

**CITY OF ROCK ISLAND**  
**CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

City Hall

1528 Third Avenue, Rock Island IL

City Council Chambers, 3rd Floor

7/25/2022 - Minutes

1. Call to Order

Mayor Thoms called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

2. This meeting will also be conducted by audio and video conference without the requirement of a physically present quorum of the Rock Island City Council due to the disaster declaration issued by Governor Pritzker.

3. Roll Call

Mayor Thoms asked Deputy City Clerk Naomi Sanderson to call the roll.

Present: Mayor Mike Thoms, Alderpersons Moses Robinson (virtual), Randy Hurt, Judith Gilbert, Jenni Swanson, Dylan Parker (virtual), Mark Poulos, and Bill Healy.

Absent: None.

Staff: City Manager Todd Thompson, City Attorney Dave Morrison, Deputy City Clerk Naomi Sanderson, and other City Staff.

4. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Thoms led in the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. Moment of Silence

Mayor Thoms requested a moment of silence. A moment of silence was observed.

6. Public Comment

Mayor Thoms announced item number twenty-two had been removed from the agenda and moved to the August 8, 2022 Council meeting.

Mayor Thoms asked if a Council member would make a motion to move item twenty-one up in the agenda to after item fifteen due to the interest and discussion regarding the Special Service Area (SSA) proposal.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Poulos moved to move item twenty-two up in the agenda to after item fifteen; Aldersperson Swanson seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Gilbert, Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, and Hurt. Nay: None. Absent: None.

Mayor Thoms announced speakers signed up to speak during Public Comment were speaking in regards to the SSA proposal and proposed waiting for Public Comment until the Other Business portion of the meeting when the SSA discussion would continue. There were no objections.

7. Minutes from the March 2, 2022 City Council Closed Session.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Healy moved to approve the Closed Session minutes; Aldersperson Poulos seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Gilbert, Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, and Hurt. Nay: None. Absent: None.

8. Minutes from the July 11, 2022 City Council Closed Session.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Gilbert moved to approve the Closed Session minutes; Aldersperson Swanson seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Gilbert, Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, and Hurt. Nay: None. Absent: None.

9. Minutes from the July 11, 2022 Study Session and City Council Meeting.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Swanson moved to approve the minutes as printed; Aldersperson Healy seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Gilbert, Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, and Hurt. Nay: None. Absent: None.

10. Update Rock Island

**2022 Tell on Your Neighbor Awards.** Each year, residents of Rock Island are encouraged to “Tell On Your Neighbor” by nominating the yards in their neighborhood that they find to be the most appealing or the most improved. Nominations can be made through August 5th, 2022. Digital photos of the nominated yards are required. Call Kathy Douglas at (309) 732-2905 for nomination information.

**Save the Date! The Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center will host its 35th Annual Family Fun Day on Saturday, August 27, 2022.** The fun starts at 10:00 a.m. with a parade on 9<sup>th</sup> Street followed by a family fun day full of activities. The Center is now accepting applications for food and merchant vendors, informational booths, and parade participants. For more information, visit their website.

11. Proclamation declaring July 26, 2022 as Americans with Disabilities Act Awareness Day.

Deputy Clerk Sanderson read the proclamation. Mayor Thoms read his declaration. Hershel Jackson, representative of the IL/IA Center for Dependent Living and the QC Disability Awareness Coalition came forward to accept the proclamation. A picture was taken with Mayor Thoms.

12. Proclamation declaring Tuesday, August 2, 2022 as National Night Out in the City of Rock Island.

Deputy Clerk Sanderson read the proclamation. Mayor Thoms read his declaration. Ashely Harris, representative of Rock Island Community Care Conference came forward to accept the proclamation. A picture was taken with Mayor Thoms.

13. Motion whether or not to recommend to the Mayor/Liquor Commissioner to waive the signature requirement as requested and approve the liquor license.

Mayor Thoms stated he would close the regular meeting and open a Public Hearing on a request from Latisha Howlett, Bayside Bistro for a waiver of the signature requirement to secure a liquor license at 2704 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Ms. Howlett approached the podium to address Council in support of issuing a liquor license for Bayside Bistro at 2704 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Ms. Howlett said she and her husband are very excited to have moved their business to Rock Island. She said her customers are excited that the Rock Island location is more spacious. Ms. Howlett explained that she would be able to expand the Bayside Bistro menu and hours with a liquor license.

Mayor Thoms asked if anyone else would like to speak, no one volunteered to speak. Mayor Thoms closed the public hearing and reopened the regular meeting to entertain a motion.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Swanson moved to recommend to the Mayor/Liquor Commissioner to waive the signature requirement as requested and approve the liquor license; Aldersperson Hurt seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Gilbert, Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, and Hurt. Nay: None. Absent: None.

14. Mayor Thoms will close the regular meeting and open a Public Hearing regarding the amended HUD CDBG Program Year 2021 Annual Action Plan.

Mayor Thoms stated he would close the regular meeting and open a Public Hearing regarding the amended HUD CDBG Program Action Plan. Mayor Thoms inquired if anyone wished to speak regarding the HUD CDBG Plan including virtually, no one volunteered.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Gilbert moved to accept and approve the Program Year 2021 Annual Action Plan as recommended; Aldersperson Healy seconded.

DISCUSSION:

Aldersperson Poulos inquired if the item should read the Program Year 2022. Deputy Clerk Sanderson responded affirmatively. Aldersperson Healy withdrew his second.

Aldersperson Gilbert amended her motion to accept and approve the Program Year 2022 Annual Action Plan as recommended; Aldersperson Healy seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Gilbert, Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, and Hurt. Nay: None. Absent: None.

15. Presentation of the Firefighters Pension Fund and Police Pension Fund Preliminary Actuarial Valuation results for January 1, 2022 and Assumption Discussion.

Finance Department Director Linda Barnes announced the presentation of the actuarial evaluation results to Council. Ms. Barnes introduced the representative from the actuarial firm Nyhart, Nick Meggos. She said Mr. Meggos is the Lead Consultant for Nyhart's Actuarial Pension Plan and works to help clients with plan sustainability and employee retirement readiness. Mr. Meggos approached to address Council and began by explaining the purpose of the evaluation as examining where funds are. He said data in the presentation reflects the funds as of January 1, 2022 as that is the date the of the annual measurement. Mr. Meggos explained that information such as funded percentages and contributions are derived from asset and liability data.

He referenced page three of the presentation which shows the history of contributions and funded ratio of the plan. He made note of the consistent increase in contributions from 2017 through 2021 and said that will continue to increase. Additionally, he noted the funded percentage has not increased, however he anticipates that eventually this will improve based on asset performance and structure of the calculation in the plan. Mr. Meggos explained the legal

requirement of increasing funding of plans to ninety percent by the end of fiscal year 2040 for the City of Rock Island. He said current contributions are based on assets and demographics.

Mr. Meggos moved on to explain assumptions and the significant change in the last year. He said the consolidation of the Police and Fire plans are being done throughout the State. He reported all of the Fire plans have been consolidated into the plan and that Police plans are behind schedule but are in the process of consolidating as well. He informed Council of the experience study conducted to establish updated assumptions to best calculate liabilities based on the consolidation of plans. Two public safety assumptions were adjusted based on the most recent study conducted by the Society of Actuaries. This includes mortality changes based on increased life expectancy and the rate of retirement was accelerated with increases liabilities.

Mr. Meggos continued by explaining asset returns for the consolidated plans and the anticipated benefits. He said it was obvious that smaller plans would experience higher returns after consolidating, although it was unclear what the asset returns would be for category four plans over \$10 million like Rock Island. Additionally, he said the City of Rock Island has been utilizing a higher assumption rate than was recommended due to the potential of equity exposure. He shared that the Fire Consolidated Fund actuary recommended 7.125% and the Fire Board adopted this recommendation. He further explained the Police Consolidated Fund actuary recommended 6.75% and the Police Board had not yet adopted this recommendation.

He then explained that payroll growth assumptions are impactful for contribution calculations. He referenced page five in the prepared presentation to illustrate the contribution being comprised of the cost of benefits being earned in the current year and the payment on the unfunded accrued liability, which is the gap between assets and liabilities earned to date. He theorized that the higher the payroll growth assumption is, the lower the contribution would be. He said the assumption recommendation for payroll growth was 2.75% for fire and 3% for police.

Mr. Meggos referenced page six and discussed the Firefighters Pension Fund in detail. The City contribution from last year was \$4,079,988.00, which was a result of comparing two different approaches, the entry age normal approach and compare to projected credit approach that is required, and going with the greater amount. If all assumptions were kept the same as last year, the contribution would grow to \$4,243,605.00. He then reviewed the contributions recommendations based on the experience study done by the fire plan and recommended assumptions, which would grow the City contribution to \$4,635,168.00. The final estimated recommendation amount of City contribution is \$4,510,002.00 which consists of adoption assumptions fully with the exception of the payroll assumption and a 7% rate to be consistent with the Police Pension Fund. He then offered to take questions regarding the Firefighter Pension Fund and none were asked.

He indicated the Police Pension fund details were listed on page seven and discussed in detail the information listed including the previous year's contribution as \$4,354,876.00. The recommended City contribution would increase due to increases in liability to \$4,484,955 if all other assumptions remained the same. If the current plan was based on the recommended asset return assumption, as recommended by the actuary but not yet agreed upon, 6.75% the City contribution would increase to \$5,093,163.00. The final estimated City contribution that consists of a 7% asset return and a 3.5% payroll growth assumption would amount to \$4,701,935.00.

Mr. Meggos explained that these assumptions and rates are increasing over time and will continue to do so. He suggested utilizing projection of future increases to understand how future increases will impact future contribution amounts. He explained that some municipalities increase current contributions to offset the projected increases that would occur between 2035 and 2040 as the law is currently written.

Alderson Poulos asked what the returns have been for the Firefighter Pension Fund for the first quarter of 2022. Mr. Meggos said he did not know that information but many clients experienced a decrease by ten to fifteen percent in the first quarter. Alderson Poulos verified that Mr. Meggos is aware of the 7.25% IMRF while the Illinois requirement is at 6.75%, teacher retirement fund is at 7%, the state university retirement system is at 6.5%. Alderson Poulos commended Mr. Meggos for his work and explained other firms are utilizing other assumptions. He opined that 3.5% salary increase is unreasonable based upon our contracts; and expressed concern for the City being billed for a gap in income if it hasn't been budgeted for. Alderson Poulos reported the previous three City Councils have addressed the previous underfunding by increasing basis points to narrow the gap. He said he represents both the City and the pension fund.

Mr. Meggos said he would prefer for municipalities to use a lower payroll growth assumption but its about finding a balance between representing the pension fund and the City and the significant increase on financial impact. He explained that the actuary must balance continuing to lower the asset return, the consolidated fire pension, and significant increases on other assumptions like mortality and retirement. He reiterated that there will be significant increases in the future and every municipality in Illinois has to choose how much of that they can take on today to avoid a balloon payment in the future. He also said IMRF is the standard for pension funds and their recommendation is 7.25% but there will be more to pay in the future.

Alderson Gilbert stated IMRF is funded at 98%. Alderson Poulos responded affirmatively and said IMRF would bill the City for the difference in the amount if the actuarial assumptions were not met. Alderson Poulos inquired about the difference between 6.5% and 7%. Mr. Meggos referenced the information from the presentation and explained at \$10 million, if the City underperformed by 2% that would equate to \$2 million.

Alderson Poulos said his concern is that Rock Island acted on reducing unfunded liability and this would appear to do the opposite and overall concern about the future. Mr. Meggos responded by validating reported concerns. Alderson Gilbert asked Mr. Meggos what the recommendation was to Council. Mr. Meggos indicated he would recommend the last column on both the graph that represents Fire Pension and Police Pension. Alderson Gilbert confirmed the amounts recommended contributions were \$4.5 million for Fire and \$4.7 million for Police. Mr. Meggos responded affirmatively. Alderson Gilbert said that equated to approximately \$9.2 million just in pension payments for Police and Fire. Mr. Meggos clarified the City's contribution is not to pay for benefits being earned this year, rather the cost of benefits for Rock Island Police is six hundred thousand because they pay approximately five hundred thousand themselves. He elaborated that the majority of the City contribution is to make a payment on the almost \$65 million of unfunded liability. Mr. Meggos thanked Council.

Mayor Thoms announced Public Comment.

George Crouse approached the podium to address Council. Mr. Crouse said he wished to speak to Council as a resident of Rock Island within the proposed SSA. He shared that he owns four parcels within the proposed SSA boundary and he views the additional tax to be paid as an investment. He said the City of Rock Island would need clear guidance, investment, and diligence to effectively intervene with issues downtown. He said there comes a time when a public entity must acknowledge that they do not possess the manpower, resources, or core competencies to make their visions happen. Mr. Crouse opined he has more faith in a public-private partnership than in the City Council attempting to resolve concerns on its own. He said the behavior downtown is more nuisance related than concern for safety and that he has intervened as a citizen previously. He said the City should be the responsible party for intervening with nuisance behavior rather than citizens. He said a mechanism for intervening with nuisance behavior is needed. He said he likes investing in the City of Rock Island.

Mayor Thoms called Jeff Lam to speak, it appeared that Jeff was no longer present.

Mayor Thoms called Tom Norman. Mr. Norman addressed City Council as a property owner in Rock Island since 1984. He said that he has invested significantly in the building he owns including rehabilitating the upstairs with the help of the City of Rock Island, grant money, and forgivable loans. In his time as a business owner, he has observed fluctuations in the downtown district but that right now is the worst it has been. He opined that Council would likely agree that changes are needed. He said he has lost tenants and business owners because of the circumstances of downtown. He stated understanding for reported concerns but it's time to do something positive for the people with a vested interest in downtown. He said he would like to see a return on his investment which has been decreasing. He identified the SSA as a vehicle to accomplish making needed changes in the downtown area. Mr. Norman stated changes in downtown are time-sensitive as people are moving out of the district due to a lack of feeling safe. He said he would like to continue being a proud business owner in the district and the SSA benefits everyone.

Mayor Thoms called the Downtown Steering Committee members to approach Council to continue discussing the proposed SSA. Director of Downtown Rock Island with Quad City Chamber of Commerce Jack Cullen said Tom Norman is an example of a property owner who connected with him to discuss the proposal after receiving the mailer that was sent out. Mr. Cullen said they were able to discuss Mr. Norman's questions, concerns, and grievances which resulted in his speech this evening.

Aldersperson Gilbert directed her questions to Mr. Cullen and the Chamber as they are the representatives contracted for services with the City. She asked if there were additional properties left out of the downtown area aside from Modern Woodmen and their eight parcels and identified a particular part of the map of the proposed area. Mr. Cullen said the properties within the area indicated were Modern Woodmen's mailing distribution center and that there were no other taxable parcels within that area. Aldersperson Gilbert asked if there was a building for sale in the mentioned area. Mr. Cullen reported the building Aldersperson Gilbert was inquiring about was not located in the area drawn out of the proposed SSA.

Aldersperson Gilbert remarked that no public meetings had been held by the Downtown Steering Committee. Mayor Thoms responded affirmatively and said that question was answered earlier. Aldersperson Gilbert reported that many of her questions were related to the process the Chamber undertook and requested that detailed information regarding contacted parcel owners be provided to Council. Aldersperson Gilbert asked how many businesses in the proposed taxing district rent rather than own the property of their business location. Mr. Cullen responded that is a great question and unfortunately he did not have that data. He explained that collecting data on the available store fronts would be a function of the SSA and this information could be identified. Mayor Thoms stated the goal of the proposal was to speak with property owners not the renters. Mr. Cullen reported that many property owners are also the managers of the business in that location.

Aldersperson Gilbert verified that the proposed budget was not included with the mailing sent to property owners. Mr. Cullen responded affirmatively. Aldersperson Gilbert inquired about the reason why it was left out. Mr. Cullen reported there was no reason other than that the Chamber was still working with the Steering Committee on the draft proposal budget that was provided to Council. He explained that it is a draft budget based on the proposed service area which would generate an estimated \$315,000.00 and asking the City to contribute \$150,000.00 annually for five years and contributions from community partners would be in addition. He explained the budget is not definitive until the SSA is established and a governing board of directors sign off on the budget. He said the proposed budget was a representation of needs and wants for more services and activities in downtown which is consistent with feedback Aldersperson Parker has received in the last five to six years.

Aldersperson Gilbert asked if the proposed SSA would be under the control of the City or the Chamber. Mr. Cullen explained a service provider is needed as part of setting up an SSA so even though the City would collect tax dollars quarterly for the SSA the funds would be administered to the non-profit, in this case the Chamber affiliate place management organization, and its board of directors to invest those funds. He said the City does not pay for the services provided by the downtown place management organization.

Aldersperson Gilbert theorized that a different service provider could provide the place management. Mr. Cullen clarified that the proposal is that the service provider is a Chamber affiliate place management organization.

Aldersperson Healy stated there are four cities with an established SSA including East Moline, Moline, Davenport, and Bettendorf. He clarified that East Moline and Moline manage the SSA in-house and Davenport and Bettendorf have contracted services with the Chamber. Mr. Cullen explained that East Moline and Moline have Main Street entities and there are business improvement districts in Davenport including the Hilltop and East Village of Davenport. He said the Chamber currently manages the downtown Davenport partnership and the downtown Bettendorf organization which is the newest business improvement district and urban place management entity of its kind in the Quad Cities.

Aldersperson Parker made a statement reminding Council members that the recommendation of the Downtown Taskforce, which became the Downtown Steering Committee, was to explore creating the downtown place management organization with the Chamber. He said Council explored doing it in-house and it was the recommendation of the downtown business community to pursue the model the Chamber has proposed.

Aldersperson Gilbert asked if more detailed information was available to explain the proposed budget. Downtown Steering Committee Chair Arron Sutherland came forward to address the question and asked for clarification. Aldersperson Gilbert asked how each line item amount was determined. Mr. Sutherland said the items were estimates of costs for services needed in the downtown. Aldersperson Gilbert asked about specific salaries of the full-time staff positions. Mr. Sutherland questioned the necessity of discussing employee salaries as these are hypothetical.

Aldersperson Gilbert asked why the Executive Director's salary increased by \$10,000.00 as the salary changed from \$85,000.00 last year to \$95,000.00 this year. Mr. Cullen explained the salary amounts fall within the salary bands of the Chamber and are in line with the market for the type of position. He said base salaries and percentages were also provided to Council. Aldersperson Gilbert asked if the salaries are aligned with City positions and if they've been reviewed by the City's Human Resource Department. Mr. Cullen responded they had not been reviewed by the City.

Aldersperson Gilbert inquired about the number of part-time positions. Mr. Cullen reported that has yet to be determined due to the flexibility in approaching how the cleaning ambassadors will be hired, including working with an employment agency or partnerships with community navigators (community agencies). Mr. Cullen reiterated that this is a draft budget proposal since these items will not be solidified until the entity exists. Aldersperson Gilbert asked about how the budget amounts were determined without knowing this information. Mr. Cullen explained that the proposed budget was based on the estimated number of hours per week for ambassadors for specific services which was approximately 120 hours for maintenance, beautification, etc. Aldersperson Gilbert inquired if this information was based on three full-time salaries. Mr. Cullen said the ambassadors would not be full-time positions.

Aldersperson Gilbert inquired if the line item in the budget for \$55,000.00 was for a contract for services. Mr. Cullen confirmed. Aldersperson Gilbert said she was referring to the line item for



community navigators. Mr. Cullen explained that would be determined and if it were a partnership with an existing agency then those funds would be for contracted services. He said conversations regarding a potential five-year contract for services have gone well with agency directors.

Alderson Gilbert inquired about the number of grants that could be awarded based on the line item amount of \$60,000.00 and whether there is a cap on the amount of the grants. Mr. Cullen explained this program would be similar to the City's program but could be obtained in addition to grants available through the City. He shared that Bettendorf has a similar program and budgeted for \$50,000.00 that was able to be leveraged for a total of \$250,000.00 in the past year.

Alderson Gilbert asked about the design assistance grant. Mr. Cullen explained this grant is in response to entrepreneurs interested in starting a business and working with the City CED department regarding detailed needs for specific spaces which currently does not occur in Rock Island. Alderson Gilbert inquired about the number of grants that could be generated and if there is a cap on the amount. Mr. Cullen reiterated this budget proposal is a draft and policies and procedures for each program would be solidified at a later time.

Alderson Gilbert inquired about the details of the entrepreneur grant in the amount of \$10,000.00. Mr. Cullen reiterated that these details would be solidified at a later time and that these proposed programs were modeled after programs in the Downtown Davenport Partnership, who has implemented this with success. He explained that an unmet need has been identified by entrepreneurs and business owners that would like to start up and this funding is not currently available. This would be a flexible, forgivable grant to assist in starting up. Alderson Gilbert expressed confusion about the budget amount. Mr. Cullen explained the proposed budget amount is about half of the amount budgeted for the Downtown Davenport Partnership for this program due to Rock Island being about half the size of Davenport.

Alderson Gilbert asked Alderson Healy what the value of Davenport's downtown property was versus the value of Rock Island's downtown. Alderson Healy approximated \$186 million as the value of Davenport's downtown properties. Kyle Carter, Executive Director of the Downtown Davenport Partnership and Vice President of Place Management for the Chamber approached the podium to address the questions asked. Mr. Carter reported that value of Davenport's downtown varies between \$186 million and \$200 million depending on the value of Mid-American as a utility and utilizes a budget of roughly \$1.5 million. Alderson Gilbert asked what the value of Rock Island's downtown properties. Mr. Cullen said the assessment for Illinois is different than Iowa and approximated the value of Rock Island's downtown as \$30 million which equates to approximately \$90 million in fair market terms.

Mr. Carter remarked on an earlier question regarding the number of grants to be generated from the façade grant. He said the program in Davenport has a maximum of a \$15,000.00 match but that number changes depending on the need so the total number of grants varies.

Alderson Gilbert asked what experience is required for cleaning ambassadors. Mr. Carter responded that required experience is very minimal for basic cleaning services including picking up trash and cleaning windows. Most of the training provided is to ensure that people understand the mission and the role they play in the goals for downtown. Alderson Gilbert asked if the budget reflected seasonal needs. Mr. Carter responded affirmatively and said his previous experience and the Chamber's experience were utilized to propose a budget that is feasible for the needs of Downtown Rock Island.

Alderson Gilbert inquired about the supplies line item. Mr. Carter clarified that a utility vehicle would be needed to complete work in downtown and the budget line item was representative of that. Mr. Cullen added that conversations regarding partnerships with Public Works and other City departments have identified the need to establish responsibilities in downtown for all parties.

He said his discussions have been very collaborative and expressed optimism in working relationships to provide more resources for downtown.

Aldersperson Gilbert asked what was included in the advocacy and promotions budget including the line items for marketing as \$15,000.00 and events as \$15,000.00. Mr. Carter explained that hosting events and festivals is very expensive and the priorities of the proposed program were cleaning the streets and assistance for businesses and the budget reflect those as priorities as reported by the Downtown Steering Committee. He said smaller events such as a small band and a food truck would make an impact in downtown and are within the proposed budget. Mr. Cullen added that there is a desire for smaller, more intimate events since the pandemic. Smaller, more frequent events help to build culture more than one large annual event.

Aldersperson Gilbert remarked about the lack of a line item in the budget for private security for supplementing the Police Department. Mr. Carter explained that the role of the community navigator is to act as a liaison between police and the private sector and that a business district would not replace the role of the police. Aldersperson Gilbert remarked the number one concern in the downtown is safety.

Aldersperson Gilbert asked why the Chamber was charging the City an almost \$70,000.00 management fee and how that amount was determined. Mr. Carter explained the fee represents the expertise and experience of members of the Chamber, the CFO function, the CEO function, and marketing by the Chamber as the fee represents the work of support staff. Aldersperson Gilbert shared her observation of the marketing line item and the marketing execution function and requested these be differentiated. Mr. Carter clarified one is for paying for staff time and the other is for buying ads.

Aldersperson Gilbert asked if promises had been made to entities that have pledged private donations. Mr. Carter stated the only promise made has been to make Downtown Rock Island a better place. He said the private sector is coming to the public sector through the contract in place to make improvements to downtown. The individuals from the public sector have the best intentions to build a public-private partnership to include City representation on the board of directors including the City Administrator, the CED director, and Council. Transparency is a shared vision and necessary for the SSA to be successful.

Aldersperson Healy said he is supportive of the SSA, however he is concerned that salaries and fees make up forty-four percent of the budget, but doesn't address concrete changes in the downtown. He opined the \$70,000.00 fee is unreasonable. Mr. Carter clarified that the dollar amount is inclusive of benefits and does not reflect take-home pay. He added investment is needed to dig ourselves out of where we are to get where we want to go. The decision of how to move forward with the downtown is the Council's decision and prerogative.

Aldersperson Hurt asked who makes the hiring decision for the Operations Director. Mr. Carter said staffing is managed by the Chamber as part of the agreement. Aldersperson Hurt asked if this included the Executive Director position. Mr. Carter explained that boards are typically more involved in the selection of an Executive Director but that this situation is unique in that Mr. Cullen is already established as the Executive Director of this program.

Aldersperson Gilbert inquired if a flat tax for each parcel was considered by the Chamber. She stated it may be more palatable to property owners as they recover from the pandemic if even just for the first year. Mr. Carter said the 1.15% tax is a flat fee. Aldersperson Gilbert clarified that her question was intended as a flat fee in a dollar amount. Mr. Carter stated that the SSA is bound by limitations set in place by the State of Illinois and is unsure if that would be possible. He reiterated that the proposal reflects what that Chamber thought was best and that it can be changed as needed.

Nicole Watson-Lam addressed Council and opined 1.15% is fair as properties with lower taxes will pay a lower amount. She addressed the previously mentioned safety and security and explained the liaison would allow police to address violent crimes in other parts of Rock Island versus wasting their time on nuisance behaviors occurring in downtown. She also expressed concern regarding the hostility toward representatives proposing the SSA and support for Rock Island as a whole. Alderperson Gilbert reported understanding and concern for the business owners notified of the potential tax two weeks prior. Ms. Watson-Lam explained that everyone has access to the information and what they choose to do with it is up to them. Alderperson Gilbert expressed concern about the timeline of notice and the need for details to make an informed decision. Ms. Watson-Lam suggested sending questions in an email format to ensure all questions could be answered.

Alderperson Healy shared his concern that business owners are not being contacted regarding the proposed SSA including a business owner he spoke with who has owned a business for 73 years in Downtown Rock Island. He opined that they should have met with all business owners. Mr. Carter explained that not all property owners could be met with in person and the letter was sent out as a best effort to ensure property owners were aware of the proposal. He said the vote in August is to establish the beginning of the process of establishing the SSA. The state statute was designed to allow time for changes and opportunities to voice opposition. He explained that as much information was gathered as possible within the timeline the Chamber was putting together in the proposal.

Mr. Carter further explained the process of establishing an SSA is a little different for each community. He said the private sector would like to be a part of the solution for Downtown Rock Island. He expressed support for the proposed SSA and shared concerns about potential future challenges that may be experienced if the SSA proposal is not approved. Mr. Cullen commented that the mailer had effectively connected several property owners with him for discussion. He asked Alderperson Healy for contact information for the aforementioned business owner.

Alderperson Poulos inquired about the best contact information for individuals within the SSA proposed area to contact Mr. Cullen. Mr. Cullen reported his contact information is listed on the mailer and on the City of Rock Island website including his office phone number and email. Alderperson Gilbert asked if the mailer was posted on the City website. Mr. Cullen said it was not currently, but that it could be. Alderperson Poulos expressed support for the proposed SSA and potential for addressing the nuisance behavior in downtown and the negative reputation.

Mr. Carter remarked that the proposed timeline is to ensure that tax dollars are received to fund the project next year. He also explained that the contract with the Chamber expires in December.

Alderperson Robinson expressed support of the SSA and Jack and thanked the Downtown Steering Committee members for their hard work. He requested increased communication from Mr. Cullen to the Council so that Alderpersons can address questions and concerns from constituents. Mr. Cullen encouraged Council to share his contact information so that concerned parties can directly connect with him to address questions and concerns.

Mayor Thoms said the City of Rock Island has had very good success with public-private partnerships, including Friends of Hauberg and Friends of Douglas Park and none of those partnerships have been scrutinized like this one. He opined the bureaucracy and red tape bog things down and the City misses opportunities. If the City waits and misses this opportunity, business and property owners could move and invest somewhere else. Whether or not this is considered a tight schedule is irrelevant as the meeting schedule can be adjusted to allow the City to support local business owners. He said receiving feedback from all of the business owners would not be feasible. He declared it is not the role of the City or Council to dictate how dollars are spent and private businesses should be supported in the endeavor to improve

Downtown Rock Island. He explained the need for the City to respond in a timely manner to requests that improve the quality of life for Rock Island citizens and stakeholders.

Alderson Hurt said members of Council are not opposed to the SSA, but are concerned with making uninformed decisions. He explained the questions and comments by Council were not made in opposition to the proposed SSA. Mayor Thoms stated he understood, and added that a survey for the City would likely yield unfavorable results because of previous inaction. He explained that business and property owners have been let down due to inconsistent follow through on services. Alderson Hurt said there have been previous situations in which Council did not ask questions that led to a lack of follow through. He opined everyone would like a vibrant downtown and Council is responsible for asking questions on the behalf of the public.

Alderson Swanson stated her support for an SSA, but said she wanted to ensure individuals in opposition have the time necessary to voice their concerns. Mayor Thoms said the proposed timeline allows for feedback. Alderson Poulos confirmed that Council has until December to decide. Mayor Thoms responded affirmatively.

Alderson Healy voiced support for an SSA for Downtown Rock Island but stated concern for the amount of funds allocated for salaries versus tangible changes that business owners would prefer. Mayor Thoms responded in agreement and said changes could still be made to the draft proposal including the managing organization. Mr. Carter clarified the proposal specifically identified the Chamber as the managing organization. He also explained that operating expenses will always be higher than capital expenses due to the nature of the business. He said the capital budget could be increased if the City were to contribute more dollars as this proposal was conservative.

Alderson Gilbert made a correction to Alderson Poulos's comment regarding the timeline and the December deadline for a decision. She said November 7, 2022 was the deadline for the second reading of the second ordinance. City Manager Thompson provided clarification for the deadline for the second reading of the second ordinance as the last Tuesday in December for tax purposes.

16. Claims for the week of July 1 through July 7, 2022 in the amount of \$340,218.18; for the week of July 8 through July 14, 2022 in the amount of \$538,798.14; and payroll for the weeks of June 27 through July 10, 2022 in the amount of \$1,653,981.93.

MOTION:

Alderson Swanson moved to allow the claims and payroll; Alderson Healy seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Gilbert, Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, and Hurt. Nay: None. Absent: None.

17. Report from the Public Works Department regarding a Memorandum of Agreement between the City and Augustana College to provide professional services related to the development of a Lead Service Line Material Inventory, with a budget not to exceed \$113,500.00.

MOTION:

Alderson Poulos moved to authorize the City Manager to execute the Memorandum of

Agreement; Alderperson Swanson seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Gilbert, Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, and Hurt. Nay: None. Absent: None.

18. Report from the City Clerk regarding a Resolution approving the partial release of Closed Session minutes and the destruction of audio recordings for the same Closed Session meetings.

MOTION:

Alderperson Gilbert moved to approve the partial release of Closed Session minutes as recommended and adopt the resolution; Alderperson Poulos seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Gilbert, Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, and Hurt. Nay: None. Absent: None.

19. Report from the City Clerk's office regarding a request from Augustana College to use sound amplification on Saturday, August 28, 2022 from 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. outside in the Lower Quad of the Augustana campus.

MOTION:

Alderperson Poulos moved to approve the sound amplification request as recommended; Alderperson Hurt seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Gilbert, Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, and Hurt. Nay: None. Absent: None.

20. Report received from the City Clerk's office regarding a request from Allen Shay of CCKMA requesting sound amplification on Saturday, September 10, 2022 from 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. for their annual Poker Run fundraiser event.

MOTION:

Alderperson Healy moved to approve the sound amplification request as recommended; Alderperson Swanson seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Gilbert, Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, and Hurt. Nay: None. Absent: None.

21. Other Business

Council voted to move other business (item twenty-one) to immediately follow item fifteen.

22. Closed Session

This item was removed from the agenda.

23. Motion to Adjourn.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Poulos moved to adjourn; Aldersperson Healy seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Gilbert, Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, and Hurt. Nay: None. Absent: None.

The meeting concluded at 9:02 p.m.

\_\_\_\_Naomi Sanderson\_\_\_\_\_

Naomi Sanderson, Deputy City Clerk