



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

August 22, 2023

Mayor Toland called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

City Council Members Present: Mayor Dan Toland, Jeff Bjork, Nick Carow, Sean Downing, Alyssa Mueller, Todd Bjerstedt, Scott Morrisette, Diane Odeen

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: City Administrator Scot Simpson; City Attorney Chris Gierhart; IT Specialist Jonathan Thoen; Utility Director Kevin Westhuis; Police Chief Gordon Young

Others: Dana Linscott, others

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

August 8, 2023, regular and workshop minutes; August 3, 2023, Board of Review minutes

MSC Downing/Bjork move to approve minutes. Unanimous.

APPROVAL OF BILLS:

Bills: \$847,982.79

MSC Bjerstedt/Mueller move to approve bills. Unanimous.

PUBLIC COMMENT, PETITIONS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

Aldersperson Carow made a public comment addressing those who continually come to Council meetings and make repeated false statements against the city regarding treatment of people experiencing homelessness. He said River Falls is a compassionate community with compassionate leaders and noted the city's skilled and professional police force. He suggested investing in existing resources to help and serve people and provided several examples. Carow concluded by saying to work on the challenges facing homelessness and poverty, we need to make bigger tables and not attack the institutions and compassion of those currently engaged in the fight.

The mayor invited others to speak saying speakers had two minutes.

Dana Linscott, 11395 County Road M – said it would take longer than two minutes to address Carow's comments. He talked about the 'no camping' policy and the ordinance that was passed. He talked about homeless people being forced outside city limits.

CONSENT AGENDA

Acknowledgement of the following minutes: Police and Fire Commission – 9/1/22; 7/31/23

Resolution Requesting Application for Exemption from County Library Tax→→**pulled by Downing**

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

Resolution No. 6817 - Requesting Application for Exemption from County Library Tax

Downing is in favor of the resolution but asked Administrator Simpson if he could explain what gets paid into the county and why the recommendation with it.

Simpson said state law provides everyone in Wisconsin access to a library. With that requirement, the state thought it was fair to provide a taxing mechanism on users of the library who don't live in the taxing jurisdiction. The mechanism in Wisconsin is through a county library. All communities within each county that don't provide a library must pay into the communities that do provide library service. Simpson said there is a formulaic approach. Each year the cities and villages that provide library service are asked to certify that they have a level of effort that meets the minimum standard for library. This prevents communities from opening a corner of their city hall and having a stack of books and saying, 'that's our library; we're exempt from the tax'. By this action, Council is certifying that the city has appropriated money more than the minimum calculated. Simpson said for River Falls, the minimum is \$650,000 per year. He said \$867,000 has been appropriated. In addition to that, the city receives monies from the counties based on our cost for circulation and the amount of circulation to residents outside of city limits. Simpson didn't have the number but could look it up. He said the county tax equates to another \$250,000-\$300,000 per year.

Downing asked if the formula could be found online. Simpson believed it was Department of Public Instruction, Section 43.64 of statutes. Library fund is 43.52. He thought there maybe information on the city's website. People can also email the city or library for it.

Downing thanked Simpson for the information. **MS Downing/Bjork to approve the resolution. Unanimous.**

REPORTS:

Comptroller's Report for July 2023

Comptroller Odeen read the following: General Fund revenues through the end of July were \$6,722,391 or 52% of total budgeted revenues for the year. Revenues in July include \$403,337 for state shared revenue, \$158,633 for state aid for streets, \$61,396 for state fire insurance revenue (fire dues), and \$18,676 for plumbing inspection permits. Expenditures through the end of July were \$6,881,110 or 53% of total budget expenditures for the year. As of July 31, 2023, net expenditures over revenue were \$158,719.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mayor's Appointment

Police and Fire Commission

Appointment of Lenny Austin through April 2028

MSC Morrissette/Bjerstedt move to approve the mayor's appointment. Unanimous.

Aldersperson Bjork provided a reminder on the upcoming Cookout Conversation and said the Customer Appreciation Event was fantastic.

MSC Bjerstedt/Morrissette move to adjourn at 6:42 p.m. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristi McKahan, Deputy Clerk