

A WORK SESSION WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 7:00 P.M. BY MAYOR MARCHESE FOR THE PURPOSE OF REVIEWING ITEMS ON THE OCTOBER 20, 2025 AGENDA WITH THE CITY COUNCIL. THE WORK SESSION ADJOURNED AT 7:11 P.M.

Minutes of the Regular Meeting

of the City Council of the

CITY OF DARIEN

October 20, 2025

7:30 P.M.

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Darien was called to order at 7:30 P.M. by Mayor Marchese.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Marchese led the Council and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. **ROLL CALL** — The Roll Call of Aldermen by Clerk Ragona was as follows:

Present:	Thomas J. Belczak	Gerry Leganski
	Eric K. Gustafson	Ted V. Schauer
	Joseph A. Kenny	Ralph Stompanato

Absent: Mary Coyle Sullivan

Also in Attendance: Joseph Marchese, Mayor
JoAnne E. Ragona, City Clerk
Bryon Vana, City Administrator
Austin Jump, Deputy Chief

4. **DECLARATION OF A QUORUM** – There being six aldermen present, Mayor Marchese declared a quorum.

Mayor Marchese announced New Business Item A, regarding repealing “Environmental Committee,” was removed from the agenda. Item will be reviewed at Goal Setting Session, which is scheduled to be held on November 19 at 6:30 P.M. in the Police Department Training Room and is open to the public.

5. **QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS – GENERAL**

Heather Conroy, member of Environmental Committee, Darien Garden Club/Board, and Rotary Club of Darien, voiced her dissatisfaction with email from Administrator Vana regarding the disbandment of Environmental Committee.

Arleta Peknik, Environmental Committee member, commented on privilege of attending Argonne Community Leaders Round Table (CLRT); she shared importance of disseminating valuable information with the community.

Mayor Marchese stated he appreciated the work of Environmental Committee. He noted he also attended CLRT at Argonne. He commented on Environmental Committee logistics. Mayor Marchese commented that over the last few years, environmental opportunities have been addressed at City staff level (i.e. grants, EV Readiness Program, etc.). He stressed the importance of attendance for discussion at Goal Setting Session in determining continuance of Environmental Committee.

Mayor Marchese spoke of misstatements and untruths on social media; he stated Darien is and will continue to be an environmentally conscious community. He voiced his discontent over accusations made against Administrator Vana.

Alderman Kenny engaged in a heated debate with Heather Conroy regarding Deb Hardtke's opportunity to speak.

Deb Hardtke, member of Environmental Committee & Darien Garden Club, voiced concerns with workings of Environmental Committee.

6. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – October 6, 2025

It was moved by Alderman Stompanato and seconded by Alderman Belczak to approve the minutes of the City Council Meeting of October 6, 2025.

Roll Call: Ayes: Belczak, Gustafson, Kenny, Leganski, Schauer, Stompanato

Nays: None

Absent: Sullivan

Results: Ayes 6, Nays 0, Absent 1

MOTION DULY CARRIED

7. **RECEIVING OF COMMUNICATIONS**

Alderman Kenny received communication from Brian Liedtke, Heather Conroy, Sylvia McIvor and Val Kazich regarding Environmental Committee.

Alderman Gustafson had communication with residents regarding dissatisfaction with repealing Environmental Committee.

8. **MAYOR'S REPORT**

A. CONSIDERATION OF A MOTION TO APPROVE THE REAPPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE CITIZEN OF THE YEAR COMMITTEE: BONNIE KUCERA, LANA JOHNSON, TRACY THOMSON JOHNSON AND CAROL MALLERS

It was moved by Alderman Schauer and seconded by Alderman Gustafson to approve the reappointment of members to the Citizen of the Year Committee: Bonnie Kucera, Lana Johnson, Tracy Thomson Johnson and Carol Mallers.

MOTION NO. M-77-25

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE REAPPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE CITIZEN OF THE YEAR COMMITTEE: BONNIE KUCERA, LANA JOHNSON, TRACY THOMSON JOHNSON AND CAROL MALLERS

Roll Call: Ayes: Belczak, Gustafson, Kenny, Leganski, Schauer, Stompanato,

Nays: None

Absent: Sullivan

Results: Ayes 6, Nays 0, Absent 1

MOTION DULY CARRIED

B. CONSIDERATION OF A MOTION TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF JANE MOSS TO THE CITIZEN OF THE YEAR COMMITTEE

It was moved by Alderman Belczak and seconded by Alderman Schauer to approve the appointment of Jane Moss to the Citizen of the Year Committee.

MOTION NO. M-78-25

**A MOTION TO APPROVE THE
APPOINTMENT OF JANE MOSS TO THE
CITIZEN OF THE YEAR**

Roll Call: Ayes: Belczak, Gustafson, Kenny, Leganski, Schauer,
Stompanato,

Nays: None

Absent: Sullivan

Results: Ayes 6 Nays 0, Absent 1

MOTION DULY CARRIED

Clerk Ragona administered the Oath of Office to Bonnie Kucera, Tracy Thomson Johnson, Carol Mallers and Jane Moss.

Bonnie Kucera announced Citizen of the Year (COY) and Honoree celebration will be held on Friday, March 6, 2026 at Alpine Banquets from 6:00–11:00 P.M.; cost is \$52/person and includes family-style dinner, open bar, music and dancing. The event will be videotaped and featured on City website. COY nomination application will be available online November 1 and must be submitted by January 6, 2026; she encouraged all citizens to submit their nominations. Ms. Kucera will be contacting respective organizations for their honoree nominations.

**C. RECOGNITION CONSIDERATION OF A MOTION TO APPROVE THE
REAPPOINTMENT OF MELODY JANKOWSKI, TRACY THOMSON
JOHNSON AND LESLIE SWEENEY TO THE HOLIDAY HOME
DECORATING COMMITTEE**

It was moved by Alderman Leganski and seconded by Alderman Schauer to approve the reappointment of members to the Holiday Home Decorating Committee: Melody Jankowski, Tracy Thomson Johnson and Leslie Sweeney.

MOTION NO. M-79-25

**A MOTION TO APPROVE THE
REAPPOINTMENT OF MELODY
JANKOWSKI, TRACY THOMSON JOHNSON
AND LESLIE SWEENEY TO THE HOLIDAY
HOME DECORATING COMMITTEE**

Roll Call: Ayes: Belczak, Gustafson, Kenny, Leganski, Schauer, Stompanato

Nays: None

Absent: Sullivan

Results: Ayes 6, Nays 0, Absent 1

MOTION DULY CARRIED

Clerk Ragona administered the Oath of Office to Tracy Thomson Johnson and Leslie Sweeney.

Mayor Marchese noted Holiday Home Decorating Committee was expanded to include Halloween Decorating Contest; nominations must be received by October 31. Five winners will be awarded cash prizes; \$100.00 first place and \$50.00 for second, third, fourth & fifth places.

D. RECOGNITION OF KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS – HEART OF DARIEN AWARD – MICHAEL POWERS

Mayor Marchese presented Heart of Darien Award to Michael Powers for his more than forty years of unselfish service to others. He commented on the many contributions that Mr. Powers has worked quietly and diligently on in making Darien “A Nice Place to Live.”

Mr. Powers expressed how overwhelmed, surprised and honored he was by the award.

E. MAYORAL PROCLAMATION “DARIEN YOUTH CLUB MONTH” (NOVEMBER 2025)

Mayor Marchese read proclamation into record declaring November 2025 as Darien Youth Club (DYC) Month. Brian Arquilla, DYC President, accepted proclamation. He invited all to attend 65th DYC Anniversary celebration on November 8 at Darien Swim & Recreation Clubhouse. Mr. Arquilla expressed his thanks for honoring the DYC and naming November as DYC Month.

F. HINSDALE SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL ROBOTICS CLUB

Mayor Marchese said that Darien Lions Club & Rotary Club of Darien made monetary donations to the Hinsdale South High School (HSHS) Robotics Club in support of State Competition, in which HSHS placed 11 out of 60. Three student representatives introduced

themselves and shared Robotics Club specifics/significance, donation usefulness, competition details and introduction of robot. Students addressed Council questions.

Alderman Kenny made a public apology for his actions; he will be making a \$200.00 monetary donation to each of the following organizations: HSHS Robotics Club, Darien Youth Club and Knights of Columbus.

9. **CITY CLERK'S REPORT**

Clerk Ragona announced...

...the November 3 City Council Meeting was cancelled.

...the next City Council Meeting will be held on November 17.

A. 2026 VEHICLE STICKER

Clerk Ragona provided a brief history of the Darien Identification Vehicle Sticker Program and read the list of non-profit organizations offered the opportunity to participate. She stated there would not be a lottery since no organization expressed an interest. Clerk Ragona recommended further discussion at Goal Setting Session.

Mayor Marchese commented on City issuing vehicle sticker the last two years; those interested in participating should contact Clerk Ragona.

10. **CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

There was no report.

11. **DEPARTMENT HEAD INFORMATION/QUESTIONS**

A. POLICE DEPARTMENT MONTHLY REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2025

Deputy Chief Jump stated the September 2025 Monthly Report was posted to the City website; there were no notable changes. He addressed Council question regarding reporting.

B. MUNICIPAL SERVICES – NO REPORT

12. **TREASURER'S REPORT**

A. WARRANT NUMBER 25-26-12

It was moved by Alderman Stompanato and seconded by Alderman Schauer to approve payment of Warrant Number 25-26-12 in the amount of \$881,433.40 from the

enumerated funds, and \$323,458.31 from payroll funds for the period ending 10/16/25 for a total to be approved of \$1,204,891.71.

Roll Call: Ayes: Belczak, Gustafson, Kenny, Leganski, Schauer, Stompanato

Nays: None

Absent: Sullivan

Results: Ayes 6, Nays 0, Absent 1

MOTION DULY CARRIED

Administrator Vana commented, on behalf of the viewing audience, that the Warrant contains aggregate numbers; individual expenditures by department can be found on City website.

13. **STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Administrative/Finance Committee – Clerk Ragona announced the Administrative/Finance Committee meeting scheduled for November 3, 2025 has been cancelled; the next meeting of the Administrative/Finance Committee is scheduled for December 1, 2025 at 6:00 P.M.

Municipal Services Committee – Chairman Belczak announced the Municipal Services Committee meeting is scheduled for October 27, 2025 at 6:00 P.M.

Police Committee – Chairman Kenny stated the minutes of the September 2, 2025 meeting were approved and submitted to the Clerk's Office. He announced the Police Committee meeting is scheduled for November 17, 2025 at 6:00 P.M. in the Police Department Training Room.

Police Pension Board – Clerk Ragona announced the next quarterly Police Pension Board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 6, 2025 at 6:00 P.M. in the Police Department Training Room.

14. **QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS – AGENDA RELATED**

Heather Conroy commented on City accountability, Rotary "Four-Way Test," Darien Garden Club honorary representation at COY/Honoree celebration, and Environmental Committee.

Mayor Marchese clarified Darien Garden Club honorary representative was included in Honoree Celebration.

Arleta Peknik spoke highly of Michael Powers and provided accolades for his humbly serving the community and strong demeanor with children as instructor for Our Lady of Peace Parish Religious Education Program.

15. **OLD BUSINESS**

There was no Old Business.

16. **CONSENT AGENDA**

There was no Consent Agenda

17. **NEW BUSINESS**

New Business Item A “Environmental Committee” was removed from Agenda.

A. CONSIDERATION OF A MOTION TO APPROVE THE TAX LEVY DETERMINATION FOR GENERAL AND SPECIAL PURPOSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026

It was moved by Alderman Belczak and seconded by Alderman Kenny to approve the motion as presented.

Administrator Vana explained annual process for setting a tax levy and commented on recommended tax levy determination. He noted the second tax levy request Special Assessment Area #1 (Tara Hill) covers maintenance expenses for wetlands and storm water infrastructure. He addressed Council questions.

Mayor Marchese commented on Police Pension Fund contribution increase.

MOTION NO. M-80-25

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE TAX LEVY DETERMINATION FOR GENERAL AND SPECIAL PURPOSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026

City Council Meeting

October 20, 2025

Roll Call: Ayes: Belczak, Gustafson, Kenny, Leganski, Schauer,
Stompanato

Nays: None

Absent: Sullivan

Results: Ayes 6, Nays 0, Absent 1

MOTION DULY CARRIED

18. **QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS – GENERAL**

There were none.

19. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the City Council, it was moved by Alderman Stompanato and seconded by Alderman Schauer to adjourn the City Council meeting.

VIA VOICE VOTE – MOTION DULY CARRIED

The City Council meeting adjourned at 8:38 P.M.

Mayor

City Clerk

All supporting documentation and report originals of these minutes are on file in the Office of the City Clerk under File Number 10-20-25.
Minutes of 10-20-25 CCM.