

MONONA CITY COUNCIL MINUTES  
September 7, 2021

The regular meeting of the Monona City Council was called to order by Council President Thomas at 7:01 p.m.

Present: Council President Kathy Thomas, Alderpersons Jennifer Kuhr, Kristie Goforth, Molly Grupe, and Doug Wood

Excused: Mayor Mary K. O'Connor and Alderperson Nancy Moore

Also Present: City Administrator Bryan Gadow, City Attorney William Cole (via Zoom), Finance Director Marc Houtakker, Police Chief Brian Chaney Austin, City Planner Doug Plowman, Parks & Recreation Director Jake Anderson, Director of Administrative Services Leah Kimmell, Library Director Ryan Claringbole, and City Clerk Joan Andrusz

ROLL CALL AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion by Alder Grupe, seconded by Alder Goforth to approve the Minutes of the August 16, 2021 City Council meeting, was carried.

APPEARANCES

Amber Drewieske from Clifton Larson Allen LLP provided a Summary Presentation of the 2020 Financial Audit, reviewing a bound document distributed at the meeting. The Fund Balance was at 27% which is within the preferred range. Losses due to COVID-19 were close to what was expected. Internal controls were in compliance with no suggestions for change or improvement.

PUBLIC HEARING and CONSENT AGENDA

There was no Public Hearing or Consent Agenda.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Alder Grupe stated she that while she appreciates the conversation about the following item, she feels it's a missed opportunity to fill the open seats with members of the community.

A motion by Alder Wood, seconded by Alder Kuhr to approve Ordinance 8-21-743 Amending Section 18-10 of the Code of Ordinances Regarding the Community Media Committee, was carried.

City Administrator Gadow stated a change was made in the following Ordinance. Under the "Now, Therefore" section, the dollar amount listed in part 2.a. is changed to \$25,000 and part 2.b. is removed.

A motion by Alder Grupe, seconded by Alder Goforth to approve Resolution 21-8-2506 Consent to Assignment of Renewable Energy Credit Service Agreement as amended, was carried.

## NEW BUSINESS

City Administrator Gadow provided information on Resolution 21-9-2507 Approval of a Three-Year Police School Resource Officer Agreement Between the City of Monona, the Monona Grove School District, and the Village of Cottage Grove. The MOU for a 3-year contract was reviewed by the Cottage Grove Village Board. The previous contract ended this past school year; he reviewed the School District's changes.

Police Chief Chaney Austin reported he has worked on this since his June 1st start date. He met with students, staff, parents, the School Board, and others regarding the SRO program. Changes were made to the roles and expectations. They Officers are there as a resource; they may provide information from outside of school, and are able to give council. They want to avoid a law enforcement outcome, but that decision is school-based. They want to limit the unintended consequences of citations and arrests, though some instances require a law enforcement outcome by law. Moving forward, everyone will see a positive program. He wants to provide a safe learning environment and the School Board has looked at their policies as well.

Changes include a 90-day opt out clause to allow cancellation of the program. He will continue communications with the School Board to provide ongoing evaluations. He has changed the SRO policy so that some instances will remain a school issue, not law enforcement. Each call will be evaluated to review the outcome for improvement. Alder Wood stated this is a shift in behavior in the School District and SRO; he is concerned about how to make sure the changes will be followed. Police Chief Chaney Austin responded he has worked with the SRO on scenarios and he will be more involved in the program. The SRO will be at sporting events and possibly other events like graduation and Prom.

A motion by Alder Kuhr, seconded by Alder Wood to suspend the rules and take action on Resolution 21-9-2508 Terminating Contract for Springhaven Pagoda Roof Replacement, was carried.

City Planner Plowman reported the construction contract was based on a prior report that stated the roof support was in good shape. Park construction revealed the supports were in much worse condition than expected. Replacement of the roof won't be supported by the base. This work should be removed from the contract and the Pagoda removed with future design undertaken. The engineer provided an opinion. Efficiencies of removal and redesign can be gained. Alder Kuhr questioned whether there is enough information to recreate the structure as is. City Planner Plowman responded he will make sure prior to any removal. Alder Kuhr stated there should be a press release to make it clear the damage wasn't caused by the construction project. Alder Wood stated it's not surprising a 120-year-old structure is at the end of its life; this provides an opportunity for design. He asked City Attorney Cole if there were any penalties for removal of this contract. City Attorney Cole responded the contractor is owed any costs to date, or any others incurred, which would be fairly minimal.

Alder Goforth reported she has been asked why the Pagoda can't be repaired. Her response is the concrete could not be matched and it would look like a patch job. Best practice is not replication; the Landmarks Commission will look at other ideas. There will be some cost; it needs a separate contract, but it will be a fairly minimal cost. City Planner Plowman is not sure why the structure was originally designed as a pagoda but the structure was there to delineate and protect the natural spring. Alder Wood stated it was owned by Judge Keys who liked the design.

A motion by Alder Kuhr, seconded by Alder Wood to approve Resolution 21-9-2508 Terminating Contract for Springhaven Pagoda Roof Replacement. On a roll call vote, all members voted in favor of the motion.

Finance Director Houtakker provided information on Resolution 21-9-2510 Awarding a Five-Year Contract for City Transit Services to First Student, Inc., reporting the 5-year transit service contract has almost expired. Two bids were received and First Student was almost \$800,000 less over a 5-year contract. The Transit Commission approved it but wanted an explanation of their DEI training prior to final approval. These will be used buses; he will have the cost of new buses for the next meeting. Alder Grupe stated new buses would be electric. She thanks the Commission for their work and the community for the survey feedback received. Alder Goforth reported 139 people took the survey. Partnering with Madison has been considered; but cost and service changes are a factor. Council President Thomas stated ridership is down due to COVID-19 and questioned what will happen if it doesn't go back up. Alder Grupe responded that ridership was at an all-time high pre-COVID-19 and is increasing. Finance Director Houtakker stated if it doesn't improve the loops could be reduced and other cost savings measures taken. The Lift service is still being used by seniors and is coming back close to 100%. Alder Wood reported Madison Metro ridership went way down as well; this was the same across all transit providers.

A motion by Alder Kuhr, seconded by Alder Grupe to suspend the rules and take action on Resolution 21-9-2511 Authorizing Increasing the Water Utility Billing Clerk Position to Full-Time, was carried.

Finance Director Houtakker reported the Utility Billing Clerk's last day is Thursday. He wanted to make this position full-time in 2022, but should hire for it now. The duties have increased, first with disconnection notices and now with monthly billing. In addition, election help is needed along with receptionist duties at the front counter. The Receptionist, in turn, helps with water billing. The salary is paid through utilities, not the property tax levy. Alder Grupe questioned how residents are responding to monthly billing and if they are signing up for online payments. Finance Director Houtakker responded there are a few issues to get through and mixed reviews about the change, more favorable than negative; it is easier to budget. 800 out of 3,000 have signed up for online payments with more signing up daily. There is no fee unless a credit card is used. The due date is always the 22<sup>nd</sup> of the month now; it used to fluctuate. Use can be monitored on the "Eye on Water" system.

A motion by Alder Kuhr, seconded by Alder Grupe to approve Resolution 21-9-2511 Authorizing Increasing the Water Utility Billing Clerk Position to Full-Time. On a roll call vote, all members voted in favor of the motion.

A motion by Alder Wood, seconded by Alder Kuhr to suspend the rules and take action on Resolution 21-9-2512 Amending the Capital Budget for Winnequah Park Paved Path, was carried.

Recreation Director Anderson reported there is a path around the skate park that is gravel because of the dredging project. The Parks & Recreation Board approved paving for this section only right now. The cost will be covered using savings from two completed Capital Budget projects. In the future, the section from Greenway Road to the skate park will be done; it is in bad shape. Alder Grupe stated ease of mobility will be gained. Recreation Director Anderson reported that permeable pavement can't be used because of the base material needed. In future, this will connect to Fireman's Park. Park use survey results will be presented to the Board this week. Alder Wood stated the path near the school doesn't have to wait for a Master Plan. Recreation Director Anderson responded it is planned for 2023. A quote won't need a bid. The cost is \$150,000 to do the whole path.

A motion by Alder Grupe, seconded by Alder Wood to approve Resolution 21-9-2512 Amending the Capital Budget for Winnequah Park Paved Path. On a roll call vote, all members voted in favor of the motion.

A motion by Alder Grupe, seconded by Alder Goforth to Convene in Closed Session under Wisconsin Statute section 19.85(1)(c) Considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility (Full-Time Parks and Recreation Position). On a roll call vote, all members voted in favor of the motion.

Upon reconvening in Open Session:

A motion by Alder Wood, seconded by Alder Kuhr to suspend the rules and take action on Resolution 21-9-2509 Authorizing a Full-Time Parks and Recreation Position, was carried.

City Administrator Gadow reported this brings an existing position to full-time, from 25 to 40 per week, with no increase in the property tax levy limit.

A motion by Alder Wood, seconded by Alder Kuhr to approve Resolution 21-9-2509 Authorizing a Full-Time Parks and Recreation Position. On a roll call vote, all members voted in favor of the motion.

## REPORTS

Alder Grupe began Updates/Discussion on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Efforts, reporting that the Senior Citizens Committee wants to collaborate with other City departments to include older and disabled individuals and those from different walks of life in Senior Center discussions.

Alder Kuhr reported the Library Board approved signage to include Spanish. Library Director Claringbole reported the Library has an anti-racism initiative starting in September; these programs are starting up in the area.

City Administrator Gadow reported the ad hoc work group has decided to try a 3:30 p.m. meeting starting on the 16<sup>th</sup>. He should be contacted for enrollment for individual Council members for Justified Anger courses.

Members announced meeting dates, times, and cancellations.

Alder Grupe reported the Senior Citizens Committee tour of San Damiano was a positive experience. A budget item will be a vestibule during the winter hours to mitigate heat loss. The Monona Grove High School Shop Class may collaborate to create this as a class project for May, 2022 completion with material cost only; the labor would be provided by the students and community members.

Alder Goforth reports the Tourism Commission is finalizing grant applications for \$50,000 available for distribution. The Plan Commission meeting regarding the West Dean Avenue and Monona Drive development project is still scheduled for October.

Alder Wood reported that there is an opening on the License Review Committee.

Fire Chief McMullen thanks Police Chief Chaney Austin for having an Officer at the de-escalation training at the Fire Department. Ten volunteer applications will be reviewed next week with three from Monona. Information was provided on the McFarland structure fire. Council President Thomas requested new volunteers and staff come to the Council and the Public Safety Committee to be introduced. Fire Chief McMullen reported meals will be provided to Public Safety staff on September 11

by an area restaurant. The Reach a Child organization reached out to provide book bags on the fire truck. He received a FEMA grant for \$212,000 for turnout gear with a \$10,000 match from the City.

Recreation Director Anderson reported the Biergarten is at Schluter Park on Thursday from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Concrete sidewalk work at Stone Bridge Park has started; the project will be completed soon. He thanks all staff, including those from the 100 seasonals he hired, for their awesome effort at the very well attended swimming pool this summer. Fall programs are gearing up.

Police Chief Chaney Austin appreciates the ongoing collaboration with the Fire Department and other agencies. Outreach continues, including the Bike Rodeo, and he wants to continue and expand programs. The Department represented the City at a refugee picnic; participants shared their experiences. He encourages participation in the Ann Ahearn Run/Walk on September 18th at Winnequah Park; \$5,000 was received from WPS. It is his duty to report negative events or acts, which included racist vandalism to resident's Black Lives Matter signage, which won't be tolerated. He wants to educate and provide restorative justice. Information was provided on a traumatic, gruesome call involving violence between family members; the victim is recovering but it was very close. Resources of comfort and support were offered to all involved. He won't tolerate violence. He will keep the community updated on good and bad events.

Library Director Claringbole reported anti-racism professional development is being offered to staff along with the Library Board; they want to improve and grow. The Board approved a Values Statement, which he read, that will go under its Mission Statement. Staff will take de-escalation training to learn how to handle intense interactions and reduce the need for Police intervention; he will work with the Police and other City departments. He is extremely fortunate to live in this City and serve this community and welcomes citizen feedback.

City Administrator Gadow reported Tuesday, September 21 the Committee of the Whole on the Capital Budget will convene at 5:30 p.m. The first meeting will be on Monday, September 20 after the City Council meeting.

Council President Thomas stated she is happy to have staff here; their reporting is valuable and interesting to the Council. On June 15, 2020 the Council adopted a policy of a commitment of response to the June 2, 2020 Police call that included review of Police policies and training. The goal isn't to have Police Chief Chaney Austin review all 400 policies, but she wants this on the next Agenda to provide clarity for Police Chief Chaney Austin so he knows what is expected and an undue burden is not put on staff.

## APPOINTMENTS

No action was taken on a motion by Alder Wood, seconded by Alder Goforth to approve the Appointments. Alder Kuhr reported she will be voting against these Appointments because the last several appointees haven't diversified the committees and she hasn't seen an effort to recruit a diverse membership; the Library Board appointee was involved with the Board already. It has always been done this way, but doesn't have to be. She acknowledges that some committees, like Public Works, need expertise. Alder Grupe agrees; there has never been a discussion on Appointments in her four years on the Council. It appears to be a cabal of folks making decisions.

Alder Wood stated these should be tabled because the Mayor made these Appointments and should be present for discussion. Members agree there is nothing negative about these appointees; the question is about the process. Council President Thomas stated an 8-page document was approved in 2018 for the appointment process. It was not approved by the Council, but it is used. Action should be made and should be on the Agenda to provide clarity. Alder Kuhr stated it should include a diversity effort. Alder

Goforth stated this and term limits were discussed by the DEI Committee; more than one diverse voice is needed on a committee. Council President Thomas stated the City needs some member's expertise and doesn't want to lose that. Alder Kuhr stated she wants added that the Council should get the credentials of the members before approval is considered. Alder Grupe stated we are told that no People of Color applied but that means the Council didn't do its due diligence.

A motion by Alder Wood, seconded by Alder Grupe to table the Appointments of Sam Bohrod to the Public Works Committee, effective immediately–April 2023 and Teresa Adams to the Library Board immediately–June 2024 until the next meeting, was carried. Alder Kuhr voted against the motion.

#### ADJOURNMENT

A motion by Alder Kuhr, seconded by Alder Grupe, to adjourn was carried. (8:57 p.m.)

Joan Andrusz  
City Clerk