



## Strategic Planning Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 29, 2024 at 3:00 p.m.

Washington Fire Department Training Room, 200 N. Wilmor Road, Washington, Illinois

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The meeting began at 3:00 p.m. A quorum was present.

**Present** *Present:* Alderpersons Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens  
*Remote:* Alderperson Martin

**Also Present** Mayor Gary Manier, City Administrator Jim Snider, Finance Director Joanie Baxter, Planning and Development Director Jon Oliphant, City Engineer Dennis Carr, Public Works Director Brian Rittenhouse, Police Chief Mike McCoy, Deputy Police Chief Jeff Stevens, City Treasurer Abbey Strubhar, City Clerk Valeri Brod

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**Reference Materials** *Attached to these minutes is the meeting agenda and PowerPoint Presentation. Page numbers from the presentation may be referenced.*

**Welcome & Overview** City Administrator Snider provided a welcome and shared that this is staff's opportunity to share accomplishments and what is being considered in the next budget cycle. He shared that the audience can participate. Administrator Snider shared a video and emphasized working together. Staff provided feedback regarding the video and working together.

**Public Comment** Administrator Snider opened the floor for public comment. Brian Tibbs from the Washington Park District, came forward asking for reconsideration on the water needed for the splash pad. Administrator Snider said they will discuss water and get back to Mr. Tibbs.

**"Developing Teamwork Strategies"** Administrator Snider introduced Dean Heffta. He described Mr. Heffta as an asset to the City, providing leadership training and appreciates his time helping us build remarkable teams.  
*Dean Heffta*

Mr. Heffta, thanked everyone, shared his background in leadership development. He asked everyone to break up in to groups of threes, including residents, and asked anyone to share a story of teams that work. Deputy Clerk Anderson referred to her co-workers at city hall, Chief McCoy shared about his St. Jude team and Public Works Director Rittenhouse shared about coaches and their teams. Mr. Heffta explained what servant leadership means that leaders are in an act of serving. He noted the challenges of bringing our community together. Mr. Heffta noted the difference between a team and a group explaining a common purpose. Mayor Manier referenced a group of rowers working together. Mr. Heffta further explained that there are hurdles sometimes, like not being open to new ideas and an inability to listen might cause a team to miss out on valuable opinions. Engineer Carr shared the difference in listening to understand versus just to talk. Other hurdles shared were not looking at the big picture, only looking at your own objective, having hidden agendas and not going towards the same goal. Mr. Heffta stated that everyone here is in a leadership role and shared information about Project Aristotle done by Google which looked at what separates an average team from an exceptional team. They identified five key components to an exceptional team:

5. Impact = the members understood the work they are doing will make an impact.
4. Meaning = is the work we are doing matter?
3. Clarity = about their role, what they are doing and who is doing what.
2. Dependability = can I count on my team members
1. Psychological Safety = perception about what will happen to them if they say the wrong thing or make a mistake.

Mr. Heffta noted there is safety in clarity and we can't have a team without a purpose. He shared that The March of Dimes was created to eliminate Polio but they are still around because they found a new problem to solve. He also explained that city leaders should come together and ask what is our intention and what are we solving noting that we need to be clear about our individual roles. Mr. Heffta went on to explain that it is easier to find what we don't want than to clarify what we do want. He noted that just like a patient brings a problem to a doctor to treat the symptom but treating only the symptom might cause other issues. Mr. Heffta suggested adding "so that" to requests to clarify its purpose. Mr. Heffta noted roles are necessary on teams referenced Jeff Bezos who was reluctant to have teams that were too big due to fear that too many people would slow things down. Mr. Heffta also explained that excellence is different in different roles which also include boundaries. Mr. Heffta said that people who are willing to take responsibility are more likely to get promoted but they are least likely to hand off responsibility. He shared that communication is a meaningful exchange between individuals to create mutual understanding which is not the same as the distribution of information. Mr. Heffta described three different ego states. At any given time, we are

either in a “parent position” “child position” or “adult position”. The parent/child relationships are not productive but adults speak to other adults. A person will sometimes reject a person in “parent mode”. Mr. Heffta explained the concept of the “drama triangle” explaining that for drama to occur there needs to be roles:

- 1) Persecutor - the bad guy
- 2) Victim - person making mistakes
- 3) Rescuer - shows up to help, usually an outsider

On every dollar spent on payroll, \$.35 is spent on drama.

A persecutor needs to realize that the problem is not the person, the problem is the problem. Victims need to state what they want without insisting others deliver it to them. Rescuers listen without making the problems theirs.

He shared that to eliminated drama, only speak to and not about someone I am annoyed with. For instance, instead of saying “why were you late” say “how can we get back on track” “what can we change to better use time”. He further explained that a leader is non-blameful and based on trust while managers are results driven.

Administrator Snider explained that the following information is for FY24/25 and this provides an opportunity to discuss items. The FY24/25 budget will be brought to Council over the next eight weeks.

Aldersperson Blundy would like to look at the long-term strategic planning and asked about the vision for the City. He would like to have another meeting reviewing the next 2-5 years for Council to get behind it. Administrator Snider feels the strategic plan for the City is the comprehensive plan and the budget numbers provided tonight go out 4-5 years. He explained that capital projects are included in this presentation but if Council wants another meeting it would be fine. Administrator Snider recommended Council take notes and at the end of the night provide direction.

**Economic  
Development - Review  
and Progress Report  
for FY24/25**

P&D Director Oliphant shared the following:

- Culvers began construction on the old Core and Main location and he hopes it will open later this year.
- Miller Custom Welding should be more highlighted with all that it is bringing. Construction started last fall and finish late spring.
- The Brewpub should open around the fourth quarter of this year.

Administrator Snider noted ongoing issues with Marlene Miller and the historical society. They are currently concerned with water but we have been diligent and we are confident that it is not coming from the City. Public Works Director Rittenhouse said they met with Jewel Ward and took some samples. They are discussing how they may troubleshoot if it is a leak. He thinks some of it is ground water but because there was a small amount of chlorine and they will do further testing. He shared that Marlene does not have water. Mayor Manier clarified that the Historical Society has had water issues prior to this project, noting that he walked through ankle deep water in the basement several times before the they purchased the property. P&D Director Oliphant explained that the developer will need to replace the fire escape to code even if Marlene might want something different. P&D Director Oliphant noted there is an easement for the fire escape. Mayor Manier noted that the garbage walkway used to be inside the building. Aldersperson Smith asked about advertising the brewpub since they are not brewing beer on premise. P&D Director Oliphant noted that definition of a brewpub can also be serving beverages from a tap. P&D Director Oliphant clarified that they are still moving forward with the banquet facility for June or July and the City is getting close to issuing the permit for it.

- Accomplishments pertaining to the team include:
  - Joe Boyer helping with the permitting
  - The DCO approval for the Enterprise Zone
  - BRIC application for partial funding for mitigation project
  - Two safe routes projects to hopefully announce in April
  - New GIS software has been updated
  - Implemented the TIF scoring model
  - Completed demolition of 305 Walnut
  - Adopted the Comprehensive Plan

P&D Director Oliphant shared that Mrs. Shafer has been aggressive about trying to sell the property and we have made it clear that while we would support a sale, there may be a point in the future when we need to demolish the property. There has been a building permit issued for bracing the north and west sides of the building. Administrator Snider shared that the broker involvement is positive. He asked for feedback from Council but none was provided.

P&D Director Oliphant continued:

- We have been given tourism awards
- Tyler permitting and code enforcement program training is complete and rolled out
- They have implemented Solar App+ software and issued about 270 permits last year
- We completed recertification of Tree City USA, noting that we need to spend at least \$2 per capita on tree related expenses per year which includes trees, landscaping costs, and annual waste pick up.
- There is a slight increase on the planning side of the budget but a decrease in inspection costs
- There is \$200,000 budgeted for property purchases

- There is \$40,000 planned for inspections and plan reviews
- There is \$300,000 planned for planning assistance

Aldersperson Blundy asked if the planning assistance ties to the Comprehensive Plan. He would like more discussion. Administrator Snider clarified that this is the opportunity to discuss. Aldersperson Brownfield noted that City goals may not be the property owner's goals. It was agreed that further discussion is needed. Administrator Snider noted that it is usually driven by people coming to them for projects. He shared that a developer has looked at property near Cherry Tree. Mayor Manier shared that the person who wants to develop the 223 property has paid for a feasibility study which should begin in February. He shared that the donor has provided \$2 million towards the project. Administrator Snider will bring back more information as it is received.

**Engineering - Review and Progress Report for FY24/25**

Engineer Carr shared the following regarding completed projects:

- Hilldale Section 3 was completed and only received a few complaints
- Wilmor Road mill and overlay is complete and under budget
- Pressure paving near Easy Street is complete and under budget
- Completed MFT roads included chip sealed, hot in place recycling and mill and overlays under budget
- They will shrink the project size next year

City Engineer Carr clarified that hairline cracking is on top of where the pressure paving was tested on Shellbark but it is holding up and they will monitor it. Engineer Carr shared that roads are holding up after plow usage. Aldersperson Blundy noted chip sealing in Trails Edge is coming up and the fog coat doesn't seem to be working. His neighbors are complaining. Engineer Carr said that Council can direct another approach to pavement concerns noting that less roads may be done with mill and overlay due to expense. He shared that pavement management is a policy decision that a majority of council can direct. The increase in price between the road processes was noted as a budgetary concern and Council direction was requested. Aldersperson Blundy feels roads are more important to us than other things. Engineer Carr cautioned that there isn't a surplus likely but if a majority of council would like to direct him to spend time creating a plan, he can. Aldersperson Stevens complimented Westgate and thinks certain rock is causing the current issues. Engineer Carr and Aldersperson McIntyre discussed the long-term cost of using concrete. Engineer Carr explained that Freedom Pkwy will be asphalt and a portion of Nofsinger will be concrete. Oil prices can change the cost of asphalt. Engineer Carr noted that concrete lasts longer but the replacement costs is more.

- Willshire and Willshire Court are completed and under budget
- The sidewalk replacement program is going well.

Aldersperson McIntyre would like to continue it and Aldersperson Blundy would like to do an inventory of the sidewalks. Engineer Carr explained that an inventory would open up liability. Aldersperson Adams noted that the east side of town needs sidewalk attention. Engineer Carr said majority of town east of Wilmor will be considered. Alderspersons Smith and Adams would like 70/30 for another year.

- Freedom Parkway is still in progress
- Nofsinger has received several funding sources that cover most of the costs
- Nofsinger is still on schedule and the target completion date should be in 2024

New projects include:

- Catherine to Elm Street
- For the Jackson Street Pedestrian Bridge, they were hoping to create a berm in the park
- Candlewood Bridge repair is estimated about \$500,000 and on target for this year but it is up to IDOT
- Eagle Avenue sidewalk from Central School to Bus24 will tie into other recent projects and the completion date is not yet known.

Aldersperson Blundy asked if it could be prioritized for the kids to get to and from school. Engineer Carr noted that there aren't any projects that we can shuffle and putting a deadline in the bids would increase the price.

- Stormwater projects are ongoing and they are outlining Drainage Project K which will help Catherine
- Drainage Project L will help the St. Pat's School area
- The Felker's drainage project should be fairly simple and inexpensive

**Public Works - Review and Progress Report for FY24/25**

Public Works Director Rittenhouse explained that they try to do as much in-house as possible to save money. He shared the following:

- They completed several paving projects
- They replaced PLCs at Treatment Plant #1
- SCADA helps maintain the system when staff is not there
- They replaced the roof at WTP#1 which came in under budget
- Collection service improvements will include lining
- The sludge storage tank stores liquid sludge and needs to be in good repair and it should be inspected in ten years
- A catwalk was added for safety when opening valves
- In MERF, they received the Lincoln 23 and another Lincoln is going to be done being fitted in March or April
- They received a new excavator and mowers
- They put on a new roof and added a few door openers in the budget for the Public Works storage building and Police Department evidence building.
- They added new lighting.

- Some cracked tile showed evidence of asbestos and will be removed

Alderson Blundy feels the exterior of the building should be painted. Mr. Rittenhouse explained that it had been discussed. He shared that they painted the side and back noting that once brick is painted, you have to continue with paint maintenance. Mayor Manier noted the historic nature of the building.

Mr. Rittenhouse also shared:

- They will install a concrete pad at the fire department
- They can complete sections of street paving, including a few alleys, in-house
- They will work on CIPP lining and televising storm sewers
- They will jet the culvert under Cummings and Freedom Parkway which will take several days because it was bad
- They will add a topcoat to the water tower which should last 10-15 years. He noted some of the paint issues could be from the tornado.
- They plan to do improvements and additional lining of storm lines near Georgetown and Westlake. Engineer Carr explained that the IEPA has recommended that we also televise the Farm Creek trunkline, and we will need to keep it on the budget every couple of years.
- They will address outfall at the wastewater treatment plant.
- They will receive a new Western Star and street sweeper through MERF
- They will improve the parking lot at the fire station

As for future building planning:

- They may consider a larger building in 28/29 due to larger plow trucks. He suggested the Legion Road location but shared that it needs to be studied.
- They are considering a new cemetery building/garage with an office, breakroom, and a couple bays for equipment.

Mr. Rittenhouse clarified that the new Public Works building is 5-10 years out.

Alderson Blundy asked about the use of the current building and Mr. Rittenhouse explained that he is not sure but it can be used for storage.

- Mr. Rittenhouse further shared that it is beneficial to address water mains while working on roads

Administrator Snider noted the Mr. Rittenhouse is working on developing plans. He asked for details regarding Water Tower #3. Engineer Carr noted a hold up due to concerns with water quality. He noted that they are putting our current systems on the same disinfection processes and explained that you have to have enough water pressure for insurance purposes. Adding the tower to the high-pressure system will help make sure we have enough water quality and it will help our ISO rating as well.

**Administration:**  
*Year End Summary  
and Police Update*

Administrator Snider introduced Police Chief McCoy who shared the following information:

- The police department has 22 full-time and 7 part-time sworn officers
- The police department has 5 full-time and 1 part-time administrative personnel
- They are short hours whenever personnel is training, vacation days and for sick days
- They are three officers short
- They are currently trying to get school positions
- Some departments are paying a \$20,000 bonus to get good candidates
- They had over 9,000 calls in 2023
- Warning tickets were up
- The budget total is a little over \$2 million
- They are trying to be very frugal so they can absorb the remaining cost of the evidence building

*Update on New  
Evidence Building*

Police Chief McCoy who shared the following information:

- They continue to be engaged with Dewberry
- Overseeing of materials and conditions is required for the grant
- Dewberry has started footing design and planning for power
- The projected cost provided by Dewberry was just under \$2 million
- The first building they thought they needed was \$5 million
- This design includes an option for future expansion if needed

Alderson Blundy asked how close the building will be to the fire department and Chief noted that the building was moved south, and the number of parking spaces were reduced to allow for expansion of both the evidence building and the fire department building if needed.

- The building provides a drive-thru, allowing the doors to close behind the vehicles.
- The building is 20 feet tall and will have space saving lockers
- There will be a small office and a work area
- A second bay could be used for processing vehicles
- Additional spaces will be used for processing and storing evidence
- They have received several grants covering a majority of the costs

*Discussion of  
streaming of meetings*

Administrator Snider shared:

- He met with Pearl Technologies and spent time reviewing the configurations.
- They are looking into audio equipment, cameras, and desk set-up
- They will review this with Five Points

*Discussion of possible city-wide building space study*

Administrator Snider shared:

- They have had this as a space holder for several years but needs Councils' direction.
- We have the space.
- Building a city complex could have cost concerns.
- He is concern about spending money without a driving need to build a complex.

Aldersperson McIntyre shared concerns with spending that amount of money. He appreciates Mr. Rittenhouse's time but is concerned with spending money on a space study with other large projects to consider. Aldersperson Adams agreed. Mayor Manier noted this was a conversation several years ago and price was a concern. He shared that Bob Gordon suggested renovating the library building for a fraction of the price. Aldersperson Butler feels it would be a waste of money for the study. Aldersperson Brownfield would like to remove it and consider it in the future. Mayor Manier noted the concerns regarding sound from City vehicles at a building that is close to a neighborhood.

**Summation of CIP Priorities and Budget Calendar for FY25**

Administrator Snider introduced Finance Director Baxter who shared:

- The graph is by department and is over a 5-year period of time
- Stormwater is in its own department so they can capture what is not captured by the bond
- They are shown by fund and by year
- She shared a summary graph and a graph created by ClearGov that illustrates the different funds.
- The graph breaks down the different projects within the illustrated funds
- It is proposed at \$20 million for all funds but she noted that the numbers could change as they do further review.
- The budget book breaks down projected costs that included estimates and assumptions
- This is how we see the capital projects being paid
- The minimum standard is 25% of expenses
- There is a line item for the stormwater management bond which will start to be paid for in 2025
- The projection uses the estimates and assumption of revenue and expenses and is a big picture look
- We are spending reserves and they are shown on the graph

Administrator Snider shared that this is an aggressive budget list and we have a lot of great projects. Engineer Carr added that when looking at this 5-year outlook, bridges have reached their lifecycle. This doesn't mean they will fall on that year, but we have to be prepared in case we need to adjust project priority. He suggested starting to try to get funding for some of the projects. He noted that some Council members may turn over before some of the projects are done. Administrator Snider feels these are investments which will have a return. Engineer Carr said we also have to be mindful that IDOT may improve Bus24 and we need to try to stay out of the way. We will need to decide about infrastructure work during that time. The Bus24 watermain will need to be addressed. He is hoping we can get a reduced cost if we work with their engineers.

Engineer Carr noted that Phase 2B is not in the sewer budget because staff has not received any direction from Council. Aldersperson Blundy asked how Bus24 will be replaced and is there a way to put pressure on IDOT. Engineer Carr said no. Engineer Carr said he knows there is an engineering firm they are working with but we are considered a small blue fish in a big red pond. Mayor Manier noted that Pioneer Parkway was included in the 2009 Capital Bill but was just completed this year. Engineer Carr said he was provided personnel concerns and added that his old boss who is on that team reached out to IDOT several times and doesn't feel Bus24 will be in the next five years. He also shared that they will target the watermain from Wilmor to the viaduct first because it is one of the highest break areas and it is difficult to fix due to traffic patterns. It is estimated \$1.7 million.

Finance Director Baxter continued by sharing:

- Water is the fund that we are most concerned about
- The projects and needs are great
- They will need to do a rate study at some point
- This is the last year for the incremental increase in water/sewer rates
- It will take Council action to make any changes
- The debt service is related to the AMR loan.
- We will need to discuss the next phase of meter replacements

Administrator Snider shared concern that a significant water rate increase in the next two years may be needed. He noted that Bloomington has just doubled their water rates over the next three years to cover an aging system. He noted that a gallon of water is 1.38 cents but it costs 1.5 cents per gallon out of the tap. He noted our rates are less than Illinois American and we don't sell our water for a profit. Aldersperson Brownfield asked if it would be better to start sooner with smaller increases. Administrator Snider said it is always good to do a rate study. Engineer Carr shared that it might be best to try to secure a low interest IEPA loan for the new water tower, which will also require a rate study. He also noted that whenever we have a break, we hear that we need to replace the line.

Regarding the sewer fund, Finance Director Baxter shared:

- It has a healthy balance but there are a lot of unknowns
- If we didn't have Phase 2B to deal with, the sewer fund would look good

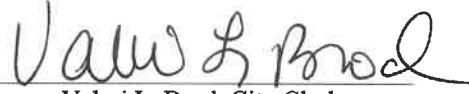
- She noted \$340,000 a year to spend towards infrastructure
- Looking over the next five years, the ending fund balance is quite a bit higher
- The 2009 loan will be repaid in 2030 which will free up some funds of the debt service.
- Phase 2A won't be paid off until 2037

Finance Director Baxter also shared:

- ClearGov was used to develop the budget
- We are implementing operations and personnel which will help streamline everything.

Mayor Manier expressed that staff did a great job putting everything together and he hopes this is helpful. Alderperson McIntyre thanked staff as well.

**Adjournment** At 8:25 p.m. City Administrator Snider closed the meeting.



Valeri L. Brod, City Clerk