

**MINUTES  
CITY OF DEKALB  
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING  
MARCH 24, 2025**

The City Council of DeKalb, Illinois, convened for a Regular meeting on March 24, 2025, in the Yusunas Meeting Room of the DeKalb Public Library, 309 Oak Street, DeKalb, Illinois.

**A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Mayor Barnes called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Recording Secretary Ruth Scott called the roll, and the following members of the City Council were present: Alderman Barb Larson, Alderman Tracy Smith, Alderman Greg Perkins, Alderman Andre Powell, Alderman Mike Verbic, and Mayor Cohen Barnes. Alderman Carolyn Zasada and Alderman John Walker were absent.

Mayor Barnes noted that Alderman Zasada and Alderman Walker had notified him of their absence.

Others in attendance included City Manager Bill Nicklas, Assistant City Manager Bob Redel, City Attorney Matt Rose, and City Engineer Gill.

**B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Shadow Gentry led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**C. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

MOTION: Alderman Perkins moved to approve the agenda; seconded by Alderman Powell.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 6-0-2 roll call vote. Aye: Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Zasada, Walker. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

**D. PRESENTATIONS**

There were none.

**E. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mark Charvat spoke regarding ARPA funding authorized by the Council on January 9, 2023, via Ordinance 2023-004, in the amount of \$100,000 for the New Hope Missionary Baptist Church community building. He noted that while he loves the idea of a community center, it's considered improper for a governmental entity to give money to a religious institution. He also noted that the ordinance referred to the recipient as being New Hope Missionary Baptist Church and not Project Hope, Inc. However, City records later show that the charitable organization that received the funding was changed to Project Hope, Inc., even though the ordinance stated the funding was going to the church.

Continuing, Mr. Charvat stated the community center has not been built as of today's date and there is no sign of construction activity, even though the Council was informed by Pastor Joe Mitchell at the November 28, 2022, Council meeting that it would be completed within three years, which would be November of 2025. He also noted that the charitable database of the Illinois Attorney General's Office does not have Project Hope, Inc. on file. Mr. Charvat stated he feels the City failed to exercise due diligence by not verifying that Project Hope, Inc. was registered.

Tom Hapeman spoke in support of the study for a possible roundabout at the intersection of First Street and Sycamore Road. He also spoke about misconceptions regarding the proposed project

that have been on a local Facebook page, which posted a poorly manipulated video and some deceptive drawings on a map. Referencing the image of the map, he stated it's a tangible representation of the size of the lie and the size of the liar, adding that the map had a circle drawn on it to represent the roundabout that centered on Sycamore Road and First Street, and a larger circle reached the Pine Street, Augusta Avenue, and First Street intersections. Google Earth states the distance between Sycamore Road and the Pine Street/Augusta Avenue intersection is just under 600 feet, but the map represents the proposed roundabout to be between 1,100 and 1,200 feet.

Mr. Hapeman then stated that the roundabout at Peace Road and Gurler Road is approximately 150 feet. For further reference, he noted that the Los Alamos Circle in Long Beach, California, at the intersection of the Pacific Coast Highway and Lakewood Boulevard, is 450 feet in diameter and one of the busiest roundabouts in the country, handling approximately 60,000 cars a day. He also stated that while he's not an engineer, it would seem the best way to have a roundabout at the proposed intersection would be to move it northeast, allowing smooth access for southbound traffic and giving Sycamore Road a better angle while not infringing on the Ellwood House property.

Continuing, Mr. Hapeman stated he looks forward to seeing drawings by engineers and encouraged citizens to view them as well before passing judgment. He also noted that roundabouts are more efficient, safer, better looking than metal pipes and traffic lights, and less expensive.

Concluding his comments, Mr. Hapeman encouraged the public not to take seriously the posts on a certain Facebook page known to be disingenuous.

## **F. APPOINTMENTS**

There were none.

## **G. CONSENT AGENDA**

Mayor Barnes read the items on the Consent Agenda by title only.

1. Minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting of March 10, 2025.
2. Accounts Payable and Payroll through March 24, 2025, in the Amount of \$3,432,512.27.
3. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Report – February 2025.

MOTION: Alderman Verbic moved to approve the Consent Agenda; seconded by Alderman Larson.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 6-0-2 roll call vote. Aye: Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Zasada, Walker. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

## **H. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

There were none.

## **I. CONSIDERATIONS**

There were none.

## **J. RESOLUTIONS**

1. Resolution 2025-030 Authorizing an Agreement for Construction Engineering Services with Fehr Graham for the 2025 General Street Maintenance Program in an Amount Not to Exceed \$252,000.

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

Nancy Dougherty asked who decides what streets will be maintained under this project and if there's an overall plan for road maintenance over the next two to three years.

MOTION: Alderman Verbic moved to approve the resolution; seconded by Alderman Perkins.

City Engineer Gill stated the City has a five-year plan (2024-2028) that is reviewed each year along with a pavement condition index (PCI), which shows the condition of the streets and then adjusts accordingly.

City Manager Nicklas gave an overview of this item based on the information provided in the agenda packet.

There were no questions or comments from the Council.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 6-0-2 roll call vote. Aye: Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Zasada, Walker. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

2. Resolution 2025-031 Authorizing the Award of a Construction Services Contract to Landmark Contractors, Inc. in the Amount of \$206,050.25 for Reconstruction of the Pavement through the Annie Glidden Road Underpass.

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

City Manager Nicklas gave an overview of this item based on the information provided in the agenda packet.

Alderman Perkins, noting how well last year's project went, asked how the transition from blacktop to concrete is managed.

City Engineer Gill explained that typically the concrete is poured first and then paved.

Brief discussion ensued.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 6-0-2 roll call vote. Aye: Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Zasada, Walker. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

3. Resolution 2025-032 Accepting Qualification-Based Selection of Fehr Graham to Perform Construction Engineering Services for the Intersection Reconstruction Project Impacting Lucinda Avenue and Normal Road and Authorizing the City Manager to Provide Approvals on All Standard Department of Transportation Selection Documents.

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

Nancy Dougherty asked where the \$39,600 funding referenced in the background comes from. She also asked about the detour that will be posted when Lucinda Avenue is closed during reconstruction.

MOTION: Alderman Larson moved to approve the resolution; seconded by Alderman Perkins.

City Engineer Gill explained that funding for engineering services for these types of projects is matched 80/20 – 80 percent from federal funding and 20% (\$39,600) from local (City).

City Engineer Gill then stated that closure of the intersection has been coordinated with Northern Illinois University (NIU) for May 13, 2025, which is the Monday after their graduation ceremonies. He also noted that the intersection is expected to be open by the time students arrive for the fall semester. As for the detour, City Engineer Gill stated drivers can utilize Russell Road or Garden Road to traverse the closure.

City Manager Nicklas gave an overview of this item based on the information provided in the agenda packet.

There were no questions or comments from the Council.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 6-0-2 roll call vote. Aye: Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Zasada, Walker. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

4. Resolution 2025-033 Authorizing an Agreement with Fehr Graham to Perform Construction Engineering Services for the Intersection Reconstruction Project Impacting Lucinda Avenue and Normal Road in the Amount of \$198,000 and Appropriating \$39,600 of Local Funds.

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Verbic moved to approve the resolution; seconded by Alderman Larson.

City Manager Nicklas gave an overview of this item based on the information provided in the agenda packet.

There were no questions or comments from the Council.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 6-0-2 roll call vote. Aye: Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Zasada, Walker. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

5. Resolution 2025-034 Authorizing the Waiver of Competitive Bidding and Approving the Purchase of Structural Firefighting Gear from Air One Equipment, Inc. in the Amount of \$151,595 Plus Shipping Costs.

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Perkins moved to approve the resolution; seconded by Alderman Larson.

City Manager Nicklas gave an overview of this item based on the information provided in the agenda packet.

Alderman Larson thanked the Fire Department for keeping DeKalb citizens safe.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 6-0-2 roll call vote. Aye: Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Zasada, Walker. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

6. Approval in Omnibus Form of Resolution 2025-035 Authorizing a Special Event Agreement with DeKalb Corn Fest, Inc. for the 2025 Corn Fest; Resolution 2025-036 Approving a Non-Profit Special Event Liquor License for the 2025 Corn Fest; and Resolution 2025-037 Approving the Regulation of Traffic on Illinois Route 38 (Lincoln Highway) for the 2025 Corn Fest.

Mayor Barnes read the resolutions by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Powell moved to approve the resolution; seconded by Alderman Larson.

City Manager Nicklas gave an overview of this item based on the information provided in the agenda packet.

There were no questions or comments from the Council.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 6-0-2 roll call vote. Aye: Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Zasada, Walker. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

#### **K. ORDINANCES – SECOND READING**

There were none.

#### **L. ORDINANCES – FIRST READING**

There were none.

#### **M. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

##### **1. Council Member Reports.**

Alderman Verbic noted that an Airport Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for March 25, 2025.

Alderman Larson stated that on April 1, 2025, citizens will have the ability to exercise what might be our greatest right, the right to vote. She added that since this is a local election, every vote counts and can make a bigger difference in citizens' day-to-day lives, more so than in a national election.

Alderman Larson continued, stating there are local websites that continue to post, and now manufacture, misinformation regarding candidates as well as items currently being discussed and studied by municipalities. She added this isn't just about her, but about everyone on the ballot this election cycle and for every resident and voter in DeKalb and she hopes citizens are as angry about the total disregard of truth as she is. Alderman Larson further stated that she knows DeKalb has smart, involved, conscientious voters who are working hard to make the community a place we all want to call home, however, the disrespect these websites and their administrators post is deplorable. She then stated that she's been quietly polite in the past, but this recent incident has crossed the line of sharing an opinion and knowingly spreading lies.

Concluding her comments, Alderman Larson stated she will not allow people to disrespect the Council, City staff, and citizens who are quietly but diligently working to make DeKalb home and encouraged verification of not only the information posted on a website but also its integrity.

Following up on Alderman Larson's comments, Alderman Perkins stated the problem has been created by an absence of media, which once provided both sides of a story, but now there's money to be made and a vacuum has been created. For instance, this community has limited

local media coverage, which puts the burden of seeking proof of the truth on all taxpayers, otherwise local Facebook posters keep repeating lie after lie, which in turn influences local society. Noting his frustration, Alderman Perkins encouraged DeKalb citizens to seek out the truth and not believe lies repeated on social media.

Mayor Barnes stated he believes everyone is frustrated with this situation but trying to remain reserved, professional, and calm considering flat-out lies being posted, including a recent media clip that's 180 degrees different from what it was intended to be. He added if a lie is repeated often enough, people begin to believe it.

Brief discussion ensued.

Mayor Barnes further stated that by fabricating statements and perpetuating lies, local social media posters are causing negativity within the community that is not warranted. He then thanked those who are starting to step up and call out the liars online. He also stated that not only are elected officials being vilified online, but so are City staff.

## 2. City Manager Report.

City Manager Nicklas had no report.

## **N. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

There was none.

## **O. ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION: Alderman Larson moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Alderman Powell.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 6-0-2 voice vote. Aye: Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Zasada, Walker. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed and adjourned the meeting at 6:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Ruth A. Scott, Recording Secretary

Minutes approved by the City Council on April 14, 2025.

Click [here](#) to view the agenda packet for the March 24, 2025, Regular City Council meeting.

Click [here](#) to view the video recording of the March 24, 2025, Regular City Council meeting.