

**CITY OF RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN  
COMMON COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS**

**May 13, 2008**

Mayor Don Richards called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers located in City Hall.

**City Council Members Present:** Alderpersons Wayne Beebe, Tom Cafilisch, Bob Ebert, Joleen Larson, Jim Nordgren and Michael Woolsey

**Members Absent:** Dave Cronk

**Staff Present:** Bernie Van Osdale, City Administrator; Bill Thiel, City Attorney; Reid Wronski, City Engineer; Carrie Fisher, Utilities Office Manager; Lanny Gleason, Public Works Director; Julie Bergstrom, Finance Director; Jeff Rixmann, Ambulance Director; Roger Leque, Police Chief; Buddy Lucero, Planning/Development Director; Lu Ann Hecht, City Clerk

**Others Present:** Chris Brookins, Nick Shillingford, Randy Kusilek, Don Fowell, Stan Meyer, Bob Hughes, others

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

April 15, 2008, Minutes

**MSC Woolsey/Beebe to approve minutes as submitted. Unanimous.**

April 22, 2008, Minutes

**MSC Beebe/Larson to approve minutes as submitted. Unanimous.**

**APPROVAL OF BILLS**

City – \$629,569.03                      Utility - \$671,664.13

**MS Larson/Beebe to approve the bills. Unanimous.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT, PETITIONS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:**

The Mayor made a statement about the previous City Council meeting. He cited a letter to the editor in which the writer was embarrassed because there were criticisms in public of City employees. The Mayor said he felt the same as the writer. He said the Council meeting was not the proper forum to call out City employees, and he apologized. He noted that if better attention was paid to the reports that were given to them, the line of questioning could have been avoided. The Mayor said in the future he would do a better job speaking out against that type of public censure.

SLY-1 Productions (Rumor Nightclub) - Request to Continue "Class B" License with a Change of Corporate Members, Change of Agent, and Change of Name

Chris Brookins, 1314 Sun Valley Lane, Hastings, MN, said he was looking to purchase the building and there is new management. Beebe spoke about the updated map.

**MSC Beebe/Larson move to approve "Class B" license. Unanimous.**

E & F Holdings (Bo's 'N Mine) - Request to Amend Premises Description

Don Fowell, 110 S. Main Street, Hudson, said they were seeking to amend license by putting in a fenced in patio. Nordgren clarified that the only entrance to the patio was from inside the building. Fowell addressed a question from Ebert in regard to fire concerns.

**MSC Woolsey/Nordgren move to approve request to amend premise description. Unanimous.**

Randy Kusilek, 515 N. Winter, brought forward a petition that said, "We, the undersigned, request an advisory referendum regarding the building/construction of a new City Hall in the City of River Falls, Wisconsin 54022." He thanked the people who helped with the petition. He said this is not a 'yes or no' question – it is a statement that the citizens of River Falls would like to have some sort of statement in this endeavor that we are taking on right now.

Nick Shillingford, 414 N. Second Street, spoke in support of keeping Pierce County Reproductive Services and FISH open in the Ingram Center.

Stan Meyer, 303 Lewis Street, is against proposed City Hall because the citizens should have a vote in the project and spoke in support of Ingram Center.

Bob Hughes, 123 ½ S. Main Street, he signed the petition and spoke in support of FISH.

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

**Ordinance 2008-12 – To Repeal and Recreate Sections within Title 17 – Zoning of the Municipal Code of the City of River Falls (Sign Regulations) – Second Reading and Disposition**

Mayor Don Richards recessed Council at 6:56 p.m. and went into a public hearing. At 6:56 p.m. with no one wishing to speak for or against this issue, Council reconvened into Open Session for disposition. **MS Beebe/Woolsey to approve ordinance.**

Cafilisch felt the ordinance was too restrictive and was opposed to it. Beebe agreed with Cafilisch. The Mayor called the Council's attention to an amendment regarding the ordinance.

Larson felt this helps with regulation of the current ordinance and if the Council is concerned about the current ordinance, then committees should look at it. She said not passing it would not improve the current sign ordinance. Her recommendation is to pass this and if Council has concerns, the entire Sign Ordinance should be studied.

Beebe felt the Sign Ordinance needs to be reviewed. Nordgren thought the Design Review Committee would be reviewing the Sign Ordinance this year.

Lucero said the DRC would mostly look at the downtown area. He said if the Council wants to look at the whole ordinance, the Plan Commission should review it.

Woolsey asked if this would be a stop gap. Lucero answered yes and said this ordinance clarified the word 'sign' and allows people to be creative and appeal it.

**Motion passed 5-1 with Cafilisch voting against.**

**Ordinance No. 2008-14 - An Ordinance Amending The Official Traffic Control Map of the City of River Falls, Wisconsin (Install Stop Sign On N. Grove Street At Pine Ridge Terrace) – Second Reading and Disposition**

Mayor Don Richards recessed Council at 7:02 p.m. and went into a public hearing.

Bob Hughes felt a yield sign would suffice if it wasn't a blind intersection. At 7:04 p.m. with no one wishing to speak for or against this issue, Council reconvened into Open Session for disposition.

**MSC Larson/Woolsey to approve ordinance. Unanimous.**

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

Acknowledge Receipt of the following Minutes:

Library Board – 4/7/08; Fire Department – 4/14/08; Design Review Committee – 4/14/08  
Plan Commission – 4/1/08 Regular Meeting; 4/1/08 Workshop; Historic Preservation  
Commission – 3/26/08 and 4/9/08; River Falls Housing Authority – 1/8/08; 3/10/08; 4/8/08;  
Park and Recreation Advisory Board – 4/16/08; Police and Fire Commission – 4/7/08

**Resolution No. 5117 - Approving Purchase of Replacement Taxi Vehicles**

Resolution Approving Request for City Assistance on Behalf of the River Falls Area Chamber Commerce's 2008 Summer Events→→→***Pulled by Beebe***

**Resolution No. 5118 - Awarding Bid For Purchase of Ambulance**

**Resolution No. 5119 - to Convey Real Estate in Fulfillment of Old Main Street Agreement**

**Resolution No. 5120 - Designating Official Newspaper**

**MSC Larson/Beebe move to approve remainder of Consent Agenda. Unanimous.**

**Resolution No. 5121 - Approving Request for City Assistance on Behalf of the River Falls Area Chamber Commerce's 2008 Summer Events**

Beebe asked if there was a way to analyze the cost for services the City and Utility provided when helping with the Chamber's request for assistance for their summer events. He would like the Council to be apprised of the costs when they are calculated.

**MSC Beebe/Nordgren move to approve resolution. Unanimous.**

**ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:**

Ordinance 2008-15 - An Ordinance Amending and Recreating the Official Parking Control Map of the City of River Falls - Repeal Permit Parking in the Lot at 409 Spruce Street – First Reading  
Cafilisch asked if any parking permits were out at this time. Leque said no.

2008-16 – Ordinance to Adopt §13.08.040 of the City Code; Water Conservation – First Reading

Ebert had a question about the restrictions of the ordinance. He asked about leaving a hose on a low trickle for a tree that was in distress. Fisher said for the days in between, a watering can or other device would have to be used, as a hose was not permitted. Nordgren asked about the use of a soaker hose and felt that maybe a revision was needed to the restrictions.

Fisher said a lot research had been done in regard to writing the ordinance. She said that people find a lot of ways around the restrictions and noted the ordinance allowed the every other day sprinkling of trees and plants. Nordgren clarified that a soaker hose would be able to be used on a person's regular day.

**ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:**

Timeline for City Hall Project

Cafilisch requested this item be put on the agenda for discussion. He noted that Van Osdale had given them a timeline from May 8-27. His concern was not what was currently happening nor what will happen in the future but what happened in the past. He said there were citizens who have not had an opportunity to view the plans and express their concerns. He gave examples of other City projects in which he felt the public was given more opportunities to give input. He said the City should have been able to give presentations to the public. He felt that if this had happened, the community would have felt differently about this project.

Woolsey noted there was a well-received Chamber breakfast in which this project was presented to the public. He said the first time this was mentioned was June 26, 2007. He noted that over \$3 million dollars was spent on the South Fork interceptor and very few people were engaged in that project.

Woolsey felt that it was because of the 'type' of the project this is (that people are concerned), and he thinks the City has done what it needed to get the word out. The City Hall project has been talked about for years. Woolsey said the City has three options: do nothing about the issues facing the City's facilities; or renovate the Ingram Center to meet City Hall needs, which would not address the Police and Fire issues; or build a new City Hall.

Woolsey felt the City has moved ahead with the optimal plan for the taxpayers over the long haul. Woolsey said that when he looks at the renovation of the Ingram Center from a taxpayer's perspective, he sees that as a short term fix. Within 3-7 years, the City would be revisiting this project again. He said the City Hall is a long-term project that would result in a 50, 60 or 80 year building. He said as a taxpayer, he would like a long-term vision. He felt the City has done that and now the City is facing a backlash from citizens who don't agree with the project. He doesn't feel that there have been any improprieties.

Cafilisch didn't feel the City Hall project was a fair comparison to the South Fork project, as the DNR would have fined the City if the project weren't done. He said the City didn't do what it should have done for public input.

Ebert noted he was a new member on the Council. He said when he was running for office, he handed out 600 postcards to people to get their comments. He said about 20 were returned. He said that 2-3 mentioned City Hall as an issue. He said he thinks people were either unaware of the project or they were comfortable with it. He would like to see one or two more public meetings about the City Hall.

Larson said with a building project, you are waiting to see the bids. Not having the bids makes it difficult to discuss the project with people. She firmly believes a new City Hall is the way to go. She said there are repairs with these two buildings that will cost a lot of money. Larson said if only this hard decision would have been made last time building a new City Hall was discussed, the City would have been 8-10 years into a new City Hall, it would have been half paid for, and the price tag to build it would have been considerably less. She doesn't want to keep making that mistake because it is a hard decision.

She said the Ingram Center location has been considered a new City Hall location for a long time as plans from 30 years ago were found. She said the plan for Ingram Center building to be a City Hall 30 years ago wasn't a good idea then and she can't imagine that is a good idea now. She said that the City has been purchasing land in this area all long with this idea in mind. When she sees the final numbers that is when the Council needs to go out to the public to make their case. She said the current City Hall is not an efficient building and she gave examples of its inefficiencies.

Larson said that once the plans are in, the Council can make its case. She feels that once people hear about it, they will approve it. When she ran for re-election, Larson made it very clear that she was for the City Hall project and she said the only comment she heard was to use common sense and keep the costs within budget.

Woolsey agreed with Caflish's point about the comparison. He reviewed the three options again and said when a long-term project is done it takes time before one can tell the outcome. He felt this is where the disconnect with the public is.

Ebert brought up the schedule. The Mayor noted that the City Hall project has been talked about for over a year and that there have been open meetings. Ebert felt the City still needs to go the extra mile with a project of this size.

Van Osdale discussed the upcoming schedule including having the consideration of bids on the May 27 meeting. Nordgren asked if it could be delayed until the first meeting in June. Van Osdale thought there would be time to delay the bid consideration.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

The Mayor read the 2008 National Preservation Month Proclamation.

Caflisch asked for a closed session on the next Council meeting in reference to a closed session which was held at the April 8 meeting.

**MSC Larson/Beebe move to adjourn at 7:34 p.m. Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted,

Kristi McKahan, Deputy Clerk