

**COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE  
MINUTES  
October 20, 2020**

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

**COUNCIL IN ATTENDANCE REMOTELY:** Aldermen Mike Cannon, 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, Administrative Services Coordinator Elizabeth Payne, Business Advocate Martha Corner and City Attorney Melissa Wolf

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.

**1) FY 2021 Library Budget**

**Dave Ruff, Executive Director** – I know you have a busy schedule tonight so thank you for giving us the time to talk about the Library. The screen in front of you is the history of our Levy and what you see is that we're going to have a 1.2% reduction in the Levy for next year and that will allow us to maintain operations. It's going to be a quiet year on the Capital side, both on rebuilding Capital Reserves and doing Capital Projects. We originally were going to be replacing the 18 year old carpeting and doing some renovations next year but with all that has happened this year it seemed like a poor time to threaten to close down even more on patrons so we're going to defer that until 2022 at least. The good news is that the carpet is still holding up very well and we should be able to get a few more years out of it. Doing this remotely since it's harder for me to see you all just let me remind you please interrupt me as we go so you don't have to wait until the end. The 1.2% reduction of the levy will amount to about a \$0.69 per resident reduction and those are using the numbers we get as far as the percent paid by residents as opposed to businesses and we check that through with Melissa and Barry. This is a decrease but not as quite as

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big as a decrease as last year's 2% reduction but another decrease nonetheless. This shows the relationship between our property tax levy which is 97% of our budget as compared to all other types of items like per capita, the PPRT and things like that. Normally, 2020 is more representative but part of that 6.1% on all other funding is because we were putting in \$94,000 from our Capital Reserves to help pay for replacement of our Integrated Library System (ILS). The computer system we had the company was no longer supporting it after 13 years which is a good long run for the computer system. That system is what helps us order books, check them in, check them out, catalogue them and find them. The ILS is a big item in our building. The dollar amounts that represent those percentages you can see here, the property tax Levy is a little over \$3.8 million and the all other items is about \$116,000. Where is all that being spent and how are we able to have another reduction? The main thing you can see here is that in 2017 and 2019 we had two building expansions. We had to build up the funds and now we're bringing it back down to something more normal. We do the capital funds budget up to 2042 so this was a planned reduction for this year and that's why the budget itself is basically a static budget but for the absence of some capital items. Here is the staffing history, the point with this is that we made several reductions over the past 20 years but none of them were gimmicks. For instance, we all do shelving, we have roaming customer service so that we don't have people attached to one desk if we need to put three people on a desk for two hours to help the public they can do it and move to another desk and that's helped us as well. The main thing is that the staffing has been right size and it is stable and it's not something that we decrease by 5% one year and then increase by 20% the next. This is the materials budget and just by way of background, I know some of you heard this before that we are considered a mature library and that doesn't really have to do with the age of all of our staff members and myself, it's because our book shelves are full. When we receive a box of books that we ordered in the front door we have to get rid of a box of books from the shelves. In that instance, the 12% rule which we've talked about before gives us more than enough money, anything above \$400,000 is really a good amount of money for us to maintain our collection. The 12% rule is that if you want to be a member of the library system you have to take 12% of your non-capital non-reserve budget and spend it on materials and what you get for that is your in the system so you can do inter-library loan, reciprocal borrowing and you qualify for per capita grants from the State which is worth about another \$30,000 a year. This number is very formulaic, it's more than enough as long as we stay above \$400,000 and as a rule we tend to overspend this budget with any savings we have in other items through the year. If we get to the end of the year and there's some money left we spend it on consumables that we know we need like light bulbs, paper, toner and also on materials because those are a direct benefit to the patrons. If you look at operating expenditures and reserves, this is where the savings are coming from next year and this is what is allowing us to show reduction and still not inhibit operations at all. Again, this is the budget and as you can see it's a 1.2% reduction and items to notice here would be that the Capital Reserves Fund was \$94,000 last year that we put in from capital reserves and we don't have to have that this year. Taking \$94,000 and not having to spend it this year and also reducing our Capital Reserve Rebuilding from \$180,000 in 2020 to rebuild the capital reserves in anticipation of the re-carpeting down to \$100,000 so that's \$80,000 right there. That is a quick overview and I'll be happy to answer any questions if you have any. Can I invite you or any of the Council members to come over and get a behind the scenes tour of what we've done at the Library to allow us to reopen, we'd be more than willing to do that for you. There's no blueprint for this and I'm very proud of the staff and the Board for having the courage to be the first Library to reopen on June 1<sup>st</sup> for several weeks, in fact for a couple of months we were the only Library reopened and it took them some courage to do that and had it gone sideways on us we sure would have had some problems.

**Mayor Gallo** – I will absolutely take you up on that invitation, I would be happy to. As you were extending that invitation we do have some Council members with some questions.

**Alderman Bisesi** - I sat through some of the financial planning meetings and I can tell all the Aldermen and any residents that are listening that the Board for the Library did a very thorough job going through this Budget and considering should they do a Levy decrease versus a zero Levy and really going through all of the line items. This

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is a very doable Budget from what I understand and will not impact services in any way by doing the decrease in the levy. Dave, you can correct me if I'm wrong, I just wanted to get that on the record that they did a very good job of thoroughly going through it and have people that are really good and the finance side of things.

**Dave Ruff, Executive Director** – I can say that our expectation is that the COVID crisis will pass us at some point and that we'll be able to return to some normalcy. It's built into the Budget to allow us to go back to something that's normal but we're going to have to wait for the environment to allow that.

**Mayor Gallo** - I'm hopeful that it's sooner than later to be honest with you.

**Alderman Sanoica** - My question is on the two line items that we have here in 4116 "Interest Income" which appears to be down over half from that \$13,000 to that \$6000 and then the other item I would like more information on is the over 64% decrease in "Fines and Fees" listed in 4119.

**Dave Ruff, Executive Director** – The interest income we spent a good deal of our money on those two capital projects so there's a little less money there to garner income. Also, as you may know interest rates are down a little bit right now. The way we project that is that I took our midyear earnings and projected it into next year. So that's the interest income side of things. The fines and fees side is twofold, we're looking at a combination of where we were halfway through the year which of course is not as good a number because the building was closed for over two months. Fees for instance, copier money and selling thumb drives and things like that was going to be down but also we don't have fines anymore. As you know, in fact you and I talked last fall, we talked about the possibility that we were just going to get rid of fines because we looked at it and we were descending below \$15,000 on actual fines collected but we were spending almost \$6000 in staff time moving that coinage around, counting and taking it to the bank so the net wasn't looking very good. We had hoped to do this right after the first of the year then COVID hit us and we realized we had another good reason to do it and that is to take the stress off of our patrons. Many of them were sitting on the materials and we wanted them to bring them back because we never did close our return box at the Library and we wanted to encourage them and tell them that there were going to be no fines but not only no fines going forward we were going to forgive all the fines they have. We tried to remove every obstacle that we could for people who were having trouble and not able to use the Library is much as they'd like.

**Alderman Sanoica** - I also have one additional question that I received from resident and their question was regarding the cost of the current operating hours since those hours had been reduced due to CDC recommendations. Do you anticipate that those hours will continue as long as we're in Phase 4 in Illinois or do you anticipate making any staffing changes in order to accommodate a wider range of hours for patrons?

**Dave Ruff, Executive Director** – The staff that we have would allow us to go to 72 hours if there were no extenuating circumstances. That's the staffing we have budgeted for next year. All of our people are still working their normal hours even though we're not open to the public all those hours. There's a lot going on behind the scenes when we're not open. The thing that's driving the reduction in hours is that we have a grocery store single shift model for the Library. We don't have any furniture so you come in and use the Library but you can't stay and that has to do with having occupancy limits and making sure that we keep patrons and staff safe. The second thing is that it's a single shift model because we realize that we are staffed to be able to do 72 hours but we're not overstaffed. We made some reductions to right size ourselves and we've been doing it successfully for many years with that staffing but the problem now is that with the new COVID guidelines if you have a positive test as a staff member you're gone for 14 days and if you have a negative test you're gone for 10 days. That's in addition to all the other reasons that people can be gone, they can sprain their ankle, loose tooth or almost anything. What we realize is that we needed to go with a single shift, we have a six hour day and that means that one person could staff a public desk all by themselves for the entire shift. It also reduces the number of people that are going to be infected

if we had one staff member infected, they're not going to wipe out an entire department. We have not had a positive COVID test from any of our staff members but we have had almost on a weekly basis two or three people in the building at a time that have had symptoms such that they quarantined as they're supposed to and have gotten tested and as soon as they do that it takes them out for 10 days. We recently lost half of our maintenance crew, two of the four and they're coming back so now we're hoping to get back to full speed there. What the Board decided and I think it's the right decision is that we needed to really make sure we were sustainable with whatever we were doing. You've seen some other organizations try to open up too much too soon and almost immediately close down and we know that there's a lot of hardship not only on the patrons but also on the staff by overreaching and then having to shut down completely. We wanted to be sustainable and we decided to go with a single shift approach and it has worked marvelously. We have cycled through a number of people who've had close calls on COVID but turned out to be negative but at no point we had to close down any desks or the building. Our concern now is that the State is considering moving back to Phase 3 and right now we see some schools opening and almost immediately close. It doesn't feel like the environment is right at this point to leave something that has worked really well since June 1<sup>st</sup>. We said when we went into full lockdown that we were going to open as soon we possibly could and we did and as soon as we can safely expand the hours we will. Right now we have some weekday hours, some weekday evening hours and some weekend hours. We have added a lot of capability on the e-material side and the one area that we are actually up on is programming, our August and September programming this year is more than it was in 2019 and that's all been remote programming and concerts.

**Mayor Gallo** – Thank you for providing this information thus far, is there additional information you will be providing?

**Dave Ruff, Executive Director** – No. Thank you so much to you and City Staff, you guys have really stood by us throughout this strange year. We appreciate it, we don't take it for granted and you really have helped us to stay operating.

**Mayor Gallo** – Thank you for that. We appreciate what you're doing with the Library and keeping services available for members in the community and I will absolutely connect with you after this meeting tonight or sometime tomorrow so we can define a date to connect and you can give me the tour. I'm looking forward to it.

## 2) FY 2021 City Budget

**Melissa Gallagher, Finance Director** - The FY 2021 Proposed Budget and the FY 2021 Budget in Brief are available on the City's website at <https://www.cityrm.org/233/Financial-Reports>. Please remember that this budget process was started in January 2020. The FY 2021 Proposed Budget was in the current format and the ending fund balance estimates for the City's funds were completed in August. Due to COVID-19, the City has prudently used of reserves to help mitigate revenue losses; filed for available COVID-19 relief funding (federal, state and county); reduced expenditures and deferred certain items and/or projects. Capital projects continue to be completed.

The City of Rolling Meadows has developed fund balance policies for the City's General Fund (FY 2014); the Refuse Fund (FY 2015); the 911 Fund (FY 2016) and the Garage Fund (FY 2019). The City is within parameters for each policy. In FY 2021, Staff will propose fund balance policies for the Liability Insurance Fund and the Health Insurance Fund.

The City of Rolling Meadows is committed to the long-term financial outlook for the City's operating and capital needs. The City has received awards from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for the City's CAFR (Audit); Popular Annual Financial Report (Citizens' Report); and Adopted Budget.

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The annual Budget is the engine that drives and guides the City operations. It is a management tool that each department uses to plan, administer and improve its operations and customer services. It is a legal document through which the City Council carries out its legislative responsibility to control City finances. It is a public information resource that helps taxpayers understand the finances and their local government.

Crafting a nearly \$60 million municipal budget is a year-round effort that involves careful planning, deliberation, review and discussion. City Council and staff work together to determine the City's overall strategic direction and then guide funding to achieve established goals.

The City of Rolling Meadows provides a full range of high-quality municipal services to over 24,000 residents and hundreds of businesses each day. Its customer service team is comprised of approximately 164 full-time and 28 part-time employees working in Public Safety, Public Works, Community Development, Economic Development, Information Technology, Finance and General Administration.

Depending on the results of the discussions tonight, Staff will determine if the November 17<sup>th</sup> Committee of the Whole Meeting is needed to continue discussions on the FY 2021 Budget

COVID-19 Impact on City Finances: Faced with an estimated \$2.9 million shortfall in estimated revenue due to COVID-19, the City acted to offset those losses by transferring money from the Liability Insurance Fund (\$500,000) and the Health Insurance Fund (\$1.5 million) to the General Fund. In addition, City Staff submitted more than \$316,000 in authorized expenses to federal, state, and county entities for COVID-19 related operational reimbursement. Capital improvement projects have been reviewed and some projects deferred or reprioritized. City departments are keeping several (recently vacated) staff positions unfilled or there is a slow down on filling the vacancy to save against revenue shortfalls. Staff training, classes and professional education expenses were scaled back or eliminated. Only essential expenses are being approved. The City is ensuring that an adequate stock of PPE, sanitizing and other COVID-19 essentials are in supply for FY 2021. [Note the biggest burn rate of PPE continues to be in the Fire Department.]

Before I turn it over to City Council for questions and discussion, what I wanted to close on, again, is the resiliency and sustainability that our City has worked towards and the reserve level that we've been able to mitigate some of the revenue losses. Again, all the items that are in our Budget are estimates based on the best information that we can provide. We also we want to make sure for the residents out there listening that there is no increase to the 2021 Budget for the Tax Levy, there are no rate increases for the utilities fund or the refuse fund and Capital Improvements projects remain intact. Overall, we will continue to keep the City Council and community informed as we move through the process going forward in terms of our financial picture.

**Mayor Gallo** - One quick question I have regarding tonight and looking toward the future is I have been asking for a while now with Manager Krumstok and Director Horne about getting the initial costs for mechanizing our refuse so we could have trash cans and we could use a mechanical arm to do the dumping. What I would like to do is be able to look ahead toward that expense and see if the initial expense is going to be worth it from the long-term value and savings and additional benefits it can provide. Is there opportunity to factor these in should this information come sooner than later for FY 2021? Is there still time in there for these conversations or is this strictly something that should be looked for 2022?

**Melissa Gallagher, Finance Director** – That's a really good question. I think when you're planning for something like that we would want to look at 2022 given the fact that there are some planning pieces that you have to work along the way in terms of the operational and mechanizing the refuse trucks and also the totes and how you roll that out. I think at this point it would be something in my view it would a 2022 item.

**Mayor Gallo** – Keep it on the record for now because I know I started this conversation well over six months ago with my initial outreach on getting this information and gathering the statistics so I would definitely like to have this on the record for FY 2022.

**Melissa Gallagher, Finance Director** – Okay, thank you.

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**Alderman Sanoica** - I think that the two items that I'm most interested in are on our agenda today, they're items 5, 6 and 7 so I will be deferring my questions at that point unless this is the time to be discussing finances regarding those projects.

**Melissa Gallagher, Finance Director** – No, since those items are on the agenda tonight would be through that process and then whatever is decided upon at that point then we would update as necessary for the 2021 Budget.

**Alderman Sanoica** - I will defer my questions until those topics come up.

**Alderman Bisesi** - I was going to ask the same thing as Alderman Sanoica. I did have a brief conversation off-line with Melissa and Barry so I will wait until we get to the topics later tonight to go into that.

**Alderman O'Brien** - Just a quick question for clarification. A resident did reach out to me regarding the abatement from our last meeting and I wanted to confirm that since we're not having any increase to our Levy and the Library is decreasing their Levy, that doesn't mean that residents are not going to see an increase in property tax because we don't know what the other taxing bodies (school districts, park districts, etc.) are doing, so there could still be an increase in property tax, is that correct?

**Melissa Gallagher, Finance Director** - You are correct, we have no control over the other taxing bodies.

**Alderman Budmats** - Given the question asked about the 2022 Budget process, correct me if I'm wrong, but it looks like we have \$1 million that we're taking from the health insurance and potentially using to fund the General Fund in the 2021 Budget, is that sustainable moving forward through 2022 or at what point are we not going to be able to take from those fund balances anymore and have to make different cuts if revenues don't increase?

**Barry Krumstok, City Manager** - At this point in time that it's not sustainable and that's why we're going to be having a discussion with the City Council about fund balances for those two funds. We're able to do that now but that's also why we need to have the fund balance policies and also make sure where we sit with each of the funds.

**Alderman Budmats** - Okay, then for sure we need to make sure before we get the 2022 Budget out that we've come up with the fund balance policy for each of those funds and how much we can take or not take in the future and if we have to make cuts in other areas.

**Melissa Gallagher, Finance Director** – Yes, we are currently talking with the City's auditors and reviewing the process to start the fund balance policy process for both of those funds that we'll bring back in early 2021 to review, discuss and approve with the City Council for both of those funds. It will be well in advance of the 2022 Budget.

**Alderman Cannon** - I would like to compliment Staff for doing the best job they could under these crazy times. I would like to remind everybody even though we're not having an increase in taxes we have moved off of our 2033 to 2035 now so in essence we've mortgaged our pensions for two more years so it's not pain-free. Again, I think Staff did a great job in light of all the troubles we have this year.

**Mayor Gallo** – Are there any other questions or items for discussion regarding the FY 2021 proposed Budget that we just should the presentation on now? Are there any future items that need to be brought up other than what's been brought up? If not, I guess we'll continue on and we'll see where items 5, 6 and 7 lead us to before the results of this discussion tonight to determine whether or not the November 17 Committee of the Whole is needed to keep these discussions continued and so with that we can move on to the next item.

### **3) Chamber Support on Business Licenses (Mayor Gallo)**

**Mayor Gallo** - The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted economies on local, national and global scale. Businesses everywhere are eagerly looking at ways to adapt in a post COVID-19 world. The need to adapt is no different for the businesses in Rolling Meadows or for the associations that support those businesses. The Rolling Meadows Chamber of Commerce has a long standing relationship with the businesses in our city; supporting them with resources, research and advocacy among many other things. It's important to note, there are certain businesses in Rolling Meadows who have come forward to return the favor by advocating their support to keep the Chamber flourishing.

As a non-profit association, the financial model for the Chamber of Commerce revolves around membership fees to sustain a portion of their operations while the production of events and activities provide significant revenues that ultimately keep the Chamber afloat through their fiscal year. With the earlier shelter in place orders and a current reluctance for large groups to come together, the Chamber is unable to host many, if not all of the events that secure the remaining funding for their operating budget.

Current membership levels are experiencing a decline since certain businesses are restricting spending as a result of their own financial uncertainties. However, there are new members joining weekly from different industries.

One way to increase value and relevance for the Rolling Meadows Chamber of Commerce, the business community, and the City of Rolling Meadows is to enable an opportunity for all businesses in Rolling Meadows to automatically become a basic level member in the Chamber of Commerce if the City of Rolling Meadows increases the fee on the business license and its business license renewals.

There would be an "Opt-out" checkbox on the license and renewal form if a business did not want to pay the additional fee. Other cities and villages currently include this on their business license and renewal forms. In my opinion and through numerous conversations with business owners and members of the Chamber's Board, it demonstrates a stronger relationship overall between the City, the business community and the entities like the Chamber that support our businesses.

Remember, this money is not being paid from the City of Rolling Meadows. The money is coming from the business.

Is the City Council willing to add a basic Chamber membership fee to our current business license fee and business license renewal? If so, what fee amount is the City Council willing to include for this basic Chamber of Commerce membership? My first knee jerk reaction when discussing this was an automatic \$100 up charge. full disclosure and transparency my business license, when I receive the renewal notice in the mail I write the check and mail it out so if there was an additional \$100 tacked on to my business license I would pay no questions asked. My Chamber membership as a basic Chamber member is \$250. Now I don't necessarily use more than the basic level membership so in one regard it would save me \$150 but on the other side of this if we were able to enable all of our businesses or the majority who wanted to opt into this, the Chamber would have a much stronger bottom line an operating budget. Then there would be this graduated membership that the Chamber of Commerce would have to worry about on their side. I don't want to get into the guts and details of that scenario but I want to find out from the City Council if they're willing to assist the Chamber of Commerce by automatically establishing a basic level of membership which gets incorporated which the business pays for so no money comes from the City of Rolling Meadows pocket it's just a passed-through the City from the business to the Chamber. When I said \$100, the Village of Schaumburg has an automatic charge for basic Chamber of Commerce membership of \$10. There's is \$10 because the Village also has an economic Development Fund and that fund is financed by the Village and the

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Schaumburg Business Association receives significant funding from that Economic Development Fund so they're able to charge a \$10 rate. For me, I would like to have the Council determine whether or not we can do this for our Chamber of Commerce who has been up to bat for our businesses and our community numerous times and then to what is a reasonable price to enlist for the basic level of membership. With that, I would like to open it up for any questions with the who's, what's, when's and why's, if there are any.

**Alderman O'Brien** – I appreciate the background you just provided. My initial hesitation is that I looked at about six or eight other areas and the only when I did see referenced to this was Schaumburg as you noted. Can you note the other areas that are doing this because the five or six that I pulled don't seem to do that? In terms of Palatine, Barrington, Hoffman, Elk Grove, Arlington and I couldn't find it on there. Am I missing something, do they do that also because the only one I could find was Schaumburg.

**Mayor Gallo** – No, the Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce can get you those details if you need them. The point about bringing one into this conversation is that this is not unheard of and it's not an anomaly and at the same time I also don't want to use it to lean on the fact that three others are doing it so we have to do it. What I want to do is say that it has been done elsewhere and now the conversation is are we able to do it and should we do it and is it a beneficial thing to do?

**Alderman O'Brien** - Maybe that's where I would like to get to the details before feeling comfortable moving forward. Based on the write up, it does say other areas are doing it. I would just like to get a feel for which ones are and aren't and pros and cons so maybe that is something that the Executive Director can provide. I would also like to see the membership trends because I know membership is declining. I know we have about 175 businesses and from a timing perspective granted we're Covid your thoughts on this and I'll let staff correct me if I'm wrong but I believe renewal licenses go out within the next two weeks. As I was reading our Ordinance, we might have to pass an Ordinance to make this change and I don't know if timing is available to do that if you're expecting this for 2021.

**Mayor Gallo** - As I mentioned on September 22 that because of the nature of the timing of all this and the ability to have a Committee of the Whole and after having it passed by the Chamber's Board is that I would request waiver of the first reading on October 27 City Council meeting should the City Council find it valuable to partnership and create this basic level of membership on our business licenses.

**Alderman O'Brien** - I know they're converting to the ERP system and the bills are manually done so from a staffing perspective that would be okay timing wise?

**Mayor Gallo** - There 130 Chamber members currently, 90 of them who are Rolling Meadows businesses and so there's only 90 that would have to be cross checked to determine whether or not they're a current Chamber member and don't need to receive that up charge fee.

**Alderman Cannon** – I was going to ask our legal counsel if we put this fee on there is it considered a tax and is that legal?

**Melissa Wolf, City Attorney** - No, the way it's been proposed it's not tantamount to a tax. It would be a fee that would be run through the City to effectuate a membership with the Chamber of Commerce and it allows these business owners and applicants to opt out so no it would be not be considered a tax.

**Alderman Cannon** - Thank you. A couple questions I would like for us to think about. Watching the area news a number of Chamber of Commerce's in our area have shut down in towns that are much bigger than ours. I was

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looking at one today namely Mount Prospect, they laid off their director and all their staff and I think their Chamber was a lot bigger than ours. It seems like some of the financial troubles our particular chamber has had is just a long-term thing it's not just this year. The thing that I struggle with is why we aren't taking steps to merge with another Chamber such as Schaumburg, Arlington Heights or Palatine and get some help there. It seems like we struggle with numbers all the time, I know the Chamber had taken out a couple loans over the last couple of years but even when things were going good and if they were taken out loans that's not a good indication of the future. At this point in time, Mr. Mayor, I'm not willing to support this but maybe others will.

**Mayor Gallo** - To be clear, the City takes out loans as well we just call them different terms, we call them bonds. The point about the Chamber partnering with other chambers, if our Chamber does that what we end up losing is the specificity of value that the Rolling Meadows Chamber provides to the Rolling Meadows business community and to the Rolling Meadows residents and that circular fashion.

**Alderman O'Brien** - This is where I think would like more of the details before I feel comfortable moving forward in support or not in support of it. Using your numbers which is extremely helpful, so 90 businesses would be local that would get the extra \$100 so that's \$9000. I think at the end of the day we are trying to help out financially not knowing the financial details, is the \$9000 going to help?

**Mayor Gallo** - No, the City of Rolling Meadows has approximately 900 businesses. When I was giving you those numbers that was current businesses that are Chamber members, there's 130 businesses that are currently Chamber members. So when the business license has to be issued to the businesses from the City, there are only 90 businesses that are members of the Chamber that are in Rolling Meadows so therefore the business license being distributed are only 90 that have to be double checked to see if they're already a member of the Chamber and don't need to be charged this up charge basic membership. That's what those numbers were.

**Alderman O'Brien** - Thanks for clarifying that. So using the 900 businesses give or take, in theory if this were to go through, from my understanding and what I was able to find on the Chamber website, they roughly have an annual budget of \$100,000 to \$120,000 and I'll differ to you being a Board Member, this would almost double, correct? I know the City has earmarked for almost the last five years an average of \$21,000. I feel more comfortable moving forward if we had a longer-term business plan of what the Chamber is going to do. I view this as any type of investment so before I say yes or no, what is their long-term plan, what do members get? I can only find limited information. Their rates fluctuate from \$250-\$1800 for an annual membership and I couldn't find out what services are provided for that. If we had a bigger outlook on the Chamber's business plan.

**Mayor Gallo** - The Chamber has been operating in the City of Rolling Meadows for over 35 years. The current Executive Director has been operating the Chamber for 35 years. The business plan she can definitely speak to but as far as the membership levels and the actual services or amenities are escaping me right now, but the actual benefits they receive at that level of membership, I do believe most Chambers keep those close to their chest they don't just publicly display all that on their website and I could be mistaken but I know from my experience with the Rolling Meadows Chamber that x amount of dollars in membership provides you up to five members and one free foursome in golf and two tickets to the Circle of Success dinner type of thing. That's a Chamber situation and those are Chamber deals. What I'm trying to do is foster an alliance between the City of Rolling Meadows, the businesses in the City of Rolling Meadows and our Chamber of Commerce and allow the City to be a conduit to if we were to use \$100 and I'm not saying we have to but if we were to use the \$100 as an up charge on our business licenses or our business license renewals that that would provide our Chamber of Commerce the ability to have \$90,000 a year for the operating budget paid for by the businesses in this community that get to participate at a basic level for that price. Of course the larger businesses would have to pay more of the graduated scale if they wanted more than just the basic level of services. If the Council moves forward in agreeing to establish this than

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the Board of Directors from the Chamber of Commerce can provide what the basic level of membership gives you for \$100.

**Alderman O'Brien** - I would feel more comfortable knowing.

**Mayor Gallo** – There's no reason for the Chamber to go through that exercise to try and find anything different than what the current \$250 value provides, they can provide that. If the City Council approves this then there is going to be some augmentation to what the higher level membership gets you. The Chamber Director is on here tonight, please make a note to provide details on what the current \$250 basic level of membership provides and that would be around the lines of what the \$100 basic level of membership would be on the business license.

**Alderman O'Brien** - Given COVID and things like that I guess it's just a recommendation because I'm still not 100% comfortable, potentially the Chamber could request the business assistance program too like others have done too. I'm open for discussing this but I would be a little bit more comfortable versus throwing an additional unbudgeted fee on businesses with two months ago in the year. I might feel more comfortable if this was for 2022.

**Alderman Budmats** - I do operate a business in Schaumburg when this did show up on my business license renewal about five or six years ago. Obviously, the amount is less than the amount we're talking about I think it's \$10 or \$20 something like that. It's like a check off so it's kind of like the check offs on your income tax where you can elect to or not to do this. In general, it's foolish of us as a City Council not to support the Chamber of Commerce when all they do is sit there and advocate on behalf of businesses that are in our community, specifically to our community. Many times I have sat at a City Council meeting and had the Chamber of Commerce testify to us or stump if you will for some particular business that's looking to get something passed by the City Council or to pull on our ear to see if they can get us to do something to the benefit of a Rolling Meadows business. That to me seems to be invaluable, they are as they should be a partnership and it seems like they have been a partnership with the City so for us to do something which costs us nothing, it costs the City nothing so why wouldn't we put a check off on our business license for businesses to become a part of the Rolling Meadows Chamber of Commerce. All it does is build the camaraderie between the business community in Rolling Meadows with each other and gets them more involved in our community with other community businesses. It only improves Rolling Meadows. I can't see a good reason not to support an organization that's not-for-profit that's working to better Rolling Meadows, so why wouldn't we if it costs us nothing? It's just putting a check box on the form that says whether they want to be in it or not, however we decide to do that. I think \$100 is a tough nut for business to get a surprise with, I would recommend half of that. If they choose to opt out it goes back to the original amount for the business license. I think most of them would just pay it and not even pay attention and get the benefit of becoming an associate benefit of the Chamber or whatever they're going to call this. For us as a Council not to support the Chamber of Commerce is foolish, there would absolutely be no good reason not to after all they've done for the City and for the businesses in our City. I would be embarrassed if we didn't do something for them at this time as Alderman Cannon says when Chambers are having a tough time. For us is just say it was great for 35 years when they helped the community let's just watch and flounder little bit. It's embarrassing to think we're not going to step up and do something that's going to cost us nothing to do.

**Mayor Gallo** - You raise a good point about general versus specific value. I can think of a couple organizations and I won't mention them now by name that the City of Rolling Meadows pays and participates in for \$15,000 plus at times and we get very little in the way of general value or benefit. However, the Rolling Meadows Chamber of Commerce which the City of Rolling Meadows will not be paying directly which is coming from the businesses in the City of Rolling Meadows will get specific local value. This is what I want the Council to start thinking about as we do look at other associations that the City is going to partner with or participate in or be a member of, I want to think about the general value versus specific value and what the dollars cost. As we do move forward times are

going to get tighter before they get more liberal in this so just remember that as we're thinking of what we could do for the Chamber. As a Mayor, the Chamber has provided me invaluable metrics on the class A and class B buildings and property managers of the tenants for those buildings and the corporate entities and the employees who are not back in those buildings and what that's doing from a financial impact or the daily population cycles and what that's doing for our motor fuel tax potentially or from the restaurateurs who are in Chamber's membership who are telling them what it's going to do to our food and beverage tax. The Chamber has brought me vital information that I haven't gotten from any other place than the Chamber and I haven't had to request it from the Chamber, they provided it to me as the Mayor and that's something that I very much appreciate. It's valuable because I can utilize that in conversations to talk about the future economics of the City.

**Alderman Vinezeano** - I brought this topic up to a couple of my businesses in my Ward just to kind of get their senses on their thoughts and how this would be affecting them. The handful that I able to speak with were all in support of this. I had no idea who was a Chamber member or who is not, I'm not privy to that information, and a couple of them were already members and they thought it would be a phenomenal relationship between the City and the Chamber. The couple that were not members thought it would be a valuable asset for them and they immediately wanted to know what more they can they get and when can they get started. Our businesses need our help. On the Economic Development Committee that is our number one topic that we're constantly talking about is what we can do for businesses right now. I will bring it up, we're in partnership with Meet Chicago Northwest and they came in and made presentation to us and we're one of the smallest towns in that partnership with the bigger towns, Schaumburg, Palatine, Arlington Heights, and we asked what we're getting out of this and as the Committee we really started to question what we're getting for our money for Rolling Meadows. To partner, as Alderman Cannon had suggested to partner with another town's Chamber would defeat the continuity and edicately of Rolling Meadows because we already have that partnership in a different business format and what we're getting for our money may not be exclusive to our town and to our community. I think in this time right now we've constantly talked as a Council how we can help our businesses and I think this is exactly what we've been looking to do. I think some of the ideas that staff has come up with as far as vouchers and restaurant plans and all that has been great but this will help all of our businesses not a select category. I think our partnership between the Chamber needs to grow and one of the ways to grow that partnership and the Chamber is obviously financially and we need to support that partnership. I'm very much in favor of this and I agree with Alderman Budmats that I think may be \$100 might be a bit too much right off the bat so I could support the \$50 for the first year and the times that we're in and see this partnership grow.

**Alderman Bisesi** - My initial gut reaction was not necessarily in support of this but I've been listening to the discussion and being somewhat persuaded. If we were to go forward with this it would definitely need to be a lower dollar amount maybe the \$50 that we've been discussing. On the topic of having an "opt out" box, I personally think it may be better, though it may yield less memberships, to have an "opt in" box similar to the tax return asking if you want to contribute X number of dollars to the election fund whatever they call it. What I would be worried about is people who don't look at it and pay the money and then realize afterwards. Can they come back and say oops I made a mistake can I have my money back just because they didn't check a box? I would rather have them check a box. The other option if we don't move forward with this, I assume we mail out asking people to renew their business license, do we put any kind of information promoting our Chamber of Commerce?

**Mayor Gallo** - Currently? No.

**Alderman Bisesi** - That would be another option to help support our Chamber of Commerce. Lastly, at least by the time this comes up for us to vote on it, I would like to see something similar to what Alderman O'Brien said, from a business point of view the big thing is going to be what is in it for them. What are they getting with the membership at this level? What type of help or support or opportunities are they getting for this because some of

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the comments I've heard is that they were members of the Chamber of Commerce but they don't really do anything for them. We had people who join initially and then just drop out because either they they made the contacts they needed to make and then they drop out or they don't want to be asked for more money. I would rather have it more of an "opt in" as well as understand what's in it for the businesses before we move forward.

**Alderman Sanoica** - To all the points that Alderman Bisesi brought up I think it should absolutely be an "opt out" option because ultimately read your paperwork and our goal here is to try and make this easy for people and having to do any extra action make something harder for people to do. Just like voter registration is not automatic, it requires an extra step and so we have overall lower voter turnout speaking to the times of the season that we're in right now. As far as the pricing, I think \$100 is fine to start with its lower than the current base of \$250 and also I would much rather come back to the Council and decide to change that price to \$50 then to have those who are already paying \$50 to bump it up to \$100. I think that the perceived benefit would actually be much easier and more positive for business owners to experience a decrease in pricing if we're more interested in inclusivity and realize that \$100 is excluding something like 50% of our businesses than that would be a decision for a later time. We just don't have the data to determine if that's the case right now so I would rather start high and bring down low then start low and build up high in this case.

**Mayor Gallo** - To that point about the \$100, like I said for any current business that does have basic level membership at \$250 and again, using my business as an example and using my business license as an example I don't look twice at my business license and also because of my time constraints I really can't afford to get more than just my basic participation which is even less than in the Chamber at times because of my time constraints. It would save me \$150 but it would also directly guarantee \$100 from my business being in Rolling Meadows is going towards the Chamber of Commerce much like any other business that's in the City of Rolling Meadows so it does strengthen and enhance the Chamber but it also provides a bit of financial relief for me on another account in my balance sheet and so that's where I came up with the \$100 mark and bounced that around to other small business owners in the community who are okay with that too. At the end of the day I just want to see the Council stand behind this opportunity and then define an amount that the Council deems fair.

**Rob Horne, Director Public Works** - I have a few questions but if you'd like to wait for me until all of the Aldermen have had an opportunity to speak I would be fine with that.

**Mayor Gallo** - Are your questions better suited for the Executive Director of the Chamber to answer or are they just general questions for the Council?

**Rob Horne, Director Public Works** – They're likely for the Council they're not related to the Chamber operation at all.

**Mayor Gallo** - Okay, I see Alderman D'Astice and Alderman O'Brien's hand up so I will let them talk and then circle back to you.

**Alderman D'Astice** - I work in a hotel and I am a member of two Chambers, Northbrook Chamber and the Deerfield, Bannockburn Riverwoods Chamber. It's not unusual to have several cities represented by a single chamber. I gladly pay my dues because I get something from each of them and it's not just the networking, they do educational classes, women in business, there's a lot of things that these two Chambers do that provide me a benefit. I agree with Alderman Bisesi that it needs to be "opt in" people need to pick it and pay for it if they want it and I totally disagree that it's an 'opt out' because to me that appears to be a tax/fee that City is requiring and I don't want that I think we need to be at arm's length. As far as the fee goes, I am absolutely opposing \$100 and I agree

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with Alderman O'Brien that I would want to what the benefits are because if they're going to pay something extra what are they getting for it. Mr. Mayor, correct me if I'm wrong, you're a board member, correct?

**Mayor Gallo** – Yes I am a Board member.

**Alderman D'Astice** - You said yourself that if paid the \$100 you would be saving \$150. I'm not sure but it almost sounds like a conflict of interest, you're saying we should pay this and you personally are going to be saving money so I think that you may have a little bit of a conflict of interest.

**Mayor Gallo** - No, it's not just me, my term as Mayor will come and go or my membership with the Chamber will come and go, what I'm saying is businesses in my situation, the basic \$250 membership would save a business in that situation \$150. I'm using me as an example because I can point to me but this has nothing to do with my political interest or professional interest.

**Alderman D'Astice** - I think that if that were the case then why wouldn't the Executive Director of the Chamber put out some informational piece to these 900 businesses in the City and tell them they're only going to charge them \$50 or \$100 or whatever the number is to get a basic membership and ask them if they want to join? I have to tell you businesses now especially food and beverage businesses are barely making money if they're making any money whatsoever and \$50 is going to hurt them. By the City putting this on their business license at this time during COVID, I have a hard time with that because I know that the businesses are barely making it if they are. I know people who are in business and I know people who own restaurants and even though they got their payroll protection they're about to go under because they're not getting enough people in and with this relapse and the Governor closing indoor dining they might going to go out of business. So whether it's \$50, \$100 or \$10 they can't make any money as it is. I don't think this is the right time to do this, I don't disagree with the concept but I do disagree that the timing is wrong and I do agree with some of the other things that were said. I would like to see what it is that they're getting and if the businesses think that it's something good enough they'll just volunteer to do it anyhow. It needs to be an "opt in" and like Alderman Bisesi said what's in it for the business. I think we need to let the businesses know what they're getting as opposed to adding an extra fee. I'm a little leery at this point.

**Mayor Gallo** - I also think you're a little myopic in the sense that Rolling Meadows consists of just food and beverage businesses, we're a little bit broader than that. Ironically I was reading that some 30% of hotels will be out of business by the end of this year which is alarming too and we do have hotels that we would like to keep viable in our community. I wish the Council would broaden their perspective on this in the sense that the current basic Chamber membership is what could be afforded to that basic Chamber fee so long as the Chamber could receive almost 900 businesses in exchange for it. For those asking that they have to see more of what this basic Chamber membership is, it's existed for decades with the Rolling Meadows Chamber of Commerce and you can call or hopefully the Executive Director will clarify today what that basic fee entitles a business to.

**Alderman O'Brien** - That would just be my big thing, I would only feel comfortable if we move forward that we can tell businesses what they're getting for the membership. I do like the idea of the "opt in" versus "opt out." I could potentially be open to an "opt in." I'm just tossing this out there, let's help the Chamber and get a bill insert into the business license renewal to give information about the Chamber. I would support the "opt in" idea because that's how it is now. Maybe we just help educate and in the November renewals put in a nice flyer about the Chamber to bring awareness to it maybe that would be the first step and when COVID passes and in 2022 we can talk about the \$25, \$50 or \$100 fee.

**Rob Horne, Director Public Works** - The questions I have really have nothing to do with any existing Chamber members or how the Chamber operates. I have a few questions or concerns that I want to make sure that the Council

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is aware of. We have business licenses that we do now for home occupations and very small businesses in multi-tenant office building where the business license fee is \$100 or less and we very regularly receive complaints that because of their size and because of the fact that they're just a home occupation that they shouldn't have to pay such a high fee. I just want to make sure that this Chamber fee will include all businesses regardless of their stature or categorization?

**Mayor Gallo** - Yes every business that exists in Rolling Meadows and again if you're receiving complaints from certain businesses that's what the "opt out" checkbox would do so it's one less financial hit that they have to complain about by just checking the box to "opt out" if \$50 or \$100 or if \$150 is too much for their business in the City of Rolling Meadows then we don't want to put undue pressure on them so the "opt out" checkbox would be valuable to them for that type of business.

**Rob Horne, Director Public Works** - Okay so that kind of takes care of the other question of a graduated fee. The other issue is more in the messaging to the business owners. We're having this conversation tonight potentially if the ordinance gets past on the 27<sup>th</sup> staff is going to try to get all of these things done so we can get it out in the November 1<sup>st</sup> mailing. That will be the first notification that the businesses will have to this new fee will be in the application that is asking them to pay it. I just want to make sure how we want that messaging to go out to them. Is it going to be a City Council initiated issue or how do we want to message that?

**Mayor Gallo** – It would have to be but what happens here and now is if the City Council blesses this idea then the Chamber's Board of Directors will put together a buck slip introducing this opportunity that can go out with the business license. The City of Rolling Meadows doesn't have to determine how to articulate this, the Chamber will do that and I'll drive as being a Chamber Board Member, I will drive that conversation with the Executive Director and the remaining Board Members on explaining the features and benefits of this new line item charge.

**Rob Horne, Director Public Works** – Okay. The last thing is just to confirm there's no other different fees, it would just be \$50 or \$100? I only ask because as you all know we're trying to evolve out of our old databases and old software packages and move into a new ERP system for all of our business licenses and permitting, however we're not there yet so our business license software we use is really antiquated Access database that really cannot be manipulated so each transaction will likely have to be calculated by hand but \$50 or \$100 is not going to be hard to add to that. I just want to make sure how the operation might be affected by the change.

**JoEllen Charlton, Assistant Director Public Works** - Just a follow-up on what Rob said. Anytime we look to implement a new program, I always look to try and expect the unexpected because nothing happens without issues. I do have a little bit of concern about that database and our ability to modify it is a concern and the time between now and next week I would appreciate an opportunity to speak with our IT Department and see how we need to do that or if we need to gear up some kind of software program to accommodate this if we move forward with it this year. Next year it's absolutely no problem as the new ERP system will be in place and I don't anticipate we would have an issue with it at that point. In addition to the messaging question that Rob asked, one of the concerns because we would see people getting this message may have questions and if we have 900 businesses that are calling the Community Development with questions about this, how we support that? Is that something you want our Community Development staff to say you're opting out that's fine or do we want to try to be supportive for people to join it? What direction do we give Community Development staff when they get phone calls?

**Mayor Gallo** - I would definitely advise Community Development to force the opt out issue but again what happens is these business license renewals get mailed to the point of business and if someone were to call, staff can say that we're participating in a new collaboration initiative between the Chamber of Commerce trying to strengthen our rapport among the business community and the City of Rolling Meadows during these post COVID pandemic

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times. This is a good opportunity to help leverage additional resources to the Chamber that may be beneficial for you as you work through this coming economy. Doesn't need to be anything special. I have a concern with the whole timing issue and I don't know what I don't know but I do know that I brought this up on *Matters Not on the Agenda* on September 22<sup>nd</sup> and I mentioned that there's going to be a basic Chamber of Commerce membership fee on the business license with an opt out. If this was something that needed to be checked into we really had from September 22<sup>nd</sup> until now to check into those things.

**JoEllen Charlton, Assistant Director Public Works** - I apologize, I may have not been part of that conversation or fully aware. I kind of knew that it was happening, I was waiting for further discussion and consideration from the Council. Obviously, the Council's direction is something that we can put together and we'll do but I just want to make sure that operationally we give consideration and provide the resources that our staff is going to need to implement it properly.

**Alderman Budmats** - I've seen City Staff be nimble on some things. I recall recently there was a Halloween thing that we were going to move quick on and it happened and then it didn't happen when the Council voted against it so I honestly think that we can move fast on this too as a staff if the Council's behind it.

**Alderman D'Astice** – Are we going to have a straw vote on “opt in” or “opt out” before we take a general straw vote on the whole thing? Are we going to have a straw vote on the amount of money? I would like to get some information so that I can make an educated decision on this.

**Mayor Gallo** - What I would like to do is first allow the public to comment and then circle back for our conclusion on this and that will consist of those straw votes to make those determinations.

**Alderman D'Astice** – Okay. Thank you.

Mayor Gallo opened the floor.

**Christine Burbidge** - I have been a Chamber member for about two years now. I am a financial advisor with Edward Jones, my office is in Rolling Meadows right near Plum Grove Junior High. I've been a Chamber member for a couple years, I pay my dues however my business license is paid by my company and the money is put on my PNL. I couldn't tell you how much my business license cost so if you increased it \$100 or \$50 I would probably have no idea. I'm still paying for it but the idea of saving myself \$150 so I can use that money to do something like sponsor a hole at a Chamber golf outing or that type of thing is a fabulous idea to me. I would love the opportunity to not have to pay the additional \$250, be billed \$150 or \$50 right on my PNL and then I'm a member and I could use that extra money that I'm not spending on paying that membership for something else that would help support the Chamber.

Mayor Gallo read the following submitted via email:

*Mayor Gallo,*

*I am writing you because I am unable to attend tonight's meeting when you read the proposal that affects the RM Chamber of Commerce.*

*Please know that while representing Northrop Grumman over the past several years on the Board of Directors with the Chamber I have witnessed numerous occasions where the Chamber has been a benefit to our businesses community. The proposal before you costs the city no money and will benefit the RMCC which serves the businesses*

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*and residents alike. As a 50+ year resident of RM I ask that you and the City Council consider this proposal as a way to benefit our business community which in turn will benefit our residents. Please forward to the Alderman and others as necessary as I do not have their email addresses at this time.*

*Thank you,  
Mike Hutchins*

**Linda Ballantine, Chamber of Commerce Executive Director** - Thank you for the opportunity to address the City Council this evening concerning the Rolling Meadows Chamber of Commerce and the overall business community impacted by COVID-19. The Chamber like many businesses has been negatively affected financially during the COVID-19 pandemic since March prohibiting normal functions and operations. More than ever our business service organization has been needed to assist businesses in the area of marketing, financial assistance, funding resources, certificates of origin for exporting products in a timely manner and overall general assistance. In order to meet the continued and ongoing demands of the business community the Chamber must remain viable and functional. Although the Chamber has been able to provide business resources for federal, state and county funding available under a number of programs and grants. Chambers in general have been unable to qualify for the same funding sources being 501(c)(6) organization restricting our ability even more to obtain new revenue sources to replace the loss of some dues and revenue generating events that we've had to cancel indefinitely. Almost 50% of our annual operating budget is derived from revenue producing events, programs and sponsorships. We appreciate the Council's consideration to review and assist the Chamber through possible new revenue sources that would allow and encourage the business community at large to be a part of the Rolling Meadows Chamber of Commerce. To try and at least answer a few things real quickly. We will be looking at different levels and tiers of membership so the basic membership if it's going to be under what we normally charge, we'd include like a listing in the Chamber website directory, a listing in the business resource guide directory that goes out to all the businesses and residents of Rolling Meadows on an annual basis. Free participation in the Rolling Meadows Talk community wide website that we have started with a free landing page. We would have to look obviously at different tier levels for any of those that are paying full boat for all the benefits and all the services that we provide. We do list that on our website when you look into joining the Chamber. We have also mentioned it in our 2020/2021 business resource guide that went out to the businesses and to the residents. We mentioned that we continue to assist member businesses that need to reinvent themselves, find matching resources to needs, obtain critical funding sources and provide new program opportunities which include our co-op marketing which is that RM Talk and discounted employee health benefits that we are offering to businesses that are members of our Chamber to help keep their costs down more than ever with employer/employee health benefits and health insurance as well as offering business and educational webinars. I will tell you that there is no magic formula to say what is a business getting out of it, they get out what they put into it and it is not uncommon for a business especially manufacturing that will come to us and say that I'm not interested in any other service you provide networking, discounts, I'm only interested in knowing that the Chamber can handle my certificates of origin as needed. That is the reason for a manufacturing business basically joining the Rolling Meadows Chamber of Commerce. It depends on the type of industry of what they're looking for and if we know what it is they specifically need and we aren't offering it already we're always open to seeing about how we can add value and how we can offer something specifically to that particular type of industry or that particular type of business. I also want to just address that I think we're going to be celebrating our 60 years as an organization next year. Please know that when they pay dues, regardless of what that dues amount is, it is considered a business expense that they write it off as a business expense when they're paying any kind of association or organizational membership dues and they're always good for a minimum of 12 months. Basically what we've been offering now that if a business joins in October they are good through December 2021 so in essence they're going to get 14-15 months of membership for the price of 12 months. If someone joins in April, May, June, July we'll tell them their membership is going to go through June or July of the following year. We do try to offer as much as we can and make it as easy for them as possible. Full membership

receives all the services and benefits that we list and that we offer and provide. Again, we would look at the tier level to see what makes sense but I would say for basic, discounted membership and certainly they would get listings in those three different areas of inclusion that I mentioned.

Mayor Gallo closed the floor.

**Mayor Gallo** - If there aren't any further questions, I'll ask a series of questions for straw votes purposes. It's kind of interesting now in the order to take these because the first question was going to be asking if the Council is willing to add this basic Chamber membership to the form but then the curb ball between an "opt in" or "opt out" changes the whole game of adding this because if I have enough folks who are willing to have the "opt in" versus "opt out" or vice versa then it just doesn't go over well. So I'm going to start like this, I want to see a show of hands for those who are in favor of adding a basic Chamber membership to our business licenses regardless of "opt in" or opt out." 3 in favor and 4 opposed.

**Melissa Gallagher, Finance Director** – I just want to help you with the "opt in" and "opt out." However the City Council decides to choose to go, it might be helpful to note that the current business license the way it stands, you might want to do the "opt out" because you'll probably want to add it as a current fee so it has a total because of the way the form is currently formatted.

**Mayor Gallo** - Thank you for that. The thing is nobody doesn't "opt in," it's always an "opt out." It's actually backwards and counterproductive because we'll end up with the same level of members that we currently have in the Chamber now if you're going to ask people to "opt in" because 90% of the people don't really scrutinize this blanketly speaking but you just pay the invoice and if you get an additional benefit from that which you pay you got an additional benefit from that which you paid. It's just about paying for value and being a basic Chamber member is an item of value that goes along with it. There no need to go on further with this because anything else demonstrates sentiment here.

#### 4) Zoning Code Update

**Rob Horne, Director Public Works** - Before Elizabeth introduces this item I just want to take a few seconds to publicly express my sincere appreciation for the efforts of both Elizabeth Payne and JoEllen Charlton. As Elizabeth will no doubt tell you this project has taken the better part of a year to complete and they have spent countless hours working with our consultant to develop zoning regulations that will guide future staff, future commissions and future councils for years to come. I want to thank them for their dedication, hard work and tireless effort in assisting with the development of what they will be presenting to you tonight. They did an outstanding job and I think if you have any experience with our Zoning Code and you took a look in our packets tonight you will see the fruits of their labor.

**Elizabeth Payne, Administrative Services Coordinator** - In 2018, the City of Rolling Meadows began a project with its consultant, Teska Associates, to update its Comprehensive Land Use Plan, which had previously been updated in 2006. The Comprehensive Plan was completed and adopted by City Council in April, 2019. One of the recommendations made by the updated Plan was to update and modernize the Zoning Code of Ordinances, as it was outdated, difficult to use, and clashed with itself throughout. Its last comprehensive update was over 40 years ago.

In January, 2019, the City Council approved \$65,000 to update the City of Rolling Meadows Zoning Code of Ordinances. Since that time, Staff and the consultant have been working and meeting regularly to review and revise

every section of the Zoning Code. Throughout that process, there were numerous reviews and revisions of each section of the draft revised code, which were completed several sections at a time.

Throughout the process, there were several workshops and discussions held with the Planning and Zoning Commission to gain insight and direction for the code. Examples of the discussion items included; overall structure of the code and districts, signs, outdoor seating, required screening (for example of dumpsters), donation boxes, home occupations, accessory dwelling units, and proposed updates to the process of requesting public hearings.

On September 24, 2020, the Commission began the public hearing to provide a recommendation to the Council on the draft of the Zoning Code. The hearing was continued to October 6, 2020, and at that meeting, the members present voted unanimously to recommend approval of the Zoning Code update.

**Michael Blue, Teska Associates** - I have to start by echoing the comments that you heard from Director Horne and Elizabeth. There was a tremendous amount of work that was put into this draft by the City Staff and by the Planning and Zoning Commission. I would go a little bit further and add to what they said as to why that's important. One of the things that you all know very well about municipalities is that they're all different, there is no right answer and it's both the blessing and a curse of what we do. You have to find the best answer and as a firm we do a lot of zoning and I have been a Community Development Director so I know what it's like to sift through a zoning ordinance. It's one thing to bring that experience and share best practices and share what to do but the idea that the code that you adopt is going to be customized to what the City needs and what Rolling Meadows wants and what are the policies and practices. That's really on the Staff and the Commission and you got everything that you could possibly ask for. This has been a terrific process and the Staff and the Commission have been great. I also want to mention Francie Sallinger from our office who put in a lot of hours and was with us every step of the way and also Greg Jones from the firm of Ancel Glink was part of the process, they did a legal review of the ordinance and have been available to help us with that.

**Elizabeth Payne, Administrative Services Coordinator** – This is a big thing. We're changing the Code, we're changing how it's laid out and changing some of the requirements. The big question that we would have moving forward that we would ask for Council direction is when do we bring this into effect? If there are no significant questions or changes from Council tonight then we would anticipate bringing this forward for first reading next week on October 27<sup>th</sup>. After that, we've been tossing around a couple of potential dates to suggest to you to have this Code go into effect, either December 1, 2020 or January 1, 2021. We do have a couple of things in the pipeline, a potential variance request and sign appeal which we would probably have on the January Planning and Zoning Commission agenda but we do have one thing which is Shelby's video gaming café which needs a special use so for purposes of keeping them moving forward, if they choose to move forward, we would probably suggest a January 1, 2021 effective date for the new Zoning Code.

**Alderman Budmats** - Talking about major changes, the current R-1 lot size is 10,000 sq. ft. and we're making the new lot size 32,000 sq. ft., so how many 32,000 sq. ft. lots are there in Rolling Meadows and how many would conform to R-1 at this point?

**Elizabeth Payne, Administrative Services Coordinator** - We are but we aren't. We're not actually changing that what we're doing is changing the name. What is currently known as R-1 will now be R-2 and the purpose of that is because it's a more logical progression of the districts. Right now R-5 is the 32,000 sq. ft. lot size. There's one area zoned R-5 west of Route 53. It's not going to create any nonconformities, those R-1 lots will now be known as R-2 moving forward.

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**Alderman Budmats** – Okay. There are some inconsistencies on page 4 it says 32,000 sq. ft. but on page 80 it says 32,600 sq. ft., so I'm trying to figure out what that really is.

**Elizabeth Payne, Administrative Services Coordinator** – That is probably a typographical error and I'll make that note to make that correction.

**Alderman Budmats** - Okay. In the tables on page 80 it says the minimum 90 foot but then the drawings associated with that shows maximum.

**Elizabeth Payne, Administrative Services Coordinator** - I see that as well, it is a 90 foot minimum, we'll make the correction as well.

**Alderman Budmats** - Okay. I think that same problem follows with all the other tables and drawings, all the tables say minimum and all the drawings a maximum.

**Elizabeth Payne, Administrative Services Coordinator** - We will make that note and make that correction.

**Alderman Budmats** – Are we currently allowing dry storage containers for our commercial properties?

**Elizabeth Payne, Administrative Services Coordinator** - I don't believe so, outdoor storage is special use no matter where it is so it's one of those things regarding mitigating impact. If a business wants to have outdoor storage, then generally speaking, with some limited exceptions they have to apply for special use which ultimately gets approved by City Council.

**Alderman Budmats** - I've seen some and I was just curious. I saw in this that we weren't going to be allowing storage containers on commercial which is kind of common in commercial locations.

**Elizabeth Payne, Administrative Services Coordinator** - Our current code does allow for businesses to apply for temporary outdoor storage up to I think it's 30 days without seeking a special use, like Jewel outdoor garden tent sale.

**Alderman Budmats** - I'm talking more about containers.

**Elizabeth Payne, Administrative Services Coordinator** - It's similar to that where they're allowed to have things outdoors for limited amount of time.

**Alderman O'Brien** – Elizabeth and Mr. Blue, kudos on the great work, myself and Mr. Bisesi were members of the Planning and Zoning when this started so it's great to see the fruition and I know it's no small feat. Knowing that this was done and the amount of time that staff spent and the residents and the firm, is there a best practice that Council should have in the back of their mind, was waiting 12 years too long? There were so many changes and all the great work that was done, should this be looked at every five years versus waiting 12 years?

**Elizabeth Payne, Administrative Services Coordinator** - The last time we were able to find any information that the Zoning Code was comprehensively updated was 30 or 40 years ago so it's been a while and I probably wouldn't wait that long. That being said, we don't anticipate getting everything absolutely 100% perfect the first time, this is meant to be a living, breathing and evolving document much like the Comprehensive Plan. As staff is using it, as residents, developers, businesses are using it we'll note where we need to make the changes and bring those forward in text amendment form.

**Michael Blue, Teska Associates** - Not to belabor the point, I would agree completely there is no rule of thumb. When it gets old you know because you see a lot of the same kind of variation requests. You hear from neighbors and businesses. Staff knows because it's a problem for them. If administering the Code is a hassle for staff it's a hassle for your residents to use as well. It's worth taking a look at every year or so just to see and maybe it's something the Planning and Zoning Commission does and asks if it's still working. You could adjust it on an ongoing basis. The structure you have now is going to be a sound structure for quite a while. I don't know if I would go 30 or 40 years but this is something that you need to completely redo every five years.

**JoEllen Charlton, Assistant Director Public Works** - One of things that we've already talked to the Planning and Zoning Commission about briefly is that we would anticipate doing an annual review or update to the Zoning Ordinance and the Comprehensive Plan. Once year take a look and see what we accomplished and if there's anything there that has changed, have conditions changed and then to also keep a running tab of the text amendments to the Zoning Ordinance that we find as we're doing routine reviews of zoning cases. Obviously the ones that we need to take care of if particular business we bring forward as part of their application. The other things that can wait and just keep a list of them we'll bring that once a year.

**Michael Blue, Teska Associates** - The thing that most communities do, keep track of all the amendments that need to be made, the things that come up and the things that you find as time goes on. A lot of communities will keep what they call an interpretation book so that when ABC business comes in and said they don't see their business listed as a permitted use, these are things to keep track of so that you have consistent set of policies. That might not require updating the Code but what you have is the consistency built into your implementation process.

**Alderman Budmats** - I didn't see the zoning map that was referred to in our packet, would it be possible to get the old and then the proposed zoning map with what those are going to look like after this was applied so that we could compare those properties before we vote on this?

**Elizabeth Payne, Administrative Services Coordinator** - Absolutely.

**Mayor Gallo** - Are there any other questions or comments for discussion at this time? Since there aren't any, I'm going to take a straw vote to get the general sentiment for where we are with the Zoning Code amendment and updates. If I could have a quick show of hands for all those who are in favor of the progress and where we stand at this time. 6 in favor, 0 opposed and 1 abstain. That gives a good indicator of where the Council stands on this and I hope you can utilize this going forward to make the appropriate determination on the dates to bring this before the Council.

## 5) Chipper Program Community Survey

**JoEllen Charlton, Assistant Director Public Works** - At the October 15, 2019 Committee of the Whole meeting, Council discussed reinstating the Chipper Program, as a pilot program. This program was last available in Rolling Meadows in 2012, and is supplementary to the City's weekly collection of yard waste provided it is bundled, cut into four foot lengths, and not greater than 50 pounds. The pilot program, if approved, would offer expanded brush pick up once in the calendar year. The program could benefit the public, particularly those with physical limitations, because brush does not have to be cut to 4' lengths or bundled. Limitations still apply and include no branches greater than 6" in diameter, no bushes with thorns, no vines, stumps, logs or root sections.

A draft of the survey is attached to the agenda packet. All we're looking for tonight is to see if the survey answers the questions that are important to the Council, you feel that we've presented those questions fairly and see if there's anything else that we want to ask or any other information we would like to obtain from the survey. It has been prepared with input from Alderman Bisesi. With Council's direction to proceed tonight, we will work with Melissa to determine when the best time would be to insert that survey in our water bills or some other method of distribution to the community. Staff will allow for approximately 4-6 of data collection time and will report back to the City Council at the next appropriate Committee of the Whole meeting to continue the discussion with addressing some of the additional information that was brought up during the first Council discussion. Again, we're looking for Council feedback on the survey that was provided in your packet.

**Alderman Bisesi** - Once again, if you remember our prior discussion, the survey was primarily a tool for us to get some information regarding the leanings of our community and hopefully will get a large response to it and then we'll discuss pros and cons after we get results. One thing I wanted to make sure everyone on the Council was aware of is that the costs that were in the write up that we had before were basically based on outsourcing this whole thing, they were not based on us doing it ourselves. We currently do not have those numbers and from conversations I've had, we're looking in the neighborhood of \$18,000-\$25,000 total would be the actual expense which would be less than a \$0.50 increase per month on the bill. As far as a comment regarding when to put this in, I would like to get it put in as soon as possible so that we can have this discussion and be able to potentially do a pilot program at a minimum, after our discussion, in 2021 and at a bare minimum in 2022 given our fund balance right now which leaves a couple of questions that I do have for Melissa. Real quick and I know it's not directly pertaining to this but if we were to do this and adopt the increase that would pay for the program, would we be able to do a pilot this year in 2021? Given that it would be getting the additional revenue to pay for.

**Melissa Gallagher, Finance Director** - To answer your question Alderman Bisesi, based on any type of survey information and the City Council choosing to move forward with a pilot program in order to cover the cost of the program there would be some sort of a rate increase needed in terms of the amount to cover the program. Whatever that amount would be would be determined on the results of the survey and what the ultimate cost might be.

**Alderman Bisesi** - I don't want to digress any further away of what our topic really should be today. As far as the questions are concerned, I know some of the other Aldermen have some tweaks, as far as myself there are a couple of things, one would be in the spot where it says *insert link* to the website we should probably make sure that it says the website address. Also, on there where it says to drop it in the City Hall box I think we should have the address of City Hall so that if someone were choosing to just mail in or for some unknown reason doesn't know about the white box they at least know the address of where the white box is. Lastly, on the part where it asks for the Ward, if they're not sure what Ward they're in if we could just have a line on there that says *if they're not sure of the Ward please put your street and nearest cross street* and we could figure it out. Where we're asking the question about how much do you anticipate putting out, that's kind of a difficult question for people. I was wondering if we could put it in terms of multiple-choice (1-2 branches; 1-2 large branches; ½ the parkway, etc.), something that's very easy for people to determine how much they're going to be putting out. I'm not sure that's going to be something in putting out the survey over the next eight weeks, people are probably not going to even know how much exactly they may be putting out. Some people will say a lot because we haven't done this in a long time but what's a lot? I don't know that we're really getting what we're looking for with that question.

**Alderman Budmats** - I really don't have a problem with the whole chipper deal but I get more phone calls about our regular refuse service than I do the chipper program. If we're going to be sending out a survey to residents concerning our refuse program I really think there needs to be something on there asking if they would prefer if we had totes for garbage and a way of picking them up with our trucks as part of the survey. We've been dragging our feet and have no idea how big of an issue it is for residents but based on the complaints that I get it's a bigger

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issue than the chipper service based on the number of phone calls that I receive. I really like to see if we're going through the trouble of doing a survey about our refuse pickup that includes the primary refuse issue that we haven't addressed yet which is totes and garbage trucks that pick up the totes or we still going to mess with paper bags? If we can answer those questions from the residents that would be great.

**Alderman O'Brien** - I thought the survey looked real good. I was just wondering from the COW from last year's comments, at the bottom where does say should it continue at no cost or at most a \$0.50 increase, could we add that this could impact other projects at hand. Clearly, we have to see what the results are of the survey but at least there's an awareness to residents that should this move forward that other projects may shift. It just might make us have some decisions to make in terms of doing chipper but we won't be able to do another project whatever that might be. This question might be for Finance Director Gallagher or Alderman Bisesi, if we truly call it a pilot program, we can defer this conversation until we get the surveys back and do we incur the charge? If we don't adopt a program after the pilot then do we take the \$0.50 off the bill? Once we get to the financial aspect of it, do we charge for the pilot not knowing whether it's going to be successful going forward or do we just bite the bullet for the pilot and if it's successful then we put in the additional fee.

**Alderman Sanoica** - I also had some feedback from some residents who had reached out earlier in the year about this program or the potential for this program. They had some questions about the \$0.50 and it sounds like today that it's quite clear that the \$0.50 per month which would be about \$6.00 annually per household would be sufficient for this program in-house. If that's the case let's make it really clear in the beginning of this survey to state that for about \$6.00 a year on this bill that the chipper service would be available to anyone because then residents had stated that even if they use the service once within three years that it would pay for itself based off of that they had been paying for this particular service and not having to bundle. That's the only feedback that I wanted to share tonight on this item. Since we're also expanding this to other refuse items, is this an opportunity where we can also perhaps raise this amount if we are struggling to ensure that this fund is being funded?

**Melissa Gallagher, Finance Director** - In years past, every single budget year we run the numbers to make sure that we're covering the fund expenditures each year with the revenues that are coming in. We also now have a fund balance policy and we want to make sure that we're in parameters between 30% and 50% of the fund balance policy. For instance, we are looking at future increases, we have to run all that data to make sure that we're covering all the costs of the fund. I don't know if that answers your question per se but I wanted to make sure that it's looked at every single year and should the City Council desire to increase costs to the refuse fund, remember the last rate increase was back in 2014, we've had the same rate because we've done different items in the fund to make sure that we've kept the costs where we can and we've made sure that we're in parameters with our fund balance policy.

**JoEllen Charlton, Assistant Director Public Works** - Is your question more geared towards whether we have enough information now to ask a question about what fee people might be able or willing to consider as part of the survey or are you asking the question for later discussion?

**Alderman Sanoica** - I'll clarify it. The first item that I had mentioned was that the limited feedback I had received from residents who are very excited about this kind of a program made the suggestion that in addition to having (I'm on electronic packet page 197), on that question number 7 where it says *I support nominal monthly increase of \$0.50 or less in garbage rates necessary to cover costs associated with reinstating the Chipper Program*, residents have asked me if that cost of the program is a \$0.50 increase per month than to state that \$0.50 increase is what it would cost for the program. Before I go on to the two other questions, I want to clarify if that is accurate?

**Jo Ellen Charlton, Assistant Director Public Works** - Rob if you're available I would like to ask you to review that question with Alderman Sanoica. I know the last time it was discussed we had a large conversation about it and it was as Alderman Bisesi indicated that the numbers that we used was because it was comparable to the outsourcing. Have we done enough analysis to feel comfortable that that number would be the cost that we would need to charge for this service moving forward if we did it in house?

**Rob Horne, Director Public Works** - I don't over sure, it was my recollection that the cost associated with the \$0.50, where the \$0.50 came from was if the City were to pay half of the cost associated with the program and then the resident paid the other half with the \$0.50 increase to their refuse bill. Again, as Alderman Bisesi indicated earlier I think he is accurate in stating that that dollar amount was used as a factor in comparing it to the outsourcing costs. To Alderman Bisesi's point, the \$0.50 fee likely would cover our direct costs but I'm not 100% sure what our actual direct costs were as part of that memo because we also included labor costs and things like that which might not be included in our future analysis of the program.

**Alderman Sanoica** - If after re-reviewing this that \$0.50 stands, the feedback that I'm relaying from my residents is that that is a selling point in favor of the program and to highlight that beyond just question number 7 and putting that in the body of the survey to say that the total cost of this program would be an annual increase of \$6.00 which to those who use the program or haven't used the program but for those who have used not this specific program had refuse taken say that that is a wildly excellent deal because they said if they use the service once that it would pay for itself within three years. That was the feedback I was providing. The follow-up question beyond this because Alderman Budmats brought up utilizing this opportunity to gain additional information on refuse, I'm piggybacking off of this to the wider issue, (Is this an enterprise fund? Yes, okay.), of ensuring that the enterprise fund is meeting its fund balances and it is a healthy fund. If the only way for us to make sure that this stays healthy to increase fees, is this an opportunity where we can identify which fees are acceptable for residents and which ones are not. If it's \$0.50 for the Chipper Program but if we increase it by \$1.00 or double that, that would put us in a really good place going forward for this enterprise fund than I'm suggesting that this could also be an opportunity for us to explore that as well. Finance Director Gallagher, I understand that we're always making sure that we're covering expenses for this fund but is there any reason for us to not utilize this is an opportunity to ensure that or to see if we can increase or potentially increase or see what the threshold or limits test is for those increases?

**Melissa Gallagher, Finance Director** - We can certainly add a survey question to that end. It is important to gauge the temperature of what folks are accustomed to. I think any type of rate increases that the City has done in the past has always been incremental over time and has always been making sure that we're not raising rates to the point of not being able to have residents pay those rates over time as well and balancing everything along the way to making sure operating costs particularly in the Refuse Fund and then also the capital costs that are included in the Refuse Fund. When I say capital, I mean that we have a chargeback going out of the Refuse Fund over to the Vehicle and Equipment Replacement Fund so that we're making sure that we're covering all of those types of costs. Again, the Refuse Fund, years ago, the monthly rate was a couple dollars higher than it is now, it was through careful planning to bring down the refuse rate of \$32.00 and we brought it down to \$29.95 per month. My point being is that incremental change to a rate has to be done thoughtfully and through a planning process. We've been able to hold rates the same through many different areas of planning. Since 2014 for the past six years and for 2021 that will be seven years, we've had the same monthly rate. To your point, yes to gather the information to gauge the temperature of what our residents are comfortable with as far as rate increases, I think that would be a good idea. We probably should add a question to the survey so we can get that information.

**Alderman Sanoica** - I'm emphasizing that we don't necessarily have to raise rates overall, I just want to make sure that we're being cognizant of this opportunity given our fund balance request going forward.

**Alderman Bisesi** - I would be in opposition of putting any extra question regarding that on the survey. I think we're mixing issues and I think it could start to become confusing to some people the more we lengthen this survey. I also feel that we should not put it on there because we have absolutely no idea whatsoever how much we would want to be raising this. From what I understand this could be six digits at least that we're going to have to pay to do that garbage can thing. Right now I think it would be premature to add any questions regarding that on here. I do believe we should survey to determine what the appetite is but there is absolutely no way we would put the garbage can thing in 2021 given our current budget without increasing a tax somewhere. As Melissa said, we would have to do stuff with the Vehicle Fund and have a payback for the Vehicle Fund and do various other gymnastics that potentially may not be looked on to favorably to be able to accommodate that. Right now I think we're very premature in asking the questions regarding the garbage cans without totally knowing what the cost of that is and I don't want to delay this survey from going out hopefully with the next bill even. On another point, I would agree with Alderman Sanoica in highlighting that this is only a \$6.00 increase annually or we may even want to rephrase the question, instead of saying \$0.50 per month we can highlight that it's only \$6.00 per year. For the record, I would be in favor of retrofitting and putting in the garbage cans but I just think that it's premature to put it out on the survey right now without knowing what we're getting into.

**Mayor Gallo** - I can see the pros and cons to your sentiment regarding muddying the waters from chipper to the overall refuse collection conversation but if there's a way that staff could identify with one or two additional questions to gauge the appetite, I don't see detriment in that. I know we're definitely deviating from the specific survey as it stands but I'll put a straw vote out to see if it is appropriate to incorporate the question about trash receptacles just in the survey while we're on the subject of having some sort of refuse take place whether it's foliage or trash just to see what the Council decides on that.

**Alderman Cannon** - Just a point of order on Alderman Bisesi's last comments, we know from the Vehicle Replacement Committee that it would cost us at least \$40,000 per truck to retrofit them to put the scissors on and we were told in the past when we looked at this before that it would cost \$65-\$80 per garbage can depending on the size for each household. The one question I would like to ask is how many surveys would actually go out in this mailing?

**Mayor Gallo** - Does staff have an indication? I was under the assumption that it would just be one survey.

**Alderman Bisesi** - I was under the assumption that it was 6000 homes.

**Melissa Gallagher, Finance Director** - You are correct Alderman Bisesi, 6000 homes would be surveyed.

**Alderman Cannon** - With that said, what would be the criteria of this survey being successful? If we send it out to 6000 households and if we get back 2000 that said they wanted it but 4000 didn't send it back, what does that mean?

**Mayor Gallo** - Like any other survey what it does it gives you a baseline indicator of what the trends would be, which way the trend will lean.

**Alderman Cannon** - What's the trend if it's not even half the people responding positively? Does that mean it's a go or not a go?

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**Mayor Gallo** - What it means is that you can extrapolate that whatever the results are the broader audience of who would of have participated can safely assume that the majority would go in that same correlated path, as far as market research goes.

**Alderman Cannon** - Does that mean we would do this service?

**Mayor Gallo** - No, what it means is that the appetite for the service iss there so gosh darn it we better start figuring out what the benefits and savings are for implementing such a thing so we can go ahead and identify how to make the investment into it. That's what we should do, I've been trying to get this (trash cans) set up since February if I'm not mistaken with my internal conversations.

**Alderman Cannon** - I'm not talking about the trash cans, I thought we were talking about the chipper service.

**Mayor Gallo** - Yes, you are asking about the survey results regarding the trash cans.

**Alderman Cannon** - No, I was talking about the chipper service and what would it take for us institute that going forward?

**Mayor Gallo** - The response rate would be the indicator so if only 2000 people responded but the majority of those 2000 responded, you can safely assume that a majority will participate in this. It doesn't mean that they'll participate in taking a survey but it means they'll participate in the activity of utilizing a chipper service. But you bring up a very important point here, are we sending these out to multifamily homes and areas that don't have chipper service or have we omitted all those homes?

**Rob Horne, Director Public Works** - The plan was to send these out to every customer that receives refuse service because their rates would be affected. Townhomes would be included but not condos or apartments complexes.

**Mayor Gallo** - So when performing the analysis of the results that would be taken into consideration as to what their response is. Hopefully they'll say no that they don't need that service being in a townhome. That would be part two for the analysis component. As far as I know about market research and surveys and data analysis, we go based on what the feedback is provided as the indicator for which direction we should go. If the majority says no then the majority means we shouldn't pursue this it's just not financially feasible or operationally feasible. If the majority are in favor of this then chances are the majority are going to utilize this service.

**Alderman Cannon** - Historically, when we did have this service 8 or 10 years ago, the last year we had it I think the survey number that I was told was somewhere between 14% to 16% of the households used the service so that meant more than 80% did not use it and everybody else's fee would still go up. The problem I have with this is that we're asking everybody to pay for this, it's not a huge amount of money but we have the highest garbage rates of anybody in the northwest suburbs. We have the most expensive service out there. We do a great job, our people work hard but we pay a premium for it. Other cities are getting their garbage service for less than \$20 a month, we're paying \$30 and then this will go up from there. If we do the can service, that's another whole ball of wax. I'm not for this, I think our service right now is very adequate.

**Mayor Gallo** - Thank you for your opinion. I think we visited this opinion the last time I brought this survey up. I really believe you should allow your residents to speak for the situation and not your opinion.

**Alderman Cannon** - We're all giving our opinion.

**Mayor Gallo** - No, we're supposed to provide the opinion based on our residents, it's not our individual opinion. It's our opinion based on the consensus of the resident's feedback that we receive. So allow the data to come back from the survey going out to the residents in your Ward and if they're in favor of it I think you should support it.

**Alderman Budmats** - In response to Alderman Cannon's comments. Only 15% to 20% of the voters turned out for the last Council election but based on the majority of those who voted we sit here. The point is that the majority of the residents are probably not going to return the survey so we just have to work with the feedback that we do get and move forward with it just like we work with the voters whoever they voted in even though the majority of the citizens may not choose to vote in the election but those who do decide what's going to happen moving forward as a Council. The majority of the responses that we get on the survey will help us decide whether we move forward with the Chipper Program or not or refuse program with votes or not. Let the citizens who participate in the process guide what happens here.

**Alderman D'Astice** - My question is regarding the 6000 surveys. My Ward is probably more unique other than the possibly Ward 5 in that we have some single-family homes, we have quite a few condominiums and townhomes. My question is, who gets the survey? I have rentals in my Ward. Does the building owner get the survey and respond on behalf of his unit? I'm curious about that because of the makeup of my Ward and I want to make sure that it's represented properly.

**Melissa Gallagher, Finance Director** - If we were to insert the survey with the utility bill which would be the most economical way to do that. That would go with all utility bills and yes some multifamily wouldn't apply to them and they could just discard it. We've done in the past where things just don't apply to certain residents or businesses and they would just not respond to the survey. We could even put something like that in or on the survey. Just to add to the conversation, should the survey move ahead for the chipper service, the next available opportunity would be for the December utility bill because the November utility bill has already been completed and there's no further inserts for this month.

**Alderman D'Astice** - My only concern was because of the significant amount of townhomes that I have in this Ward as compared to the other Wards who may have more single-family homes, I just want to make sure that everybody is represented properly so that I can make the correct decision based on what my Ward wants.

**JoEllen Charlton, Assistant Director Public Works** - To maybe help answer Alderman D'Astice's questions, I could suggest that we add the question that would request that they provide data whether they reside in a townhome or single-family, what kind of structure they live in. That way if people do respond and they have an opinion one way or the other we can sort the responses in a way that would let you know which homeowners are responding in which way.

**Alderman D'Astice** – That would be good.

**Mayor Gallo** – Are we trying to stay under series of 10 questions or something just for the sake of trying...

**JoEllen Charlton, Assistant Director Public Works** – We're trying to keep it to one page because we want to make sure that people answer it. We can reformat it and move some things around and come up with a way that it works. I think adding that question will help us make sure that if we get those people responding and chances are they won't unless we asked the question we won't be able to analyze the data properly. The alternative would be trying to figure out a way to only send it to single-family homes and I think that would add a complexity that we probably don't have time to work on right now.

**Alderman Bisesi** - I think we got a lot of good points brought up. I think to what Alderman D' Astice was saying there is a question on the survey that asks if they rent or own so we could probably just re-word that question to ask what they live in, single-family home, townhome etc., just re-word that a little bit to get to that type of an answer. These surveys are most likely going to people who pay the bill so even if they are in a townhome I would think we would want them to get it so they can at least be able to check the box that they would never use the program because it is an extra fee on everyone who gets this bill. It is my understanding that we're doing this survey and it's not necessarily a referendum, it's to gather some information so that when we talk about this again that we have some feedback from our residents regarding what they have an appetite for regarding this topic. If the survey goes out in December we are pretty much shot for 2021 even if we want to do this. I'll save my the rest of my comments for the next time we talk about this.

**JoEllen Charlton, Assistant Director Public Works** - I just have one final thought. Hearing Finance Director's comment about the survey going out in December and the need to try to get the information out and hopefully get a good response. It is hard to get people to respond to surveys. I would suggest in the November timeframe or the time between now and when the survey goes out that we try to advertise it. At the Council and COW meetings we can advertise that the surveys are going out and ask people to participate, that it's important in helping us make decisions. We could put some things on our website and talk about some of the newsletters that we put out especially to the elected officials as you talk to your constituents. I think just letting people know that it's coming and to look for it in December may help us get a better response rate and give us data that you'll feel more comfortable making decisions on.

**Mayor Gallo** – Just to close this out with the last question here, staff you have sufficient notes from Council feedback on what changes need to be made specific to the content related to the chipper service, are we good on that?

**JoEllen Charlton, Assistant Director Public Works** - I do, yes.

**Mayor Gallo** - I don't know if there's going to be a small paragraph at the top for the resident/reader of the survey to say the City is looking to improve our service offerings or what have you but at that point while we're talking to the resident about refuse and removal, I do want to put that straw vote out there to see to incorporate the one question about canister garbage cans for refuse pickup just to see if we can get appetite for Council's approval.

**Alderman Bisesi** - Would it be possible to put that on a separate survey?

**Mayor Gallo** - It's really difficult to get participants to conduct a survey. If we're putting out a seven or eight question survey if we could include one more line without over burdening the resident/reader on the survey I think it's appropriate and just put a checkbox next to it for our knowledge.

**Alderman Bisesi** - Put a very small paragraph over the top so that they know we're changing subjects. The whole top part of this talks about the chipper service, we just want to put a little something on the bottom we're also looking at potentially doing the garbage can thing and what level would you be comfortable with an increase in order to pay for the service.

**Mayor Gallo** - Honestly, we don't even need to get in the finances for that part, the finances for the chipper service program is fine, but for the receptacle and the mechanical arm for the pick of the totes we just do to know if there are a majority of the households that are interested in that. We have some numbers on our side from what the cost to integrate the mechanics into our trucks but what we don't have is the long-term numbers for what the financial

value and benefits are for implementing these things so we still have to wait for that. But if there's a majority of the population that's not in favor of having another tote then there's no reason to even run down the road of analysis to see what the long term benefits are.

**Alderman Bisesi** - Make sense, go ahead with a straw vote.

**Mayor Gallo** - For those in favor of incorporating in the survey the line about totes for garbage. 5 in favor and 2 opposed.

## 6) Expansion of Police Department Social Services Outreach Update

**Barry Krumstok, City Manager** - At the September 15<sup>th</sup> Committee of the Whole meeting, the City Council directed Staff into exploring adding an additional person in this area (second police social work) in an effort to be more responsive to the current needs of the City. Staff has taken this direction to heart and we have also asked our grant writer/investigator to look for money for the support of this expansion. Social workers can be very successful in addressing problems/issues that may not be traditionally a law enforcement type matter but yet find their way to the police department's doorstep. Social workers can offer truly life altering help and can reduce repeat calls for police services because many times they can address the root cause of problems.

Since the September 15<sup>th</sup> Committee of the Whole meeting, the Police Department has been proactive in utilizing a current employee (in the police records area) who has a Master's Degree in Social Work to work a little with the Outreach Coordinator. This employee is also bilingual and has previous experience in the field of social work (before being employed at the City). The current plan is to have this individual commit approximately ½ their work week working hand-in-hand with the Coordinator and to help perform several of the duties associated with police social work.

Prior to full implementation of increasing social services of twenty additional hours a week in the above plan mentioned, the City is in the process of training a part-time Police Assistant to fill in for the loss of the full-time records personnel when they are away performing social service type duties and working with the Coordinator. The reason is simply that the full-time records position is critical to the operation of the Police Department and the established and allotted staff time of forty hours a week to perform records duties needs to be maintained to avoid significant disruption of services. It is for this reason that a part time employee needs to be pulled away from their assignment (mostly police desk related duties) and fill in for the absence of the full time records employee while they are performing additional social work. The Staffing is also back-filled with other employees, as needed, to make sure that the desk is covered. (The overall staffing increase is by a half-body or 0.5 FTE in FY 2021).

Grants are being sought after to help fund an additional social worker, however, there is no guarantee one will be awarded. (One of the grants that just opened up is called the Law Enforcement and Prosecution Victim Assistance Program. This grant is offered every three years and will fund a good portion of the social services work for three years (January 2020 to December 2022). The City will also talk to AFSCME about these changes in 2021 as Staff follows the current Collective Bargaining Agreement.

For the proposed FY 2021 budget, money from the "Manager's Hold" will be utilized (unless grants are awarded) and the only change is in the staffing number is one person from Part-Time to a Full-Time (0.5 FTE increase). The new social worker position will be created and a new ordinance for the salary will be presented to the City Council in the near future.

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**John Nowacki, Police Chief** - The City Manager pretty much summarized what's going on. At the last Committee of the Whole meeting the City Council gave direction to add a police social worker so we've been very active in making that happen. I have been working on applying for some grants to fund the position and that is going very well and I'm very optimistic that will be able to get funding to either pay for most if not all of that position. I'm also currently cross training two of our part-time employees to learn the duties of one of our full-time Records personnel. The reason I'm doing that is that she does have a Master's degree in social work, she does have experience in social work and she's also bilingual. Prior to moving to a full-time position which we are working on with some labor and union issues, we will be able to have her assist Dr. Nieves with police social work and I'm hoping to do about 20 hours a week until we're able to make that position permanent and full-time.

**Mayor Gallo** - Thank you for providing the update. It's exciting to see that we have new social services and social workers coming in the community for the residents.

**Alderman Sanoica** - How does our grant writing work with the City overall? Working on the Capital Improvements Committee, grants are just a part of life, it's known that Public Works is going to try and identify ITEP and STP grant funding for all of our projects and that's just with all the planning documents. What is the relationship between our grant writer and all our other departments?

**Barry Krumstok, City Manager** - Our current grant writer minds for all different things. Even in the budget when there's two main line items in the General Fund that are being paid for. He's actually looking all the time for us. When he sees something that looks like would benefit us such as public safety related, Public Works or even with COVID-19, he is continuously looking for any grants that may benefit the City of Rolling Meadows. Even if he's working with another municipality on a grant he may contact us if he thinks it would benefit us also.

**Alderman Sanoica** - Do we have a quota system? Do we expect something like two or three grants that are being submitted every Friday by the end of the week for various programs throughout the City or how is that output managed and measured?

**Melissa Gallagher, Finance Director** - As City Manager Krumstok mentioned, the grant consultant is under contract with the City, the primary focus is public safety, police and fire grants. He also minds for other types of grants and really it's just the availability of federal, state and county funding and what is out there. It's not an actual grant that you're doing a couple of times a week or something to that end. Most recently, Chief Nowacki let us know this week that a new grant came on board and has been approved for the Police Department. It just depends on the availability of the funding that's out there and what we're eligible to apply for. There's no quota or criteria per se to your question, it's what's available and what we're able to apply for eligibility. Chief Nowacki can discuss the social worker piece but we did get an update this week from the grant consultant that he's actively looking at the availability and the eligibility to fund this social worker piece.

**John Nowacki, Police Chief** - I received an email couple hours ago regarding what's called a Voca grant, it's to pay a three year funding for a police social worker, I think the minimum awarded \$75,000. The email indicated that they received our letter of intent that we're looking to apply. I have been updating some letters of support which go along with the grant and other information that I've been working on with Dr. Nieves to provide to our grant consultant to finalize that package and get it forwarded for our grant application. We're always looking for grants, we're also applying for the Department of Justice grant to hopefully be awarded some funds to also help pay for an additional police social worker.

**Alderman Sanoica** - Thank you for that context, I have no further questions at this point. I would just end with looking forward to the 2022 budget, I'm sure there are many other financing opportunities given the trends that

we're starting to see at the municipal level to perhaps solidify funding going forward so we don't have to necessarily depend on the managerial hold for these social services going forward.

## **7) Holiday Tree on City Owned Property Located on Kirchoff Road (Owl & Kirchoff)**

Rob Horne, Director Public Works – This item was discussed in FY 2019 at the May 21<sup>st</sup> and September 17<sup>th</sup> Committee-of-the-Whole meetings. Council was also provided with an update in a staff report included with the October 13, 2020 City Council meeting. Generally, staff reported that additional work that had already been programed, scheduled and under way along Barker would continue. Central Road decorations would return to the level that existed prior to last year, and that given short time frames, staff had focused its attention on identifying an electrical contractor that could commit to necessary work in a turn-key, last minute fashion.

*Electrical* - As reported in the October 13, 2020 Council Meeting staff report (attached), staff determined the electrical work associated with providing power to the Owl/Kirchoff site would have to be completed by an electrical contractor given the tight schedule and existing Public Works workload. After speaking with contractors who might be able to complete this turn-key work on short notice, staff identified BME Electrical as one who could make that commitment. A preliminary quote in the amount of \$10,500 was provided to complete the work in the timeframe needed.

*ComEd* - Estimates from ComEd to make the connection were provided at \$1,200, with confirmation that they would prioritize the work provided there were no unexpected weather events requiring their attention.

*Decorations* - In the September COW report, staff provided tree decoration cost estimates that were consistent with quotes in prior years to have Beary Landscaping supply materials and do the setup, takedown and storage (nearly \$10,000). In an effort to offset the additional costs to complete the electrical work, staff recommends that Public Works crews utilize existing budgets to purchase lights and possibly some decorations to decorate the tree at Kirchoff and Owl in a manner consistent with other Kirchoff “gateway trees”.

Public Works can execute Council's desire to have a Holiday tree installed on the City's Kirchoff/Owl property, subject to ComEd's ability to perform their work. However, Council will need to approve a resolution authorizing an electrical contractor who has agreed to complete necessary excavation, electrical, site and restoration work on the site in a short period of time. With consensus direction from Council to proceed, staff will prepare a resolution authorizing the electrical work for consideration at the October 27, 2020 Council meeting, and will make preparations and expenditures within budgets and purchasing protocols on decorations and required ComEd work.

**Alderman Sanoica** - Since it's so late in the game and we can't get that confirmation from ComEd, I would recommend that the Owl/Kirchoff location be dropped and also given the other austerity measures that we're pursuing and that Public Works has already purchased and scheduled time for the Barker/Central location, that those plans continue as they've already been incorporated with other work. However, I would like to see some follow-up on this particular item because it seems like a good long term opportunity to apply to the Comprehensive Plan. Our 10 year Comprehensive Plan recommends strengthening residents sense of place and enhancing community pride and economic development by using strategies like systematic streetscape, landscaping and wayfinding to highlight Rolling Meadows assets. We have some unique challenges to this that we can't necessarily control like Palatine Street addresses and the bifurcation of the City by Route 53. I think that we as a Council have the opportunity here to utilize winter lighting decorations as a strategy to improve the City's sense of place and bring together disparate economic corridors and sights through cohesive theming. Ideally, a visitor would recognize a similar atmosphere whether they're on Algonquin Road or Kirchoff Road or Plum Grove Road and also think

that this would require more strategic detailed approach than what we currently have now where we're just choosing one place. Last year Community Development provided multiple sites for the Council to choose as kind of a home base for tree lighting and in the future instead of choosing one location, I propose that Community Development in collaboration with the Assistant to the City Manager or the Community Events Foundation and the Planning and Zoning Commission consider a long-term plan more like two, three or five years to address the maintenance, the storage and the theme of these winter decorations and streetscapes to both promote a sense of place and just give us some consistency and predictability going forward I think as a City. Over the course of the next five years how might the City focus or expand its winter decorations for the major corridors and thoroughfares and what kind of infrastructure improvements need to be made in order to make that happen. For example, at Kirchoff/Owl we know we need electrical hookup and we know we can do it for less than half the price than outsourcing it as long as time and labor is scheduled then that's something we can incorporate over the long-term so at least that site is an option while that site is with the City for the foreseeable future. This isn't something I think the Council can necessarily create so this is something that we would have Community Development bring back in January/February 2021 and maybe that means ultimately when all the numbers are crunched that we don't have the staff time to be able to light up every single corridor and I think that's important to know maybe then we have a moving cycle and know that it's going to be a different location every time. That would be another type of compromise that we can make with the cost that we have or if we wanted to go completely decked out every 10 years and say here's where everything is going to be lit up or if there are some technology advancements that we could use in order to be able to incorporate theming not just for the holidays but maybe for Halloween or St. Patrick's Day that would be really easy to incorporate such as LED lights or something. The skies the limit to come with ideas and bring back to the Council. I also don't want this to be a lost opportunity for just winter lighting. I think that talking about theming, talking about streetscapes and talking about the Comprehensive Plan is going to be helpful for anything else that comes to the Council like deciding if we want to go with dark lights on some of our pathways or if we need some improvements on pavement. If we have a set plan on what that theme and what that branding is then we won't necessarily have to have so much back-and-forth when it comes to Council. That's a lot, I know it's really late but happy to field questions from staff.

**Mayor Gallo** - Just to recap what I heard, your request to drop the Kirchoff/Owl this year specifically but in conjunction requests that City Staff provide a more long-range holiday plan for the festive ambience around the community and then bring that before the Council?

**Alderman Sanoica** – Yes, excellent summary.

**Alderman Cannon** - I agree with Alderman Sanoica. I think for this year across the street doesn't make much sense, it's just way too much money. I did a little research that I passed on to staff, they could buy 10 foot tree and have it planted and guaranteed for \$1500 but we would have to hook up all electricity. I think going forward I would like to see something done on Kirchoff if we're going to consider this still our main business district. I don't know about you but I'm getting awfully concerned about some of things that have happened on Kirchoff in the last year. The American bagel store is sitting empty because no new leaser has come through, we lost Taco Bell and now we lost Dunkin' Donuts. I think as a City we better start looking and figure out ways to make that area more attractive to get more people downtown or what we call downtown. It's a big concern of mine, I don't hear other people talking about it and that concerns me or maybe people just don't care about it I'm not really sure. I'm not really interested in going forward with this. I appreciate all the staff work that went into this, I just think it's too expensive at this time. Going forward, I agree with a lot of the thoughts that Alderman Sanoica offered. I'm confused as to how Central /Barker all the sudden became the central point for Christmas when we haven't spent all those resources on Kirchoff. I think we could have done that and made it a lot nicer.

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**Mayor Gallo** - I think staff can appreciate and respect the need to not sink money in there at this time.

**Alderman Vinezeano** - I just want to verify with staff at this time that there is no event planned for the Christmas tree lighting, is that correct?

**Barry Krumstok, City Manager** – You are correct, there is nothing scheduled at this time.

**Mayor Gallo** – I'm going to take a few straw votes to make this officially unofficial. All those in favor of abandoning the Kirchoff/Owl location this year. 7 in favor; 0 opposed. All those in favor of having staff provide the Council with a long-range plan for the festive ambience seasonally throughout our City at different corridors and some matrix thereof. 7 in favor; 0 opposed. Those in favor of allowing staff to continue with the decorations at Central/Barker at the museum. 7 in favor; 0 opposed. Director Horne, is there any further direction that you need from Council regarding Central/Barker location for decorations this year?

**Rob Horne, Director Public Works** - No, that was a perfect explanation and direction. Staff is everything we need to proceed.

**Mayor Gallo** - I know there's probably a million other priorities. Alderman Sanoica, when you brought up your suggestion request to have staff provide us with a long-range holiday plan for the ambience in the City, did you have any expectations on when to see this?

**Alderman Sanoica** – Yes, I had mentioned either January or February at a Committee of the Whole so we can review that in 2021. If that's too soon for staff then we could push that out but that month was suggested based off of the planning for 2020. From our understanding, Community Development begins their planning in January of the year.

**Mayor Gallo** – Manager Krumstok, is that January/February timeframe obtainable?

**Barry Krumstok, City Manager** - I think we will shoot for that and if we can't make that February date we will let you know.

**Mayor Gallo** - Will you let us know in January if February is not going to be on the radar for it?

**Barry Krumstok, City Manager** - Yes.

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**Mayor Gallo** – Are there any other questions or comments from Council? Seeing none, is there a motion to adjourn? Alderman Bisesi has made the motion and it has been seconded by Alderman Cannon. Any discussion? Seeing none, will the Clerk please call the roll?

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

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 11:14 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted: Judy Brose, Deputy City Clerk

October 20, 2020 Committee of the Whole Minutes Approved by Council on November 24, 2020.

*Judy Brose*

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Judy Brose, Deputy City Clerk