

The City of Lake Forest
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Proceedings of Tuesday, January 20, 2026
City Council Meeting – City Council Chambers
220 E Deerpath, Lake Forest, IL 60045

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL: Immediately following the Finance Committee meeting at 6:30 pm the Honorable Mayor Tack called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., and City Clerk Margaret Boyer called the roll of Council members.

Present: Mayor Tack, Alderman Novit, Alderman Clemens, Alderman Notz, Alderman Powers, Alderman LeVert, Alderman Bothfeld, Alderman Weber, and Alderman Walther.

Absent: Alderman Bothfeld

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by all those present.

REPORTS OF CITY OFFICERS

COMMENTS BY MAYOR

Mayor Tack thanked the Chicago Bears for a successful season.

COMMENTS BY CITY MANAGER

**A. Update on Bond Sale for the New Police Facility
-Katie Skibbe, Finance Director**

Jason Wicha, City Manager, stated on October 6, the City Council approved the issuance of \$20 million dollars in obligation bonds to finance the new Police Facility. The sale attracted strong market interest, with multiple bidders participating, resulting in favorable terms for the City.

Katie Skibbe, Finance Director, gave details of the Sale. The bond was set with a 5% coupon, and the winner paid \$2.1 million in a competitive process. The debt service is phased over 3 years. Overall, the timing of the issuance proved advantageous, as the City benefited from a competitive bidding environment and Speer Financial was pleased with the results. With 12 bidders, a total of 51 bids were received. The successful bidder was Hilltop Securities with a true interest cost of 3.263%.

The City Council noted excitement in seeing a project come to fruition. A comparison was made to previous bond sales; while the competitive bidding was the same, the rate environment was different.

OPPORTUNITY FOR CITIZENS TO ADDRESS THE CITY COUNCIL

Diane offered her appreciation to City Sanitation for all their help, thanked the Finance Committee, and wished everyone a Happy New Year.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- 1. Consideration of action items relating to the Lake Woodbine Bridge Project: (1) Approval of a Construction Contingency in the Amount of \$214,882 for Invoices to the State of Illinois Department of Transportation; (2) Approval of a Construction Contingency in the Amount of \$214,881 to Dunnet Bay Construction Company; and (3) Approval of the advancement of Fiscal Year 2027 Funding in the Amount of \$500,000.**

Byron Kutz, Superintendent of Engineering, provided an update on the overall schedule and current status of the Lake Woodbine Bridge Project. He reviewed construction progress to date and outlined the anticipated timeline moving forward, with initial preparatory work and utility coordination occurring in April and May. Major structural work is expected to take place over the summer months, with substantial completion anticipated by mid-September. Construction activities will be coordinated closely with residents to minimize disruptions, and ongoing communication efforts are in place.

COUNCIL ACTION: Consideration of action items relating to the Lake Woodbine Bridge Project: (1) Approval of a Construction Contingency in the Amount of \$214,882 for Invoices to the State of Illinois Department of Transportation; (2) Approval of a Construction Contingency in the Amount of \$214,881 to Dunnet Bay Construction Company; and (3) Approval of the advancement of Fiscal Year 2027 Funding in the Amount of \$500,000.

Alderman Walther made a motion to approve items relating to the Lake Woodbine Bridge Project: (1) Approval of a Construction Contingency in the Amount of \$214,882 for Invoices to the State of Illinois Department of Transportation; (2) Approval of a Construction Contingency in the Amount of \$214,881 to Dunnet Bay Construction Company; and (3) Approval of the advancement of Fiscal Year 2027 Funding in the Amount of \$500,000, seconded by Alderman Powers. The following voted "Aye": Aldermen Novit, Clemens, Notz, Powers, LeVert, Weber, and Walther. The following voted "Nay": none. 7-Ayes, 0-Nays, motion carried.

- 1. Approval of Construction Engineering for the Waukegan and Westleigh Intersection Project to Gewalt Hamilton Associates, Inc., and Authorize the City Manager to Execute an Agreement in the Amount of \$378,875 to Include a Contingency in the Amount of \$19,125 for a Total Cost of \$398,000**

Byron Kutz, Superintendent of Engineering, provided an update on bid results for the Waukegan and Westleigh Intersection Project. The project schedule for the intersection improvement project, which includes roadway widening to four lanes and traffic signal replacement. The project received a favorable bid of approximately \$2.6 million through the IDOT. Mr. Kutz outlined the anticipated schedule, noting that private utility relocation, including fiber, will occur first, with notification letters sent to nearby residents. IDOT is expected to award the contract in mid-March, with contractor mobilization to follow. A preliminary construction schedule was shared, including installation of a temporary traffic signal and coordination with school-related traffic concerns, with overall project completion expected in August. Ongoing communication efforts were discussed, including a mailing to residents and continued coordination regarding traffic flow and access throughout construction.

City Council had a discussion regarding moving utilities and any possible disturbances to the residents in the area. Mr. Kutz stated that there are no planned service outages. Lastly, Mr. Kutz reported that the project includes the closing of only one lane at a time.

COUNCIL ACTION: Approval of Construction Engineering for the Waukegan and Westleigh Intersection Project to Gewalt Hamilton Associates, Inc., and Authorize the City Manager to Execute an Agreement in the Amount of \$378,875 to Include a Contingency in the Amount of \$19,125 for a Total Cost of \$398,000.

Alderman LeVert made a motion to Approve Construction Engineering for the Waukegan and Westleigh Intersection Project to Gewalt Hamilton Associates, Inc., and authorize the City Manager to execute an agreement in the amount of \$378,875 to include a Contingency in the amount of \$19,125 for a total cost of \$398,000, seconded by Alderman Clemens. The following voted "Aye": Aldermen Novit, Clemens, Notz, Powers, LeVert, Weber, and Walther. The following voted "Nay": none. 7-Ayes, 0-Nays, motion carried.

ITEMS FOR OMNIBUS VOTE CONSIDERATION

1. **Approval of December 1, 2025, City Council Meeting Minutes**
2. **Approval of the Check Register for the Period of November 15 – December 26, 2025.**
3. **Approval to Extend the City’s Grant Services Agreement with The Ferguson Group for Grant Research/Writing Services for 2026**
4. **Approval of Verkada Security Camera and Access Control Maintenance for Fiscal Year 2026 from Modern Media Technologies in the amount of \$43,770.**
5. **Consideration to Waive the Bidding Process and Authorize the City Manager to Execute an Agreement in the Amount of \$44,500 with Pyrotecnico Services for the Fireworks Display at the Festival and Fireworks Event to be held at Deerpath Park, July 4th, 2026**
6. **Approval of an Illinois Department of Transportation Resolution Appropriating \$1,500,000 in Motor Fuel Tax (MFT) Funds to be used for the 2026 Annual Pavement Resurfacing Program**
7. **Consideration of an Ordinance Approving a Recommendation from the Building Review Board for 58 Marion Avenue. (First Reading and if Desired by the City Council, Final Approval)**
8. **Consideration of a Recommendation from the Plan Commission in Support of Tentative and Final Plat Approval of the Saunders Estates – Lake Forest Subdivision for Property at 480 Saunders Road. (Approval by Motion.)**

Clarifications on item #5, as the contract is with the City of Lake Forest instead of Friends Foundation and the cost is slightly higher to enhance display in honor of the 250th celebration.

COUNCIL ACTION: Approve the eight (8) omnibus items as presented

Alderman Novit made a motion to approve the eight (8) omnibus items as presented, seconded by Alderman Clemens. The following voted “Aye”: Aldermen Novit, Clemens, Notz, Powers, LeVert, Weber, and Walther. The following voted “Nay”: none. 7-Ayes, 0-Nays, motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Consideration of a Request to Authorize the City Manager to be a Co-Applicant with the Lake Forest Open Land Association (LFOLA) to the Illinois Nature Preserve Commission for Acceptance of the Dedication of 48.7 acres of the Jean and John Green Nature Preserve at the McCormick Ravine as a Nature Preserve. (By Motion)**

Catherine Czerniak, Director of Community Development, introduced the item authorizing the City Manager to be a Co-Applicant with the Lake Forest Open Land Association (LFOLA) to the Illinois Nature Preserve Commission for acceptance of the dedication of 48.7 acres of the Jean and John Green Nature Preserve at the McCormick Ravine as a Nature Preserve. For many decades, the City and LFOLA have partnered up in the preservation of open lands. She stated, this reaffirms the City’s ongoing commitment to open space preservation and environmental stewardship.

She noted that the matter has been reviewed and will proceed through a one-year Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC) process before returning to the City Council for final approval.

Ryan London, President of LFOLA, reported on City of Lake Forest accomplishments, including approximately \$13.7 million in total investment, \$9.7 million in grant funding, and \$4 million in donations, along with increased site visitation and grant activity. This represents the highest level of land preservation funding available, resulting in the protection of over 6,200 acres of natural areas.

Mr. London highlighted accomplishments and recognitions related to land preservation efforts and shared that Lot 4, which is city-owned, is already under buffer dedication.

COUNCIL ACTION: If determined to be appropriate by the City Council by motion:

Authorize the City Manager to be a Co-Applicant with the Lake Forest Open Land Association to the Illinois Nature Preserve Commission for Acceptance of the Dedication of 48.7 acres of the Jean and John Green Nature Preserve at the McCormick Ravine as a Nature Preserve.

Alderman Walther made a motion to authorize the City Manager to be a Co-Applicant with the Lake Forest Open Land Association to the Illinois Nature Preserve Commission for Acceptance of the Dedication of 48.7 acres of the Jean and John Green Nature Preserve at the McCormick Ravine as a Nature Preserve, seconded by Alderman Clemens. The following voted "Aye": Aldermen Novit, Clemens, Notz, Powers, LeVert, Weber, and Walther. The following voted "Nay": none. 7-Ayes, 0-Nays, motion carried.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS FOR COUNCIL DISCUSSION/COMMENTS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mayor Tack asked Council members if they had any additional items. Seeing none. He stated that there will be no further business following the executive session. He then asked for a motion to adjourn into executive session pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2 (c) (1). The City Council will discuss specific personnel.

1. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Alderman Weber made a motion to adjourn into executive session pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2 (c) (1). The City Council will discuss specific personnel, seconded by Alderman Clemens. The following voted "Aye": Aldermen Novit, Clemens, Notz, Powers, LeVert, Weber, and Walther. The following voted "Nay": none. 7-Ayes, 0-Nays, motion carried.

Adjournment into Executive Session 7:45 pm

Reconvene into Open Session 9:14 pm

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Tack asked for a motion to adjourn. Alderman Novit made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Alderman Notz. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Margaret Boyer, City Clerk

A video of the City Council meeting is available for viewing at the Lake Forest Library and on file in the Clerk's office at City Hall. You can also view it on the website by visiting www.cityoflakeforest.com. Click on I Want To, then click on View, then choose Archived Meetings Videos.