

MONONA CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
February 17, 2020

The regular meeting of the Monona City Council was called to order by Mayor O'Connor at 7:01 p.m.

Present: Mayor Mary K. O'Connor, Alderpersons Nancy Moore, Andrew Kitslaar, Jennifer Kuhr, Kathy Thomas, and Molly Grupe

Excused: Alderperson Doug Wood

Also Present: City Administrator Bryan Gadow, Finance Director Marc Houtakker, Financial Consultant Jeff Belongia, Police Chief Walter Ostrenga, Director of Administrative Services Leah Kimmell, and City Clerk Joan Andrusz

ROLL CALL AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion by Alder Moore, seconded by Alder Grupe to approve the Minutes of the February 3, 2020 City Council meeting, was carried.

PUBLIC HEARING

There was no Public Hearing.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion by Alder Thomas, seconded by Alder Kitslaar to approve the following, was carried:

1. Approval of Application for 2019/2020 Operator License:
 - a. Demitria J. Robb, Speedway – Monona Drive

Mayor O'Connor re-ordered Agenda items to accommodate those present.

NEW BUSINESS

A motion by Alder Thomas, seconded by Alder Kuhr to suspend the rules and take action on Resolution 20-2-2392 Authorizing the Issuance and Sale of \$5,490,000 General Obligation Promissory Notes, Series 2020A, was carried.

Finance Director Houtakker reported this borrowing is for the 2020 Capital Budget and to re-finance a 2012 Note. The amount needed is less than was approved at the last meeting. Mr. Belongia stated premiums reduced the refunding portion of this issue. He reviewed a report of highlights of the borrowing and comparable municipal financings. This is issuing less par amount with very low interest: 1.80% total interest cost on a 10-year borrowing; this is only the second time the rate was under 2%.

A motion by Alder Kitslaar, seconded by Alder Grupe to approve Resolution 20-2-2392 Authorizing the Issuance and Sale of \$5,490,000 General Obligation Promissory Notes, Series 2020A. On a roll call vote, all members voted in favor of the motion.

APPEARANCES

Mayor O'Connor introduced Loreen Gage, who is on the April 7 ballot as a School Board candidate. Ms. Gage stated it will be a pleasure to be on the Board and it is a pleasure to be in the Monona School District.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Police Chief Ostrenga reported the following will bring the City's Ordinances in line with State Statutes that require massage therapists to be licensed by the State.

A motion by Alder Thomas, seconded by Alder Grupe to approve Ordinance 2-20-725 Amending Chapter 296 of the Code of Ordinances Relating to Massage and Bodywork Therapy.

City Administrator Gadow reported changes were made to add communication options other than just telephone to the following Ordinance based upon the last meeting's discussion. This option will be allowed for all City committees, commissions, and boards.

A motion by Alder Kuhr, seconded by Alder Kitslaar to approve Ordinance 2-20-727 Authorizing Meeting Attendance by Audio Visual Technology, was carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Mayor O'Connor introduced Resolution 20-2-2393 Adopting a Policy to Provide a Paid Family Care Leave Benefit for City Employees, reporting there was only one in effect, and very few draft, state policy examples to compare this to and it isn't provided by any municipality in the country. Director of Administrative Services Kimmell reported changes in employee policies began in 2019 with paid parental leave, which has been used by 6 employees at a cost of \$19,000, including the hiring of a temporary worker. The policy under consideration is for up to two weeks of leave that doesn't count against the employee's sick leave. It is intended to be used to care for a family member, not the employee, who has a serious, acute, unexpected illness, and is concurrent with FMLA.

The policy's definition of "serious medical condition" is less explicit than FMLA. It still may be difficult to administer with the definition that is decided upon. The leave is for full-time, and on a pro-rated basis for permanent part-time employees, after 12 months of employment. There is a request form to fill out and then the employee meets with a committee of the City Administrator, the Department Head, and herself to evaluate the request. Privacy concerns are taken into consideration. The desire is for unanimous approval, but a majority will prevail. If denied, any other avenue to provide more documentation or other information will be encouraged; the intent is to not be rigid. The benefit is restarted 12 months from the first day used if the whole two weeks has been used. City Administrator Gadow reported the Department Head is included to discuss the effect on the department but that hardship isn't used to deny a request.

Alder Grupe stated long-term partners that aren't considered domestic partners should also be considered. Director of Administrative Services Kimmell reported City Attorney William Cole had a colleague review the policy, but he hasn't provided an opinion. She has always tried to accommodate employee needs and this policy formalizes that. Alder Kitslaar thanks Director of Administrative Services Kimmell and any involved staff for their extensive work creating this policy from scratch. He wanted something like this in place to protect future employees, who may not have the benefit of Director of Administrative Services Kimmell's flexibility in working with them for time off in these types of unexpected family illnesses. Director of Administrative Services Kimmell stated the policy is a work in progress and will be updated as needed. She will periodically report financial use to the Finance & Personnel Committee.

City Administrator Gadow provided information on Ordinance 2-20-726 Amending Section 395 of the Code of Ordinances Relating to Neighborhood Block Parties; And Creating a Penalty. This is the first step in the process to revise the special event Ordinance and separates out this type of small event. It has been reviewed by the Public Safety Committee. Their requests are included and they will consider this at their February meeting. The limit is two events per year per neighborhood. Large connector streets are not allowed to be closed. Alder Kuhr noted these streets are also referred to as “collector” streets; this terminology should be consistent throughout the Ordinance.

Alder Kuhr stated the 75% household approval should apply to 18 year olds and above. Alder Thomas stated approval should include a City Administrator designee. City Clerk Andrusz reported there about a dozen of these events per year, and they have increased in number, which she anticipates will continue as the desire to be outside as much as possible has increased. Five staff members review applications so they can be added to calendars. Alder Kitslaar questioned how the two-per-year limit will work when neighborhoods overlap. City Administrator Gadow responded staff will work with neighborhoods.

The barricade deposit will be refunded when they are returned in good condition. He will ask Public Works if the resident has to pick them up. Alder Kuhr questioned whether a fee could be added for barricade delivery. Alder Thomas agreed; the amount of cost and planning required for these events could easily include pick-up or a delivery fee. Alder Kitslaar questioned whether the requirement for 75% resident approval is too high. Alder Moore would like the fee raised because of the staff time involved, or remove it altogether because it is so low. Alder Kuhr responded actual costs won't be covered so she doesn't want the fee raised. Alder Thomas stated this is a “goodwill” service communities provide their residents and the fee shouldn't be high.

REPORTS

Alder Thomas thanks Mayor O'Connor and City Administrator Gadow for the fast removal of Fire Department PFAS chemicals. City Administrator Gadow reported there will be a press release out this evening on the completion of that project.

City Clerk Andrusz reported she wasn't expecting to set up a Spring Primary in a snowstorm! But polling places are up and ready for voters to come tomorrow and use Badger Books for the first time.

Mayor O'Connor reported she will be out of the state for the next two weeks and Council President Kitslaar will chair the next meeting and serve as Acting Mayor in her absence. Alder Wood will be Acting Mayor for the days Alder Kitslaar is out of town during that time period. She requests committee appointments be given to her or Director of Administrative Services Kimmell in the next two weeks.

APPOINTMENTS

A motion by Alder Kuhr, seconded by Alder Kitslaar to approve the following, was carried:

1. Steve Andrusz – Election Inspector, effective January 1, 2020–December 31, 2021.

City Clerk Andrusz noted her husband has always been interested in the election process and won't be paid for his time.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion by Alder Kitslaar, seconded by Alder Wood, to adjourn was carried. (8:28 p.m.)

Joan Andrusz
City Clerk