

Observer: Kristine Lofquist

Council Members present: Kelly, Nieuwsma, Harris, Revelle, Burns, Wynne, Reid, Geracaris, and Suffredin

Meeting started: 7:28 pm

Meeting ended: 9:51 pm

Mayor Biss called the meeting to order at 7:28pm. The City Clerk took the roll call and noted there was a quorum.

Public Budget Hearing

Mayor Biss opened the meeting with a Public Hearing on the fiscal year 2023 proposed budget. There were comments on the cost of the Civic Center, concerns regarding proper notice of the meeting in the City calendar and lack of a separate public hearing, questions regarding many budget items and a comment in support of hiring two additional staff for climate initiatives. Councilmember Kelly inquired as to why the hearing was not on the City calendar. Discussion followed and Councilperson Reid requested that the hearing be adjourned in order for a separately-scheduled public hearing to take place at an upcoming Saturday. The hearing was adjourned.

Announcements

Mayor Biss encouraged residents to vote early.

Mayor Biss proclaimed November 13, 2022 as Second Baptist Church Day, in honor of the church’s 140th anniversary. Pastor Nabors spoke briefly.

The City Manager introduced Craig Lynch of Evanston Cradle to Career who reported on its progress and results. He noted that there is currently a nationwide search for new leadership. He also reported on the strategic planning process and the three areas of focus – Kindergarten readiness, youth and young adult career development, and the EPLAN health study. He reported on the data walks, crisis response efforts, violence mitigation efforts, workforce development, and community coffees, as well as other programs, including building community leaders.

The City Clerk referred to the emailed request for comment and read a list of supporters of the Welcome Center.

Public comment

- There were several comments from the company who had the low bid for the water intake replacement project and the representatives noted that they would like another opportunity following the judges’ ruling in this matter
- Another commenter spoke on the lack of affordable housing (particularly for police officers), requesting cash reparations, expressing concern regarding abandoned buildings, park lighting and funding for the health department
- There were several comments on the proposed 2023 budget, including: the \$15 million in debt service for the library, \$1.7 million for Robert Crown, and the cost of the new animal shelter.
- There were several comments in favor of the Welcome Center at Family Focus and one against.
- There were additional comments on sewer repair costs and affordable housing.

- There was a comment in favor of voting “Yes” on the Skokie referendum.
- There was a comment in support of funding CARP programs.
- There was a comment in support of the one-day alumni tailgate at the Evanston Wilmette golf course.

SP1 – A Motion was made and seconded to accept and place on file the Climate Action & Resilience Plan Implementation Update. Cara Pratt reported that greenhouse gas emissions had been reduced 38% as of December 2021 and that this reduction was achieved partly from the purchase of renewable energy credits (RECs). She noted that without the RECS, the goals will not be met until 2070. Ms. Pratt reviewed the 2022 progress and the 2023 action agenda, noting it is contingent on passing the current budget. Councilmember Nieuwsma asked for another report in six months. He also noted that he supports adding two people to work in this area, which is included in the 2023 budget. In response to a question from Councilmember Reid as to how the City will pay for the two new staff members, it was noted that the revenue will come from the wheel tax increase and credits from ComEd. Councilperson Nieuwsma also stressed that he would like the City to take advantage of whatever grants, credits and other resources that are available at the state level.

Consent Agenda. A Motion was made and seconded to pass the Consent Agenda, after removing items A2, A4, A6, A13 and H14. It was noted that time A14 had been tabled at the committee level. The Motion passed 9-0

A2 – A Motion was made to approve the City’s BMO Harris credit card activity. The Motion passed 8-0, with Suffredin abstaining.

A4 – A Motion was made and seconded to approve \$500,000 in ARPA funding for Family Focus for a Welcoming Center. Councilperson Harris noted she was in favor but that the community also needs to do better for its current residents who have lived here for generations. Clerk Mendoza spoke eloquently in favor of the Welcome Center, noting how Family Focus had helped her attain her goals. It was noted that the goal was to open the center by January 1, 2023. The Motion passed 9-0.

A6 – A Motion was made and seconded to approve a contract with STC for purchase and planting of trees in Fall 2022. Councilmember Harris asked whether additional trees would be planted in areas with low tree cover which was noted as a concern in the EPLAN. The City representative stated that these trees would be used to replace trees lost due to storm damage, etc. but that there is a plan to plan more trees in the parkways in the wards with low tree cover. In response to a question, he noted that the current funding would not provide trees for individual homes, just in City-owned parkways. Councilmember Reid asked the City to consider using more native plants and trees. The Motion passed 9-0.

A13 – A Motion was made and seconded to accept and place on file the emergency replacement of two boilers at the Noyes Cultural Arts Center. Councilmember Kelly noted that she had requested to pull this issue off the consent agenda to reiterate that in future local heating and plumbing companies should be reached out to first for repairs and replacements. The Motion passed 9-0.

H1- A Motion was made and seconded to approve an agreement with LEAP concerning reimagining of the public safety committee and low-priority 911 calls. Councilmember Burns made a motion to hold the item to the next meeting as there are a few programs being considered and Councilmember Reid seconded the motion.

Call of the wards.

Most of the council members noted there will be joint ward meetings in the coming week to discuss the budget. Several wards have also scheduled meetings with new Police Chief Stewart. The First Ward will have a special

meeting on pensions, and there will be an NU/City meeting. The Seventh Ward will have a special meeting on the Northwestern stadium project.

Councilmember Burns responded to concerns from residents regarding the perceived lack of communication on projects in the Fifth Ward. He reported that several meetings have taken place and that more are scheduled in the future.

Councilmember Revelle complimented the Evanston Fire Department on the Emergency Preparedness Fair over the last weekend.

A Motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting into Executive Session. The Motion passed 9-0. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:51 p.m.