



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

August 10, 2021

Mayor Dan Toland called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. in the City Council Chambers at City Hall.

City Council Members Present: Todd Bjerstedt, Nick Carow, Sean Downing, Scott Morrissette, Alyssa Mueller, Diane Odeen, Ben Plunkett

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: City Administrator Scot Simpson; Assistant City Administrator Jason Stroud; City Attorney Chris Gierhart; IT Specialist Jon Smits; Community Development Director Amy Peterson; Utility Director Kevin Westhuis; Police Chief Gordon Young; City Clerk Amy White; Assistant to the City Administrator Brandt Johnson; Finance Director Sarah Karlsson; City Engineer Crystal Raleigh; Fire Chief Scott Nelson; Zach Regnier, Senior Civil Engineer; Senior Accountant Sam Hosszu

Others Present: Ben Fochs, others

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Approval of Minutes – July 27, 2021, Regular Meeting Minutes and Closed Session; July 13, 2021, Workshop Minutes

MSC Morrissette/Odeen move to approve minutes. Unanimous.

APPROVAL OF BILLS:

Bills: \$1,764,921.37

MSC Downing/Bjerstedt move to approve bills subject to the Comptroller. Unanimous.

PUBLIC COMMENT, PETITIONS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

None

PUBLIC HEARING:

Ordinance 2021-07 Amending Section 2.04.140 of the Municipal Code Relating to Ordinances – Second Reading and Disposition

At 6:33 p.m., Mayor Toland recessed into a Public Hearing. As there were no public comments, the Mayor moved back into Open Session at 6:33 p.m. MS Downing/Bjerstedt moved to approve the ordinance. The Mayor asked for comments.

Alderpersion Downing noted that the ordinance originally only had one public hearing at the first reading and asked the City Administrator to clarify that his amendment for two public hearings was included and also Alderpersion Morrissette's recommendation of keeping it to two readings was included in the ordinance.

City Administrator Simpson referred to discussion at the prior meeting saying that the two suggestions by Downing and Morrissette were included in tonight's packet. One was to have a public hearing at each meeting and the other was not require an automatic third reading. Simpson provided further details.

Downing thought it was a huge deal. By voting in favor of the ordinance, it would make the City a leader in the state, enhancing public engagement and welcoming community members to share what is important to them in a transparent way. He thanked the Mayor and Council. **With no other comments, the Mayor asked for a vote. The vote passed 7-0 with all voting in favor.**

CONSENT AGENDA:

Resolution No. 6591 - Accepting Donations and Authorizing Purchase of Fire Safety Trailer

Resolution No. 6592 - Accepting Bid for Mill and Overlay

Resolution Acknowledging 2021-2023 Strategic Initiatives →→*pulled by Downing*

Resolution No. 6593 - Regarding Wetland Credit Purchase for North Interceptor

MSC Odeen/Bjerstedt moved to approve remainder of the Consent Agenda. Unanimous.

Resolution No. 6594 - Acknowledging 2021-2023 Strategic Initiatives

Aldersperson Downing talked about a plan combining the desire to increase affordable housing and the desire to complete the Lake George (Rehabilitation) Plan. He referred to the Strategic plan and the Maxfield Housing study. His comments recognized the current strategic priority list was maximizing staff workload, but he wanted Council to note his plan as a possible replacement on the strategic priority list should the Biosolids study not be required. He referred to his plan as “TID 22”. “TID 22” would potentially redevelop the power plant site, excluding the current facilities for hydro production, and adjacent properties, like the current bus garage, to develop a mix of affordable and market housing. This “TID 22” would create a future potential funding source for the Lake George Rehabilitation project. In addition to the funding benefits, he mentioned access to our current recreational paths and downtown as positives of this plan.

The Mayor asked Downing if he was okay with the resolution, and if yes, to make a motion. MSC Downing/Morrisette move to approve the resolution. Unanimous.

REPORTS:

Administrator’s Report

Simpson appreciated the Council’s approval of fire safety trailer. He mentioned appreciation of Chief Nelson, Division Chief Moody and Public Safety Education Officer Williams and other members for their work. We will be acknowledging all the donors, community members, and companies that have stepped up in a big way to fund this. Aladtec is giving a kickoff gift. Simpson asked if there were other questions.

Aldersperson Plunkett noted the rising Covid level in the community. He asked what steps Simpson would recommend or recommend the Council to take to alleviate transmission of Covid in community.

Simpson is aware of increased transmission throughout the country. He talked about evaluating where River Falls is in comparison and learning from other areas. City staff will continue to counsel with the Pierce County Health Director. There is a schedule for her to come back to talk to Council. Simpson spoke further talking about employees, an increase in involvement in the ‘do your part campaign’, working with customers, and more.

Plunkett asked about CDC guidance regarding masking. Simpson said as of now we have not adopted CDC guidelines regarding masking vaccinated employees in indoor settings.

Plunkett asked about making N95 masks available for residents. Simpson these options have been discussed along with being an incentive provider for vaccinations. Neither recommendation has made it to the Council. Both options will cost money – likely more than \$25,000. At this point, we haven’t come to an internal consensus that it is a good role for the City to play. It is felt there is adequate PPE available for people. Staff is not prepared to recommend that we should be a direct provider for PPE nor that we should do an incentive program for PPE.

Plunkett asked what the Council should look at for economic impact on the City's population as they may need advanced medical care. Simpson is not prepared to answer saying staff is trying to understand the projection for us as a community. The alarm has not been raised by the medical community to the City yet. The feeling is things are concerning but stable with the emphasis is still encouraging people to get vaccinated.

Aldersperson Odeen asked about being in contact with the health director. Assistant City Administrator Stroud is still in contact with her. He spoke with her last Friday and sent an email to both county health directors this morning. He provided further details.

Aldersperson Mueller asked about having a workshop with the public health in September. She thinks it will become clearer when school starts on how quickly things may escalate. Simpson said yes; there was already a plan in place to have the Pierce County Health Director come and speak to Council. Simpson spoke further saying there weren't plans about having PPE or incentives coming to Council. He talked about measures for employees and City facilities and CDC recommendations saying we are looking at them as they come.

Plunkett has an interest in PPE saying it has been neglected in public policy. He provided further details. Simpson said staff would have an interest in an example of a successful program in terms of implementation. Plunkett would provide examples. There was further discussion about residents and vaccination numbers, timelines, and the ability to have a dialogue with the health director at the next meeting.

MSC Bjerstedt/Morrisette move to adjourn at 7:04 p.m. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristi McKahan, Deputy Clerk