



**RIVER FALLS CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP REGARDING  
2019 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES  
February 12, 2019, 5 p.m.  
Training Room, City Hall, 222 Lewis Street, River Falls, WI 54022**

**City Council Members Present:** Mayor Dan Toland, Sean Downing, Chris Gagne, Scott Morrissette, Diane Odeen, Michael Page

**City Council Members Absent:** Hal Watson

**City Staff Present:** City Administrator Scot Simpson; Assistant City Administrator Julie Bergstrom; Development Services Director Amy Peterson; Utility Director Kevin Westhuis; Assistant to the City Administrator Brandt Johnson; City Clerk Amy White; Human Resources Director Karen Bergstrom

**Others:** Ben Fochs

Assistant to the City Administrator Brandt Johnson provided a presentation. The workshop's focus is on 2019 legislative priorities. He would cover background and history, the purpose of establishing priorities, and the proposed legislative priorities.

The Wisconsin State Legislature convened January 7 for start of 2019-2020. There are 99 representatives and 33 senators. Bills are sent to governor three times a year.

The Joint Committee on Finance – any bill with funding goes through this committee. Members selected by speaker. Johnson talked about the reps.

Why are we doing this? Prioritize; seek support; proactive engagement with legislators; provide one voice.

**Priorities:**

- Legislation to allow for the biennial budgeting including multi-year levies
- Allow for financing of 10+ years without a referendum
- Support increased funding for State-Local transportation systems
- Support legislation that removes barriers preventing TIDs from sharing tax increments
- Increase the ACT 150 (library) requiring county reimbursement level that currently stands at 70 percent. We will ask for 100 percent.
- Support legislation that increases the availability of emergency detention beds in Western Wisconsin.

There was discussion about TIDS and sharing increment.

There was discussion about detention beds. Talked about funding a specific provider in Western Wisconsin or work with a partner. Maybe drive to Minnesota instead of driving to Eastern Wisconsin.

**Priorities:**

- Enact legislation that allows for prepaid electric and water billing
- Support legislation that closes dark store loopholes
- Support legislation that eliminates the town incorporation loophole

City Administrator Simpson provided an example of town incorporation. Town of Menasha changed to Fox Crossing.

Aldersperson Morrisette asked about the prepay for electric and water. Utility Director Westhuis talked about prepaying. Both the utility and customers are happy with this service. He talked about helping people who are living week-to-week. Westhuis felt this was better for customer.

Aldersperson Odeen asked about limitations of financing now. Simpson talked about City Hall and Glen Park. He also talked about act 150. Libraries are free.

Johnson talked about our partners seeing River Falls doing this and maybe getting on board. Simpson talked about making and keeping the priorities.

Aldersperson Bjerstedt asked how this was going to play out. Simpson talked about having a joint meeting with counties and state representatives. He talked about Councilors using their influence with reps they know. It would not conflict of interest as isn't for yourself. There was discussion about lobbying, lobbyists, and hiring lobbyists.

Should we identify projects that we should get federal or state funding on? Possible projects are:

- CTH FF/STH 29 Intersection
  - \$850K - \$2 million State/City project
- UWRF Science and Technology building
  - \$100+ million State project
- Kinni Corridor Implementation
  - Powell Dam removal: \$500K-\$2 million
  - Downtown storm water plan (Lake George): \$1-2 million
  - Downtown pedestrian bridge \$1.6 million

Simpson asked for feedback. Alderspersons Odeen, Bjerstedt, Diane, and the Mayor, thought it was a good start. Morrisette asked about three bottom items. There was discussion about pricing and timing. Talked about having items on the list over and over.

Johnson asked about timing. Simpson said the plan was to present and give the Council time to think about it. A resolution would be presented at the next Council meeting.

There was discussion about lobbying on regional issues. The Mayor liked whole one voice thing.

Upon the conclusion of discussion, the workshop ended at 6:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristi McKahan, Deputy Clerk