

City of Litchfield
120 E. Ryder, Litchfield, Illinois
Official Open Session Meeting Minutes

January 6, 2026

6:30 P.M.

Mayor Fleming called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Present on roll call were, Alderperson Sisson, Alderperson Sara Zumwalt, Alderperson Gerl, Alderperson Robbin Huffman, Alderperson Josh Hughes, Alderperson Bob Garcia, Alderperson Holloway, and Alderperson Ray Kellenberger. The mayor declared that a quorum was present.

Others Present: Breann Vazquez, City Administrator, Vickie Throne, City Clerk, Trent Carriger, City Attorney

Absent: None

Recognition of Visitors and Special Guest: Brayden and Ann Helgen, Muffin Bates, Tyler Saathoff, Curt Faas

City Report:

Mayor Fleming started the meeting with wishing everyone a Happy New Year. He noted that the meeting is being held on Tuesday due to the holidays. City Administrator Breann Vazquez reported that the next meeting was pushed back to Thursday January 22nd due to the change of tonight's meeting.

Mayor Fleming reported that we will be starting the interview process for the Police Chief position later this month. Mayor Fleming reported that he along with the liaison for the police department will be conducting the interviews. We have a lot of qualified candidates, and the mayor will keep the council members and the public informed as we progress.

Public Participation

Mayor Fleming reported that we have some speakers signed up for the public participation this evening. City Clerk Vickie Throne informed the participants that they will each have 3 minutes to speak and she will notify them when they are at 30 seconds remaining.

Brayden and Ann Helgen spoke on behalf of Kismet Coffee located at the corner of Monroe and Kirkham Street regarding the proposal to make Kirkham Street a one-way street to accommodate a drive-up postal service box. They are the closest commercial business to the post office. They thanked Alderperson Hughes for getting their input before the change was made. They do understand that there has been a history of vehicle collisions with the mailboxes that were on Monroe Street. Recently a vehicle owned by snow removal company hit and damaged the mailbox. Brayden and Ann are very concerned that if the street is changed to one-way it could have a negative financial impact on their business as the entrance to their drive through is accessed from Kirkham Street. Brayden reported that he has an engineering background and has been involved in changes like this and does not believe changing the street to one-way is the best option. Brayden explained

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that when the business decided to put their drive thru in, they had to sacrifice parking. He believes that there is a better solution and if everyone works together, they can come up with a solution that will work for everyone. They expressed that Kismet would be more than happy and willing to write a letter of support for the TIFF or business district to be able to help fund the cost to replace the mailbox and maybe put some concrete pole barriers around it. Brayden and Ann feel that Kismet Coffee is more than just a business. It is a gathering place for this community and a contributor to the local tax base. They urge the city to consider alternative locations for the postal box or adding supports to protect it in its current location.

Muffin Bates is here to speak regarding the condition of Franklin Street. She reported that the intersections at Clark and Franklin Street are ridiculous and they need to be fixed. She asked the council members and city administrators to take a drive down Franklin to see the issues she is speaking about. Her second issue is our city street conditions after the rock and paving early this year. There are many citizens complaining, but they are confused regarding who is responsible for the condition of the roads. Muffin asked why the city is not pursuing a lawsuit against the company who laid the rock. Muffin has concerns with the tar being a problem in the summer heat. Muffin asked the city to consider having the company return and repair the streets at no cost to the city.

Tyler Saathoff Postmaster at the Litchfield Post Office reported that he is here to speak tonight regarding the proposal of making Kirkham Street a one-way street so that the post office can put the drive-up mailbox on the sidewalk in front of the post office. It would make it possible for citizens to pull up and place their mail in the box without having to get out of their car. Tyler believes it is a hazard for citizens and postal staff to keep it where it was currently located prior to being knocked over by a snowplow. Tyler reported that they have a lot of elderly people who do not need to cross the road and climb the stairs to drop off their mail as they are currently having to do. Tyler is also concerned with the street not being wide enough for parking on both sides with traffic flowing in both directions. Tyler reported that this is the fourth time in 3 years that the mailbox has been hit and damaged. Tyler reported that he did mention the idea of placing concrete barriers around the mailbox previously, but the attorney stated that was not an option. Tyler reported that customers have made it clear that they are aggravated about a collection box not being present. Replacing a collection box is an expensive and timely process as the cost to replace the new box will be approximately \$2,156.00. Tyler reported that there is also concern about limited parking spaces for customers and if the current slab on Monroe were to be removed there could be parking spaces added to that side of the post office.

Curt Faas reported that he is here tonight to speak on behalf of a group of concerned Litchfield residents regarding the oiling and rock chipping that was completed on East Prairie Street and Illini Court last summer. Prior to the oiling and rocking these two streets were among the best in town. They were wide and well paved, streets with concrete gutters that were in good shape after 30 years. Now these streets are covered with a substantial amount of loose rock and exposed oil. He reported that after the snowfall back in November that required the use of snowplows the resident's yards and driveways along these streets are covered with black tar and rock from the use of the snowplows. His question now is was the right size and or type of rock used and how

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will summer heat affect the current surface? Several of Curt's neighbors have had damage done to their vehicles caused by a loose rock becoming stuck to their wheel wells. Curt also reported that it is not safe to walk or ride bicycles on these streets due to the loose rock. Street sweepers have been up and down Prairie Street and Illini Court many times in the last month and they have vacuumed quite a bit of rock out of the grass with a special vacuum that they use. Curt reported that he and his neighbors are concerned that their property value will decline due to the current condition of the roads.

Mayor Fleming thanked everyone for coming to speak this evening as it takes courage to stand up and speak at a public meeting. Breann wanted to address the street issue. She reported that oil and chipping are a process that the city completes every year, and we do recognize that this year there were issues. Breann herself lives on North Franklin, so she is on one of the routes that was oiled and chipped, and she agrees that there is quite a bit of loose gravel. We are not quite certain what the issue was, but what we do know is we are going back to the drawing board this spring and we will be working with an engineer to ensure that we are using the proper type of rock and oil that complement each other. We are also going to be revisiting the routes that were oiled and chipped to determine what we need to do to remedy the loose rock. We plan to review our budget to see if we can just go back and properly asphalt the roads. The reason that Illini court was oiled and chipped is because an asphalt road needs new resealing about every 20 years. If that is not done you will start to see large cracks forming along with other issues. We understand it did cause a big headache for the residents, so we will be revisiting those routes and seeing what we can do to mitigate the issue.

Appointments:

None

Other Business:

Aldersperson Gerl made a motion, seconded by Aldersperson Kellenberger, to approve minutes from the regular meeting held on December 18, 2025.

Mayor Fleming directed a roll call vote.

Aye: Garcia, Sisson, Gerl, Zumwalt, Huffman, Kellenberger, Holloway, Hughes

Nay: None.

Absent: None

Abstain: None

Motion carried.

Aldersperson Garcia made a motion, seconded by Aldersperson Gerl to approve the expenditure report and payroll report for the current period.

Mayor Fleming directed a roll call vote.

Aye: Sisson, Gerl, Zumwalt, Huffman, Hughes, Garcia, Holloway, Kellenberger

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Nay: None.
Absent: None.
Abstain: None
Motion carried.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

Water Department

Aldersperson Garcia made a motion, seconded by Aldersperson Holloway, to accept a bid from Illini Environmental LLC for Chemical Containment pit cleaning at the water treatment plant for an amount not to exceed \$6,453.80.

Discussion: None

Mayor Fleming directed a roll call vote.
Aye: Kellenberger, Sisson, Gerl, Hughes, Huffman, Garcia, Holloway
Nay: None.
Absent: None.
Abstain: Zumwalt.
Motion carried.

Administration

Aldersperson Hughes made a motion, seconded by Aldersperson Kellenberger to amend section 71.02 of the Municipal Code of Ordinances to include Kirkham Street from Jackson Street as a one-way street.

Discussion: Aldersperson Hughes reported that he has spoken to several people regarding this change and he has received a lot of feedback. He wants the public to know we are listening. Aldersperson Hughes reported that this would cause a large disruption in people's lives and believes that there needs to be other options looked at and considered before making such a drastic change. Aldersperson Hughes asked if it would be doable to put up concrete barriers around the mailbox if it was put back in the current spot? Attorney Trent Carriger reported that the issue with that is you would be spending city money to construct concrete barriers on a city street in a city right away, which increases city liability if a car hits the box. Trent reported that it puts the city at risk for a large lawsuit. The question is what will be done with the current concrete pad on Monroe Street if the box is not put back there. Breann reported that she wanted to be clear that it was not a city snowplow that hit the mailbox. Breann reported that the city is responsible for any obstructions in the roadway and we would need to remove the oval pad that is there and then repair the road. Breann and Tyler had

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discussions in the past to try to find a solution. Breann believes the preferred solution would be to put the box back where it was, but she understands that the post office does not want to continue to replace the mailbox every time it is hit. The city would like to work with the postal service to produce an alternative solution that does not involve a one-way street. Gary Baker offered to allow the postal service the option to place the mail drop off box in the city parking lot that is located at the corner of Monroe and Ryder streets. Tyler reported that he did inquire with staff who are above him and he was told that the headquarters out of Washington, DC would not allow it to be off the postal property. Alderperson Holloway asked if Washington, DC headquarters understands the burden that they are putting on our city and our residents. Alderperson Kellenberger asked who would be covering the cost to move the box and Tyler reported that the postal service would be happy to split the cost with the city. Mayor Fleming thanked everyone for their feedback on this matter. We want to do what is best for the citizens of Litchfield and he believes we need to do a little more research and continue working with the post office. Breann reported that she is not sure how much more creative we can get, but we will certainly explore other options. The city will also speak more with our attorneys about the barriers. We have offered the city lot, and it does not sound like they are open to that solution, so if there are any other solutions the postal service has Breann welcomes Tyler to share them.

Mayor Fleming directed a roll call vote.

Aye: Sisson

Nay: Hughes, Holloway, Zumwalt, Huffman, Gerl, Garcia, Kellenberger

Absent: None.

Abstain: None.

Motion failed.

Executive Session

A Motion to Enter into Executive Session, as allowed under the Illinois Open Meetings Act, as found in Chapter 5 of the Illinois Compiled Statutes, Section 120, to address these certain and restricted items:

1. "Discussion of minutes of meeting lawfully closed under this Act, whether for purposes of approval by the body of the minutes or semi-annual review of the minutes as mandated by Section 2.06." (5ILCS 120/2(2)(C)(21)
2. "The setting of a price for sale or lease of property owned by the public body." (51LCS 120/2(2)(6)
3. "The purchase or lease of real property for the use of the public body, including meetings held for the purpose of discussing whether a particular parcel should be acquired. (5ILCS 120/2(C)(5)
4. "The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance or dismissal of specific employees of the public body ... " (5ILCS 120/2(2)(C)(1)

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Aldersperson Kellenberger made a motion, seconded by Aldersperson Zumwalt to enter executive session at 6:59 p.m.

Mayor Fleming directed a roll call vote.

Aye: Zumwalt, Sisson, Gerl, Huffman, Hughes, Garcia, Kellenberger, Holloway.

Nay: None.

Absent: None.

Abstain: None.

Motion carried.

Regular Session resumed at 7:38 p.m.

New Business

Aldersperson Zumwalt made a motion, seconded by Aldersperson Huffman to approve the Executive Session Minutes from the October 16, 2025, and December 18, 2025, meetings.

Mayor Fleming directed a roll call vote.

Aye: Garcia, Kellenberger, Gerl, Zumwalt, Huffman, Hughes, Holloway, Sisson.

Nay: None.

Absent: None.

Abstain: None.

Motion carried.

Adjournment

Having no further business Aldersperson Kellenberger made a motion seconded by Aldersperson Gerl, to adjourn the meeting at 7:39 p.m.

Mayor Fleming directed a roll call vote.

Aye: Gerl, Holloway, Zumwalt, Hughes, Garcia, Huffman, Kellenberger, Sisson

Nay: None.

Absent: None.

Abstain: None.

Motion carried.

Submitted by: Vickie Throne, City Clerk

Attest:



Vickie Throne
City Clerk

Approved:


Jacob Fleming
Mayor

