Roundtable, Evanston Review

**Meeting started:** 8:20pm

**Meeting ended:** (I departed) 11:15pm

**Announcements:** The City Manager recognized two employees who are leaving the city staff. He recognized Ricky Voss for many years of service, most recently as Manager of Parking Services. He praised Marty Lyons for his service as Financial Officer and Deputy City Manager. Aldermen and observers expressed appreciation for their great contributions.

**Public comment.** Eighteen comments. Four supported the library. Three expressed concern about various budget concerns. One concerned about cuts in CTA bus service, one urged an environmental/agricultural project in the Whole Foods South building site, one urged support for marginalized groups. Eight expressed support for City Clerk Reid and urged Council not to cut his budget. Several said they were part of the organization Reclaim Evanston, and noted the importance of Reid's support for information and citizen participation.

**Special Orders of Business. (SP1) Evanston Library Fund 2017 Tax Levy.** Alderman Rainey introduced the proposed annual property tax for the Evanston Public Library of \$6,761,668, an increase of 5.1% over 2016 Levy. Extensive discussion followed, characterized by appreciation for the library combined with concern that the library board was not responding to the efforts elsewhere in city government to reduce expenses. Fleming and Suffredin both said they looked for some reduction in expenses. Rainey agreed and suggested that consultants be cut out of the budget.

The motion passed, 6-2, with Fleming and Rainey voting no.

**(SP2) Fiscal Year 2018 Budget.** Extensive discussion took place focused on the budget for the City Clerk Office and the Clerk's request for additional funds. At Alderman Wilson's request, Clerk Reid presented a power point outlining his duties and need for funds. He emphasized his duties of Record Keeping, Elections and Civic Engagement, FOIA and Transparency, and Other Services. The presentation was quite general without specifics or specific costs. Alderman Rainey asked about specific numbers to back up his request. Alderman Wilson asked about his interest in providing Notary Services, asked whether he was a Notary, and he answered his is not a Notary. Wilson noted there are Notaries available in the Civic Center. Wilson reminded Reid that he had asked to have passport services and real estate transfer stamps moved out of his office; consequently the services were moved and a staff position was moved from the Clerk's Office to another office. He pointed out that the budget does not cut the Clerk's salary, as some citizen comments had suggested. Wilson pointed out that minutes are not being posted in a timely way. He also said the request for new software was vague, without a specific program or cost cited. At the Mayor's request, Marty Lyons explained the proposed Clerk's budget line by line, showing how the reduction in staff and the standard 4% reduction in office expenses led to the recommended figure. Alderman Rainey said there was no need for new software to get voter information which was available from the County Clerk. She also expressed concern that the active outreach to voters sounded political and the work of the Clerk should not be political. Suffredin said the Clerk should concentrate on

the duties outlined in state and local ordinance. Alderman Fiske agreed that the Clerk should focus on the traditional role of the Clerk, to keep records and to avoid politics, and there is no need for additional funds. Alderman Revelle said she appreciates the Clerk's goal to encourage voter participation and registration, but it is necessary to observe budget constraints. She noted that VPAC is an impressive Evanston coalition doing good work with voter registration and urged Reid to work with them. Braithwaite pointed out the importance of balancing the city budget. Rue Simmons expressed concern that the statutory tasks of the Clerk's Office are not being done, mistakes are being made, and minutes are not being done in a timely way.

Alderman Fleming moved to add \$5000 to the Clerk's Office budget for software. The motion failed for lack of a second. Reid is asking for an additional \$25,000 and Rainey said this was a significant amount. Rue Simmons then moved to add \$8000 to the Clerk's budget to use as he determines, for software, for staff assistance, for voter turnout. Mayor Hagerty said this could be called "Miscellaneous." Fleming seconded. The vote was tied, 4 -4, with Fleming, Braithwaite, Rue Simmons and Suffredin voting yes. The Mayor broke the tie and voted to support the measure, which passed.

The next item was considered while city staff recalculated the figures. The Budget resolution was presented with one adjustment for \$8000 added to the City Clerk's Office, for total expense of \$335,464,008. The motion passed, 8 – 0.

**(SP3) Freedom of Information Act Policy Revisions.** Clerk Reid has worked with City staff to incorporate changes into a new FOIA Policy. The packet outlined two proposals, one from the Clerk and one from the Legal Department. Alderman Wilson expressed his continuing discomfort with some aspects of the policy that would allow all FOIA responses to be released. Fiske agreed that she would like to see more checks on release of information. Wilson moved to approve the policy outlined on pages 34-38 of the packet, developed by city staff, after the elimination of paragraph #8 on page 38. Fiske seconded. Fleming also said she did not want all responses being released to the public. The motion was approved, 8-0.

*At 11:15 Council turned to the Consent Agenda. This Observer left the meeting and this Report ends.*