

**MINUTES
CITY OF DEKALB
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
JUNE 22, 2020**

The City Council of DeKalb, Illinois held a Committee of the Whole meeting on June 22, 2020, in the Yusunas Meeting Room of DeKalb Public Library, 309 Oak Street, DeKalb, Illinois.

A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Mayor Smith called the meeting to order at 5 p.m.

City Clerk Lynn Fazekas called the roll, and the following members of the City Council were present: Alderman Carolyn Morris, Alderman Bill Finucane, Alderman Tracy Smith, Alderman Greg Perkins, Alderman Scott McAdams, Alderman Mike Verbic, Alderman Tony Faivre, and Mayor Jerry Smith.

Although Alderman McAdams was present at the meeting, Clerk Fazekas (who attended remotely) was unable to hear his answer and originally announced a total of seven present at the meeting.

Also present were: City Manager Bill Nicklas and Management Analyst Jason Blumenthal.

B. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mayor Smith asked for a motion to approve the agenda if no one had deletions or additions to make.

MOTION

Alderman Verbic moved to approve the agenda. Alderman Smith seconded.

VOTE

Motion carried 7-0-1 on roll call vote. Clerk Fazekas, under the impression Alderman McAdams was absent, did not call him (and only seven of the body could be seen in the video portion of the meeting, which reinforced this impression). Aye: Morris, Finucane, Smith, Perkins, Verbic, Faivre, Mayor Smith. Nay: none. Absent: McAdams (due to not being called during the vote).

C. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation is wholly described under the listed discussion item below, D.1.

D. CONSIDERATIONS

1. Town Hall Discussion for Justice and Equality

Mayor Smith read the consideration item and an introduction to the discussion.

John Rey commented in person. He spoke in support of Black Lives Matter, related issues such as the need to address inequities in housing and healthcare, and the need for systemic change. He asserted the City has thus far dealt with systemic racism in episodic and incremental fashion.

Mayor Smith read a comment submitted online by Carolyn Massey. Ms. Massey commended DeKalb Police for employing the expertise of the trauma-informed initiative in the City and noted those services should be available 24/7. She suggested using as its model the 30-year-old CAHOOTS program (Crisis Assistance Helping Out on the Streets) which she said successfully uses specialized teams to respond to crisis calls instead of (or in addition to) armed officers.

There was no public comment via remote participation at first, and Alderman Morris suggested Council might discuss the demands of Black Lives Matter in the absence of public comment.

Amy K. Levin participated remotely. She said she was furious and ashamed at the behavior of fellow white people. She said it is not going to be enough to have equity for Black people and other minorities in DeKalb but will take work going in multiple directions to address issues associated with white supremacy, such as hostility and vandalism.

While awaiting further public comments amid technical difficulties, Mayor Smith invited council members to talk about issues pertinent to the agenda.

Alderman McAdams described a program in Aurora, where dispatchers screen for mental illness during police calls. He said mental illness issues account for 40-50% of first shift calls there.

Steve Kapitan participated in person. He said he likes the idea of liability insurance for individual police officers, perhaps in conjunction with licensing.

Herb Rubin participated remotely. He commented that the City was not running the "chat" feature in the Zoom application, which he said is helpful in sending messages to the host, and when there are technical problems. Mr. Rubin also noted that several other groups are likewise working on ideas for racial justice, and requested the City schedule another town hall-style meeting to receive them. He asked when the Human Relations Committee (HRC) report will be ready, and how it will be handled. He suggested a public hearing on it as well.

At the mayor's invitation, City Manager Nicklas answered that the HRC report will be ready on July 13 and will include HRC recommendations finalized during HRC's July 7 meeting.

Mark Charvat participated remotely. He observed the Zoom meetings application allows the end user to record a meeting if the host allows it and suggested allowing the recording function in the spirit of open government. Mr. Charvat also noted several aldermen have not publicly shared their views and said he would like to hear from each council member on what should be implemented.

JJ Wett participated remotely. He said police brutality should not be addressed in a vacuum but rather along with other racial justice endeavors including addressing economic and educational issues.

Sarah Glynn participated remotely. She expressed concern about a provision for expungement of police disciplinary records found in the current labor contract with the police union, and wanted to know if there is something Council can do about that.

Irene Rubin participated remotely. She noted the Illinois Supreme Court has ruled negotiated expungement of police disciplinary records for abuses of power to be illegal in labor contracts.

Amber (no last name given) participated remotely. She commented on the co-policing initiative between NIU and DeKalb, saying the agreement is missing the assignment of liability as required by statute, and she asked for action to add the required verbiage.

Katie (no last name given) participated remotely. She thanked the City for listening to demands, but cautioned the work cannot be done in a piecemeal way, and asked that the City explain why some items are regarded as hard to implement. Katie also stated it bothers her the police station sits across from the Center for Black Studies with an intimidating building, name, and signage that she said tends to create a divide.

Bessie Chronopoulos participated remotely. She commended the City for the discussions and urged that the sessions continue, observing that the Human Relations Committee mission can be a catalyst and "built-in mechanism" to help Council in its work.

Aldermen Verbic and Alderman Perkins each spoke about accumulating community input in efforts to identify action items and a path forward.

E. EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO 5 ILCS (120/2)

No executive session was authorized during this meeting.

F. ADJOURNMENT

After ascertaining no one else wished to speak to the discussion item, Mayor Smith asked for a motion to adjourn.

MOTION

Alderman Faivre moved to adjourn the Committee of the Whole. Alderman Verbic seconded.

VOTE

Motion carried 7-1 on roll call vote. Aye: Smith, Perkins, McAdams, Verbic, Faivre, Finucane, Mayor Smith. Nay: Morris. Mayor Smith declared adjournment at 5:58 p.m.

LYNN A. FAZEKAS, City Clerk

Approved by City Council: July 13, 2020.