



# WHEATON CITY COUNCIL PLANNING SESSION MINUTES

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MAYOR PHILIP J. SUESS

COUNCILMAN MICHAEL BARBIER | COUNCILWOMAN ERICA BRAY-PARKER | COUNCILMAN SCOTT BROWN  
COUNCILWOMAN SUZANNE FITCH | COUNCILWOMAN LYNN ROBBINS | COUNCILMAN SCOTT WELLER

WHEATON CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 303 W WESLEY STREET, WHEATON, ILLINOIS 60187

Monday, August 9, 2021

## 1. Call to Order

The Wheaton City Council Planning Session was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Suess. The following were:

### Physically Present:

Councilman Barbier  
Councilwoman Bray-Parker  
Councilman Brown  
Councilwoman Robbins  
Mayor Suess  
Councilman Weller

### Absent:

Councilwoman Fitch

### City Staff Physically Present:

Mike Dzugan, City Manager  
John Duguay, Assistant City Manager  
Robert Lehnhardt, Director of Finance  
Joseph Tebrugge, Director of Engineering  
Daniel Peck, Public Relations Coordinator

## 2. Approval of July 26, 2021 Minutes

The Council approved the July 26, 2021 City Council Planning Session minutes.

## 3. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

## 4. Debt Management Policy Update

City Manager Dzugan stated that City staff is seeking Council feedback on recommended changes to the City's Debt Management Policy. City staff will incorporate any changes and prepare a resolution for the Council's consideration at the August 16, 2021, City Council Meeting.

City staff and the City's financial advisor, Robert W. Baird & Co., Inc. ("Baird") presented recommended updates to strengthen the City's current debt management policy prior to the proposed issuance of approximately \$52 million in pension obligation bonds to fund the police and firefighters' pension plan unfunded liabilities.

Director of Finance Lehnhardt stated that the proposed policy provides more details on the City's current process for when the City considers issuing debt and is expanded to include goals and objectives; legal authority, debt limitations; credit industry benchmarks; debt issuance considerations; and debt administration.

The objective of the proposed policy is to obtain debt financing only when necessary; to set forth the process to identify the timing and amount of debt needed to be as efficient as possible; and proceed with the method of sale that will generate favorable interest rates and minimize other costs.

Director of Finance Lehnhardt stated that highlights within the proposed policy include additional language on the City's general obligation debt limitation policy to exclude all outstanding revenue bonds and general obligation debt that are fully supported and payable from enterprise funds from the City's debt limit calculation; the City's debt limitation is equal to 5% of the City's equalized assessed value; and the addition of specific credit implications and credit industry benchmarks that should be considered in developing debt issuance plans.

In response to Council questions, Dalena Welkomer of Baird stated that it is common for municipalities to exclude general obligation bond debt from their debt limitation calculation. She stated that under Illinois state statute, non-Home-Rule municipalities that issued general obligation bonds supported by enterprise funds are excluded from debt limitations providing there is no need for a property tax levy to support the debt service.

In response to Council questions, Ms. Welkomer stated that TIF revenue bonds that do not have general obligation bond support are excluded from the debt limit calculation.

In response to Council questions, Ms. Welkomer stated that the issuance of pension obligation bonds would count toward the City's debt limit calculation and the City's credit agency debt ratio evaluation.

## **5. Streams Lake Analysis**

City Manager Dzugan stated that the Streams Lakes Analysis is a continuation of a discussion about the ownership of the land associated with the Streams Subdivision private properties and a legal investigation into a whether a long-term solution, apart from dredging, could be achieved as a legal method for removing sedimentation from the lakes located in the subdivision. The City currently needs to dredge the lakes approximately every 6-8 years for to remove sediment, with the most recent dredging costing approximately \$695,000 in 2016.

City staff is seeking guidance on from the Council on whether the to hire a consulting engineer to provide potential long-term solutions for the Streams Lakes remediation.

City Attorney Knippen provided an overview of the Streams Lakes, Spring Brook Creek, and the Spring Brook Watershed.

The Spring Brook Watershed is a basin that collects precipitation and other surface water, then drains into the DuPage River. Spring Brook Creek is the original natural watercourse running through the watershed that drains into Lake 2 of the Streams Lakes, which has become a sedimentation basin for the creek. A manmade channel, referred to as Drainage Ditch 1, was also constructed in 1896 alongside Spring Brook Creek. The City does not own the Streams Lakes, Spring Brook Creek, Drainage Ditch 1, or any of the property that immediately borders these waterways, except for roads and bridges that cross Spring Brook Creek and the inlets and sewer outlets that deposit drainage into the Streams Lakes. Currently the City dredges the Streams Lakes every 6-8 years to remove sediment deposits to avoid creating a natural dam, which may result in flooding in the area.

Two previous studies were conducted to review potential long-term solutions for the Streams Lakes remediation. The first study was completed by Patrick Engineering in 1987, and the second was completed by DuPage County Stormwater Management in 2015. Both studies concluded that the waterways are not flowing fast enough to keep sediment from settling.

City Attorney Knippen reviewed the legalities of the City's on-going dredging and the pursuit of a long-term solution for the Streams Lakes remediation.

City Attorney Knippen stated that the City probably does not have a legal duty to remediate the sedimentation issue in Spring Brook Creek or Streams Lakes, as they are part of the Spring Brook Creek Watershed. He stated that if the City has a duty or voluntarily elects to dredge all or any portion, it could cross private property to do so, and the City could legally elect a remediation option other than dredging. He stated that the City could increase the flow of water through the Spring Brook Watershed, providing no damaged is incurred on adjoining private properties.

In response to Council questions, Director of Engineering Tebrugge stated that the Streams Lakes sediment has not reached the level for dredging to be required this year and the dredging has been moved to the 2022 Capital Improvement Project list.

In response to Council questions, Director of Engineering Tebrugge stated that if the City were to stop dredging the Streams Lakes, the sediment would eventually breach the surface of the water and could cause environmental issues in addition to bad odors.

In response to Council questions, Director of Engineering Tebrugge recommended that the potential consulting engineering firm's study encompass the area near the Wheaton Sanitary District's discharge through the Streams Lakes area when evaluating a long-term solution for the Streams Lakes remediation.

Council directed staff to pursue a consulting engineer to provide potential long-term solutions for the Streams Lakes remediation.

## **6. City Council/City Staff Comments**

Councilman Barbier stated that National Night Out was a great community event and expressed his gratitude to the Wheaton Police Department, organizers, and sponsors of the event.

Mayor Suess seconded Councilman Barbier's comments.

Councilwoman Bray-Parker recognized the beginning of the 2021/2022 school year and encouraged residents to slow down and follow traffic patterns outlined by schools when driving. She wished everyone a positive and productive school year.

Mayor Suess congratulated the Wheaton Park District and the Downtown Wheaton Association on their recent Frida Friday, Wheaton Brew Fest, and Sunday concerts, and stated that he enjoyed seeing people out in the community over the weekend.

## **7. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel J. Peck