



Office of Mayor Peter Schwartzman

## PRESS RELEASE

Topic: Reckless Initiatives at Galesburg's City Hall

Date: 5/14/23

Prepared by: Mayor Peter Schwartzman

On Friday, May 12, at 4:09 PM, I received an email from Galesburg's Administrative Services Manager that a Special Meeting has been called for Monday, May 15th, 5 PM, to discuss two issues:

(1) "Discussion and Potential Action to Approve an Ordinance authorizing the City Council to retain Independent Legislative Counsel"

(2) "Discussion and Potential Action related to the appointment, employment or removal of the City Manager"

Neither of these issues had been brought to my attention prior to receiving this email. Obviously, as Mayor of Galesburg, this is revelatory.

I am very concerned that our new Council (which consists of three new members who have served for merely two weeks) will vote to remove the City Manager and request to change our City's current legal counsel. No reason for taking either action has been communicated to me. I base my expectations of the above actions on the fact that: (a) four of our City Councilors (two of whom have only recently taken office) have kept this Special Meeting secret from me until the absolute last minute; (b) many emails (obtained via FOIA) indicate collusion of these individuals going back at least six months.

Our City Manager, Gerald Smith, has served our community well for six months and is the first African-American City Manager for our city, a city that was founded in 1837. The six month period over which Mr. Smith has served has been quite challenging due to the retirement of the Public Works Director, two EEOC complaints, numerous FOIA requests (by an elected official), and a heated local election (which saw several winning candidates revert to negative, character assassinations, and race-baiting),

I find the potential actions to fire the City Manager and change our Legal Counsel unjustified, uninformed, vindictive, callous, and reckless. In addition to these actions, these Councilors have put on additional agenda items (for the regular Council meeting on Monday) that will greatly infringe on our residents' 1st Amendment Rights by limiting public comments to two minutes (they are currently five minutes) and moving all public comments to the beginning of the meeting (and requiring speakers to sign in and state their topic).

All of these actions, especially given they are coming so early in a new Council's term, are likely premeditated and, therefore, warrant extensive scrutiny.



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I am making this statement because I find the actions of these Councilors to be a malicious act and one that will do irreparable short-term and long-term harm to our City and its residents.

I personally invite you to Galesburg so that you can witness these developments in person. I think it is important for residents all over the state/country to know how power is being usurped and constitutional rights violated in downstate IL.

Please contact me if you have additional questions: (phone) 309-877-1988; (email) [pschwart@ci.galesburg.il.us](mailto:pschwart@ci.galesburg.il.us)

Sincerely,

*Peter D. Schwartzman*

Mayor Peter D. Schwartzman