

Council Listens to WTP Update and Amendment to FEHR Graham Engineering Agreement

**By Bill Price
Staff Writer**
Mayor Cassandra Eversole-Gunter called to order the January 28, 2019 City Council meeting and proceeded with the roll call. Four alderman and one junior alderman were present and two alderman were absent. The Mayor then asked everyone to stand and all recited the Pledge of Allegiance.
A motion was made to approve the minutes of the last regular City Council meeting held January 14, 2019. The minutes were approved unanimously. A motion was made to approve the closed session minutes of the last regular City Council meeting held January 14, 2019. The minutes were approved unanimously. The next mo-

tion was made to approve the claims for payments in the amount of \$74,460.52 and received unanimous approval as did the approval of the financial statements for the month ending December 31, 2018.
Andy Kieser, project manager at Fehr Graham presented the Engineer Report. Andy reported that the WTP project was moving along smoothly. The blockage and debris in the west well was removed. Painters were inside finishing up and the drywall has been completed. He announced that the EPA also granted an extension to the city.
The Council then took up the business portion of the meeting.
Ordinance number 2019 - MC 03 - an ordinance sign-

ing a property address to real estate located at 109 Magnolia Dr., Villa Grove Illinois (formerly known as 105 Magnolia Dr). The ordinance was approved.
Ordinance number 2019 - MC 04 - an ordinance authorizing and directing the sale of certain municipally owned real estate for the city of Villa Grove, Douglas County, Illinois (Wilson Street). The Council moved to table this ordinance.
Approve format to be used for the Senior Center roof leak (repair versus replacement). The Council moved to reject all bids. The rejection was based upon language confusion in the format which failed to present clearly what work was to be done. The city will make clarifications to the

format and have the bidders submit new bids.
Approval of amendment to the Fehr Graham Engineering Agreement. The addition of the amendment to the original agreement was unanimously approved.
Council approved the asbestos inspection proposal from Courtice/Grayson LLC.
Council approved the annual water conference attendance for Scott Arbuckle. This will help meet the licensing requirements hours that are needed.
The ILCMA Conference attendance for Jackie Athey was approved unanimously. She will be attending this conference meeting in February in Bloomington Illinois.
The NextGenNation membership. The Council moved

to table this item.
Council moved forward with the committee reports
Administration and Risk Management - Chairperson Blaney - Absent
Community Development - Chairperson Johnson - He will be holding a meeting to look into plans to develop programs.
Emergency Services - Chairperson Leon - Alderman Bruce Allen brought to Mike's attention an inquiry he received concerning power outages. A discussion followed concerning the citizens that needed oxygen during a power outage. The Fire department is equipped with a generator that could provide the needed electricity in such an event. Mayor Gunter stated that she would look into some pos-

sibilities to address this issue.
Franchise Development - Chairperson Stipp - Absent
Public Works - Chairperson Allen - Nothing to report
Senior Center - Chairperson Griffith - problems with the doors at the Center will be taken care of. Sarah Bush Lincoln appears to be in final stages of hiring a Peace Meal program director and the candidate has indicated an interest in the activity portion.
A motion was made to have an Executive Session Meeting and received unanimous approval.
Meeting was then adjourned and the next City Council meeting will be February 11, 2019 at 6 PM.

Douglas County Agriculture: January 2019

January weather hasn't been very conducive to accomplishing much, outside at least. Rain on two successive Mondays kept us from taking hay to the sale at Arthur. Soft drives and barn lots have kept much grain from moving off the farm. After the snow on the second weekend of the month, most of us devoted a day or two to clearing drives and lots. Farmers pay federal income tax March 1 so many of us are gathering the numbers we need to file our taxes. The year end is also the time to see where your operation is at fiscally, especially compared to past years.

ten and I have heard stories about its effect on farmers. Right now I would classify it as an inconvenience. The local Farm Service Agency offices are closed so no business can be transacted there. The FSA has new farmer and limited resource operating loans and this is the time of year to purchase inputs for the best discounts. Not being able to buy inputs now could cut into those farmers bottom line. The support program triggered by the trade problems with China is on hold too. Sign up for that was to end January 15 but that will be extended by the length of the closure.

The crop goes in the ground. The markets are in a little bit of a holding pattern without that important piece of information.
I have talked about the many reports the government issues about crop conditions, food demand, and farm exports. These are not being issued with the partial shutdown. I heard one market analyst that said it was especially inconvenient not to have export sales numbers. I heard another that said most of the information the government provides can be found privately if you look for it. It is certain that we are operating under some handicap without the regular reports from the government. It has been assumed since the last production report in December that yields of the corn and soybeans would be lowered because of the drawn out harvest, especially is the Upper Midwest. There will be no confirmation of this until the government is back up and running.

a statewide group that held its annual meeting the third week of January. It was two days long with sessions on engineering, conservation and legal matters. Marketing our production is often the hardest part of this business and meetings on marketing take place nearly daily around the state.
The American Farm Bureau Federation held its annual meeting in early January. It is similar to our state annual meeting with seminars for education and delegate sessions to set policy. Illinois Farm Bureau sent a large contingent to participate and influence the policy of our national organization. It helped that the meeting was held in a warmer place than Illinois, New Orleans. For the second year in a row, President Trump addressed the group and Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue was also in attendance. Illinois was able to move several of its policy initiatives through the delegate session

into AFBF policy.
One part of the new Farm Bill legalizes the production of hemp as a farm crop and we have seen several articles about this as an alternative to corn and soybeans in Illinois. Alternative crops are always attractive, especially in times of depressed commodity prices. It is never as simple as obtaining seed and planting the new crop. Will the planter we have now plant the new crop? How is it harvested and where will it be delivered? What form do you take to market, the whole plant or just the seed? What are the fertilizer requirements of the new plants? Often we see claims that this new crop or another don't really use that many nutrients from the soil. That seems unlikely for any crop and, if the whole plant is removed, very unlikely. What are the other agronomic requirements for the crop?
In cleaning out some old files I found information about field peas. These were

touted several years ago to be panted early in the spring and harvested soon enough to plant something else after the peas were harvested. None of these planted around here since that first year of interest. They are much more suited to areas with a less humid climate than we have. I recently saw information about a winter annual, penny cress, to be planted in the fall as a cover crop plant and harvested in the early spring for oil production. Soybeans would follow it. A similar plant is a weed in the area so it is probably well adapted but the same questions about markets apply.
Thank you for reading about Douglas County agriculture this month. I hope you find it informative and interesting.
Larry W. Dallas
President
Douglas County Farm Bureau

Grain movement has been hampered as well by problems in Decatur, a major user of corn and soybeans from the area. Archer Daniels Midland had a major breakdown in their grain receiving in December and can unload grain cars only with difficulty. This means trying to satisfy their need for corn with semi loads. The tradeoff is not good. A rail car holds around 3,500 bushels of corn. A loaded semi hauls about 900 bushels. ADM is taking corn 24 hours a day to get enough corn to cover their needs. The repairs are expected to take months so this won't soon be remedied.
The partial government shutdown is in the news of-

We have a new farm bill but this is only a framework for the future programs. The government hiatus is preventing the development of the policy that is based on this framework. In the long run this may be the worst effect of the closure. We have an idea what the farm programs will be going forward but that is not set in stone yet. We have two Conservation Security Program contracts that encourage conservation practices on our farm land. It appears that this program is radically altered in the new Farm Bill but we just don't know until the regulations are finalized. Planting time is not far off in the far southern parts of the country. They would like to know, I am sure, what the farm programs are before

This time of year is filled with meetings since field operations are on hold. The new Farm Bill reauthorizes the crop insurance we use to lower our risk in agricultural production. Several companies are holding meetings around the state to explain what they know right now about the insurance. Illinois drainage districts and affiliated organizations have

AG Raoul Joins Opposition to Title IX Changes
SPRINGFIELD - Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul has joined 18 other state attorneys general in opposing changes to federal Title IX rules proposed by Betsy DeVos' U.S. Department of Education.
Title IX aims to prevent sex discrimination in edu-

cation programs that receive federal funding.
The attorneys general say a proposed rule will undermine the long-established anti-discrimination protections in the statute by narrowing the definition of sexual harassment, limiting schools' obliga-

tions to respond to claims of sexual harassment, and mandating unfair grievance procedures.
Illinois is the third Midwestern state to support the letter of opposition, joining Iowa and Minnesota.

Wise or Otherwise cont'd from pg. 4

several games at Busch Stadium simply due to proximity when I was younger. The time came for Mom and Dad to take me to a game at Wrigley Field. From the very moment I stepped into the Friendly Confines, I was HOME. This was my team, this was my family's team win, or more than likely lose, no matter what.

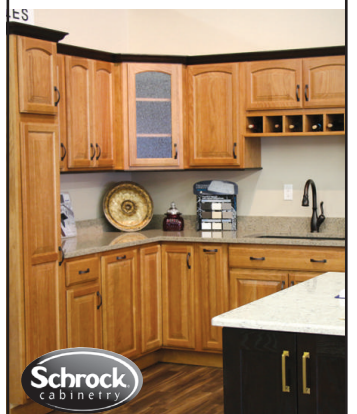
This is my team, wise or otherwise.
Actually, it does not need to be wise and probably won't be to some. It is dedicated to my first sports hero, Mr. Cub, Ernie Banks. To paraphrase "a beautiful day, the team is behind you, let's play two". Family. Baseball. Cubs. Heaven might just be like that.

Don't get me wrong, I love watching a live baseball game in St. Louis or anywhere else. When I lived on the east coast I loved Memorial Stadium followed by Camden Yards in Baltimore. No matter what, nothing compares to Wrigley, my team, my Cubs. This is family. This is my history.

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