



MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Monday, April 13, 2026 at 6:30 PM
City of Rochelle Council Chambers—420 North 6th Street, Rochelle, IL 61068

- I. CALL TO ORDER:** Pledge to the Flag and prayer were led by Mayor Bearrows.
- II. ROLL CALL:** Present were Councilors Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Valdivieso, and Mayor John Bearrows. Absent: Councilors T. McDermott and Arteaga. A quorum of five were present. Also present: Interim City Manager Sam Tesreau, City Clerk Rose Huéramo, and City Attorney Dominick Lanzito.
- III. PROCLAMATIONS, COMMENDATIONS, ETC:**
1. Linemen Appreciation Day- April 18, 2026
 2. Municipal Clerks Week - May 3 - 9, 2026
- IV. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:**
1. Mayor's Report: Reminder of Shining Star event on April 17 at noon featuring keynote speakers addressing child abuse prevention. Congratulations to Alfano's Pizza celebrating their 30-year Anniversary.
 - a) Pal Colwill was honored for his decades of dedicated service to the Rochelle community with 40 years of commitment to the Ogle-Lee Fire Protection District, along with 24 years serving between City Council and Planning & Zoning Commission
 - b) Accept Resignation of Pal Colwill – Planning and Zoning Commission: Motion made by Councilor Shaw-Dickey, Seconded by Councilor D. McDermott, **"I move the council accept the resignation of Wendell 'Pal' Colwill from the Planning & Zoning Commission effective immediately."** Voting Yea: Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 5-0.
 - c) Appoint Chris Tennegren to Voting Position - Planning & Zoning Commission: Motion made by Councilor Valdivieso, Seconded by Councilor Shaw-Dickey, **"I move the council accept the appointment of Chris Tennegren from an At-Large, Non-Voting member to a voting member of the Planning & Zoning Commission with term to expire on 7/1/2028."** Voting Yea: Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 5-0.
 2. Council Members: None.
- V. PUBLIC COMMENTARY:** None.
- VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS:** None.
- VII. BUSINESS ITEMS:**
1. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS BY OMNIBUS VOTE with Recommendations:
 - a) Approve City Council Meeting Minutes - 3/23/26
 - b) Accept & Place on File - Golf Course Advisory Board Meeting Minutes - 3/20/26
 - c) Approve Payment Registers - 3/23/26, 3/30/26, 4/6/26
 - d) Approve Payroll - 3/2/26-3/15/26, 3/16/26-3/26/26
 - e) Approve VFW Request - Community GardensMotion made by Councilor Hayes, Seconded by Councilor D. McDermott, **"I move consent agenda items (a) through (e) be approved by Omnibus vote as recommended."** Voting Yea: Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 5-0.
 2. **An Ordinance Adopting a Policy Regarding Nominal Balances on Inactive Utility Accounts.** The attached ordinance establishes a formal policy for the treatment of nominal balances on inactive utility accounts for Rochelle Municipal Utilities. Under this policy, the Utility Billing Manager is authorized to close accounts that have been inactive for a period of three (3) months following final

billing and carry a balance owed of less than \$5.00 or a credit balance of less than \$5.00. Prior to any write-off, staff will make reasonable efforts to apply remaining balances to another active account for the customer or to issue a refund when practical. However, in many cases, these small balances cannot be efficiently resolved due to unavailable customer information or the administrative costs associated with processing. This policy allows the City to responsibly clear these nominal balances without incurring disproportionate costs, such as staff time, collection efforts, or postage expenses for issuing refund checks that may exceed the value of the balance itself. Establishing this policy promotes consistency in account management, improves operational efficiency, and ensures alignment with sound financial and accounting practices. Utility Billing Manager Autumn Hernandez was available for questions. Motion made by Councilor Shaw-Dickey, Seconded by Councilor Hayes, **"I move Ordinance 2026-17, an Ordinance Adopting a Policy Regarding Nominal Balances on Inactive Utility Accounts, be approved."** Voting Yea: Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 5-0.

3. **A Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to Execute an Amended Power Purchase Agreement.** The City of Rochelle currently maintains a purchased power agreement with NextEra Energy Marketing, LLC (NEM), originally executed on October 3, 2017, and amended on July 31, 2018. This agreement provides a portion of the City's long-term wholesale power supply. Staff has negotiated a Second Amendment to the Transaction Confirmation to extend the agreement and ensure continued supply beyond the current term. The amendment includes extending the contract term through December 31, 2034, updating the total contract quantity to 338,720 MWh, and establishing a pricing structure for future delivery periods beginning June 1, 2026. This amendment supports the City's long-term power supply strategy by maintaining a balanced portfolio of contracted and market-based energy, while reducing exposure to market volatility and enhancing reliability. Superintendent of Electric Operations Blake Toliver was available for questions. Motion made by Councilor D. McDermott, Seconded by Councilor Shaw-Dickey. **"I move Resolution R2026-16, a Resolution Authorizing Amended Power Purchase Agreements with NextEra Energy Marketing, LLC, be approved."** Motion made by Councilor D. McDermott, Seconded by Councilor Shaw-Dickey, **"I approve to amend the extension to a cost not to exceed 4.6 cents kilowatts per hour."** Voting Yea: Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 5-0. Motion made by Councilor Shaw-Dickey, Seconded by Councilor D. McDermott, **"I move Resolution R2026-16, a Resolution Authorizing Amended Power Purchase with the Amended not to exceed 4.6 kilowatts per hour agreement, be approved."** Voting Yea: Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 5-0.
4. **An Ordinance Waiving Competitive Bidding Requirements for the Purchase of Holophane Lighting Assemblies from WESCO.** Staff is requesting approval to waive competitive bidding requirements for the purchase of decorative street lighting fixtures and poles. The materials will be procured through WESCO, the sole source vendor in this region for the specified Holophane lighting products that meet the City's previously approved lighting standard. The proposed equipment maintains consistency with existing infrastructure, ensures compatibility with current installations, and aligns with the aesthetic standards previously approved by City Council. These lights will be installed in the areas of Highland Road, Joanne Lane, Scott Avenue, and Sunset Terrace, where other improvements are already underway, making this an efficient time to complete lighting upgrades. A quote from WESCO has been received in the amount of \$113,931.25. Due to the proprietary nature of the specified lighting system and the lack of alternative vendors capable of providing equivalent products, competitive bidding would not yield additional viable options or cost benefits. Superintendent of Electric Operations Blake Toliver was available for questions. Motion made by Councilor Valdivieso, Seconded by Councilor Hayes, **"I move Ordinance 2026-18, an Ordinance Waiving Competitive Bidding Requirements and Authorizing the Purchase of Holophane Lighting Assemblies from WESCO, be approved."** Voting Yea: Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 5-0.

5. **An Ordinance Waiving Competitive Bidding Requirements and Authorizing the Purchase of 3 PME-11 Switchgear Assemblies from UUSCO.** Rochelle Municipal Utilities (RMU) is requesting approval to purchase three (3) S&C PME-11 pad-mounted switchgear assemblies for use within the electric distribution system. These units are necessary to support system reliability, sectionalizing, and fault protection. RMU currently standardizes on S&C switchgear across the system. Maintaining this standard allows for consistency in operation, simplifies maintenance, reduces training requirements, and ensures compatibility with existing equipment and spare parts inventory. Universal Utility Supply Company (UUSCO) is the sole authorized distributor of S&C Electric equipment for the municipal electric market in the greater Chicagoland area. Due to this exclusive relationship, staff is requesting a waiver of competitive bidding. Two enclosure options were quoted. Staff recommends selecting the standard (non-stainless steel) configuration at a cost of \$49,250 per unit, as it meets operational requirements while providing a total savings of \$32,250 compared to the stainless steel option. The total purchase amount for three units is \$147,750. Lead time is approximately 30–34 weeks. Superintendent of Electric Operations Blake Toliver was available for questions. Motion made by Councilor D. McDermott, Seconded by Councilor Shaw-Dickey, **"I move Ordinance 2026-19, an Ordinance Waiving Competitive Bidding Requirements and Authorize the Purchase of Three PME-11 Switchgear Assemblies from UUSCO, be approved."** Voting Yea: Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 5-0.

6. **A Resolution Authorizing an Agreement with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources for an OSLAD Grant for the Pickleball Court Project at 533 South 7th Street, Rochelle, Illinois.** The City of Rochelle has been awarded an Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) Grant through the Illinois Department of Natural Resources in the amount of \$237,000 for the pickleball court project at Fairways Golf Course, located at 533 South 7th Street. The grant award represents approximately 50% of the anticipated total project cost. The proposed project will redevelop an existing, underutilized tennis court area into six regulation pickleball courts, helping meet the growing demand for pickleball within Rochelle and the surrounding region. *Project Overview:* In addition to the new courts, the project includes several related site improvements intended to enhance accessibility, traffic flow, and the overall user experience at Fairways. Current site plans include:

- Construction of six pickleball courts
- Reconfiguration of the driveway to create a wider entrance
- Addition of more parking spaces in the lot
- Relocation of Fairways signage to the north and south ends of the property
- Retention of Luna's sign in its current location, with a possible request to incorporate a smaller Fairways sign
- Construction of a shade structure A permit application has also been submitted to IDOT for the driveway modifications.

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Project Schedule: The project is continuing to move forward, with the following tentative timeline: April 13, 2026 – City Council consideration of the grant agreement Late May / Early June 2026 – Anticipated release of bid specifications Late Summer / Early Fall 2026 – Anticipated construction period. *Financial Impact:* Based on the current preliminary estimate of approximately \$474,000, the anticipated funding structure remains: 50% OSLAD Grant: \$237,000 25% City of Rochelle: approximately \$118,500 25% Flagg-Rochelle Community Park District: approximately \$118,500 The cost shares are based on current project estimates and may shift slightly as the project is finalized and bids are received. *Grant Agreement:* Acceptance of the OSLAD funding requires the City to enter into a formal grant agreement with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. The agreement outlines the terms, conditions, and compliance requirements associated with the funding, including a project term of April 1, 2026 through March 31, 2028. *Recommendation:* Staff recommends approval of the resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute the OSLAD Grant

Agreement with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Assistant to the City Manager/Director of Community Engagement Jennifer Thompson was available for questions. Motion made by Councilor Hayes, Seconded by Councilor Valdivieso, **"I move Resolution R2026-17, a Resolution Authorizing an Agreement with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources for an OSLAD Grant for the Pickleball Court Project at 533 S. 7th St."** Voting Yea: Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 5-0.

7. **A Motion to Approve a Collective Bargaining Agreement with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Expiring April 30, 2028.** The City of Rochelle began negotiations with IBEW in April of 2025. Through the nearly yearlong negotiations, the City remained focused on two key priorities—maintaining fiscal responsibility and supporting long-term employee retention while ensuring operation efficiency. With these priorities in mind, the City evaluated skills, experience levels, and current market trends to guide salary-related decisions. The primary updates to the proposed CBA are summarized below. Lineperson Wage Adjustments After considering comparables, it is recommended to update the lineperson wage schedule to reflect pay based on achieving required certifications and successfully completing the six-month probationary period. This adjustment strengthens competitiveness within the regional labor market to support workforce stability. Addition of a 7 Year Longevity Step the CBA now includes a new longevity pay step at 7 years of service, complementing the existing 15-year step. This change is confirmed in Annex A notes specifying that the 7-year and 15-year adjustments are awarded only after an employee has reached the corresponding total years of employment with the City. This addition improves retention of mid-career employees and reduces wage compression particularly where new hires may start at higher rates based on verified prior experience. Annual COLA Increase of 3.5% The proposal includes a 3.5% Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) for each year of the contract, increasing base wages and certification-adjusted rates accordingly. This percentage reflects significant discussion and compromise between the City and the union. It strikes a balance between remaining competitive within the regional utility market, supporting internal equity, and enabling predictable budgeting throughout the contract period. Human Resource Director Jillian Condon was available for questions. Motion made by Councilor Shaw-Dickey, Seconded by Councilor Valdivieso, **"I move Council approve a Collective Bargaining Agreement with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Expiring April 30, 2028."** Voting Yea: Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 5-0.
8. **Ordinance Approving an Employment Agreement for the City of Rochelle, Illinois, City Manager.** In December 2025, the City engaged Arndt Municipal Support to lead the recruitment process for a new City Manager. Arndt received 40 applications and conducted preliminary interviews, background and reference checks, social media reviews, and work history evaluations to identify the most qualified candidates for consideration by the City Council. With input from staff and community stakeholders, the Council has selected Zeke Jackson as the next City Manager. The City is proposing an employment contract with Mr. Jackson beginning April 13, 2026, and expiring May 1, 2029. Under this agreement, Mr. Jackson will be under contract immediately, with an official start date of June 8, 2026. He will be eligible for Executive Level benefits and will receive an annual salary of \$190,000. Zeke Jackson was present for introduction. Human Resource Director Jillian Condon was available for questions. Motion made by Councilor Valdivieso, Seconded by Councilor Hayes, **"I move Resolution R2026-18, a Resolution Appointing the City Manager and Approving an Employment Agreement, be approved."** Voting Yea: Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 5-0.
9. **A Resolution Authorizing an Interfund Loan from the Solid Waste Fund to Finance the Airport and Tech Center Projects.** As part of the City's planned 2026 financing, staff previously brought forward an authorizing ordinance to issue General Obligation (Alternate Revenue Source) Bonds to support capital improvements at the Rochelle Municipal Airport and the Tech Center. The Airport project includes construction of a new eight-unit T-hangar and associated site improvements, with

an estimated cost of approximately \$2.0 million, of which approximately \$1.2 million is expected to be reimbursed through federal and State of Illinois funding. The Tech Center improvements are currently estimated at approximately \$1.3 million, bringing the total anticipated financing need for both projects to approximately \$3.3 million. Since that time, staff has continued working with the City's municipal advisor, bond counsel, and underwriter on structuring the issuance and preparing the related bond documents. During the course of this process, interest rates have increased and remain elevated, with continued volatility driven by broader economic uncertainty and current geopolitical conditions. As a result, issuing debt at this time would likely result in higher borrowing costs than originally anticipated and introduces additional pricing uncertainty. Given these conditions, staff evaluated alternative financing options and is recommending that the City utilize an interfund loan from the Solid Waste Fund to finance the Airport and Tech Center projects in place of issuing bonds for this portion of the financing. The proposed interfund loan will be structured with a principal amount not to exceed \$3.3 million, a nominal interest rate of 1.5%, and a 5-year repayment period. The Airport portion of the loan is expected to be partially repaid upon receipt of federal and State reimbursements, with the remaining balance supported by hangar lease revenues, while the Tech Center portion will be repaid through ongoing operating revenues. This structure provides the City with flexibility to manage cash flow, minimizes overall interest expense, and avoids locking in higher long-term borrowing costs in the current rate environment while preserving the City's future debt capacity for larger capital needs. The Solid Waste Fund maintains sufficient reserves to support this temporary use of funds without impacting operations. Of the approximately \$140,774 in total estimated issuance costs, including underwriter, legal, and advisory fees, the City would avoid approximately \$125,274 by utilizing an interfund loan, as \$15,500 has already been incurred for the S&P rating. From an interest cost perspective, the bonding analysis reflects total interest payments of approximately \$974,437 over the life of the bonds at an estimated rate of 3.75%. By comparison, the proposed interfund loan would carry a significantly lower borrowing cost at a 1.5% interest rate over a 5-year term, resulting in total interest costs of approximately \$148,500. This represents an estimated interest savings of approximately \$825,000 relative to the bond issuance. Based on the proposed structure, annual debt service on the interfund loan is expected to average approximately \$700,000 per year. Of this amount, roughly \$425,000 is attributable to the Airport project and will be supported through a combination of grant reimbursements and hangar lease revenues (with a portion of repayment expected to be accelerated upon receipt of federal and State reimbursements), while approximately \$275,000 is attributable to the Tech Center and will be repaid through ongoing operating revenues. Finance Director Matt Hoffman was available for questions. Motion made by Councilor D. McDermott, Seconded by Councilor Valdivieso, **"I move Resolution R2026-19, a Resolution Authorizing an Interfund Loan from the Solid Waste Fund to Finance the Airport and Tech Center Projects, be approved."** Voting Yea: Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrows. Nays: None. Motion passed 5-0.

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION: None.

IX. ADJOURNMENT: At 7:25 PM. Motion made by Councilor Valdivieso, Seconded by Councilor Shaw-Dickey, **"I move Council adjourn."** Voting Yea: Hayes, D. McDermott, Shaw-Dickey, Valdivieso, and Mayor Bearrow. Nays: None. Motion passed 5-0.

John Bearrows, Mayor

Rose Huéramo, City Clerk