

MONONA CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
September 20, 2021

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 Doug Wood, Jennifer Kuhr, Kathy Thomas, Kristie Goforth (returned during Unfinished Business), and Molly Grupe

Excused: Alderperson Nancy Moore

Also Present: City Administrator Bryan Gadow, Finance Director Marc Houtakker, Police Chief Brian Chaney Austin (via Zoom), and City Clerk Joan Andrusz

ROLL CALL AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Alder Kuhr reported a correction was needed in the Appointments process discussion; she was going to vote against, not recuse herself.

A motion by Alder Wood, seconded by Alder Grupe to approve the Minutes of the September 7, 2021 City Council meeting as amended, was carried.

APPEARANCES, PUBLIC HEARING, and CONSENT AGENDA

There were no Appearances, Public Hearing, or Consent Agenda.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The following items were re-ordered to allow staff to arrive.

Finance Director Houtakker reported there was a cost difference of \$791,000 between the two bus company bids. The Mass Transit Commission approved the low bid, First Student, Inc., who provided information on their DEI training. They will look into new buses, one in 2022 and another in 2023. If the City wants electric buses, they will need to re-negotiate the contract. Alder Grupe provided more detail on First Student's DEI efforts and reported they were excited about electric vehicles, which would be great for the City.

Alder Thomas asked about the Commission's plan if ridership doesn't increase back to pre-COVID-19 levels; asking whether they would consider using just one bus and/or whether the contract be changed to reduce service. Finance Director Houtakker responded the City would have to give notice in a specified amount of time. Alder Grupe reported various ideas have been discussed, such as improving online services, route changes, free rides in September when need is high, and a "Park & Ride" for City events; the Commission will continue to adapt the service to the community's needs. Alder Kuhr stated ridership should be re-evaluated in one year while keeping the Lift service for seniors. The cost is very high for so few riders.

A motion by Alder Grupe, seconded by Alder Wood to approve Resolution 21-9-2510 Awarding a Five-Year Contract for City Transit Services to First Student, Inc. On a roll call vote, all members voted in favor of the motion.

Alder Goforth arrived. Police Chief Chaney Austin reviewed the evaluation of the SRO program. Change was needed so that most situations would be school behavioral policy issues, not police. Arrests and citations will be rare, though some are required by law. He wants the SRO to serve as a resource. Patrol resources have had to be used during the time the SRO has not been approved; the Officer was successful in providing guidance. Traffic planning will be part of the role.

Alder Grupe read a statement; she is opposed to armed Police Officers in schools. There is no phase-out planned after the 3-year contract is up; if the SRO is not approved one of the Police recruits will be lost due to a lack of funding. Alder Kuhr is also concerned with this relationship. She sees no evidence of an evaluation process or protection for the officers. She is concerned that only one demographic knows the Officer. Alder Thomas reported the School District interviewed parents and students and greatly changed the SRO role. Diverse voices were heard in support of the changes. Alder Goforth stated the 90-day withdrawal clause gives comfort and the School District can remove the SRO at any time. She saw previous SRO Luke Wunsch's wonderful interactions with children at the Bike Rodeo. She trusts and wants to give Police Chief Chaney Austin a chance. Alder Wood stated the change in the duty language away from discipline is important, he wants to see if the changes are followed; it is harder work but is promising. He expressed confidence in Police Chief Chaney Austin.

A motion by Alder Thomas, seconded by Alder Wood to approve 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, was carried. Alders Grupe and Kuhr voted against the motion.

NEW BUSINESS

Alder Thomas began Discussion on Police Policies that Require City Council Review and Adoption. When Resolution 20-6-2419 was passed on June 15, 2020 the Council never meant that all 420 policies have to be reviewed. Police Chief Chaney Austin made a list of what he thought should be reviewed and she wants a Resolution to outline those: Use of Force, Operation of Emergency Vehicles, Mobile Audio/Visual Recording, and Juvenile Contact Procedure. Police Chief Chaney Austin stated to that he would like to add Citizen Complaints, which he would re-name. He wants public input on these policies. Focusing in these will be more efficient and allow Council input on policies; he is open to Council input. The current Resolution handcuffs him; some are operational policies, like the dress code. He wants to focus on larger issues.

Alder Grupe wants the Vehicular Pursuit policy added. Alder Kuhr reminded those listening that any community member can raise concerns at the Public Safety Committee or City Council; this action just streamlines the process to allow the Police Chief to do his job. Alder Wood reported this was an all-inclusive Resolution, providing a better focus of effort at the time. Alder Goforth reported she spoke with Police Chief Chaney Austin about the rendering of medical aid in the Use of Force policy and was told the statute asks for language regarding timing. She suggested the words "immediate" or "as soon as safely possible" be added. Police Chief Chaney Austin responded this is in several different policies or General Orders; language is not always appropriate in all situations. However, he can get input from other Departments and the City Attorney; Alder Goforth thanked him for that. Alder Thomas agrees that immediate aid can be dangerous in a shooting situation. Police Chief Chaney Austin agrees that it shouldn't be done if it interferes with Fire Department action, but should be done as soon as reasonably safe and possible to do so. Aid can't always be rendered; other evaluations of the situation is trained. Officers are not paramedics. Statutes dictate the duty to act, an Officer can be arrested if they don't, but he sees the need for discussion. Alder Thomas stated she wants to start right away on the other policies

listed and then look back at this one later. Alder Wood asked for clarification on the Resolution form. City Administrator Gadow responded a new Resolution will be drafted that will take this one out.

A motion by Alder Thomas, seconded by Alder Grupe to suspend the rules and take action on Resolution No. 21-9-2513 Approval to Apply for a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Urban Forestry Grant, was carried.

City Administrator Gadow reported the City was successful in the past with award of this grant. It will include 40 Ash trees in Winnequah Park and some of the wood may be used at the School District for a potential solar kiln. The application is due October 1st.

A motion by Alder Grupe, seconded by Alder Wood to approve Resolution No. 21-9-2513 Approval to Apply for a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Urban Forestry Grant, was carried.

REPORTS

Alder Grupe began Updates/Discussion on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Efforts, reporting that it wasn't possible to provide group participation for City Council members to participate in Nehemiah Center sessions, but if an alternative option is formed she offers to be a facilitator. Alder Wood reported part of the complication is that if a quorum is present the class becomes a Council meeting. He took part in the Ann Ahearn Scholarship Run/Walk event on Saturday, along with other Council members. Mayor O'Connor reported she worked at the event and is on the board of the MG Education Foundation which administers the Ann Ahearn Commitment to Diversity & Inclusion Scholarship. \$100,000 has already been raised for the scholarship and the money raised from the run will be added to that. Community Resource Officer Nathan Reynolds did a great job organizing the event.

Members and staff provided the following reports:

Alder Wood reported the first meeting of the San Damiano Steering Committee was a success with members introducing themselves and taking a tour of the house and grounds. He is on the Madison/Beltline Study Committee; Mayor O'Connor thanks Alder Wood for this participation.

Alder Goforth reported the Landmarks Commission pursued a second opinion by a structural engineer of the condition of the Pagoda.

Alder Grupe reported business and organization training will be resumed by the Monona Area Dementia Friendly Community Coalition.

City Clerk Andrusz reported that after 20 years of employment, she submitted her notice of retirement to Mayor O'Connor and City Administrator Gadow. She will work in the office through December 31, 2021 and then be on vacation until her last date of employment, January 31, 2022. Mayor O'Connor thanked City Clerk Andrusz for her great job in service to the City. She will be missed.

City Administrator Gadow reported the Committee of the Whole Operating Budget meetings will be on Wednesdays, October 20 and 27; times will be determined.

Mayor O'Connor thanked Alder Thomas for her service as Acting Mayor. The San Damiano Steering Committee meeting went very well; members are excited to get going on the project. Dinner will be provided for tomorrow night's Committee of the Whole Capital Budget meeting, which starts at 5:30 p.m. She will be meeting with staff members individually on the Operating Budget.

APPOINTMENTS

The Appointment process will be discussed at the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion by Alder Wood, seconded by Alder Grupe, to adjourn was carried. (7:49 p.m.)

Joan Andrusz
City Clerk