



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

**July 27, 2021**

Mayor Dan Toland called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers located in 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; Deputy Chief Matt Kennett; City Clerk Amy White; Assistant to the City Administrator Brandt Johnson; Finance Director Sarah Karlsson; Economic Development Manager Keri Schreiner; Management Analyst Kathryn Paquet; City Engineer Crystal Raleigh

**Others Present:** Ben Fochs, Kim Shult, Charlene Simonson, others

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Approval of Minutes – July 13, 2021, Minutes

**MS Odeen/Carow move to approve minutes. The vote passed 7-0 with all voting in favor.**

**APPROVAL OF BILLS:**

Bills: \$826,031.60

**MS Bjerstedt/Morrissette move to approve bills subject to the Comptroller. The vote passed 7-0 with all voting in favor.**

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

Ben Fochs, 2529 Powell Avenue – came to inquire about the future use of standby generation plant.

**Presentation by Baker Tilly on 2020 Audit Results**

Kim Shult, Partner from Baker Tilly, provided a presentation on the 2020 audit results. Baker Tilly issued an unmodified audit opinion on the City's financial statements sometimes also called a clean opinion of results which is consistent with what has been issued in the past.

At the end of 2020, the General Fund balance was \$12.1 million of total fund balance which is up \$1.5 million from 2019. The fund balance is split into two categories: \$4.6 million of non-spendable which mostly consists of advances to TID districts and \$7.4 million is unassigned which can be used at the City's discretion. The \$12.1 million of fund balance is a strong number for the City's size.

Shult reviewed the General Fund revenue and expenses compared to 2019. The total revenues were consistent but down slightly from 2019. There were total expenditures of \$9.9 million which is down about \$1 million from the previous year. The City is under budget as well.

Shult talked about the utilities. There was a net operating income in all three utilities with all producing over \$1 million in cash from operations. In looking at the unrestricted cash balance, there is about \$3 million in both

electric and water and \$1.3 million in sewer. Three months of unrestricted cash on hand is recommended. The City is a little short of that in electric, but she believes the total utilities are right where the auditors would like to see for cash.

Shult talked about the PSC rate of return: water is 6.92 percent and electric is at -1.74 percent. A new rate is being implemented which should result in a different return. She talked about capital assets and provided details.

Shult spoke about general obligation debt. Two ratios are calculated. At the end of 2020, the City was using 33 percent of its GO debt capacity. She talked about general obligation debt per capita which is based on population. It is just over \$1,300.

Shult talked about a reporting and insights letter which was issued. There were no red flags. She said the records are in excellent shape. Shult thanked Sarah and her team and talked about the difficulties in preparing for return especially working remotely. She stood for questions.

Aldersperson Morrissette asked for a recommendation from an auditor's perspective regarding the amount of cash to have on hand. We have set an internal threshold of 50 percent. What would it be a reasonable amount to bring it down to as Council starts to have conversations? Shult did not have a quick answer. She will give it some thought and connect with Sarah. Morrissette recognized Sarah and her team for their hard work.

#### Presentation by Kinni River Land Trust (KRLT)

Charlene Simonson, Executive Director of Kinnickinnic River Land Trust, came to make a formal request for City assistance related to the sold-out comedy show on September 9 with Charlie Berens. She thanked the Mayor and Council. There will be music and comedy which will do some fundraising for KLRT's public preserves. She talked about the reserves and the work that is being done. The event is not only a fundraiser for KRLT but it's a celebration for River Falls. Simonson talked about the organizations which are partnering for the event.

Simonson is asking for support from the Police Department to help with a soft closure of Division Street. This would allow people to cross the road. They have received permission from the school district to use its parking lots. Support is needed in placing barricades and fencing to help set a parameter, and with picnic tables, infrastructure, and utilization of the ball field. They are also requesting use of the storm and octagon shelters. Simonson spoke further about food trucks, alcohol sales, and event start and end times. She stood for questions.

Morrissette assumed that the City would get recognition in KRLT's advertising for in kind donations. Simonson was willing to have a conversation with City staff on the best way to do that. He wanted to see that. Morrissette said with the money being raised, he is hopeful the City can expect some partnership with KRLT on dam removal. He asked her to think about that as the process moves forward. Simonson answered absolutely.

Downing asked for the definition of a soft road closure. Deputy Chief Kennett said Police staff would guide people across the road during breaks in traffic. Downing asked if there are any other anticipated adjustments that would be going on between the City and her group. Simonson didn't believe so.

Aldersperson Plunkett asked about storm shelter use. Simonson said the shelter is the space for Berens. It would also house equipment and other things that need to be secured. Plunkett asked how long it took to sell tickets. Simonson said about three weeks.

#### **PUBLIC HEARING:**

Ordinance No. 2021-05 - Amending Section 10.12.030, Official Parking Control Maps – Meadows Drive No Parking – Second Reading and Disposition

**At 6:55 p.m., Mayor Toland recessed into a Public Hearing. As there were no public comments, the Mayor moved back into Open Session at 6:56 p.m. MS Morrissette/Downing moved to approve the ordinance.**

Morrisette had concerns about the neighbors' perspective and no parking along the whole side at the first reading. While Mayor's Cookout, he had discussions with residents who expressed no concerns but asked Council to keep an eye on the situation. So, at this point, he is supportive of the ordinance. **With no other comments, the Mayor asked for a vote. The vote passed 7-0 with all voting in favor.**

Ordinance No. 2021-06 - Amending Section 10.12.030, Official Parking Control Maps – Dry Run Road No Parking – Second Reading and Disposition

**At 6:57 p.m., Mayor Toland recessed into a Public Hearing. As there were no public comments, the Mayor moved back into Open Session at 6:57 p.m. MS Downing/Bjerstedt moved to approve the ordinance. The vote passed 7-0 with all voting in favor.**

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

Acknowledgement of the following minutes: River Falls Housing Authority – 6/9/21; Historic Preservation Commission – 6/9/21 and 6/16/21; Plan Commission - 6/1/21; BID Board – 5/11/21; Utility Advisory Board – 6/21/21; West Central Wisconsin Biosolids – 5/20/21

Resolution No. 6586 - Approving Results of City Audit by Baker Tilly

Resolution No. 6587 - Approving Request for City Assistance with Kinnickinnic River Land Trust Event

Resolution No. 6588 - Approving the City's Property/Casualty Insurance Coverage for 2021-2022

**MS Odeen/Morrisette moved to approve the Consent Agenda. The Mayor asked for comments.**

Before the vote, City Administrator Simpson wanted to provide a couple of key points regarding the Consent Agenda. In connection with the audit, he wanted to give Council credit for the electric rate of return being low. It was an intentional decision by the Council to delay an approved a rate increase by the Public Service Commission in order to limit impact on the rate payers which at the time was advisable given the circumstances.

Regarding the land trust resolution, Simpson said even though we don't anticipate changes to occur, the resolution does give the Police Chief the ability to modify and agree to modifications in the event plan.

**With no other comments, the Mayor asked for a vote. The vote passed 7-0 with all voting in favor.**

**ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:**

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

The Mayor asked for comments. Alderperson Downing had a proposed amendment which would create a second public hearing which would be held at the second reading to improve community engagement.

Alderperson Morrisette agreed with Downing. He felt if we wanted to open up engagement more, two public hearings are something we should do. He also would like to see us figure out a way to eliminate the need to bring the ordinance back for a third meeting. He thinks as we have done in the past, we should be able to enact the ordinance after that. He provided further details saying he would like to eliminate the language about it coming back a third time.

Resolution No. 6589 - Approving the Lease Agreement with Bearcat Investments, LLC dba The Garage Bikes & Brews

**MS Odeen/Morrisette moved to approve the resolution. The Mayor asked for comments.** Alderperson Plunkett had concerns about stormwater issues with the site being used as a parking lot and asked if staff had examined it. Simpson said it is potentially an issue depending on the type of improvement that Bikes & Brews could propose. Right now, it is a gray area. We haven't identified it as a 'for sure' issue, but it is something to be mindful of. **With no further comments, the Mayor asked for a vote. The vote passed 7-0 with all voting in favor.**

Resolution No. 6590 - Approving a Certified Survey Map Variance for David and Karin Meyer

**MS Downing/Morrisette moved to approve the resolution. The Mayor asked for comments.** Simpson wanted to make sure that the motion and second are in agreement with the revised resolution. The Mayor asked if Council had read the change. Simpson was asked to read the change aloud: “Now, therefore, be it resolved, that due to unique circumstances, including the Meyers receiving staff recommended path prior to the ordinance modification as well as the pandemic delaying their forward progress, the City Council of the City of River Falls hereby approves the enclosed certified survey map.” **With no further comments, the Mayor asked for a vote. The vote passed 7-0 with all voting in favor.**

**REPORTS:**

Bi-Annual Strategic Plan Update (2021 1st and 2nd Quarters)

There were no questions or comments.

Comptroller’s Report for June 2021

Comptroller Odeen read the following: General Fund revenues through the first half of the year were \$5,332,254 or 46% of budgeted Revenues. Revenues in the month of June included \$14,509 swimming pool fees and \$27,500 in donations for the Fire Safety Trailer. Expenditures for the month of June were \$4,697,321 or 41% of budgeted expenses. The net of revenues over expenditures as of June 30, 2021, was \$634,933.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Mayor’s Appointment

Reappointment of Brenda Gaulke to the Park and Recreation Advisory Board through May 2024

**MS Morrisette/Odeen moved to approve the appointment. The vote passed 7-0 with all voting in favor.**

**CLOSED SESSION:**

*At 7:08 p.m., MS Morrisette/Downing move to recess into Closed Session § 19.85(1)(e) for the following purposes:* “deliberating or negotiating the purchasing of public properties, the investing of public funds, or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session, to wit: River Falls Industrial Park Lot A and 716 N. Main Street.” **The roll call vote passed 7-0 with all voting in favor to recess into closed session.**

**RECONVENE INTO OPEN SESSION:**

**At 7:44 p.m., MS Odeen/Morrisette move to go back into Open Session. The vote passed 7-0 with all voting in favor.**

**MS Bjerstedt/Downing move to adjourn at 7:44 p.m. The vote passed 7-0 with all voting in favor.**

Respectfully submitted,

Kristi McKahan, Deputy Clerk