

**Observer:** Betty Hayford

**Council members present:** All. Wynne and Suffredin remote.

**Meeting began:** 8:30 pm

**Meeting ended:** 12:50 am

**Announcements.** Mayor Biss announced November 15 is America Recycles Day. Evanston students submitted designs for a recycling truck. Over 300 designs were submitted.

November 12 was proclaimed Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Centennial 100 years of Sisterhood, Scholarship and Service Day.

City Manager Luke Stowe announced that the City has received a report from 30 Black City employees charging bias and discrimination against Black employees. He explained that the City is taking the report seriously, will study the situation and respond within the month.

**Public comment.** 24 comments. 15 supported the Black employees complaining about racism and demanded the City respond, Kevin Brown and Leslie Williams among them; many speakers flanked by a dozen or so Black staff. 4 spoke about the budget and asked for more input and support for climate; 1 supported full funding for pensions; 1 urged action on Reimagining Public Safety; representatives from the Building Exchange and Soul and Smoke asked support for funding; 1 supporting Universal Laboratory moving to Evanston and asked their proposed signs be approved.

**(9:40) Special Orders of Business. SP1) Discussion of Proposed 2023 Capital Improvement Program.**

Council member Nieuwsma asked that Fitzsimmons Park be included in the budget list of priorities because it is an important neighborhood resource. Revelle asked about Independence Park and expressed satisfaction that is on the list for 2024. Kelly urged that cuts be made, including to the proposed Animal Shelter and the Civic Center. Several other parks were mentioned.

**(SP2) 2023 Budget Ordinance.** Council member Reid proposed two amendments. He moved to amend and increase the motor fuel tax by 2 cents. This would increase revenue by \$500,000 which should be committed to CARP. The current Evanston tax is 3 cents, as is Skokie's. Chicago is 8 cents. Reid said he will also propose an increase in vehicle tax. Biss expressed unease at these proposals without analysis by staff of impact. Geracaris opposed the increase in fuel tax because it particularly hurts working people with less efficient cars. He and Harris expressed concern that Evanston gas stations might be hurt. After some discussion Reid agreed to amend his amendment to support a 1 cent increase.

A 1 cent increase in the motor fuel tax passed 7-2. Suffredin and Geracaris voted no.

Reid then proposed to amend the budget by increasing the wheel tax by \$5.00. This would provide \$200,00 to \$250,000 in revenue that could be used for CARP. There was no second. Reid challenged Nieuwsma on his commitment to CARP and Nieuwsma seconded the amendment. Revelle pointed out that the wheel tax had just been increased this year and it was too soon for another increase. The proposed increase failed to pass 3-6. Reid, Nieuwsma and Burns voted yes.

Council member Kelly proposed to amend the budget to fully fund the pension payments. She said the total increase in funding would be \$4.5 million, but Biss asked for specific numbers for each pension which she did not know. Biss asked for a straw poll of Council to give guidance to staff. Council members generally supported this increase in pension funding.

Kelly then moved to increase the projected revenue from the PPRT (Personal Property Replacement Tax). She proposed raising the budget figure from \$1.75 million to \$2.75 million. All the increase would go to pension payments. CFO Desai explained that the payment this year has been higher than usual and the state has advised that it will be lower next year. Because of the uncertainty about what the state would decide, Kelly agreed to withdraw her amendment.

Council Member Burns said that Council needed to think more seriously about additional revenue. Geracaris asked about a previous proposal to require parking fees for non-residents at Robert Crown and James Park. City Manager Stowe said that more analysis about operations and impact was needed before implementing such a change.

Kelly suggested increased proposed revenue for the real estate transfer tax. Nieuwsma responded that the real estate market was soft and increased transfer taxes should not be anticipated.

Kelly moved to table SP2 to provide more time to find revenue. The motion to table until November 21 meeting passed 9-0.

Reid moved items (SP3) to (SP10) all authorizing tax levies for 2023. Then he changed his mind and moved to table these items until the November 21 meeting. The motion to table passed 9-0.

**Consent agenda.** Council members removed from the consent agenda items A2, A11, A16, P2, H2, H4, R1, R2. The consent agenda was moved and seconded and passed 9-0.

Item A2. Approval of BMO Harris Amazon Credit Card Activity. The item passed 8-0, Suffredin abstained.

Item A11. Authorizing the City to Pay Private Sewer Repair Line Costs in Excess of \$15,000 per repair. This had been amended in Committee to have the City pay sewer repair costs over \$5000 for residents with annual income under \$100,000. Nieuwsma expressed opposition because the City should not take on a property owner's obligation. Reid said staff estimated the cost might be around \$50,000 a year which was not substantial. Every resident has the right to a working sewer line. Burns said the City should do this and could raise sewer rates if necessary. The motion passed 5-4. Wynne, Nieuwsma, Suffredin and Revelle voted no.

A16. Establishing a Three-Way Stop at Florence Avenue and Washington Street. It was moved to suspend the Rules for Introduction and Action. The move to suspend the Rules passed 9-0. The move to approve the ordinance passed 9-0.

(P1). Approving Zoning Relief for Underwriters Laboratories (UL) Signage at 1603 Orrington Avenue. UL is planning to move to Evanston. It is a respected company and will plan to have office space for 200 workers. They are requesting an external sign on the building façade. It was moved to suspend the rules for Introduction and Action. The motion to suspend the Rules passed. The motion to grant zoning relief passed 8-1. Kelly voted no and had expressed strong opposition in committee.

(H2) Executing an Agreement with LEAP concerning the Reimaging Public Safety Committee and Low Priority 911 Calls. This would involve \$15,000 in ARPA Funds. Kelly proposed tabling the measure to allow more time for the community to discuss. Her motion to table failed for lack of a second. Kelly asked Burns, the sponsor, to table. Reid explained that LEAP has credibility with the police and the police need to be part of the process of making changes. Burns and Kelly exchanged comments about whether LEAP is too close to police supporters to be effective. The motion passed 8-1, Kelly voted no.

(H4) Amending Part of the City Code on “Food Service and Retail Food Store Sanitation.” Reid moved to suspend the Rules for Introduction and Action. The amendment applies to lakefront vendors and meets new FDA standards. The motion to suspend the Rules passed 9-0. The motion passed 9-0.

(R1) Approval of \$5 million of ARPA Funds to support Reparations Economic Development Initiatives. Reid asked whether it would be better to use general Reserves which have more flexibility than ARPA funds. Suffredin asked why \$5 million was being requested. Cummings explained that the Reparations Committee had proposed that figure. In response to a question, Sarah Flax explained that if this commitment were made there would be \$193,000 remaining in unallocated ARPA Funds. Nieuwsma said that \$5 million was a large amount that caused him to hesitate. He explained that there was little specific information about how this money would be used. Revelle agreed that economic development was a Reparations priority, but there was little information about this proposed use.

Extensive discussion ensued about the commitment to Reparations and the restrictions of ARPA requirements. Reid agreed that ARPA would not allow race-based programs as the Reparations Committee envisioned and perhaps using reserve funds would be preferable. Robin Rue Simmons explained that Economic Development is a major Reparations priority and the original \$10 million commitment was only a first step. Harris supported providing more funds and Burns said it was important that the housing program fund all the ancestors. Revelle agreed there are important priorities but proposed tabling this request until there is a more fully developed spending plan and time table. Burns said it might be preferable to provide \$2 million from reserves, \$2 million from ARPA and \$1 million from the real estate transfer tax. Reid said the money should be granted to the Reparations Committee and the Committee should be trusted to spend it wisely. Revelle moted to table the motion to the December 12 meeting. The motion to table passed 5-4, Harris, Burns, Reid, Geracaris voted no.

(R 2) Transfer \$1.5 million from the Graduated Real Estate Transfer Tax for properties over \$1.5 million to the Reparations Fund. Suffredin pointed out that would reduce general budget revenue by \$1.6million and asked how it would be replaced. Desai said that anticipated revenue in this category was lower, closer to \$400,000. Suffredin said additional revenue should be identified before this transfer was approved. Suffredin moved to hold. Kelly seconded. Reid moved to override the motion to hold. Suffredin said the transfer should not be approved until a budget plan is included. The motion to hold was overridden 6-3. Wynne, Suffredin and 1 other voted no. The motion to approve the transfer passed 7-2. Suffredin and one other voted no.

**Call of the wards.** Several meetings were announced. Reid moved to include a Special Order of Business in the November 28 meeting to provide \$2 million for the Reparations Committee. His motion passed 7-1, Kelly voted no.

The meeting adjourned to Executive Session at 12:50 am (!)