



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

July 23, 2019

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, Sean Downing, Christopher Gagne, Scott Morrissette, Diane Odeen, Hal Watson

Members Absent: Michael Page

Staff Present: City Administrator Scot Simpson; City Attorney Dan Gustafson; Police Sergeant Beth Posel; Utility Director Kevin Westhuis; Finance Director Sarah Karlsson; Operations Director Mike Stifter; Assistant City Administrator Julie Bergstrom; City Engineer Crystal Raleigh; City Engineer Reid Wronski; EMS Director Jason Stroud; City Clerk Amy White; Development Services Director Amy Peterson; Assistant to the City Administrator Brandt Johnson; City Engineer Zach Regnier

Others Present: Judie Foster Babcock, Greg Peters, David Cronk, others

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

July 9, 2019, Regular Meeting Minutes

MSC Morrissette/Downing approve minutes. Unanimous.

APPROVAL OF BILLS:

Bills \$1,297,555.22

MSC Morrissette/Watson move to approve bills subject to the comptroller. Unanimous.

PUBLIC COMMENT, PETITIONS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

Judie Foster Babcock from the Kinni Corridor Collaborative came to give an update. After the Council approved the Kinni Corridor plan, there was an effort to assemble a group of citizens to consider how to form a supporting entity to work with the proposed public/private partnership. Many models were studied, and it was discovered that the traditional approach to public/private partnerships didn't leave room for the involvement of non-profits and philanthropies that they felt were important. The community really wants to be involved in the corridor project and to make some investments in it. They found a model called P5 which allows for non-profits and philanthropies.

Babcock said a volunteer group meet for six months and decided on a mission and vision. They formed a Wisconsin non-stock, non-profit corporation. She explained why they thought that was the best model. Babcock said a lot of done between January and July. The board is very engaged and active, and the meetings are open to the public. She shared the group's vision and mission. In short, they are bringing the money and people together to help implement the corridor plan. To learn more, visit www.kinnicc.org.

Greg Peters, President of the River Falls Baseball Council came to provide an update of the turf project. A \$850,000 grant was received from Major League Baseball and will be used for installing artificial turf. He said the positives outweigh the negative. The field will be able to be used longer for games. Peters talked about the increase in games and the ability to move the mound. He is excited about the possibilities. A local company, Total Excavating, will be used. He talked about the other companies associated with the project. Peters said the project will be done this fall and ready for play in the spring. He understands that Major League Baseball is

going to have a big opening day in 2020. River Falls may be featured. He stood for questions, but the Council would wait to ask questions when it came up on the agenda.

Aldersperson Downing asked the Utility Director to evaluate the lighting near the movie theatre in the downtown area. Utility Director Westhuis said staff would look at the area.

Recognition of Reid Wronski

Mayor Toland asked Wronski to join him at the podium. He said Wronski has one of those jobs that affects everything in the City. The Mayor shared a personal story saying Wronski put the seed in his mind about getting involved in City government. The Mayor read a statement recognizing Wronski. He congratulated him on his retirement after 20 years at the City.

Wronski thanked the Mayor, Council, and staff. He talked about coming to River Falls and the great people he had to work with. He brags to his colleagues about Council saying they let the professionals do their jobs without a lot of second guessing. It's been a joy in that respect as that's not the way it is everywhere. He thanked the Council for a great opportunity.

Strategic Plan Report

City Administrator Simpson provided a report on the biennial strategic plan. The most recent plan was adopted on July 24, 2018. The Strategic Initiatives were formerly presented as the work plan. He talked about the next initiatives and developing initiatives and workloads across departments. Simpson also talked about public engagement involving big projects.

Simpson showed a list of the projects that were completed during the 2017-2019 work plan. He talked about projects that were still in progress. He listed the four strategic priorities. Simpson talked about large projects that were coming up. He said information can be found on the City's website. There were no questions.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Acknowledgement of the following minutes:

Historic Preservation Commission – 5/8/19; Park and Recreation Advisory Board – 6/19/19;
BID Board – 6/11/19; Utility Advisory Board – 6/17/19; West Central Wisconsin Biosolids Facility
Commission -5/16/19; POWERful Choices Committee – 6/20/19

Resolution No. 6379 - Regarding Property and Casualty Insurance Renewal

Resolution No. 6380 - Accepting 2018 Audit Report

Resolution No. 6381 - Authorizing 2019 Chip Seal Program

Resolution Regarding Lease Amendment with the River Falls Baseball Council→→*pulled by Gagne*

Resolution No. 6382 - Awarding Bid for 2019 Mill and Overlay Program

Resolution No. 6383 - Approving Transportation Project Plat (TPP) for STH 35/65 Jug-handle Project

Resolution No. 6384 - Approving Appointment of City Engineer

Resolution No. 6385 - Acknowledging 2019-2021 Strategic Initiatives

Resolution Regarding Electric Rate Submittal to Public Service Commission→→*pulled by Downing*

Resolution No. 6386 - to Enter into Assignment Agreement with NCCM Global, LLC

MSC Morrissette/Odeen move to approve remainder of the Consent Agenda. Unanimous.

Resolution No. 6387 - Regarding Lease Amendment with the River Falls Baseball Council

Aldersperson Gagne commended the Baseball Council for the work they had done at the field. He felt it was a reiteration to their commitment to the community. He felt it was a fantastic use of space. **MS**

Gagne/Morrissette move to approve resolution.

Morrissette had questions for Peters. He felt there was a miscommunication with the parking at the field. He wanted to be clear that they will address the handicap parking now and work with the City long-term as the Jug Handle project moves forward. Peters said the handicap parking will be fixed but it is not part of the turf project.

That will be done second. Morrisette confirmed that the Baseball Council will take care of the handicapped parking issue. Peters said yes.

Morrisette asked about the \$1 million budget for the turf project. Peters said it was at that amount, but they received good news regarding the soil which resulted in a savings of \$128,000. Morrisette asked about the shortfall for the project and how they were going to address it. Peters said there isn't a shortfall. They are under budget. Peters talked about sponsorships that are generating revenue. **With no other questions, the Mayor asked for a vote. All voted in favor of passing the resolution.**

Resolution No. 6388 - Regarding Electric Rate Submittal to Public Service Commission

Alderson Downing asked Utility Director Westhuis to provide a summary about the item. Westhuis said the last rate increases were in 2008 and 2001. He talked about the positive things that have happened which allowed the Utility not to raise rates. The Utility has spent money on infrastructure and new software, and it is time to address the shortfall. Westhuis also talked about thinking about rates in a different way and how we collect money to support our fixed costs. In the past, rates were based on usage and now we are moving away from that because customers are using less energy. In the future, customers will be paying for availability of electricity.

Alderson Bjerstedt asked about the PSC accepting this as written. Westhuis said the PSC will review and will probably make adjustments. He said usually there are some corrections. Hopefully, they will come back with something similar. There will be a public hearing. The process takes 10-12 months.

Morrisette encouraged staff to consider a rate assessment internally every three years. Gagne asked a clarifying question. **MSC Downing/Odeen move to approve resolution. Unanimous.**

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

Resolution No. 6389 - Regarding FERC Study Request and Relicensing Update

Utility Director Westhuis provided an update on relicensing. It is a five-year process. Westhuis talked about how the City determined which studies it wanted to do. The City submitted a final proposal of nine studies to FERC. They approved the studies and added one – a mussels study. Westhuis read a list of the studies. Staff is considering challenging FERC on the mussels study. The cost of the mandated studies and the licensed consulting work from TRC is \$662,500. The studies are scheduled to be completed by 2021.

Westhuis said staff is working with the US Army Corps. of Engineering and their cost savings program. He is hopeful there will be a cost sharing savings of \$115,000 - \$200,000. Westhuis talked about the cost to relicense being approximately \$705,500 with the decommissioning plan costing \$120,000. Westhuis spoke about hydroelectricity helping to cover the cost of the license and decommissioning plan. Upon completion of the presentation, Westhuis stood for questions.

Gagne talked about the City's hydro operations. He asked a hypothetical question about how much energy could be generated on the upper dam. Westhuis could not provide an answer.

Morrisette talked about the Kinni Corridor process that was done which has set a direction for dam removal. The studies are what they are, but he was discouraged by the number of studies requested by the stakeholders. There was a lot of discussion at the UAB meeting about this. He said it was time for the stakeholders to step up and make contributions for these costs. Right now, the costs are falling on the ratepayers. Morrisette said that if you weren't a dam fan, you better be now as they are generating revenue to pay for their removal. He feels the mussel study is ridiculous and doesn't feel we should have to pay for it.

Alderson Watson clarified that the mussel study was requested by the DNR. He mostly agrees with Morrisette. A compromise has been made, and he will support it. The studies are the costs of doing business for relicensing the dams. If we had decided to surrender the license, we wouldn't be doing the studies. It is an expensive compromise. We will continue to move forward.

Westhuis noted the DNR water certification was an unknown at this time. **MS Morrissette/Watson move to approve the resolution.**

City Administrator Simpson said Council had a choice in implementation. He said by approving the resolution, the Council is investing its authority in the City Administrator. Council will not be getting a study by study approval process. Through our internal approval process, several of these studies wouldn't have met the threshold for Council approval. Anything \$50,000 or over would have come to the Council.

He said alternately, the Council could approve each study. Simpson thinks that would be time consuming and doesn't make a lot of sense for the process. Some of the studies need to be done quickly. Simpson said monthly updates would be given to Council and the UAB. Simpson clarified the alternate to what is proposed is that any studies which meet the threshold would be brought back to Council. Because the Council meets every two weeks, it would likely delay or add costs to the studies. The Mayor expressed his confidence in staff in handling the studies.

Gagne agreed with Watson. Unfortunately, there are studies that are ridiculous. He asked that in monthly one-on-ones this information would be provided to the Council. He is in favor.

Downing asked if there was a response time from the state regarding the mussel study. Simpson said the letter suggested that we could do it in 2019. We have it budgeted but he is not sure that we can get it done this year with the order of the other studies. Simpson said the City must make a real effort to do what FERC has asked us to do. He said 99 percent the City's study plan except for the mussel study which was added at the request of a stakeholder.

Gagne asked about a timeline on an appeal. Simpson did not know that timeline and didn't think that would be a good effort. Gagne wasn't suggesting going that route but was just curious. Simpson noted there was a timeline in a previous agenda item and in the PowerPoint. **With no other comments, the Mayor asked for a vote. All voted in favor.**

REPORTS:

Administrator's Report

Simpson talked about the process at Glen Park. He asked the public to limit use around areas of construction. He spoke further about Glen Park.

Downing asked Simpson to talk about the Momentum West Conference. Simpson provided a brief summary.

Morrissette recognized the City's utility workers, Tim Wiste and Dan Treichel, who are assisting communities who experiences tornadoes this past weekend. He talked about having mutual agreements. Westhuis added that Luke Baumann and Logan Snyder were dispatched to Wisconsin Rapids to help restore power.

Comptroller's Report for June 2019

Comptroller Odeen read the following: General Fund revenues through the first half of the year were \$4,777,323 or 44 percent of revenues. Revenues in the month of June include \$15,207 in DOT Transportation State Aid for Taxi and \$20,879 in building permit fees which is comparable to last year. Expenditures for the same period were \$4,598,885 or 42 percent of expenses, for a net of revenues over expenditures of \$178,438.

The Mayor recognized the River Falls Municipal Utilities for a safety award presented by Municipal Electric Utilities of Wisconsin. He appreciates all the time put in to taking care of safety. The Mayor also appreciated the turnout for the National Guard who left for a yearlong deployment last week.

MSC Bjerstedt/Downing move to adjourn at 7:40 p.m. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristi McKahan, Deputy Clerk