

MONONA CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
August 17, 2020

The regular meeting of the Monona City Council, via Zoom, was called to order by Mayor O'Connor at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Mary K. O'Connor, Alderpersons Molly Grupe, Nancy Moore, Kristie Goforth (announcing her name change), Doug Wood, Jennifer Kuhr, and Kathy Thomas

Also Present: City Administrator Bryan Gadow, City Attorney William Cole, Finance Director Marc Houtakker, Police Chief Walter Ostrenga, Detective Sergeant Ryan Losby, Project Manager Brad Bruun, Director of Community Media Will Nimmow, and City Clerk Joan Andrusz

ROLL CALL AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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

APPEARANCES

The following individuals appeared before the Council via Zoom and spoke requesting a delay in approving the Police Department policy on tire deflation devices until the ongoing initiatives of the "8 Can't Wait" commitment, Riseling Group, Nehemiah Center, and the Truth & Reconciliation Committee are complete, as these are escalation devices:

- Katherine Punwar, 4811 Roigan Terrace
- Keltly Carew, 4905 Rothman Place

PUBLIC HEARING and CONSENT AGENDA

There was no Public Hearing or Consent Agenda.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Police Chief Ostrenga reported Monona is the only agency in Dane County that doesn't have Stop Sticks and the City's location warrants use of them. He explained the need; this is the only tool to stop vehicle thefts and high speed drivers. It is not an escalation device; it de-escalates danger to other drivers. He reviewed the policy, including when a high speed pursuit is allowed. The policy will be reviewed by the Public Safety Committee next week. Detective Sergeant Losby reported that recently a stolen auto caused havoc in Monona; Madison Police asked for it to be Stop Sticked, which takes the high speed out of the incident. Gun violence is related to these auto thefts. Monona Police Department is at the forefront of stolen vehicle recovery and is known for it. Other departments can deploy Stop Sticks in Monona without asking. Police Chief Ostrenga reported the County has jurisdiction on the Beltline; an agency coming through Monona can use them. Monona has asked for mutual aid to have Stop Sticks used. He is careful when asking for mutual aid because then the City is responsible for injuries or damage.

Police Chief Ostrenga and Detective Sergeant Losby responded to member's questions. If drug activity is suspected, and the officer keeps eyes on the vehicle and then sees a traffic violation, the officer will pursue. There's usually no way of knowing the type of drug. Pursuit would be terminated if young juveniles were involved. It is now more common for the violators to be older. Pursuit is not warranted just for a stolen vehicle; there has to be traffic violations and safety threats to the public. There is some danger to deployment of Stop Sticks, but officers must follow the directions. Both officers verified the wording of the second "Whereas" clause is true and worded correctly.

Alder Goforth wants work on prevention, reminding people to lock their vehicles. She urges waiting on this because of timing with the other efforts the City is undertaking. Alder Wood stated approving this is not in conflict with de-escalation efforts. He doesn't support pursuit of drug activity of any kind; the Public Safety Committee will be reviewing the pursuit policy. Putting Stop Sticks out for a possible flee, as was described by the officers in a Walmart case, doesn't fit this policy. Alder Kuhr stated approving this doesn't mean changes can't be made. This is not in conflict with other efforts and officers need tools. She doesn't want to rely on other agencies for Stop Sticks. Monona Police have extensive training and care about Monona. Alder Thomas stated officers are using Monona's policies and training.

On request, Ms. Punwar repeated her questions from her earlier appearance. Police Chief Ostrenga responded he doesn't have statistics regarding racial bias; officers don't know a person's race unless that information is provided or they can see the person. He considers Stop Sticks essential. Alder Grupe stated she planned to abstain from this vote because of the other efforts underway. She supports the Police Department but she wants outside agencies to weigh in. Alder Thomas stated the Department needs this tool with all that's going on. Other Departments find them essential and have had them for years. They have nothing to do with racial profiling; they are about keeping the community safe. Alder Goforth stated it is a timing issue; she wants to wait for agency input. Alder Wood stated the Public Safety Committee needs to review the pursuit policy. He wants to wait for that but to wait for the Nehemiah Center work to be done will take a year and he doesn't want to wait for that. Alder Grupe stated this is not about racial issues, her concern is use of force and de-escalation tools. Use in the case of juveniles needs to be clear.

A motion by Alder Wood, seconded by Alder Grupe to postpone approval of Resolution 20-8-2427 Adopting Police Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) 2020-1 Stop Sticks until the September 21 City Council meeting after the Public Safety Committee reviews the pursuit policy for City Council approval, was carried. Alder Thomas voted against the motion.

NEW BUSINESS

A motion by Alder Wood, seconded by Alder Kuhr to suspend the rules and take action on Resolution 20-8-2430 Amending the 2020 Capital Budget for the 2020 Library Rooftop Unit Replacement and HVAC Controls Upgrades Project, was carried.

Project Manager Bruun reported there is a Capital Budget surplus that he requests be used for duct cleaning at City Hall, a Public Works Garage ventilation system that will turn on automatically; the current system is not up to code, and Public Works Garage furnace and air conditioning replacement. The rest of the cost is covered in the Operating Budget account for unforeseen repairs. Alder Moore questioned whether these were delayed items and whether staff should have been aware of them. Project Manager Bruun responded some of the issues were known but funds ran out on other projects. The duct cleaning was on his list of projects but the garage HVAC isn't on the HVAC schedule with the other buildings. It will be now and preventative maintenance will be done. City Administrator Gadow reported the funds are already in the budget.

A motion by Alder Goforth, seconded by Alder Thomas to approve Resolution 20-8-2430 Amending the 2020 Capital Budget for the 2020 Library Rooftop Unit Replacement and HVAC Controls Upgrades Project. On a roll call vote, all members voted in favor of the motion.

Director of Community Media Nimmow provided a Power Point Presentation by Community Media Committee, including the history of the department, starting with cable television and ending with the radio station, and its partnership with the School District that includes serving as the AV Club Advisor. Equipment sharing is outlined in the agreement. An added benefit to student participation, besides gaining expertise and saving the City funds, is their connection to the community when they attend events. WMVO has gotten notice in national publications.

Challenges to the department include COVID-19 impacts, budget issues with reduced franchise fees, and volunteerism. Opportunities include hiring a Media Content Producer to replace the Media Coordinator and the UW Student Journalism Program will pay students to write content for the station. He is looking into branding to combine the Community Media Department with WVMO. TDS contributions are unknown at this time but members reported they are signing up subscribers. Finance Director Houtakker reported he has had contact with TDS. He received a form to fill out and will start to see some funding, but they are a very small service in Monona.

City Administrator Gadow began Discussion and Update on Staffing, Budgetary and City Operations Contingency Plans for COVID-19. Personal Protection Equipment expenses are being tracked for submittal for FEMA and then CARES Act reimbursement.

A motion by Alder Thomas, seconded by Alder Grupe to Convene in Closed Session under Wisconsin Statute Section 19.85(1)(e), Deliberating or negotiating the purchase of public properties, the investing of public funds, or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session (San Damiano; Public Safety Building). On a roll call vote, all members voted in favor of the motion.

Upon reconvening in Open Session:

REPORTS

Members announced meeting dates and times and provided the following:

Alder Thomas reported the Zoning Board of Appeals will review a variance. She received a contact from a person who thought that surveyors can choose to change a meander line. City Attorney Cole stated that is not something he would subscribe to. Alder Thomas stated policies have been updated.

Alder Goforth reported the Landmarks Commission is working on 6 properties applying to get on the National Register.

Alder Grupe thanks Alder Goforth for stepping for her on the Transit Commission in her unexpected absence.

Mayor O'Connor reminded members the next meeting is on Tuesday, September 8 due to the Labor Day holiday. She congratulates WVMO on its 5-year anniversary! She will schedule Capital Budget meetings with staff on September 2 and 3, and Committee of the Whole meetings will soon be scheduled.

APPOINTMENTS

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

1. Susan Humbach to Tourism Commission (effective immediately through April 19, 2021).
2. Sara Koenig – Election Inspector, effective immediately – December 31, 2021.
3. David Burke – Election Inspector, effective immediately – December 31, 2021.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion by Alder Wood, seconded by Alder Kuhr, to adjourn was carried. (10:15 p.m.)

Joan Andrusz
City Clerk