

City of North Chicago
1850 Lewis Avenue, North Chicago, IL 60064

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MONDAY
May 04, 2026
6:23 p.m.

Mayor Leon Rockingham, Jr., called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Jackson, Coleman, Evans, Allen, Wray, Murphy, Brooks

Absent: None

1. DISCUSSION/CONSIDERATION OF AN ORDINANCE REDISTRICTING THE WARDS OF THE CITY OF NORTH CHICAGO, ILLINOIS PURSUANT TO THE ILLINOIS MUNICIPAL CODE.

Chief of Staff Greg Jackson explained the purpose of the ordinance. He highlighted the council's belief this change would be in the best interest of the residents. It would exclude military personnel from the city's population base. This change aligns with federal case laws and would allow municipalities to adjust when disproportioned. To ensure accurate and balanced population counts in the Wards. The goal was to ensure that the City's permanent population supports fair representation and is equitable in the voting process. This would be a realignment of the districts.

Alderman Allen asked for clarification of the perimeters of the 4th Ward. Mayor Rockingham Jr. explained. Alderman Allen asked when this change would be effective. Attorney Adam Simon answered before the election process began the following year. Further explaining that when circulating petitions, it should be done within the ward population intended to serve according to the new ordinance.

Alderman Evans asked about changing the cadence of aldermanic elections. Mayor Rockingham Jr. said no. Alderman Evans asked why an alderman lived such a distance from the area they serviced. Asking why wards could not be changed.

Chief of Staff Greg Jackson explained that the boundaries but be contiguous with no breaks. Mayor Rockingham Jr. added an example and some feedback on the purpose of redistricting.

Chief of Staff Greg Jackson mentioned a recent article that stated property value in North Chicago was increasing. Also, should there be redevelopment in certain neighborhoods in the future there would be an increase as well.

Attorney Adam Simon added that the reason for redistricting was due to systemic changes at the Naval base and Rosalind Franklin University. This was not due to natural growth or development.

Mr. Jackson mentioned the City was unique in the population because of the military base and Rosalind Franklin University housing students.

Alderman Wray asked if Prairie View apartment complex ward was changing, what alderperson

would get the homes in the rear. Mayor Rockingham Jr. said Alderman Allen.

Chief of Staff Greg Jackson explained that it was based on where residents lived verses pockets of land, businesses and vacant lots.

Attorney Adam Simon explained census tracks.

2. **DISCUSSION/CONSIDERATION OF A THREE-MONTH SERVICES AGREEMENT FOR EVENT COORDINATOR SERVICES WITH CARLOS SMITH NOT TO EXCEED \$9,000.**

Chief of Staff Greg Jackson explained that typically a contract under \$10,000 would not have been brought to council, however being fully transparent Carlos had been previously engaged for the same purpose for the previous three months of service, which was approved by Mayor Rockingham Jr. & Mr. Smith would be paid out of Community Days Fund. The desire to continue services for an additional three months was the reason for the additional \$9000 was presented to council, the total would be \$18,000 for a six-month period. Initially Carlos was assigned for the City to observe as the lead person for three months, once realized it was retained and was brought before Council.

Alderman Jackson inquired about \$18,000 amount that was previously put on the agenda prior to revisions. Chief of Staff Greg Jackson explained that the Mayor did a signature authorization for the first \$9000, it was placed on the agenda for the full amount inadvertently combining the two amounts.

Mayor Rockingham Jr. stated that Mr. Smith was doing a good job, and it seemed as if he was trying to attract good talent, working to obtain vendors, and organize the parade. There were additional people supporting this effort; however, Carlos was the lead personnel. Stating that he would have Carlos provide council an update.

Chief of Staff Greg stated that more funds were raised currently than last year at the same point.

Alderman Allen moved, seconded by Alderman Evans that Committee of the Whole Committee Meeting stand adjourned.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE

The meeting adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/PLANNING/ZONING
COMMITTEE MEETING**

**MAY 04, 2026
6:47 p.m.**

Alderman Brooks called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Jackson, Coleman, Evans, Allen, Wray, Murphy, Brooks

Absent: None

**1. DISCUSSION FOR APPROVAL OF A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING STAFF TO
SUBMIT INTENT TO ESTABLISH STAR BOND DISTRICT**

ECD Director Taylor Wegrzyn explained the STAR stood for Sales Tax and Revenue Bond. The purpose of the resolution was to write a Letter of Intent to establish a STAR Bond district in the City of North Chicago.

**2. DISCUSSION TO APPROVE A RESOLUTION APPROVING 2026 CDBG PUBLIC
SERVICE FUNDS**

Taylor Wegrzyn explained that the City of North Chicago through its joint agreement with Lake County administers and the CDBG program. Through this program, there were allotted dollars to go towards public service programs. There was a 15% allocation. Applications are available for various entities to receive those funds. Eight applications were received for those service dollars. Seven applications were received for review by the Advisory Committee. The city will receive **\$37,581** to allocate. The entities that had been reviewed from recommendation to receive funds are;

- Prairie State Legal Services (North Chicago Housing Advocacy) **\$5000**
- PADS Lake County (Intake) **\$5000**
- Zacharias Sexual Abuse Center (Sexual Assault Counseling for Children) **\$5000**
- Prairie State Legal Services (Fair Housing Project) **\$7581**
- Northern Illinois Food Bank (Senior Grocery Program) **\$5000**
- The Cradle (North Chicago Home Visiting) **\$5000**
- YouthBuild Lake County (YouthBuild) **\$5000**

The Coalition Legal (Restorative Justice Law Clinic) was not recommended by the Residential Advisory Committee because they receive funds from the Lake County CDBG program. Also, Prairie State Legal Services (Fair Housing Project), received a higher recommendation amount due to the Federal Governments desire for like programs to be fully funded. This was the City's effort to show support of Fair Housing Programs.

This was the recommendation for the Advisory Board and seeking approval.

**3. DISCUSSION/APPROVAL AND AUTHORIZE EXECUTION OF A LEASE AGREEMENT
WITH AC POWER 49, LLC FOR CERTAIN PROPERTY ON CASIMIR PULASKI DR.
(PINS 0831113001, 0831113019, AND 0831113020)**

Taylor Wegrzyn explained that this property that had previously been discussed, to authorize the execution of an Option Agreement with AC Power to hold their right to pursue a lease agreement

with the city while they explore the due diligence process of developing a site with a Solar Energy Farm (solar panels). Staff's beliefs were that this was the best use for the property. It was a former landfill. The previous tenants were DK Organics, they paid the city approximately \$12,000 per year for the right to use that property, for disposal of organic materials from landscapes business, etc. The term was 25 years for \$40,000 paid to the city with an annual two percent a year escalator. With two options of a five-year extension, it could end up being 35 years. There is a development term, once the development is up and running the term rate will just be \$40,000 yearly. It is staff's recommendation to approve the lease agreement and NOT go to City Council.

Alderman Brooks questioned if AC Power had a timeframe in which to develop. Mr. Wegrzyn stated they had special use permits, therefore the time is set based on that permit. If the development is not complete, they would need to obtain another permit for 12 additional months.

Alderman Murphy asked who they were able to sell to solar power to.

Attorney Adam Simon explained they sell their power to ComEd. They might operate as a community solar farm, to sell "subscriptions" to residents, if they operated as a solar plant. Under a community agreement some of your ComEd bill would be reduced to some degree. Where residents would get credit on their electric bill for using solar power.

Alderman Murphy asked so the residents would receive it in the form of a credit on their electricity bill.

Attorney Adam Simon shared that the exact terms were transparently detailed on the resident's contract.

Alderman Murphy asked if there was a potential for this for North Chicago residents; Mr. Wegrzyn confirmed, there is.

4. DISCUSSION TO APPROVE AN ORDINANCE DECLARING SURPLUS AND AUTHORIZING THE DISPOSAL OR SALE OF CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY

Taylor Wegrzyn explained that the city maintained a list of surplus properties, no infrastructure plans and staff was confident there was no need to retain them. The properties would be placed in an auction, but no plans were in effect at that time. However, the first plan was to deem them as surplus. This would enable an evaluation of the best use for the properties. Properties that had been immediately identified were located on Winter Avenue. These parcels had low viability and was behind Starbucks and Jimmy Johns, the recommendation is to declare those parcels surplus along with the others. They were acquired through the Green Book Process. This was to make this property consistent with the other properties owned on Winter Avenue. 2122 Honore Ave was a 25-foot lot, in sequence of other vacant lots and a vacate home which had been vacated for some time. The city obtained a 25-foot lot at the north end

The plan was to declare surplus to combine enough parcels to make it developable. 720 18th Street (northeast corner of Park Avenue and 18th Street) was recommended for reversal of a parcel to a property that would be retained by the city. It was believed that the property could be of city use, perhaps a street project or a park project.

Alderman Murphy moved, seconded by Alderman Evans that Economic Development / Planning / Zoning Committee Meeting stand adjourned.

ROLL CALL:

Ayes: Jackson, Coleman, Evans, Allen, Wray, Murphy, Wray, Brooks

Nays: None

Absent: None

MOTION CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

Finance/Audit Committee Meeting
COMMITTEE MEETING

MONDAY,
MAY 04, 2026
7:02 p.m.

Alderman Allen called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Jackson, Coleman, Evans, Allen, Wray, Murphy, Brooks

Absent:

1. DISCUSSION/ APPROVAL OF THE FY2027 BUDGET

Comptroller Tawanda Joyner explained the proposed budget in detail, as presented in the PowerPoint Presentation, provided an explanation of funding/budget increases and decreases. Tawanda stated that a meeting had been conducted with several of the aldermen, however if the others still desired an opportunity to discuss the FY2027 budget, that option was still available. Each fund and funding category was reviewed.

Alderman Jackson asked about funding pertaining to account items 300 & 301, curious of why there were two different line item for the same entity. Ms. Joyner explained there were new department titles developed; had been split. For example, Economic Community Development and Building, which created an additional line with different amounts. Also, in the Fire Department for the Fire 2% that was buried in the initial Fire Fund. However, it had to be listed but City had no authority to determine how it was utilized. For that reason, the total amount of the budget was indicated without additional information.

Alderman Jackson indicated that he asked because he realized the two amounts under Fire and not Police. Ms. Joyner and Attorney Adam Simon stated that this was not a pension expense.

Attorney Adam explained the difference in the reason receives funds but doesn't necessarily have jurisdiction over the funds. As well as explaining that there were differences between funds for equipment, foreign insurance, other departmental/ leadership needs and variations.

Alderman Allen asked about an opportunity for grants and updates, so that everyone is properly informed about funds received and disbursed from the city budgets. Chief of Staff Greg Jackson and Ms. Joyner ensured that updates would be provided.

Alderman Jackson asked if Federal Forfeiture Fund would continue to pay the rent for the 10th Street substation in the future. Chief of Staff Greg indicated that there were conversations that were still being had about that, more information in the future would be provided.

Alderman Evans asked what kind bonds were paid for Grant Place; Ms. Joyner said it was \$966, 877. Alderman Evans clarified it was sold. Ms. Joyner explained the property was sold but the bond continued. It was not sold at a rate that did not cover the entire amount owed. Mayor Rockingham Jr. asked what the remaining time that needed to be paid; Ms. Joyner responded it was one more fiscal

year.

Alderman Evans inquired about the library budget. Attorney Simon stated that they set their own budget and could spend how they chose. However, if they needed to borrow additional funds, that would be requested to the city. They were required by law to share that information with the city. Chief of Staff Jackson and Attorney Simon provided clarification on the library and city relationship. Giving details on funds, allocations and historical facts.

Alderman Evans inquired about a line-item request that had not been adjusted. He suggested an increase in the Aldermanic budget from \$9,000 to \$11,000. There was a council decision on the rationale for the adjustment desire and needed. Alderman Jackson indicated that he was not in agreement with an increase. He explained with research, the North Chicago Aldermanic budget was larger than that of other cities.

Alderman Murphy agreed with Alderman Jackson and was not in agreement to the increase. Suggesting that the allotted amount is budgeted differently.

Alderman Wray stated that the current amount was not enough and was in agreement with the increase.

Alderman Allen stated he was not in agreement to the increase, indicating that he had served for 19 years with planning and budgeting all could be done at the allotted amount and if more funds were needed, use personal funds.

Alderman Coleman asked about cost-of-living increase for salary, is that something that can be investigated. In addition, he agreed to the increase of \$11k.

Attorney Simon stated that under elected official laws, those adjustments for increases in pay would need to be set 180 days prior to the term which would be effective. Which is why the salaries for elected officials were fixed and not adjusted.

Alderman Coleman agreed with the information that was provided by Attorney Simon and stated that was why they would not be voting for themselves but for the future elected officials. Indicating that as things increase, it would be good to look into that for future politicians.

Attorney Simon stated there was time to debate the topic in the future.

Alderman Brooks stated he'd prefer to wait until the next council meeting to decide on the suggested increase of an additional \$2,000. Stating, \$11k now and the final vote at the May 18th Council meeting.

Alderman Murphy stated that she had been around for many years, witnessed the spending and the budget was never enough for some people.

Alderman Brooks moved, seconded by Alderman Jackson that Finance/Audit Committee Meeting stand adjourned.

ROLL CALL:

Ayes: Jackson, Coleman, Evans, Allen, Wray, Murphy, Brooks

Nays: None

Absent: None

MOTION CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 7:49 p.m.