

Finance Committee

March 17, 2025

6:00pm - City Hall Council Chambers

Pro-Tem Lavieri called the Meeting to order at 6:00 pm

ROLL CALL

Present – Aldermen Bacidore, Thompson, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Herndon

Excused Absence – Chairman Ptak, Alderman Crane

Moved by Alderman Jeppson and seconded by Alderman Thompson to make Alderman Lavieri Pro-Tem Chairperson due to absence of Chairman Ptak.

ROLL CALL

AYES: Aldermen Bacidore, Thompson, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Herndon

NAYS: NONE **Absent**: Alderman Ptak, Crane **Abstain**: NONE

MOTION CARRIED: 6-0

Moved by Alderman Herndon and seconded by Alderman Thompson to allow Alderman Crane to attend the meeting remotely.

ROLL CALL

AYES: Aldermen Bacidore, Thompson, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Herndon

NAYS: NONE **Absent**: Alderman Ptak **Abstain**: NONE

MOTION CARRIED: 6-0

ROLL CALL

Present – Alderman Bacidore, Thompson, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Herndon, Alderman Crane (remotely via phone call)

Absent – Chairman Ptak

Others Present: Deputy Clerk Brent Bader, Finance Director John Duncan, Economic Development Director Curt Bedei, Director of Public Works Kevin Fay, Fire Chief Jerry Janick, Police Chief Mike Smudzinski, City Attorney James McPhedran (arrived at 6:16pm), City Engineer Brian Brown (arrived at 6:08pm)

A quorum was present.

Moved by Alderman Reynolds and seconded by Alderman Thompson to approve the amended minutes from March 3, 2025.

Alderman Lavieri wanted to clarify a part of last meeting's minutes. It was mentioned that he thought there was a need for a vote in regard to the insurance discussion. He stated that he didn't feel that it needed to be voted on, just thought that it was a good time to vote before the new council in a few weeks. He doesn't see a vote happening now before the upcoming election.

Voice vote, all ayes. Motion carried.

Bob Navarro, CEO and President of Heritage Corridor Destinations presented to the committee highlighting the economic impact of tourism in six counties. Navarro stated that visitor spending in the six counties is \$1.6 billion, with detailed breakdowns by county in the provided tip card. The tourism industry generates over 12,000 jobs and \$54 million local taxes, with significant spending in restaurants, transportation, and hotels.

Alderman Bacidore did question how much money is spent in the area and from who. Mr. Navarro mentioned that they use a company, Zarbaco, for such research.

Mr. Navarro also discussed the publication of two travel guides annually, covering Route 66 and other attractions, with 50,000 copies printed.

Navarro shared data on visitor demographics, noting that 30% of visitors come from Chicago, accounting for 19% of spending. Milwaukee and Bloomington visitors also contribute significantly, with Bloomington visitors spending more despite making up a smaller percentage of total visitors. The average household income of visitors is between \$101,000 and \$150,000, with an average age of 65 years. He also shared that \$16.9% of total spending in the city of La Salle comes from visitors, with 24% spent on restaurants and 8% on retail.

Alderman Thompson inquired about the distribution of travel guides and the cost of printing. Navarro explains the cost of printing and designing the guides, totaling around \$120,000, with a significant portion spent on digital marketing. Digital campaigns, such as the "Flock to the Rock" campaign, are managed to generate interest and drive traffic to the travel guides. Navarro mentioned that despite the shift to digital, there is still a demand for print guides, with requests outpacing supply.

Alderman Hendron asked about the coordination and relationship with Heritage Corridor. Economic Development Director Bedei praised the partnership and its impact on economic development. It was discussed by the aldermen the shift to digital travel information but acknowledged the importance of print guides for inspiration.

Moved by Alderman Jeppson and seconded by Alderman Reynolds. to accept the recommendation regarding renewing membership with Heritage Corridor Destinations at a cost of \$9,000.

ROLL CALL

AYES: Aldermen Thompson, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Herndon

NAYS: Alderman Bacidore, Alderman Crane **Absent:** Alderman Ptak **Abstain:** NONE

MOTION CARRIED: 5-2

Police Chief Mike Smudzinski explained the plan to retire an admin car and use the new vehicle as an additional squad car, funded through the drug fund. The admin truck will go to the city Parks Dept. The striping and lights will be a separate cost later.

Moved by Alderman Thompson and seconded by Alderman Herndon to accept the recommendation regarding the purchase of a 2025 Dodge Durango Pursuit AWD SUV at a cost of \$41,067 for the LaSalle Police Department.

ROLL CALL

AYES: Aldermen Bacidore, Thompson, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Herndon, Crane

NAYS: NONE **Absent:** Alderman Ptak **Abstain:** NONE

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

There were no questions on the bills.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no questions or comments from the public.

Moved by Alderman Reynolds and seconded by Alderman Thompson to adjourn the meeting.

Voice vote, all ayes. Motion carried.

Pro-Tem Chair Lavieri adjourned the meeting at 6:25 p.m.



Amy Quinn, City Clerk