

**Minutes**  
**City of Villa Grove, Illinois**  
**Regular City Council Meeting**  
**September 12, 2024**

**Call to Order—Roll Call:** The City Council of the City of Villa Grove met in regular session on Thursday, September 12, 2024, in Conference Room B of the Community Center. Mayor Eversole-Gunter called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m. Roll call found the following members present: Aldermen Blaney, Hooker, and Nieto. Aldermen Cheely, Johnson and Pangburn, as well as City Clerk Osborne were absent. City Administrator Athey, PD Chief Rea, PW Director Mixell and Building Inspector Broeker were also present. Jubal Underwood was also present representing Berns Clancy and Associates.

**Pledge of Allegiance:** The Mayor stood and led all attendees in The Pledge of Allegiance.

**Public Comments:** Several residents were in attendance. Mr. Vansighee of South Sycamore Street stated that he was present to support a neighbor seeking a zoning variance for a home business. He also asked that the City look into other home businesses that did not obtain proper permitting and do not remit taxes to the City.

**Consent Agenda (Items for Single Vote Approval Without Discussion):** **1) MINUTES OF THE REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING, HELD AUGUST 12, 2024; 2) MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING, HELD AUGUST 22, 2024; 3) MINUTES OF THE REGULAR COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING, HELD AUGUST 26, 2024; 4) AUTHORIZATION FOR THE PAYMENT OF BILLS; 5) FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE MONTH ENDING JULY 31, 2024; AND 6) APPROVE PURCHASE OF USED FIRE TRUCK FROM BONDVILLE FIRE CORPORATION.** Alderman Hooker motioned to approve the Consent Agenda. Alderman Nieto seconded the motion. Roll Call: Blaney, yea; Hooker, yea; Nieto, yea; Eversole-Gunter, yea. Motion carried unanimously.

**Reports:** **Athey:** she has been working on multiple reports; the auditor had returned for a day to work on additional materials, who also is currently requesting additional IMRF documents not available in July; attended another Douglas County Economic Development meeting so prepared for today's Cronus announcement; with the potential development of the Lyondel property as well, houses are going to be needed immediately; otherwise normal business and an excessive amount of calls about the UP steam train visit. **Mixell:** he thought that the train event went well although the engine was parked about 500 feet away from where the originally planned site and setup was located; PW noted that people were respectful and there was very little mess to clean afterwards; the metal roof on the building has been completed with only paint and soffit work to be completed in the future; bridge work on Harrison should be completed in the next week depending on weather; Frontier should be completing their additional pole installations in the next two weeks; Cross Construction will be replacing approximately 12 blocks of water main for ILAW in random locations. **Rea:** PD had prepared for the train visit by providing extra security overnight, but there were simply too many visitors to provide any type of traffic control; officers had a busy weekend; for CRC he has spent significant time with Bethany learning about the operations/software/programs of the

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building; spoke to the VFW about bringing the Halloween costume contest back to the CRC; the splash pad has been winterized but has no caps for the removed features so Bethany requested quotes from the company as they weren't included originally; Mixell added that C-U Plumbing stated that they could do the mechanical reinstall/opening and takedown/winterization each year for approximately \$300 (three hours' fee) which would place any responsibility back on professionals instead of City departments and Rea concurred with this. Broeker: had nothing to report for building inspection. Eversole-Gunter: she had a wonderful experience riding the Big Boy steam train from Watseka to Villa Grove on Monday afternoon/evening. She felt it was an honor and quite exciting to host the train overnight and that local businesses benefited from the stay.

Alderman Hooker injected that he had received complaints about parking during the train event but that a large, geographically-wide group came to VG. Athey said that she had not personally received any complaints through the office but that there simply weren't enough parking areas for the amount of people brought into a small town. The mayor estimated that 4-5K came into the City on Monday and Tuesday. The mayor also noted previous finishing issues that the City experienced with Cross Construction, and Mixell explained that the second crew that accomplished the work would be in charge of the work on behalf of ILAW so he anticipates it moving smoothly.

Alderman Blaney asked Broeker to explain what types of items would qualify a property for condemnation proceedings. He discussed an inspection he did recently on a home damaged by fire, and while the current condition makes it unlivable the damage did not appear to affect the structures integrity. He noted that with significant cleanup the property would be in good condition since there were no signs of mold.

Mr. Underwood distributed a drawing of the outlet on the north side of the currently-developed lots in Pheasant Pointe Subdivision which he had surveyed. He highlighted where the new road would be placed to align/connect with the development of Prairie Fire Subdivision as well. He noted that ideally the utilities should be extended while the construction is being done on the road. He added that the additional fill needs to be addressed with the project. Mixell asked what the material of the road would be and the mayor noted that it should be concrete to connect to the other concrete streets running north/south. Discussion also included how to replat areas north of the new road so that the backs of houses did not face the highway. Mr. Underwood said that BC&A would be completing the drawing to create documents for bidding. The Council encouraged him to continue with the process.

**Business:**

Item 1. Alderman Hooker motioned to approve a variance request from Mr. Harrison Gast for a firearms repair and restoration business in his home at 701 South Sycamore Street. Alderman Nieto

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seconded the motion. Roll Call: Hooker, yea; Nieto, yea; Blaney, yea; Eversole-Gunter, yea. Motion passed unanimously.

Item 2. A representative and Broeker explained that due to the flood zone, drop sheds would be used on one half of the lot with tie-downs added upon approval of the OWR (to prevent them floating away). Alderman Hooker motioned to approve a variance request from American Way Storage for a mini-storage warehouse business at 308 South Spruce Street. Alderman Nieto seconded the motion. Roll Call: Hooker, yea; Nieto, yea; Blaney, yea; Eversole-Gunter, yea. Motion passed unanimously.

Item 3. After Athey explained the issues in renaming an existing account at a local bank due to the changes from eliminating Council subcommittees, Alderman Hooker motioned to approve Ordinance 2024-MC07—An Ordinance Amending Chapter 36 “Financing and Revenue; Purchasing” of the Municipal Code of the City of Villa Grove Regarding Section 36.05 Checks and Warrants. Alderman Nieto seconded the motion. Roll Call: Blaney, yea; Hooker, yea; Nieto, yea; Eversole-Gunter, yea. Motion passed unanimously.

Item 4. Alderman Hooker motioned to approve Ordinance 2024-MC08—An Ordinance Authorizing the Mayor to Execute the Employment Agreement by the City of Villa Grove for the Position of CPS Facility Lead. Alderman Nieto seconded the motion. Roll Call: Nieto, yea; Blaney, yea; Hooker, yea; Eversole-Gunter, yea. Motion passed unanimously.

Item 5. Alderman Blaney motioned to regretfully accept the resignation of CPS Director Bethany Surowka. Alderman Nieto seconded the motion. Roll Call: Blaney, yea; Hooker, yea; Nieto, yea; Eversole-Gunter, yea. Motion passed unanimously.

**Executive Session:** Alderman Nieto motioned to enter closed session under the Open Meetings Act according to Section 2(c)(1) for Personnel at 7:00 p.m. Alderman Hooker seconded the motion. Roll Call: Blaney, yea; Hooker, yea; Nieto, yea; Eversole-Gunter, yea. Motion passed unanimously. Council stated that action would be taken on Business Item 6 following the closed session.

Council returned to open session at 8:27 p.m.

Alderman Hooker motioned to appoint Bob Rea as both the CPS Director and Public Safety Director, and Cole Tibbetts as Interim Chief of Police (pending negotiation of employment contracts). Roll Call: Hooker, yea; Nieto, yea; Blaney, yea; Eversole-Gunter, yea. Motion passed unanimously.

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Mayor Eversole-Gunter noted that she had forgotten to ask the Council to be thinking about development of Prairie Fire, and in particular what kind of investment the City should be making to push the work forward. She cited the Village of Dieterich as an example where incentives were offered to buyers to earn increment in the long-term. The Mayor mentioned meeting with Emily from Moran Economic Development, as well as speaking with C-U Under Construction and Luxury Homes by phone about jumpstarting the planning. Time is of the essence with the developments west of Tuscola impacting the entire county, and our businesses and Community Rec Center will benefit greatly from the growth that we need to be ready for. Emily asked specific questions like: was the City willing to bond the infrastructure if needed, would a 10-year bond work, would an extension be needed, would a new TIF be needed, etcetera. Those questions need answers in the near future.

**Adjournment:** With no further items to be discussed, Alderman Blaney motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:32 p.m. Alderman Hooker seconded the motion. Roll Call: Nieto, yea; Blaney, yea; Hooker, yea; Eversole-Gunter, yea. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

*Jacki Athey*

Jacqueline S. Athey, CIMT, CPFA, CPFIM  
City Administrator

xc: Mayor  
City Council  
Building Inspector  
Department Heads  
File