

# CITY OF WEST CHICAGO

WHERE HISTORY & PROGRESS MEET

Approved 12/13/11

## MINUTES

### FINANCE COMMITTEE

**September 22, 2011 7:00 P.M.**

#### **1. Call to Order, Roll Call, and Establishment of Quorum.**

Chairman Don Earley called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. Roll call found Aldermen Chassee, Smith, Pineda, Fuesting, Dimas, Meissner and Stout present.

Staff in attendance was Community Development Director Joanne Kalchbrenner, City Planner Jeff Harris, Chief of Police Laz Perez, Administrative Services Director Linda Martin and City Administrator Michael Guttman.

#### **2. Approval of Minutes.**

**A. Finance Committee – July 28, 2011. The minutes were approved as presented by voice vote.**

#### **3. Public Participation / Presentations.** The following persons spoke during public participation:

1) Laurie Staple, Executive Director, We Grow Dreams, 1055 West Washington, spoke in support of the waiver of permit fees for their not-for-profit organization that offers vocational program training for individuals with disabilities.

2) Greg Dose, parent and volunteer for special need adults who are employed at We Grow Dreams, spoke of the financial burden that the cost of permit fees and letter of credit amount would create for the organization.

3) Ruth Ann Seney, 304 Park Avenue, West Chicago, a volunteer and parent of a young adult employed at We Grow Dreams, spoke of the self-esteem benefits her son has received from his employment at We Grow Dreams. She is in support of the waiver of permit fees in order for the organization to financially continue.

4) Holly Rierdan, Co-Founder and Executive Board Member of We Grow Dreams, spoke of the great support they have received from the citizens of West Chicago and offered other options, such as bartering services with the City, in exchange for the waiver of permit fees.

#### **4. Items for Consent.**

**A. Approve Job Description for Position of Police Commander**

Chief Perez gave a short explanation of how the changes of job description would benefit the City.

**Alderman Chassee moved and Alderman Fuesting seconded a motion to recommend to City Council the approval of the Job Description for Position of Police Commander.**

**Voting Yea: Aldermen Chassee, Fuesting, Smith, Dimas, Meissner, Pineda and Stout.  
Voting Nay: 0. Motion carried.**

## **5. Items for Discussion.**

### **A. Building Permit Fee Waiver Request – We Grow Dreams**

It was the consensus of the Committee that, although they support the efforts and results of We Grow Dreams, a granting of waiver of permit fees would result in a change of precedence thus opening up the possibility to allow all not-for-profit/charitable organizations to be given the same opportunity. Ultimately, the Committee concluded that it was necessary to be fiscally responsible on behalf of the City and could not support the granting of waiver of permit fees.

**The Chair entertained a motion to continue to maintain the City's policy regarding the waiver of permit fees. Alderman Fuesting moved and Alderman Meissner seconded the motion. Voting Yea: Aldermen Fuesting, Meissner, Chassee, Smith, Pineda, Dimas and Stout. Voting Nay: 0. Motion carried.**

### **B. Funding Level for 2012 Railroad Days**

Chairman Earley stated that each year, the City contributes a substantial amount to the Railroad Days Event. Besides this contribution, there are other costs to the City due to the involvement of needed policing and public works personnel. Although other entities involved in taking part in this event are able to profit, the City receives no percentage of profits.

Alderman Pineda stated he would like the event to continue, but would like to see total accountability for the operation of this event. Alderman Chassee stated that in this time of economic downturn, the four-day length of the festival should be evaluated. It was further stated that the carnival was the only aspect of the festival that was profitable and successful on the Thursday date of the festival. Alderman Meissner expressed his concern on discontinuing the carnival as it is a draw to the public and a less expensive way for families to enjoy themselves in an amusement park-type atmosphere. Alderman Chassee suggested a possibility of holding a four-day carnival, with only a 2-day participation of the Railroad Festival.

For future Railroad Days Events, the Committee would like to attain from the overseer of the festival: 1) An assurance of fiscal responsibility and greater accountability. 2) Consideration of length of festival. 3) Consideration of a year-to-year contract stating a percentage amount in relation to profits of the event, payable to the City.

The Railroad Days Event is funded by money collected from amusement tax proceeds.

A budgeted amount of \$80,000.00 was considered by the Committee for the 2012 Railroad Days Event. This amount may be revised.

**Staff is directed to report back to next month's Finance Committee Meeting with a projection of the amount of money collected from amusement tax proceeds. At that time, the Committee will decide the amount of money to be budgeted for Railroad Days.**

**C. Funding for Neighborhood Resource Centers**

Chief of Police Laz Perez spoke of the Community Block Grant and Teen Reach Grant that currently help fund the Neighborhood Resource Centers. He said that although the City has re-applied for these grants, because of budget constraints, the State of Illinois will most likely cut the amount of support or be unable to continue the funding for these grants. He stated that the Centers opened in 1995 and since that time approximately 6,000 residents have been assisted. The Centers are located in high-crime areas and statistics show a 50% reduction of crime rate between the years of 2004 and 2007. If the Resource Centers are abandoned because of no funding, there is a fear of the return of a higher crime rate. Chief Perez quoted a figure of \$98,000.00 to continue the program at both resource centers.

Aldermen Pineda and Chassee agreed that they would like more information on this issue. Treasurer Earley stated that item was put on the agenda per the Mayor's request. City Administrator Michael Guttman stated that staff was not directed to prepare an Agenda Item for this issue. He said that if the feeling of the Committee was that if funding the Resource Centers was a high priority, for budgetary reasons, a decision should be made at this time. He further stated that reserves were available for funding. Alderman Chassee said that the budgeting decision could only be addressed when the City receives evidence of any future grant amounts, if any, by the State. She requested that Chief Perez keep the Committee apprised of any grants or awards the City does receive, and to continue to pursue the search of grant funding money.

After further discussion, the Committee's consensus was to continue this invaluable and important program. If necessary, the Committee would look at making budget modifications, in regard to the City's budget priority list.

**The Chair entertained a motion to continue to maintain the City's Resource Centers, if materially possible. Alderman Dimas moved and Alderman Fuesting seconded the motion. Voting Yea: Aldermen Dimas Fuesting, Meissner, Chassee, Smith, Pineda, and Stout. Voting Nay: 0. Motion carried.**

**6. Unfinished Business.** None

**7. New Business.** None

**8. Reports from Staff.** None

**9. Executive Session (if needed).** None

**10. Adjournment.** Alderman Chassee moved and Alderman Stout seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion was approved by voice vote and the meeting adjourned at 8:35 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Arlene Fisher*