

Finance Committee

Tuesday, May 27, 2025

5:00 p.m. – City Hall Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:02 p.m. by Chairman Ptak.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chairman Ptak, Aldermen Demes, Thompson, Reynolds (arrived 5:03 p.m.), Lavieri, Jeppson, Herndon

Excused Absence: Alderman Crane

A quorum was present.

Moved by Alderman Jeppson and seconded by Alderman Lavieri to allow Alderman Crane to attend the meeting remotely.

Voice vote, all ayes. Motion is carried.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chairman Ptak, Aldermen Demes, Thompson, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Herndon, and Crane (remotely)

Others Present: Deputy Clerk Brent Bader, Finance Director John Duncan, Economic Development Director Curt Bedei, City Attorney James McPhedran (arrived 5:08 p.m.), Park and Recreation Director Lynda Kasik

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Alderman Reynolds and seconded by Alderman Thompson to approve the minutes from the May 12, 2025, meeting.

Voice vote, all ayes. Motion carried.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion of the fiscal year 2026 Appropriations Review.

Alderman Thompson raised the issue of a monetary donation policy for 2026.

Chairman Ptak asked Finance Director John Duncan if he had any further information on the appropriations ordinance discussed at the May 19 Finance Committee meeting; Duncan indicated he was continuing to work on it; figures for the TIF revenues or expenditures are still not yet available from the County and TIF administrator. In addition, the charitable donations portion needs to be determined, along with any other direction from the committee and Council.

Alderman Lavieri asked if the fourth item on the agenda was to discuss charitable donations for the next fiscal year; Duncan confirmed that once direction on charitable donations is given, he will work that number into the ordinance. Lavieri apologized for his absence from the prior meeting and asked if any decision had been made regarding a donation to the Illinois Valley Food Pantry. Chairman Ptak responded that no decision had been reached.

Chairman Ptak asked Park and Recreation Director Lynda Kasik to discuss the potential purchase of a Kubota D1105 utility vehicle at cost of \$17,513.47. Kasik explained the difference between the Kubota and a John Deere (\$16,300). The Kubota is diesel and has a bigger bed; Kubota owners with whom Kasik spoke recommend it as being longer lasting. The cost of a Kubota is approximately \$1,200 more. Parks and Rec currently has a 2000 John Deere Gator which is showing its age. In addition, the Deere is often borrowed at Rotary Park to for use on the disc golf course; the purchase of a new machine for Parks and Rec would leave the Deere available for use by the disc golf course. Kasik does not anticipate any other large expenses in 2026 for Parks. Alderman Jeppson asked about a warranty on the Kubota. There is a warranty and Kasik will follow up for additional information on it. Alderman Herndon asked if it were possible to put a snowplow on the Kubota. Kasik confirmed there is a snowplow kit for it. Alderman Crane suggested tabling the issue to determine winter usage (e.g., hydraulic snow blower and salt spreading potential) before making a decision. Alderman Thompson asked if diesel would create problems in the winter. Crane responded that it would not. Kasik was asked about sharing the equipment with another department in the winter; she indicated a willingness to do so as long as whoever was using it took responsibility for it. Jeppson raised the issue of how many months each department would have use of it; Kasik responded Public Works could have it six months and Park and Rec would use it three.

Alderman Crane moved to table the discussion. Attorney McPhedran explained that it was not necessary to make a motion to table it; simply take no action and put it back on the agenda for next time. Jeppson asked Kasik if delaying a decision for two weeks mattered. Kasik indicated she was hoping to have the new equipment this summer. Thompson asked if the equipment is readily available. Kasik responded the Kubota is; she does not know about the Deere.

Chairman Ptak asked if there were further comments and hearing none indicated no action would be taken on this item at this time. Crane indicated he would follow up to obtain additional information on winter kits and the warranty. Duncan suggested in order to avoid a two-week delay until the next meeting Crane and Kasik could be given authorization to proceed. McPhedran pointed out that approval of the Council would be needed. Ptak asked what the appropriations amount was for the purchase. Duncan indicated he is aware of the amount for the Kubota but since appropriations for 2026 has not been passed there is no approved amount for it yet.

Moved by Alderman Demes and seconded by Alderman Thompson to recommend to the Council to approve Kasik, Duncan, Crane, and Fay to price out a new Kubota including a snow blower and a blade to attach to it.

ROLL CALL

AYES: Aldermen Demes, Thompson, Ptak, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Herndon, Crane

NAYS: NONE **Absent:** NONE **Abstain:** NONE

MOTION CARRIED: 8-0-0

Committee members reviewed and discussed monetary donation policies to various nonprofits and related matters.

Alderman Thompson asked about the source of funds for a potential donation to the Illinois Valley Food Pantry of \$10,000; he cited the \$10,000 in the appropriations draft for a recycling (e-waste) event. He suggested forgoing the recycling event for this year only and donating those funds to the Food Pantry. He suggested capping donations to each organization at \$500 annually. He pointed out because La Salle is subject to Home Rule donations to charities may be made. He continued with the idea that any organization requesting more than \$500 would need to be part of the appropriations, so would still be able to receive a larger amount. Lavieri agreed that organizations requesting larger amounts should make those requests in time to be included in the appropriations process.

Alderman Jeppson added that he thought a total annual cap should be included as well. There was further discussion.

Ptak pointed out this has always been a touchy subject because when the City makes a donation it is essentially giving away taxpayer dollars and not everyone thinks that is appropriate. Illinois Valley Animal Rescue (IVAR) is an example of an exception to this because IVAR provides a service; Ptak suggested IVAR should be part of the annual appropriations. Better Fishing Bureau was also mentioned as being a regular recipient because their annual event is city sponsored along with little league, girls' softball, North Central Area Transit (NCAT), Perfectly Flawed, and the Food Pantry. Mendota Area Services was given money because they serve transportation needs in the community.

Duncan clarified that a recent "donation" to Lighted Way was in fact a grant that the City donated back to Lighted Way.

Discussion turned to the Illinois Valley Food Pantry because of the request from them for \$10,000. Ptak stated last year the Food Pantry received \$35,000 in grants but none this year and he wondered why the change. The Food Pantry is needed but what is the appropriate level of contribution from the City? Ptak suggested that a \$10,000 total cap is high if the IVAR contribution is not included in that total. IVAR performs a service that helps keep police officers from spending their time chasing stray animals.

Alderman Reynolds added that he was made aware of an issue at the Food Pantry with families double dipping and that identifying which ones is difficult.

Alderman Jeppson asked what the Food Pantry proposed to do with the large donation request: purchase food, build a new facility, or relocate? Thompson indicated the request was for certain items they cannot purchase. He believes the large request has to do with the Food Pantry not

receiving the \$35,000 and trying to make up for it. He thinks the \$10,000 request is for one-time and the City has funds that could be moved to cover it without affecting any other City expenses.

Jeppson asked if moving money in the Garbage Fund for a donation to the Food Pantry was permitted. Reynolds indicated it is his understanding the Food Pantry is interested in purchasing a new location. Jeppson suggested the Food Pantry should be seeking grants for that purpose, not asking for City funding. Jeppson acknowledged food insecurity is a local issue and indicated he is not in favor of providing funding for building expenses.

Duncan indicated the amount of donations in the previous year was \$10,750. That figure is slightly high due to La Salle Little League and Illinois Valley Baseball being included in the same fiscal year because the little league donation came late and the baseball donation came early; the request for La Salle Girls' Softball was a little higher this year due to an equipment purchase; the Lighted Way donation would not be included; and it is unclear if the Perfectly Flawed donation was intended to become an annual donation. The donations to IVAR and NCAT are in view of services received from those organizations, as would a donation to the Food Pantry. But realistically, not all of those same donations would occur in the next fiscal year.

Alderman Lavieri suggested a \$12,000 cap in donations might be considered. Ptak countered saying that figure was high due to \$3,000 going to IVAR. He suggested setting the cap at \$5,000 to create an easy way to put a reasonable limit on donations.

Lavieri asked for confirmation that Home Rule exempts La Salle from the usual rule that cities may not make charitable donations. Thompson confirmed. McPhedran also confirmed stating that municipalities may make charitable donations if they feel it is in the best interests of its citizens.

Jeppson expressed concern that if the cap is too low some of the organizations to which the City typically donates might miss their opportunity by being late with their requests.

Attorney McPhedran sought clarification on the committee's intentions asking if the proposal was meant to be a recommendation to the City Council which, if approved by the Council, would result in an ordinance. Ptak agreed and received consensus from the other committee members.

Moved by Alderman Reynolds and seconded by Alderman Demes to recommend to the Council that the maximum individual donation that can be received by any organization in the upcoming fiscal year is \$500.

ROLL CALL

AYES: Chairman Ptak, Aldermen Demes, Thompson, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Herndon, Crane

NAYS: NONE **Absent: NONE** **Abstain: NONE**

MOTION CARRIED: 8-0-0

Duncan sought further clarification on the motion asking if IVAR was included in it. There was further discussion of donations to NCAT and Perfectly Flawed. Thompson indicated he was not sympathetic with donating to charitable organizations that pay large salaries.

Duncan indicated he is inclined to create a new general ledger account dedicated to tracking charitable donations and keeping them separate from community relations.

Demes sought clarification on the \$500 cap as related to Perfectly Flawed. Jeppson recalled the donation to Perfectly Flawed was considered a one-time donation for a table sponsorship at a fundraising event which is not annual. Demes asked if the Council could make an exception and approve a larger request in spite of the cap. Ptak countered that the reason for recommending creating the cap was to simplify situations such as those.

Discussion moved on to a reasonable number for the total annual cap. Duncan reviewed the recent donations indicating \$3,000 covered those and advised setting the cap at \$4-5,000 to leave a margin for unexpected requests.

Ptak asked if everyone was in favor of IVAR being a separate item. They were.

Moved by Alderman Herndon and seconded by Alderman Thompson to recommend to the Council that total amount of charitable donations that can be approved in a fiscal year be \$6,000.

McPhedran asked if IVAR and the Food Pantry were included in the \$6,000. Ptak clarified that IVAR is not included in the \$6,000 and the motion was restated:

Moved by Alderman Herndon and seconded by Alderman Thompson that the Committee recommend to the Council that total amount of charitable donations that can be approved in a fiscal year be \$6,000, excluding the donation to Illinois Valley Animal Resue (IVAR).

ROLL CALL

AYES: Chairman Ptak, Aldermen Demes, Thompson, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Herndon, Crane

NAYS: NONE **Absent:** NONE **Abstain:** NONE

MOTION CARRIED: 8-0-0

Duncan reiterated he intends to create a new general ledger account dedicated to tracking charitable donations and the final appropriations ordinance will include that new account.

Attorney McPhedran sought clarification on the intention of the motion recommending the \$500 cap on individual donations: was it the committee's intention to exclude IVAR and the Food Pantry from that cap? Ptak indicated it was and McPhedran suggested amending the motion to reflect that.

Moved by Alderman Demes and seconded by Alderman Thompson to amend the earlier motion that the Committee recommend to the Council that the maximum individual donation that can be received by any organization in the upcoming fiscal year is \$500, excluding the donations to Illinois Valley Animal Rescue (IVAR) and the Illinois Valley Food Pantry.

ROLL CALL

AYES: Chairman Ptak, Aldermen Demes, Thompson, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Herndon, Crane

NAYS: NONE **Absent:** NONE **Abstain:** NONE

MOTION CARRIED: 8-0-0

Discussion continued regarding a donation to the Food Pantry. Alderman Thompson reiterated his support for it and made a motion to make the donation.

Duncan clarified that the garbage fund would not be the source of the donation; it would have to come from the general fund.

Deputy Clerk Bader requested a clarified motion for the record.

Moved by Alderman Thompson and seconded by Alderman Demes that the Committee recommend to the Council to make a one-time donation of \$10,000 to the Illinois Valley Food Pantry.

ROLL CALL

AYES: Chairman Ptak, Aldermen Demes, Thompson

NAYS: Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Herndon, Crane **Absent:** NONE **Abstain:** NONE

MOTION FAILED: 3-5-0

Herndon asked Duncan if he knew if Peru gave money to the Food Pantry; Duncan stated he had asked but had not had a response.

Moved by Alderman Herndon and seconded by Alderman Demes that the Committee recommend to the Council to make a one-time donation of \$5,000 to the Illinois Valley Food Pantry.

ROLL CALL

AYES: Chairman Ptak, Aldermen Demes, Thompson, Lavieri, Jeppson, Herndon

NAYS: Reynolds, Crane **Absent:** NONE **Abstain:** NONE

MOTION CARRIED: 6-2-0

Chairman Ptak asked if there were any further comments. Alderman Lavieri asked about voting on insurance. Deputy Clerk Bader explained the insurance vote was on the City Council's agenda, not the Finance Committee's agenda. The Finance Committee had previously tabled it for Council consideration. Duncan indicated both insurance agents had been notified of the City Council meeting and would be present at it. They had also been told the matter would not be discussed at the Finance Committee meeting.

Chairman Ptak asked for any additional comments or questions on the bills.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Voice vote, all ayes. Motion carried.

Chairman Ptak adjourned the meeting at 5:49 p.m.

Liz Bishop

Liz Bishop, City Clerk