

**COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE
MINUTES
March 16, 2021**

Mayor Gallo called the Committee-of-the-Whole meeting via Zoom Teleconferencing to order at 7:30 p.m.

COUNCIL IN ATTENDANCE REMOTELY: Aldermen Karen McHale, Nick Budmats, Kevin O'Brien, Jenifer Vinezeano, Jon Bisesi, John D'Astice and Lara Sanoica

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF IN ATTENDANCE REMOTELY: City Manager Barry Krumstok, Finance Director Melissa Gallagher, Deputy City Clerk Judy Brose, Assistant to City Manager Lori Ciezak, Police Chief John Nowacki, Fire Chief Jeff Moxley, Deputy Fire Chief Rick Acosta, Director Public Works Rob Horne, Assistant Director Public Works Jo Ellen Charlton, Business Advocate Martha Corner, City Attorney Melissa Wolf, Police Outreach Social Services Specialist Dr. Natalia Nieves

Those who are joining us via Zoom or in the City Council Chambers will be afforded the opportunity for public comment to address the City Council on matters that are on tonight's agenda after the City Council discusses with Staff.

Members of the public present in the City Council Chambers listening to the meeting will be afforded the opportunity to provide public comment in accordance with the procedures applicable to public comment at an in-person meeting of the City Council. Namely, members of the public must have signed-in before the start of the meeting.

Public comment will also be afforded to the public who are joining us on this conference line as long as they provided their contact credentials and the subject matter for which they would like to speak about before the deadline as noted on tonight's agenda. Written comments that were submitted prior to the meeting will also be read out loud after the topic is discussed by Council.

We ask that persons wishing to address the City Council keep their comments to 5 minutes in length. Comments must be addressed to the Council as a whole through the Mayor, and profanity will not be tolerated.

Please note, items were not discussed in the order as listed on the Agenda

1) Coach Light Condominium Structural Fire on December 29, 2020 Update/Summary

Barry Krumstok, City Manager – This update/summary was requested from a conversation with two Aldermen. We took the information that we could provide and show you what each of the departments did from that early morning fire on 12/29/20 until now. Both Chiefs are here, Assistant Director Public Works JoEllen Charlton can address any questions regarding Community Development/Public Works and Dr. Nieves is also here. Additionally, the GoFundMe page is still active, if anyone makes any more contributions it would still go to the individuals affected directly from the fire. This is just an update/summary to show you the steps that we took and show you the ongoing efforts of the departments.

Alderman Budmats – Dr. Nieves, is there any other assistance that we can provide at this point to you to help the citizens who suffered this devastating fire?

March 16, 2021

COW Minutes

Page 2 of 18

Dr. Natalia Nieves, Police Outreach Social Services Specialist - That's a good question and I don't know if I have a specific answer. I can tell you that so many of the families particularly those that were most impacted are still needing financial assistance. While I was able to help them with Salvation Army funds for help with electric. The electric bill was the only thing covered because they are not renters so I couldn't help them with rent. The program that was passed earlier, the monies that were donated to Salvation Army was only for COVID relief so they wouldn't qualify. In short, these folks need money, a lot of financial assistance. They've also needed case management which I have taken upon myself to offer them. I think if you were to ask them directly many would say financial assistance.

Mayor Gallo - As far as beyond financial assistance, is there any articles of clothing that you've heard come up that maybe we could put ask out for residents or help gather for them?

Dr. Natalia Nieves, Police Outreach Social Services Specialist - Not right now. The problem is that many of them are still displaced and there is no date for them coming back to their homes. Most of them are staying temporarily at hotels or staying with family members. Five families had no insurance. Some have been able to rent apartments temporarily. The community has been wonderful asking about clothing drives but unfortunately not yet because it's hard to live in a place that's temporary and have more stuff to bring once they go back home.

Alderman Vinezeano - I know you said that there is still financial assistance needed, can you give us an idea of an amount of type of financial assistance some of these families are looking for? I know we have caps on the Salvation Army for the COVID relief but do you have an idea of what that would look like?

Dr. Natalia Nieves, Police Outreach Social Services Specialist - I think it varies case-by-case. My most severe case is facing foreclosure because they have to pay a mortgage, association fees and rent for an apartment. So it's hard to put a number that is reasonable and each case is so different, there are 17 families affected. I don't know if I could put a number. For each family I could probably come up with a number separately but I don't know such a number would make an impact. I could tell you that a local church has been able to help one of the families that was mostly affected with one month rent and security deposit and that was really helpful and I think that was about \$2000. Would that help with number?

Alderman Vinezeano - Sure, any number would help us to get an idea. I was one of the Aldermen that asked to have this topic brought to Council because I feel like this can be a learning experience for us as Council members and as City staff. I wanted to know what other resources could we have benefited from when this event happened?

Dr. Natalia Nieves, Police Outreach Social Services Specialist - As I was juggling my work with the Police Department with crime victims and really trying to find the time because it is so time-consuming, to obtain resources and advocate for the families and properly connect them with resources is really not just giving them a list, it's calling for them as there is a bit of a language barrier for many of the families. I could have used a case manager. My students helped tremendously but a case manager position that would really take care of them, just being dedicated to them would have been helpful in my opinion.

Alderman Vinezeano - Do you think with Council approving that additional part-time social worker that would have substantiated the time you would have needed to allocate in this situation?

Dr. Natalia Nieves, Police Outreach Social Services Specialist – Yes, any help at this point.

Alderman Vinezeano - Does staff have any input about any other resources we could we have benefited from?

John Nowacki, Police Chief - I want to thank Dr. Nieves for all the help she's done. The issue we've had we had was that were so many families that were displaced because of the fire, it was pretty much overwhelming. We did have a lot of things in place initially but I think where we struggled was the length of how long these families are displaced. I think that's where we're having issues. We did have partnerships with Palatine Township and hotel vouchers and on the night of the fire we made sure that families that had no place to go we put them up in hotels. Short-term, I think we definitely have things in place with food vouchers and other assistance we can provide. However, it's amazing how long-term this has been because I thought for sure we would already have the families in their homes and that has not been the case. I think if you're looking for ways we could improve, obviously having funds to sustain a long-term placement of multiple families would be a plus. The issue is we rely on other agencies for that and that's been very difficult trying to get these families help from other agencies. Dr. Nieves has been doing a great job trying to be an advocate for them but it's been a long road. If you're looking for suggestions in the future I would just say a little more plans in place for long-term placement of individuals such as this or anyone for anyone that loses their housing. When someone loses their home they have to go somewhere especially families with kids or other issues so that's really been a struggle.

Alderman Vinezeano - Moving forward, what changes, if any, are we going to make? I'm hoping that we learn something from this and that we as a Council and as a City we can plan, hopefully we never have to use plan, but what can we do in the future?

John Nowacki, Police Chief - The leadership shown by the Mayor and City Council with giving us the additional social worker is going to be tremendous to help us mitigate situations like this if they do arise in the future but hopefully they don't. Part of the issue was we were doing this transition right at the start when this occurred so we were still cross training with the additional social worker and there were some other issues that we were working through. We weren't quite up to speed long-term but like I said with the additional social worker will definitely be able to ease the burden that Dr. Nieves has been involved with. I think we definitely made some strong progress forward with the additional personnel to help families such as this. So I think in the future we're definitely in a better situation then we were and I do look forward to the increased services that we are going to be able to provide with the Council allowing the additional social worker and I just want to thank you all for that. We're definitely moving in the right direction I just wish it was a little faster but these things do take time.

Alderman Vinezeano - I know we have partnerships and resources like Salvation Army and Palatine Township. Moving forward I would just like to really explore different opportunities that we can partner with. I asked if we can ask a neighboring town if we could borrow one of their social workers in these instances because I knew Dr. Nieves was going to be stretched very, very thin. I think having that new part-time position is going to be beneficial but resources like that and a plan in place. We have the hospital right here and there are several social workers there and I feel like there is a lot of resources in our area that we could benefit from as a community in a situation like this. In our uneventful times such as now in planning that we establish those relationships and set them up so that when we do need to act upon we could call upon them. I did have a resident suggest was volunteers from the community such as translators or if they needed people to help move their items from the apartment complex to another place. Just getting the information out there. Mayor Gallo got the fundraiser out there but being a little bit more transparent with the community in what the exact needs are, we have an extremely generous community that want to contribute and I think if they know what the need is we may fill a lot of gaps that we're looking for.

Dr. Natalia Nieves, Police Outreach Social Services Specialist - I just wanted to go into a little more detail because I think it's important to explain a little bit more on how I was able to use the community partners that are in existence. I don't get anything done by myself as I strongly count on the community partners quite a bit. As soon as this happened I immediately reached out to Elk Grove Township which is where Coach Light Condominiums is located and they were able to help with gift cards and one month condo association fees and

that's basically it. They don't have the bilingual staff to be able to do case management. I also reached out to the schools where the children attended and the schools were able to count them as homeless because they are without the ability to live in their homes so they could have access to transportation and I believe reduced or no fees for certain things and they also gave them the gift cards. I also collaborated with some of the nonprofits in the area and received a lot of ideas. I presented at a local partners meeting where we talk about ways to work together with the stakeholders in the area and what usually ends up happening is that everyone is eager to help with ideas but everyone is very clear about their job duties. That is probably why I'm still so involved with the families because nobody was really willing to take them under their wing and take responsibility for them so obviously I did. Another idea that came from a social service provider is to have for the future to establish some type of charitable fund for these crises when they come up like an Angel Fund or a Rolling Meadows Cares Fund or something like that. If it existed I could just tap into and not scramble around and find some money for folks when crises like this happens because unfortunately it's just a matter of time.

Barry Krumstok, City Manager - I want to bring up a few things. We already talked about the new full-time social worker but I do want to address a few things that's in the report. The actual timeline that you see from Community Development, this is an older building and with older buildings they do have issues such as the water, water lines, electrical meters etc. I want to point that the asbestos is creating its own delay. We wanted you to see that working with the association and management firm and how long it has been taking on their side. Again, an older building does have certain issues, this one did not have fire stops between some of the areas that require it. Again, the asbestos is taking the longest time and causing the delay. Public Works and Community Development are taking extra steps making sure they install additional valves and making sure they can isolate certain things such as the water or electrical. Some of the apartments just need some work and then the families can move back in. The report shows the timetable of what has happened already. Community development is continuously working with the management company and the contractors. When other fires happen it usually doesn't take this long but this one has additional steps that need to be done and that's what's creating some the delays with this management company.

Alderman Sanoica - I wanted to clarify on the suggestion that Alderman Vinezeano had brought up about utilizing residents to assist in these types of matters. I think that everyone's heart is in the right place when they're referring to wanting to help. I also want to clarify that when Dr. Nieves is referring to case management, the students that are working on case management have done extensive training to do so and have that skill set. I would also say that if we're going to be leveraging any other staff or interpreters from the area that these are interpreters that are certified and that have training in doing so because we also want to make sure that the services that are being provided are of a high quality. Dr. Nieves, is there anything that you can say as far as the type of specialized work that would be involved in an emergency like this?

Dr. Natalia Nieves, Police Outreach Social Services Specialist - When I say case management I really mean just knowing the resources in the community that are very specific to the contextual needs that a family or individual might need. It's even anticipating needs like knowing where you find furniture that is clean and upholstered that have a protocol for accommodating families. Being able to apply for public services and trust me that is a skill because it is so tricky with the State of Illinois. I just had one of my client's from the fire get rejected. There's a lot of specialized knowledge that a person will have to now in order to be able to dive in and figure out what exactly they need. Someone may have lost their glasses in the context of leaving in the night or their medication, etc. and figuring out how to obtain that. It is hard to rely on volunteers for the immediate crisis as it relates to case management. Afterwards, I have a list of people that want to donate clothing, furniture, household items etc., the list will come in handy but not yet.

Alderman Sanoica - That does answer my question or rather the observations that I want to make sure that we have on public record for the Council and for the residents that are watching at home because I'm not saying that we wouldn't welcome help from other community partners or from residents that want to get involved. I think it's important that the Council and residents recognize that it takes time, effort and work to organize volunteers. If we only have right now one social worker for the entire City in the middle of a crisis we don't want to make more work by trying to help necessarily. I would want to make sure that Dr. Nieves has a team of people to be able to coordinate that type of an effort going forward. I wholeheartedly agree with Alderman Vinezeano's suggestion to be able to continue to work with community partners. Dr. Nieves, it sounds like you are aware of all of those partners and what their limits are. Earlier Chief Nowacki had mentioned that going forward we will as a City have to come up with a long-term funding strategy and the long-term partnership strategy to be able to deal with the aftermath of tragedy. I would agree that from this memo it sounds like the Fire Department and the Police Department did an excellent job of managing an emergency. They were being first responders using all the training and knowledge and resources that they had to make sure that there were no human fatalities and I'm very grateful for that and I know all the residents our very grateful for that. I would want to clarify Chief Nowacki's comment, Chief Nowacki, when you mentioned that working with some of our partner organizations you found, I don't know if you said resistance but I heard it essentially being resistance to helping residents long-term, could you talk a little bit more about that?

John Nowacki, Police Chief – Obviously, we don't have control over some of these other agencies, they have their own workloads and their own protocols. We want the best for our residents and the care for them. I don't know if resistance is the best word but we can't make an agency accept someone like Dr. Nieves said that one of the residents was rejected by the State of Illinois, we don't have control for that. That's what has been difficult, if we had our own internal mechanism or funding where we have control I think we wouldn't have those issues occur so frequently where we're at the mercy of these other agencies. If they don't want to accept our residents, if they can't help or don't have the funds or they don't have the time there's not much we can do. With that many families we just didn't have resources to take on and provide six months or year worth of housing for 17 families. When a true tragedy happens you want the systems in place and have established resources that's under our control.

Alderman Sanoica - Then resistance is not the word, limitations is probably more appropriate. I understand that much of what our Outreach Social Services Specialist is intending to do is to connect individuals with the City with these long-term agencies that have the resources to do so. My concern is when we really do need those long-term resources for a tragedy it doesn't seem like those resources are there as you're saying and I am concerned about our current model. In the past have we encountered these kinds of limitations with our normal day-to-day casework?

John Nowacki, Police Chief - We had a similar incident with a large-scale fire with a lot of displacements prior to my tenure so I'm not sure if there were issues or if it was at this magnitude, I don't know if anybody on the meeting can respond to that.

Dr. Natalia Nieves, Police Outreach Social Services Specialist - It was in March 2015 there was a major fire at Carriage Way and it was mainly Polish speaking families so I used a Polish interpreter at that time to communicate with them. Similarly, they were displaced for a very long time and I believe it was about 40 families and because it wasn't COVID times I was able to put together a resource fair two days after the fire had occurred. Similarly, I followed those families for a really long time and stayed with them as much as possible with similar limitations. Many of the resources that are out there will help one time and not keep them long-term.

Alderman Sanoica - My interpretation of this is that within five years we've had two major tragedies that have required this so this doesn't appear to be (*inaudible*) it appears to be the structure whether or not we are under COVID-19 this is probably something that we'll need to dedicate time, resources and planning towards.

Alderman Bisesi - One of the other people that spoke here mentioned something that kind of stuck with me, is if we ever thought about establishing some kind of a Rolling Meadows Cares some sort of a 501(c)(3) type thing that people could contribute throughout the year, have fundraisers, those types of things in addition to any GoFundMe pages. I was wondering if that's something that the Council would want to research and think about something like that. Wasn't there another big event in Woodfield Gardens because I know one of the buildings is missing? That probably displaced quite a few people as well. That's the thoughts that I was thinking about because when we had a Jaycee chapter in Rolling Meadows we did fundraisers for people who experienced a fire and stuff like that and raised some good money doing it. It would have helped out more if we had some kind of fund to put it into that was a 501(c)(3) to be able to do that because that was one of our challenges that we wanted to try and run the money through that. Just some thoughts I wanted to bring up. If any other city does anything like that but it would be something that I would be willing to pursue I'm just not sure where to start.

Dr. Natalia Nieves, Police Outreach Social Services Specialist – I made that suggestion based on my partner at Northbrook, they have an Angel Fund, that's why I said Angel Fund, Rolling Meadows Cares Fund or something along those lines, I could commit myself to finding out a little more information about how they administer those funds because they are a separate fund of the Village of Northbrook. It's ongoing and they have it for crises and the criteria so I could look into that and ask for details and share them with City Council if that would be helpful.

Alderman Bisesi – That would because I was thinking something like the City set up the Community Events Foundation as a charitable organization for people to contribute to. I would think this would be similar in some ways except for the administration of the money and that could almost work kind of like some of the funds that we already have except we might be able to put a little bit more marketing around via website and other things and any volunteer organizations that would want to run fundraisers to put money into it and stuff like that. It's something I would be more than willing to investigate I just need to know where to start.

Alderman O'Brien – I just want to thank Chief Nowacki, Dr. Nieves, Chief Moxley and Deputy Chief Acosta. The only feedback I received from residents that were very generous with gift cards is put them in touch with Dr. Nieves and everybody was first class there. Across the board to our first responders, not a Meadows firefighter but a nearby firefighter was injured during the call so thanks for that. As Alderman Sanoica did say we're so grateful that there wasn't any loss of life. I know this is water under the bridge at this point and not being privy to the previous Council, I wasn't on the Council at that time, most importantly is the loss of life which our first responders were able to make sure we didn't experience any but I also do think that there might be a silver lining is that there is no loss of structure. I can't imagine being displaced like these families have been but there was a quick response time the new location of the fire department and hopefully in time once the asbestos mediation and utilities are done they do have a house to go back to. Just passing on my own thanks and then the 4-6 residents that I put in touch with Dr. Nieves, Chief Moxley, DC Acosta and Chief Nowacki, though this they pass on their thanks as well.

Alderman Budmats - Based on something that Chief Nowacki said that it's taking a lot longer to get people back into the building than originally anticipated. Is there anything that Community Development can do to cut red tape? I don't know if it's necessarily them or the contractors who they're working with, what can we do to get the applications to the top of the pile and make sure they stay on top of the contractors so things are happening in a timely fashion to get these 17 families back into their homes?

JoEllen Charlton, Assistant Director Public Works - Community Development has been working very closely with both the contractors and the management company. Everything has risen to the top of the pile and they do have all the permits that they need. The delay has occurred because of the asbestos and because of the lead-time that was necessary to get the contractors on board and to get those contractors in and working around some of the

areas of the main things that needed to be replaced such as the water system. The asbestos contractor and other contractors all agreed that the asbestos needed to be cleared first so it would be safe for all the other contractors to go in. I believe that work began on March 4 and we are going out pretty regularly every week to confirm that the crews are in fact working and they're making progress. We were out there late last week and we weren't allowed to go in because they were doing work in the building but we did confirm that they're doing work. We are following up to the level that we can but it is something that is their project to manage. We're trying to make sure they don't sit on their hands and take too long but at the end of the day it's a project that we have to rely on the contractors and the management company to do the work.

Alderman Vinezeano - I happen to be at the site of the fire that morning seeing a patient across the way. A couple residents actually had questions about resources for emotional support for the tragedy even though they didn't live in the apartment building that it affected but these were their neighbors so there was a lot of additional (*inaudible*) and I know that a couple of them were talking amongst themselves about needing more information about such things as homeowners insurance and whatnot. I know that we do a lot of outreach in that area in those apartment complexes so I would hopefully like to add that to when we do those outreaches that maybe this be something that we add to that would be such things as homeowners insurance, renters insurance that maybe a lot of these families could have additional resources and some of this would have been negated had they been informed and been educated about those type of resources initially.

Alderman Sanoica – I just want to clarify, Dr. Nieves, you mentioned that most of these individuals had homeowners and renters insurance, is that correct? Only five families did not?

Dr. Natalia Nieves, Police Outreach Social Services Specialist - Yes, so the problem I learned is that the condo association requires homeowners insurance for every unit but they don't require renters insurance. None of my renters had renters insurance and one of my homeowners had not paid so they were uncovered. When this happened in 2015 I made it a point when I have my big resource fair at East Park/Coach Light in May, I make it a point to invite insurance companies and for my women's group I make it a point to invite an insurance agent so they can talk about the importance of renters insurance. It is my biggest fear that I live with as Police Social Worker for East Park for another fire of this magnitude to happen at East Park because they're all renters and I can guarantee you that there are very few of them have renters insurance and I definitely preach to them about that. That is such a massive need and I thank you Alderwoman Vinezeano for mentioning this, it almost needs to be a public campaign to let people know how valuable it is to have renters insurance and homeowners insurance.

Mayor Gallo - Is there any other questions or comments or discussion on this? If not, I want to say thank you to Dr. Nieves for taking the time to fill in some of the gaps we have and for the rest of staff for the update and of course the continued attention that the City is providing for these families as we work through this.

2) **Brush Collection Survey Results**

Rob Horne, Director Public Works – Just as in introduction, just want to give a big kudos to Elizabeth Payne and Jo Ellen for the outstanding work they did on this survey, managing a significant amount of data as we received about 1200 surveys of about 5900 residents. Unfortunately, with all that information it still boils down to about a 50/50 split but in an effort to make sure the Council understands clearly, each one of the questions and what the results indicate. Jo Ellen is going to walk everyone through the survey responses and both of us will be available for any questions.

Jo Ellen Charlton, Assistant Director Public Works - At the October 20, 2020 Committee of the Whole, Council provided direction to proceed with the distribution of a survey intended to gauge interest in reinstating what was previously referred to as the “Chipper Program” back in 2012, when it was last offered as a service to Rolling Meadows residents. This program, if reinstated, would supplement the City’s existing brush pickup program by allowing residents, once per year, to place brush on the curb without having to cut, bundle or stack the material. As part of the survey, Council also asked that one additional question be added regarding community interest in the investments necessary to service regular garbage pickup with garbage cans instead of the City’s current bag pick-up method.

Hard copies of the surveys were distributed in the December water bill, with instructions that completed surveys could be mailed or dropped off at City Hall. Instructions were also provided on the surveys and on the City’s website about how surveys could be completed and submitted on-line. A total of 688 hard copy, and 516 on-line surveys were returned by the end of January, for a total of 1,204 responses. It is estimated that the response represent roughly twenty percent (20%) of the 5,975 households served with municipal refuse service in the community.

The survey posed ten questions. The first nine were general questions or questions related to the brush collection program, while the last question was intended to gauge tolerance for the investment that would be necessary to switch refuse pickup from the current bag method to the use and servicing of garbage cans.

Results are tabulated and are reported either collectively for all responses received, or both collectively and by ward. Where appropriate, staff has offered interpretations of the results.

Question 1. How many years have you been a resident of Rolling Meadows? Responses are fairly evenly distributed between newer and longer-term residents. Only 20 percent of the respondents weren’t here the last time the program was offered.

Question 2. I live in Ward... Responses by Ward: Ward 1 – 196 (16%); Ward 2 – 180 (15%); Ward 3 – 313 (26%); Ward 4 – 260 (21%); Ward 5 – 74 (6%); Ward 6 – 44 (4%); Ward 7 – 105 (9%) and 32 not listed.

Question 3. Ownership status: A single family owner 92%; a single family renter 1%; a townhome or condo owner 7% and a townhome or condo renter 0%.

Question 4. Have you used the Rolling Meadows chipper program in the past? Yes 57%; No 43%.

Question 5. Not including storm damage, how many times per season do you currently place landscape brush at the curb for pickup? Spring: 609; Summer: 468; Fall: 633. Spring and fall would be the best times to implement the program. 32% of respondents report they don’t need service, or if needed, they hire a separate service.

Question 6. Again, not including storm damage, if you currently use curbside landscape brush pickup, how many times per year are your landscape brush needs not met? 36% of the respondents have existing unmet brush pickup needs. 64% of the respondents either don’t use the pickup or find existing services satisfactory for their brush pickup needs.

Question 7. If you would use a reinstated Chipper Program, how many branches would you expect to put out? 70% of the respondents would use the program to put branches out. 64% of the respondents will either not use the service, or may use the service to dispose of 10 branches or less. 9% of the respondents have significant needs (over 31 branches).

Question 8. I support reinstating the program, and would pay less than or up to the following monthly fee increase: 83% of the respondents might support a program; 58% either don't think it is necessary or are unwilling to pay any fee for a program; 42% would be willing to pay at least 50 cents; 30% would be willing to pay at least \$1.00; 11% would be willing to pay at least \$2.00.

Question 9. I support the Chipper Program if it can be done without significantly impacting other Public Works services like road patching, tree trimming, special events, etc. 79% True; 21% False. The results of this question, along with the results of question #5, provide direction that, if a brush program were implemented, spring would be the only available alternative given existing fall and summer programming of Public Works staff for events, asphalt patching, street cleaning and holiday decorations.

At its October 15, 2019 Committee of the Whole meeting, Council discussed instituting the Brush Collection "Chipper" Program. This program was last available in Rolling Meadows in 2012, as a fee for service program. It was discontinued because during the final year, only 22 residents participated. The question again was raised in 2020. A reinstated brush pickup program would be supplementary to the City's existing weekly collection of yard waste, provided it is bundled, cut into four foot lengths, and not greater than 50 pounds. The program, if approved, could benefit the public, as it would offer pickup of brush once per calendar year even if it was not cut to 4' lengths or bundled. Limitations would still apply and would include no branches greater than 6" in diameter, no bushes with thorns, no vines, stumps, logs or root sections.

Based on Staff review, there seems to be no overwhelming evidence for, or against, the reinstatement of this program. Instead, the results generally seem to be split 50/50 depending on how you interpret the results.

It is important to note that no adjustments were made to the FY 2021 budget to accommodate a brush collection program this year. If Council wishes to pursue the program, staff recommends Council indicate that desire and provide direction that staff perform additional research into actual costs, impacts and programming details, and that the program be further evaluated and included as part of the FY 2022 budget discussions and process. If Council provides direction not to pursue the program, there will be no further staff work on this project.

Refuse Container Survey Results: Question 10. The City is evaluating the opportunity to automate its garbage collection to utilize a City-issued garbage can to handle your weekly perishable garbage. The City would still pick up all additional items. 62% of respondents would like refuse containers; 74% of respondents don't want it OR wouldn't support any increases in fees for it; 15% would pay up to \$5/month extra for the service, while 11% might pay more, but would want more information.

Alderman Bisesi – Since this is my item I want to thank JoEllen and staff for all the work you did and putting up with my questions and concerns. In looking at this, to me it's a slam-dunk, we need to proceed. There is a large enough proportion of the City that would utilize this. I do want to emphasize to pay no attention to the quantity of people that did this the last year of this. Many of them were charged \$75 or more for one time pickup so if you're going to be paying that much money you might as well just not do it. This is a program that many residents, particularly in the 3rd, 4th and 5th Wards used religiously year after year when it was not a fee for service program. I think it provided a time of year, particularly when it was done in the spring when people were doing their cleaning, it really helped out getting people motivated to do their trimming and it helped people who don't necessarily have the physical ability to spend the hours chopping up the branches and stuff. We're not talking about small little 4 or 5 foot branches, we're talking about if you have a 10 or 20 foot branch that is a lot of work to chop up and bundle. I can't say enough about how I believe that this would be a very beneficial program. Based on the cost of a lot of the other programs that we do, this really is not too expensive and I think the benefits will be much more than the costs. In some of the Wards, for example I see 17% going through the figures there was 17% that didn't

want it at all, I'm going to wager that a good portion of that are the people that are living in townhomes or condo's. I believe most of the townhomes and condo's don't deal with trimming the trees and that type of stuff so that would bring it down to maybe 10%. I also know that when you're talking maybe there would be an impact of \$.50 if that's what it comes out to in a monthly bill which would be \$6 a year. I'm wondering if several of the people are just saying no I just don't want my bill to go up for any reason. The bottom line is, at times bills go up and I believe that people should be getting the services. One of the big things when our City was founded and one of the things that a lot of our residents took pride in was not only the snow removal but it was a lot of the services we provide rolled up into that refuse bill. You go to other cities the refuse bill is a little bit lower but they get stickered like crazy, every little thing you need a sticker, if it doesn't fit in the bin you need a sticker. In the long run, it comes out to be much more than what we're paying for refuse. I could go on and on but I'll let others talk on this. If anyone wants any more history on this, I'll be more than happy to give it to them being a long time resident of the City.

Mayor Gallo – I know you are passionate about this.

Alderman McHale – I haven't used the chipper program before and many of the residents that I speak to in my area have no desire to have a chipper program reinstated. What is exactly the problem that we're trying to solve here? It seems to me that we already have a service that's provided and every week it's provided from April to October/November. I just don't why it would be necessary to pursue this when we already have the option of putting our branches out tied up and ready to go. I also think it's hard to make a determination without knowing the actual costs of what it's going to be and how it's going to affect Public Works in what they're doing, how many employees are going to have to be pulled from their other duties to do this chipper program when we already have a service that seems to be provided for residents.

Alderman Bisesi – The difference in this program versus what we're currently doing. This would be in addition to that. This would be an opportunity for those who are familiar with the program, typically you'll see an entire parkway filled. In order for a person to be able to take down those branches, cut them into 4 foot lengths, put them in bundles no more than 50 pounds and then drag it to the curb, there are a lot of people that prefer to just let them grow as it's too much physical work. A comment that was made by a former Alderman of the 1st Ward was saying pretty much what you said. They basically said that people in my Ward will just pay a service. The thing is, this is more than just the 1st Ward where the majority of the people have the means to hire a lawn service and all of that. I think this is providing a once a year service with minimal work from Public Works in the grand scheme of things and we did talk about the costs and all that stuff before. There was some debate on what some of them were not true costs but if you go back in the minutes you'll see that stuff. I want to say that I strongly believe that there's a difference between this and what we're currently doing. I think what we're currently doing is awesome but on a once year basis I think that this would really benefit our citizens particularly our senior citizens that may not have the ability to spend hours bundling these things up but can drag a branch to the curb.

Alderman Vinezeano – Looking at the survey results and I'm just going to speak for Ward 4. Having 260 responses seems like a pretty good response for my Ward and it looks like 65% would put out less than 10 branches. I received calls and emails from several residents on this and for the majority of those responses I did get was for those few that do want to use this service they can either hire a service or work out a deal with the City and why should all of us residents pay an additional cost in our refuse bill which is already higher than most communities, rightfully so because we do have additional services, but why should the rest of the residents that wouldn't use it or maybe use it for one branch have to pay additional costs. With that, I do support the suggestion that Assistant Director Charlton had that maybe we come up with a program like the senior program at a discounted fee or cost if a resident wanted to put out several branches then Public Works would chip them at a lesser fee and the rest of

the residents continue doing what they currently do. I think that's what Ward 4 would more be in line with. So I'm definitely interested in getting more information along those lines of a program.

Alderman McHale – If we're doing this program once a year, how many weeks does it take?

Rob Horne, Director Public Works – It's about a 6 week program.

Alderman McHale – How many people?

Rob Horne, Director Public Works – It's usually about 3 guys per crew and 2 crews going so 6 men.

Alderman McHale – It's my understanding that there currently is no option for one-off service for this if there were seniors or residents that were really in need of this service?

Rob Horne, Director Public Works – Currently, there isn't but we've been having conversations about enhancing that at the request offline with a different Alderman similar to this topic. We have been in conversation internally about including some of those types of services in some of the contracts we are going to be bidding out in the future. To your point, we have been non-committal about those things yet because we just don't know the direction we want to head at this point but we are investigating price structures and what it would take to accomplish those things. In preparation for some of those conversations.

Mayor Gallo – Director Horne, you mentioned that it's about a 6 week timespan to run the program with two three man crews and I think that harkens back to the days that Alderman Bisesi mentioned where an entire parkway in front of a residents property was lined up with trees. Given the survey results and there being 10 or less branches, do you think that those previous timeframes when this program was still in full bore and the community was very engaged in participating with it, do you think those timeframes are still adequate? Do you think a 6 week timeframe, given the new statistics on how much they would be putting out to the curb, is still aligned?

Rob Horne, Director Public Works – We've had several conversations as you can imagine internally about the impacts of bringing a program back. For right now we do have some equipment that we did not have in the past for some larger brush collection. That's why we're trying not to call it a chipper program we're calling it brush collection because we do have some additional equipment that we didn't have in the past. It's hard to say, while the numbers reflect a more manageable program, there's also the belief out there that if a program was done especially due to some of the landscaping that's been done over the past year that there would be a spike the first year in usage. It's really hard to say at this point and I don't even know if we could be predictive as to how a community as whole would respond to the program. As I indicated, the survey was a great idea, it was really good data but at the end of it I don't know if it gives a clear picture one way or the other which obviously is making your jobs very difficult.

Alderman Sanoica – I received some general questions from new residents in the City and I wanted to ask them here as I stated that I would. New residents that have never experienced this service wanted to know the logistics of how a program like this would work. For example, does the City bring a brush collector to your driveway and chip right there on garbage day or is there more to this program than meets the eye or then our regular refuse collection?

March 16, 2021

COW Minutes

Page 12 of 18

Rob Horne, Director Public Works – Generally, we identify one quadrant/section of the community and we notify all residents saying they have to have all their brush on the parkway by April 1st or whatever the 1st Monday is in the season we pick it up, we then go systematically through that section of the community either picking up or chipping the brush on site into a truck and once we have completed a street we call that street into the office and we know that street has been completed. By the end of that week, we have completed that section of the community. Then the next section of the community knows that the next week all their brush needs to be out on the parkway and then we continue like that. Residents are given more than enough warning to get their branches out but the unfortunate reality is if they've missed it we don't come back out for it. Once we clear the street, we don't go back.

Alderman Sanoica - Another resident asked if the wood chips or mulch would be available for public pick up? What is the fate of the refuse after that?

Rob Horne, Director Public Works – We do host a program every year where residents can call and request chips. We will deliver them and dump them at the end of their driveway. We definitely get participation in that program every year but unfortunately the cost to do it organically and green is much higher than to dump it in the garbage. That waste goes in the landfills.

Alderman Sanoica – A resident wants to know if the chipper service would impact refuse clean up after storms and to clarify how storm collection currently works in the City.

Rob Horne, Director Public Works – We meet with some of the key personnel in our staff and the City Manager and we discuss whether a storm event warrants an actual storm event and when that happens we publicize to all residents that it is a storm event and if they have tree damage to bring it out their parkway and we make several runs through the community to clean that up. Similar to how I discuss the section by section program but we're a little more responsive because we understand that the damage is not convenient. There's not a lot of time to plan for that so we will generally go back if someone missed it and make sure we collect everything. This is usually about a 2 week program and we have several trucks going when this happens.

Alderman Sanoica – To clarify, the brush removal program is essentially storm pick up for everyone in the City and it's planned coordinated, is that a fair assessment?

Rob Horne, Director Public Works – Yes it is.

Alderman Sanoica – You're saying that we essentially already have the equipment to do that service?

Rob Horne, Director Public Works – Yes, we'd like to consider ourselves first responders as well. If a tornado were to go through we need to have the equipment to be able to respond to that event so we do have 2 chipper units, a brush collection machine and the vehicles necessary to do a program like that.

Alderman Sanoica – Understanding that staff would have to do a much more in depth study, are the suggested costs just to test the waters here in general for the refuse fund? What would be the hardcore costs for the big ticket items that your department would be anticipating for this program?

Rob Horne, Director Public Works – There's a few factors, there's labor and equipment costs. I've had conversations with Alderman Bisesi and we understand that Public Works employees are here on the job so those labor costs are paid regardless but as Alderman McHale brought up it pulls them off of other responsibilities. Those responsibilities will no longer be getting done during that month and a half. The disposal costs are the biggest

single cost for the whole program. You have fuel costs, equipment depreciation costs and as Assistant Director Charlton indicated we would have to do a little bit more of a deep dive into what programs and services would be significantly affected. If we were to farm those activities out those would be obviously be secondary costs to the main cost of the program. We would have to dig into those and see what the effects of those would be.

Alderman Sanoica - I have heard from residents years prior to this meeting back when I was campaigning who are very passionate about this program and want to see it come back and reiterated that when this came back up again. I have not yet heard from any residents directly outside of this particular survey who have stated that they absolutely don't want this or think that is a detriment to the City. One resident in particular had made the assertion that having free brush cleanup and having it scheduled and having it in event format would incentivize other neighbors to maintain their yards and their properties specifically within Ward 7 which is surrounded by a forested area and probably has a higher incidence of wildlife encounters and also pests to a certain degree. This resident has asserted that having brush clear up would also impact the incidence of pests. I don't know if that's true that's probably something that I would hope that we would want to look into further but if there's that global environmental benefit to the City then I think this is something that we should be looking at from a public health standpoint and also from a property maintenance standpoint. Director Horne, you mentioned earlier that the environmental impact of cleaning up all of the refuse collection or the brush collection is something that we would consider as well. I would be interested to know what the Rolling Meadows Environmental Committee would state or whether or not they would be in support of the program like this and why for those statements because outside of what the resident asserted I don't know if that's actually true or not. I'm hoping that our Environmental Committee might be able to give some more expertise on a program like this and coming up with creative ways where we don't necessarily have to pay for significant disposal and maybe if there are connections that the Environmental Committee knows about or other services where we can divert that disposal in a way that's cost-effective for the City or possibly even a source of profit. That would be my recommendation. I don't know if this is something that requires any type of motion at this point but that would be something I would like to see from that group.

Mayor Gallo - We'll finish up with the comments and questions. I do have two residents that provided written comments for this particular subject, I will address those and then we'll circle back to the Council action items and direction and at that time if you want to propose that we give this topic to the Environmental Committee for review we could go ahead and put out a straw vote on that as well.

Alderman Bisesi - If you do look at the survey, 83% of everybody who responded to this might support this program. All we're being asked to do tonight is give direction on whether or not staff should dig a little deeper and determine what the costs are. I for one will say that if the costs turn out to be very significant in a legitimate cost than absolutely yes I do not want to proceed with the program. As far as our vote tonight, once again I want to say that I believe that we should at least move forward and get what the cost might be, get the input from the Environmental Committee and move forward. I think that the fact that there is the \$0.50, \$1.00, \$2.00, I don't want my bill to increase being the no fee, I think that might have been a little misleading as well. The intent was supposed to be to find out if they would support the program. I just wanted to mention that 83% of the respondents were in support of the program in principal.

Alderman Budmats - It seems like we're at the tail end of the chipper program but question number 10 was part of the survey and so that it doesn't go unaddressed I would like to say that based on what I'm reading here it looks like 62% of the respondents would like refuse containers. The question is how we are going to pay for them and what the cost would be associated with them. The only thing I'm looking to do is to have staff look at the costs and what they would be and the things that we need to factor in to what those costs are, the savings that we would get in Workmen's Comp. insurance by not having workers getting injured by throwing bags in the back of garbage

trucks, what would the cost savings be by having an automated process versus having an unautomated process and the intangible costs that we're all paying by having skunks and other vermin and coyotes that feast on the garbage every week. What can we do about getting some direction to staff to find out what those costs are so that we can make a decision?

Mayor Gallo - I've had this conversation with Director Horne and Manager Krumstok on every single one of those topics including the reduced overtime from the mechanization. Director Horne is getting that information and he currently has information on what we currently pay in workers comp and injuries in addition to the shelf life that the actual employees can continue staying on the roster to pick up garbage. This is something that I've had discussions with him about a year ago for him to be working on because this is something that is dear to my heart is the plastic totes. Again, the primary reason is reducing the vermin that so many residents were concerned about when it came to getting chickens here and if you really want to reduce the skunks, coyote's and raccoons you cover up your trash cans. As I understand it Director Horne is working on getting this information, we started a conversation a year ago. Director Horne, maybe you can provide us an update in the near future as to when you'll have all the information on the reduced overtime from mechanization, Worker's Comp. claims and anything else that does reduce our overall costs in order to implement a plastic tote program for garbage containers.

Alderman Budmats - So it's unnecessary to have a straw vote, it's already in motion?

Mayor Gallo - It's in play. What we can do is have Director Horne give us a timeframe of when he thinks he can provide updates on this. I know he has some work to do behind the scenes to get all together. Is there any further discussion on the survey? If not, I will now read the two emails sent in from residents regarding this topic.

Email sent in by Kathy Brush:

I am writing in reference to the Agenda for March 16, 2021. I am totally against the reinstatement of the brush pickup. Our residents and public works employees, have done just fine since 2012 without it. In reading over the charts, it states that 64% find that our existing services are satisfactory. Why would we implement it if that high of a percentage are satisfied? 22 residents participated in 2012! We would incur additional costs to appease 22 residents? At this time, we need to be cutting costs to save the residents money and not adding additional fees and services that would put a strain on our residents. The same holds true for refuse containers. 74% of the residents don't want it OR wouldn't support an increase. Who, besides the residents would be paying for these added services?

Email sent in by Janie Jenssen:

I am in favor of bringing back the chipper. I don't think I understand why Rolling Meadows stopped the service. It is difficult as a senior to cut branches to a certain size. I can not tie up branches. I have a son that travels so I can't depend on him. If we have a storm I am able to move branches to the curb but can't follow the current rules. It seems easy enough to schedule the chipper to travel our city. Do you need help with this? Please bring the chipper back. Remember that not everyone has the time to write you and your message was not well advertised. My daughter found it and sent it to me. My message represents a number of my neighbors I'm sure.

There are two action items for the Council:

1. Are there any other survey results the Council would like reported or further analyzed?

Alderman Bisesi - I could probably do this myself because I have the raw data in 1's and 0's. I'm curious by age, is there an age or a length of time in the City that we're seeing that people want the program. I think if you haven't used it or haven't had any necessity to use it in the past, you may not necessarily understand how much time and effort it saves a person. It's like if we had a leaf sucker how much time and effort it might save.

Mayor Gallo - To be clear, are you asking for staff to help you understand the analysis by age of the survey participants?

Alderman Bisesi - Yes. I don't need it to vote tonight but I just think down the road at some point in our discussion should this move forward.

Alderman McHale - I would like included, if we're going to proceed, the amount of time that's already been spent on surveys and the analysis and if we're going to do anymore analysis how much time staff is going to have to continue on with that.

Rob Horne, Director Public Works - I think we could put that information together.

JoEllen Charlton, Assistant Director Public Works - We can look at what we've done more recently because I know there's been time spent over the last couple of years and I don't think will be able to re-create that. Moving forward we can also take a look at what amount of time we think we need to spend on resources to put together cost estimates if you'd like us to do that before we proceed. I did want to clarify a question Alderman Bisesi asked about providing additional data by age, it's not the age of the resident it would be length of time they've been a resident that we would be able to provide that data.

Alderman Bisesi - That's what I meant.

Mayor Gallo – Any other requests from Council on additional components for analysis? If not, we'll move on to part two.

2. Does Council wish to pursue the program and direct staff to perform additional research into actual costs, impacts and programming details as part of the FY 2022 budget?

Those in favor of having staff pursue the program and direct staff for additional research into the actual costs. 3 in favor; 4 opposed. The straw vote would dictate that no further analysis would be done and just providing the additional feedback back to the respective Councilmembers or provide it to everyone for transparency.

Alderman Bisesi - I accept what the Council has voted, I don't have to like it but I'll go with it. The one thing I would like to see given this is staff determining for a future agenda a possibility of the fee for service at a greatly reduced price from what an outside private service would cost. Whether it's part of the senior program or something like that.

Alderman Vinezeano - I would like that information back from staff but I would like it broken down two ways, 1) for all residents and 2) to be included in our senior program at a senior cost.

Mayor Gallo - I'm a bit confused because it was just voted down by Council to have staff no longer pursue the program for any additional research. I don't know how that's possible now.

Alderman Vinezeano - The chipper program has been voted down but there still may be a need for our seniors and our residents that are interested in this program and if there is a fee. I think we are ready have this service for \$75 and if that's the case we just have to get the information out there but I would like to see it at a reduced fee for our seniors if that is the case.

Rob Horne, Director Public Works - It's called a pay for use fee or service and we've really tried to steer against that. With that said, based on previous conversations we've had and things we've talked about, today we are investigating a program that helps seniors and other people in need with a variety of different services. This service is already included in that investigation. If that is the primary desire on the request we have heard that loud and clear and we certainly will pursue that if it's agreed upon by the Council.

Mayor Gallo – Alderman Vinezeano, is what Director Horne stated sufficient for what you are seeking?

Alderman Vinezeano - Yes. Director Horne and I have had multiple conversations about additional services to the senior program.

Alderman Bisesi – It wasn't sufficient for me. I believe the City can provide that service.

3) Leaf Program (topic requested by Alderman D'Astice at 11/10/20 CC)

Rob Horne, Director Public Works - At a recent City Council meeting, an Alderman requested that staff present information related to the potential for the City to offer a leaf collection program. Staff research uncovered that this item has been brought to the City Council for consideration in the past, most recently at the May 16, 2000 Committee of the Whole Meeting, when Public Works staff prepared a very comprehensive report, that outlined significant data related to the impacts of offering a separate leaf program to the leaf services already offered by the City. At that meeting, following the presentation of information, the Council agreed to not pursue the matter further.

As a reminder, the City currently does provide leaf collection services as part of the regular refuse collection services. Leaf collection is currently offered weekly, from April 1st through December 1st (weather dependent). Residents are not asked to purchase yard waste stickers, which are generally upwards of \$2.00/sticker. Instead, this service is simply included in the resident's monthly refuse collection rate.

Capital Costs: In 2000, the cost of new automated leaf collection equipment was approximately \$110,000. The proposal, at that time, was to purchase three (3) new leaf collection machines (2 primary machines and 1 for heavy pickup times or backup during breakdowns). The need for this many machines has not changed. These pieces of equipment require constant maintenance and break down regularly. In an effort to maintain a consistent service level, three (3) machines would be required. It is estimated based on costs investigated by staff that these costs would be in excess of \$270,000. Additionally, each leaf collection crew would require three (3) employees (two in trucks and one operating leaf equipment). Therefore, this would require the purchase of five (5) leaf collection boxes (*the City owns one box that is currently utilized for forestry operations*) that are secured in the rear bed of the dump trucks that would serve in this capacity. Each leaf collection box is estimated to cost approximately \$20,000, or \$100,000 for all five. Total Capital Costs: \$370,000.

Direct Costs: (Labor, Equipment Maintenance, and Fuel): Labor costs related to this program would average approximately \$52/hour. It is assumed that the program would take approximately 1,200 hours to perform annually. This analysis does not include an estimate of overtime hours, which would be likely in an effort to maintain the required program schedule, either due to weather, breakdowns or other unforeseen circumstances. Therefore, the approximate labor costs associated with this program would be estimated at \$62,000. Equipment maintenance were not evaluated in the 2000 report, but using the industry standard "Schedule of Equipment Rates" established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that includes; depreciation, overhead, all maintenance, field repairs, fuel, lubricants, tires, and other costs incidental to operation. Collection \$34,500; Trucks \$60,000; Handling \$3,000; Disposal Costs \$30,250. Total Costs/Season: \$189,750.

As the information above indicates, the cost necessary to implement this type of program would result in approximately \$370,000 in upfront expenses, and would include approximately \$190,000 direct costs, which would be incurred annually. These costs would be further increased once a more comprehensive assessment of the indirect costs were measured and analyzed. Obviously, the indirect costs referenced above are only a small outline of the possible impacts that could result from implementing a new program such as this. In addition to the direct and indirect costs, there are operational questions that would need to be answered, including; where to store the additional equipment needed to provide this service, and where to stage and handle the leaves prior to disposal.

To reiterate the information provided at the beginning of this memorandum, the City currently provides unlimited leaf collection for eight (8) full months each year, provided they are placed in proper yard waste bags. It is important to note, that communities that do not currently have a once/year leaf collection program, generally also offer leaf collection through their private refuse collection service, in similar fashion to the City's service. However, in most communities that do not provide a refuse collection service, residents are charged approximately \$2.00/sticker for each yard waste bag collected. Therefore, if you placed ten (10) yard waste bags at the curb for collection, it would cost you approximately \$20. It is also important to note that communities that offer a leaf collection service, do not generally also provide a municipal refuse collection service.

Again, it is important to educate residents accurately about the services provided by the City. While the City does not have a special program set aside for six (6) weeks each fall for the collection of leaves, it can be argued that the City provides a far superior service.

Mayor Gallo - Are there any questions from the Council? Seeing none, we will skip right down to the action items.

There are two action items for the Council:

1. *Is this a program that would warrant a survey of the Community?* 0 in favor; 7 opposed.
2. *As a result of the potential costs associated with this program, would the Council want to subsidize any portion of the program, either through increased refuse rates or a different funding mechanism?* 0 in favor; 7 opposed.

It's unanimous on not pursuing this because at this time it sounds like extremely cost prohibitive and we couldn't fit that in logistically given the timeframe you mentioned. With that, there aren't any public comments for this topic.

March 16, 2021

COW Minutes

Page **18** of **18**

Is there a motion to adjourn? Alderman Budmats has made the motion and it has been seconded by Alderman O'Brien. Will the Clerk please call the roll?

AYES: Bisesi, D'Astice, Sanoica, McHale, Budmats, O'Brien, Vinezeano

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: 0

With 7 in favor and 0 opposed, this meeting is adjourned.

There being no further business, by unanimous consent the Committee-of-the Whole meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Judy Brose, Deputy City Clerk

March 16, 2021 Committee of the Whole Minutes Approved by Council on April 13, 2021.

Judy Brose

Judy Brose, Deputy City Clerk