

City of Litchfield
120 E. Ryder, Litchfield, Illinois
Official Public Hearing Meeting Minutes
March 19, 2026
6:15 P.M.

Mayor Fleming called the Public Hearing Meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Present on roll call were, Alderperson Marilyn Sisson, Alderperson Sara Zumwalt, Alderperson Dwayne Gerl, Alderperson Robbin Huffman, Alderperson Josh Hughes, Alderperson Bert Holloway, Alderperson Bob Garcia (arrived at 6:20 p.m.), and Alderperson Ray Kellenberger.

Others Present: Breann Vazquez, City Administrator, Vickie Throne, City Clerk, Mike McGinley, City Attorney

Recognition of Visitors and Special Guest: Adrienne Eilers, Engineer, CMT

Presentation:

Adrienne discussed improvements to the wastewater treatment plant, which treats 3 million gallons daily and serves over 2,800 residential customers. The \$23 million project, funded by the Illinois EPA, will upgrade preliminary, secondary treatment, disinfection, sludge handling, and stormwater systems, with construction starting in May 2027 and ending in April 2029. Sewer rates will increase slightly, remaining under 2% of the median household income. Environmental reviews were positive. Concerns were raised about the accuracy of the report, the impact on sewer rates, and the lack of mention of stormwater systems. The city administrator clarified that CMT was not hired to evaluate the entire water and sewer system or conduct a rate study.

Public Participation:

John Hanafin expressed his frustration about not being able to access public document required by the EPA and mentions confusion over the details provide by CMT. He questioned the quality of the report and the accuracy of the information, suggesting that some details may be incorrect or incomplete. John raised concerns about the city's relationship with CMT, mentioning past incidents and issues with the firm's engineers. He also questioned the accuracy of the census figures used in the report and the feasibility of paying off the \$23,000,000.00 cost.

City Administrator Breann Vazquez clarifies with Mr. Hanafin that the purpose of the public hearing is to discuss the wastewater treatment plant improvements, not the entire water and sewer system. Breann informed Mr. Hanafin that if he has other questions, he is welcome to schedule a time to meet with her and Mayor Fleming.

Mayor Fleming asked if there were any other public comments and no one else in the audience has further comments.


Breann wanted to clarify that the location of the new plant, will be close to the current location.

Adjourn:

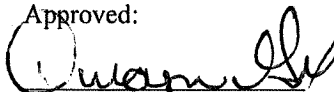
Mayor Fleming Adjourned the meeting at 6:28 p.m.

Submitted by: Vickie Throne, City Clerk

Attest:


Vickie Throne
City Clerk

Approved:


Dwayne Gerl
Mayor Pro-Tem



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Official Open Session Meeting Minutes
March 19, 2026
6:30 P.M.

Mayor Fleming called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Present on roll call were, Alderperson Marilyn Sisson, Alderperson Sara Zumwalt, Alderperson Dwayne Gerl, Alderperson Robbin Huffman, Alderperson Josh Hughes, Alderperson Bert Holloway, Alderperson Bob Garcia, and Alderperson Ray Kellenberger. The mayor declared that a quorum was present.

Others Present: Breann Vazquez, City Administrator, Vickie Throne, City Clerk, Mike McGinley, City Attorney

Absent: None

Recognition of Visitors and Special Guest: None

Appointments:

Mayor Fleming introduced Robert L. Carpenter as the new Police Chief for our city. Mayor Fleming reported that we are excited to have Chief Carpenter join our police force. Chief Carpenter was part of the strict interview circuit and he nailed his interview. He has 10 plus years of experience as a chief in Maryville and he will be a great asset to our city.

Vickie Throne, City Clerk swore in Robert L. Carpenter as Police Chief.

Police Chief Carpenter thanked everyone for coming to the meeting to support him in his new position. Police Officers from his previous employers and from Litchfield Police Department were in attendance as well as his family members and friends. Chief Carpenter reported that he believes if everyone works as a team things will go as they should and everyone will get credit and if they go wrong everyone will get credit.

City Report:

Mayor Fleming recognized that we have a new State Champion in Litchfield to add to the list. Owen Pryor, who is a 6th grader, won the Class A State Wrestling Championship at 65 pounds. Mayor Fleming is excited to get to sign a letter to IDOT for him to have signs in Litchfield that display his name and that he is a state champion in wrestling. The new sign will be displayed next to the one for Sam Mosley who won track and field in the hurdles previously.

Mayor Fleming also updated the council to let them know that he will not attend the next meeting due to a pre-planned family vacation. Council member Dwayne Gerl will be acting mayor for this meeting.

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Mayor Fleming thanked the Litchfield Fire Department for the response to the recent fire in Litchfield. He recognized them for their professionalism and teamwork that they all displayed. Mayor Fleming asked Fire Chief Pennock to step up to the podium and report on this recent fire. Chief Pennock provided a detailed account of the fire incident, including the challenges faced and the effective response by the fire department and mutual aid partners. Chief Pennock thanked Chad Dooley for being acting captain at the start and for doing a fantastic job that day until Chief Pennock arrived approximately 15 minutes later. Chief Pennock would also like to thank all of our surrounding fire departments and their teams for showing up to help contain this fire and keep it from spreading to other buildings due to the high winds.

Mayor Fleming thanked one of our Litchfield citizens Libby Jones for putting together a petition for Litchfield citizens to sign to try and help get a new post office box placed outside of our local post office after the last one was knocked down. Libby Jones received over five hundred signatures, and she submitted them to the local post office.

Aldersperson Hughes asked City Administrator to provide an update for the public regarding National Primers. Breann reported that National Primers remains on track. There is not a groundbreaking date set, but as soon as she has a date, she will share that with everyone. Breann has had several meetings with their engineers and their team as they move forward.

Aldersperson Hughes asked for an update regarding the streets in Ward 3. Breann reported that she and the Public Works team have met with our engineers. They do have a plan to go forward with our oil and chipping program for this year. They have been out spot testing areas because we are going to be redoing some of the streets that are still having issues.

Mayor Fleming reported that there is now a walkup post office box on the north side of the post office. The city will continue working with the post office to hopefully get a drive-up box.

Public Participation

None

Other Business:

Aldersperson Hughes made a motion, seconded by Aldersperson Gerl, to approve minutes from the regular meeting held on March 5, 2026.

Mayor Fleming directed a roll call vote.

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

Nay: None.

Absent: None.

Abstain: None.

Motion carried.

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

Mayor Fleming directed a roll call vote.

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

Nay: None.

Absent: None.

Abstain: None

Motion carried.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

Administration

Aldersperson Hughes made a motion, seconded by Aldersperson Sisson, to approve the renewal of health insurance for the City employees effective May 1, 2026, through April 30, 2027.

Discussion: Carson Bauer from the insurance brokerage team is attending via Zoom. Breann reported that the city received quotes from two companies this year and one declined to quote us. Currently we are with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois. They proposed a 10% increase for this year. The other quote was from United Healthcare, and they quoted 13% under what we received from Blue Cross Blue Shield last year. Breann reported that they have an A+ rating as a carrier and we checked with all of the local doctors' offices and hospitals to make sure that they are in the United Healthcare network. Breann reported that the Employee Engagement Committee and the city administration does recommend going forward with the United Healthcare proposal. Carson reported that the loss ratio we received from Blue Cross Blue Shield was significantly high, meaning that we gave Blue Cross less than what they paid out in claims. Typically, when that happens, we expect to see an increase in rates for renewal. Carson reported that Blue Cross gave us a reasonable rate renewal based on how our claims ran. However, we still wanted to check the market to see if there were any options available to help reduce the cost. We did find United Healthcare, and they came in with a 13% reduction in rate across the board. The plan designs are similar to what we have with Blue Cross. Carson reported they have completed the behind-the-scenes work to make sure that there will not be a big disruption in care or disruptions in access to providers or hospitals. Carson also reported that the prescription drug co-pays are actually better with the United Healthcare plan. So overall he believes that it is a positive change for all parties involved. Breann wanted to report on two things in cost reduction. She reported that this does allow for the city under all three of the collective bargaining agreements for all of our union employees to have two plans that are no cost to them. Breann also reported that United Healthcare is also more reasonable for the employees to add dependents. Aldersperson Holloway

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asked if there would be any issues regarding authorization for treatment and preexisting conditions. Carson agreed that United Healthcare has been in the news for all the wrong reasons. Carson reported that they cannot deny someone to come onto the plan due to preexisting conditions. The prior authorization component is something that has become more and more problematic regardless of the insurance carrier. Carson reported that he has not had major concerns or issues shared with him from any of his other clients that have United Healthcare. Breann reported that she has reached out to LFPC, Litchfield Hospital, Springfield Clinic, and SSM to see if they were all in network with United Healthcare and found that they are. They did ask the Employee Engagement Committee if there were any other insurance carriers they wanted us to check and they felt that we were good with the ones we checked on.

Mayor Fleming directed a roll call vote.

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

Nay: None.

Absent: None.

Abstain: None.

Motion carried.

Building & Zoning

Aldersperson Zumwalt made a motion, seconded by Aldersperson Huffman, to a resolution approving and authorizing a demolition agreement for the demolition of a structure located at 115 East South Street Pin # 15-04-134-006.

Discussion: Mayor Fleming reported that this is paid for through the Strong Communities Grant.

Mayor Fleming directed a roll call vote.

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

Nay: None.

Absent: None.

Abstain: None.

Motion carried.

Aldersperson Zumwalt made a motion, seconded by Aldersperson Huffman, approving and authorizing a demolition agreement for the demolition of a structure located at 1221 North Van Buren Pin # 10-33-186-007.

Discussion: None.

Mayor Fleming directed a roll call vote.

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

Nay: None.

Absent: None.

Abstain: None.

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Motion carried.

Aldersperson Zumwalt made a motion, seconded by Aldersperson Huffman, to approve a Resolution making separate statements of finding of fact in connection with an ordinance granting a special use permit for a sort-term rental property in the S-1 Single family residential district located at 508 E. Water Street.

Discussion: None.

Mayor Fleming directed a roll call vote.

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

Nay: None.

Absent: None.

Abstain: None.

Motion carried.

Aldersperson Zumwalt made a motion, seconded by Aldersperson Huffman, to approve an Ordinance granting a special use permit for a short-term rental in the S-1 single family zoning district located at 508 E. Water Street.

Discussion: None.

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 Zumwalt made a motion, seconded by Aldersperson Huffman, to approve a Special Use permit to allow for a short-term rental property in a residential district, located at 508 E. Water Street Pin # 15-04-401-0029.

Discussion: None.

Mayor Fleming directed a roll call vote.

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

Nay: None.

Absent: None.

Abstain: None.

Motion carried.

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Alderson Zumwalt made a motion, seconded by Alderson Holloway, to approve a Resolution approving a large-scale development plan for 414 N. Old Route 66.

Discussion: None.

Mayor Fleming directed a roll call vote.

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

Nay: None.

Absent: None.

Abstain: None.

Motion carried.

Water Department

Alderson Garcia made a motion, seconded by Alderson Gerl, to approve a professional services agreement with HMG Engineers for design and permitting services for the Phase III Water System Improvements project for an amount not to exceed \$76,500.00.

Discussion: Alderson Zumwalt asked if this is to potentially receive a grant with plans for him to apply. Mayor Fleming reported that is correct.

Mayor Fleming directed a roll call vote.

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

Nay: None.

Absent: None.

Abstain: Zumwalt.

Motion carried.

Tourism

Alderson Hughes made a motion, seconded by Alderson Sisson, to approve payment to the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation for tourism promotion services through Great Rivers and Routes for an amount not to exceed \$18,000.00.

Discussion: Mayor Fleming reported that he believes this is less than it was last year. City Administrator Breann Vazquez reported that in previous years the City of Litchfield has contracted directly with Great Rivers and Routes and the amount of the contract was \$40,000.00. We are a member of the Montgomery County Economic Development Commission and they are now going to contract with Great Rivers and Routes, so we will get services through their contract as one of their members, given that Litchfield is one of the larger populations in the area, and we are located right on Route 66, so our share of that cost is \$18,000.00.

Mayor Fleming directed a roll call vote.

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

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

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 appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance or dismissal of specific employees of the public body ... " (5ILCS 120/2(2)(C)(1)
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)

Aldersperson Zumwalt made a motion, seconded by Aldersperson Gerl to enter executive session at 7:00 p.m.

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

Regular Session resumed at 8:03 p.m.

New Business

Aldersperson Zumwalt made a motion, seconded by Aldersperson Gerl to approve the Executive Session Minutes from the March 5, 2026, meeting.

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

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Abstain: None.
Motion carried.

Aldersperson Huffman made a motion, seconded by Aldersperson Zumwalt to approve a Resolution approving and amending employment agreement with Bob Carpenter.

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

Aldersperson Hughes made a motion, seconded by Aldersperson Holloway, to approve an Ordinance approving the purchase of real estate located at 113 E. Union Ave.

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

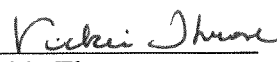
Adjournment

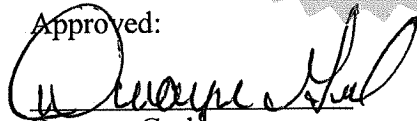
Having no further business Aldersperson Kellenberger made a motion seconded by Aldersperson Gerl to adjourn the meeting at 8:04 p.m.

Mayor Fleming directed a voice vote.
Aye: 8
Nay: 0
Absent: None.
Abstain: None.
Motion carried.

Submitted by: Vickie Throne, City Clerk

Attest:


Vickie Throne
City Clerk

Approved:

Dwayne Gerl
Mayor Pro-Tem

