

MONONA CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
October 4, 2021

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

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

Also Present: City Administrator Bryan Gadow, Finance Director Marc Houtakker, Police Chief Brian Chaney Austin, Sergeant Adam Nachreiner and K-9 Officer Miya, Fire Chief Jerry McMullen, Public Works Director Dan Stephany (via Zoom), Parks & Recreation Director Jake Anderson (via Zoom), Senior Center Director Diane Mikelbank (via Zoom), and Director of Administrative Services Leah Kimmell (via Zoom), and City Clerk Joan Andrusz

ROLL CALL AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Prior to the meeting, Mayor O'Connor contacted City Clerk Andrusz with an amendment to her report on the Ann Ahearn event.

A motion by Alder Thomas, seconded by Alder Grupe to approve the Minutes of the October 20, 2021 City Council meeting as amended, was carried.

APPEARANCES

Mayor O'Connor read a Proclamation for Native American Heritage Month. She invites all to attend a Ho-Chunk flag raising event at City Hall on Monday, October 11 at 11:00 a.m.

Mayor O'Connor read a Proclamation for K9 Miya on Her Retirement from the Monona Police Department, followed by a standing ovation by those present. Sergeant Nachreiner and K-9 Officer Miya were recently awarded the State of Wisconsin's Meritorious Tracking Award. Residents and businesses have generously donated to Miya's purchase, training, and care and will continue to do so for her successor. Officer Miya will live out her retirement as a member of Sergeant Nachreiner's family. Sergeant Nachreiner thanked the Council and community for their support while K-9 Officer Miya, ready to get started on this new chapter of her life, played tug-of-war with her leash.

The following individuals appeared before the Council and spoke against Winnequah Road sidewalks:

- Mike Meulemans, 5800 Winnequah Road
- David Witte, 5802 Winnequah Road
- David Lehrer, 5801 Winnequah Road

The following individuals registered against Winnequah Road sidewalks:

- Kurt and Nicole Studt, 6003 Winnequah Road
- Ron Binzley, 713 Moygara Road (Form received after the Appearances section closed)

City Administrator Gadow read an email from Sue Carr, 4209 Winnequah Road who provided information on the group she formed, ARC, that is a neighborhood-based, locally-focused group who gather to discuss issues of racism and inclusion and registered in favor of adopting the Committee Appointment Process Procedure with a focus on diversity.

PUBLIC HEARING, CONSENT AGENDA, and UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no Public Hearing, Consent Agenda, or Unfinished Business.

NEW BUSINESS

A motion by Alder Thomas, seconded by Alder Kuhr to suspend the rules and take action on Resolution 21-10-2515 Acceptance of FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant, was carried.

Fire Chief McMullen reported this is a \$212,700 grant with a \$10,000 match required from the City to replace all of the Department's obsolete self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA). He would like to purchase equipment now to avoid a price increase.

A motion by Alder Thomas, seconded by Alder Kuhr to approve Resolution 21-10-2515 Acceptance of FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant, was carried.

Police Chief Chaney Austin provided information on Resolution 21-10-2516 Clarification of Police Department Policies Review Procedures. This is an effort to clarify the previous Resolution that had an unintended consequence of requiring review of all policies and procedures. This narrows the scope to specify policies that should be reviewed, and that the City Council will continue to review. Others can be done as well, and he is open to public and Public Safety Committee input. Alder Moore reported the former Chief acknowledged that current policies need review, but she agrees that all 400 don't need it to this level. Alder Goforth questioned whether the K-9 policy is part of Use of Force, requested this be reviewed with the acquisition of the new dog, and suggested the City of Verona's policy as a resource. Police Chief Chaney Austin responded this is a separate policy and it is a solid policy now; he will review it when the new apprehension dog is acquired.

Mayor O'Connor introduced each of the following Amendments to Resolution 21-10-2514 Approving the 2022-2026 Capital Improvements Program and 2022 Capital Borrowing:

Amendment 22-01: To increase the 2022 Capital Budget by \$15,000 to install a vehicle charging station at the Public Works garage was withdrawn by Alder Wood after Public Works Director Stephany reported the newest vehicle is a hybrid and not full electric.

Amendment 22-02: To increase the 2022 Capital Budget by \$30,000 to apply a polymer coating on the Bridge Road bridge deck with funding from unspent 2020 Capital Budget funds. Alder Wood reported Public Works Director Stephany requested this; Public Works Director Stephany reported this overlay was recommended by Strand Associates and the project contractor and should be installed within 3 years to meet Department of Transportation requirements. Finance Director Houtakker reported the funds are a carry-over from the previous budget for this project because it can't be finished in time this year.

Amendment 22-03: To increase the 2022 Capital Budget by \$10,000 for the Fireman's Park bicycle pad and rack using General Obligation bonds. Alder Wood reported Recreation Director Anderson told him the project was more involved; Recreation Director Anderson reported it needs a curb cut and small sidewalk.

Alder Moore noted the following Amendment account name should be Community Center Design Plans.

Amendment 22-04: To decrease the 2022 Capital Budget by \$35,000 to reduce funding for the Community Center Design Plans for Remodel. Alder Wood stated this depends on building replacement in 8 to 9 years, so larger work should wait until 2023. However, there are urgent needs, like the Senior Center stairwell and other smaller safety needs. Senior Center Director Mikelbank reported the stairwell is the first priority. Recreation Director Anderson stated that with that funding they may only be able to do the stairs but he will get information for the next meeting. Finance Director Houtakker reported funding for work done to date is in the current year's Capital Budget.

Amendment 22-05: Has a neutral effect on the 2022 Capital Budget; changes funding for the sidewalk portion of the South Winnequah Road modifications, \$430,000, from general funding to TIF funding. Alder Thomas reported this keeps this funding off the tax roll but pushes the City higher toward its debt ceiling. The City is very judicious in its use of TIFs. This is within the half-mile of a TIF, up to Moygara Road, that allows TIF use. By state law, use of these funds is very strict; TIFs are audited every year. Finance Director Houtakker reported TIFs are reviewed by the City's financial consultant every year as well. The law changed within the last 10 years and while this is the first time for Monona, it has been done by many communities in Wisconsin. Use of the word "unethical" is inappropriate for this process; it is a clear, approved usage. City Administrator Gadow reported the City Attorney is also rigid about this use. Alder Kuhr reported request for the use of TIF was included in the plan that was presented to the Public Works Committee.

Alder Kuhr expressed concern that the timing of the vote on the Capital Budget is before the Public Hearing. The Council should wait until November to approve the Budget. Finance Director Houtakker reported Option 3 for this project is in the Budget. It is not a problem to wait. Mayor O'Connor reported there was a recent accident on the corner of Bridge and Winnequah Roads; Fire Chief McMullen and Police Chief Chaney Austin provided information.

Amendment 22-06: To increase the 2022 Capital Budget by \$2,000 to conduct an inspection and cost estimation for the potential relocation of the WVMO radio station to the City-owned house next to City Hall, and relocation of the Municipal Court Clerk office to the radio station space. Alder Goforth reported the Court Clerk should be separate from the Police Department. This suggestion provides privacy and accessibility for visitors, and allows the Clerk to do the job in a more professional way and in a more dignified way for those that need to meet with the Clerk. Director of Community Media Will Nimmow was positive about the suggestion.

City Administrator Gadow reported he is working on a contractor walk-through with ADA knowledge to consider relocation of the Clerk's office within the Administration wing. Mayor O'Connor stated that once the Public Safety building is complete, this won't be needed. Members expressed support for this Amendment and other ideas, agreeing that access and equity issues are important to address. Alder Wood reported that by state law the Court Clerk is supposed to be separate from the Police Department, but because of the City's space issues it has been grandfathered in. While it is not urgent, it is needed well before the Public Safety building is complete. Mayor O'Connor stated there isn't a need to wait for that but she wants it done in the most cost effective way; waiting to approve the Budget until November will allow time for more information to be gathered.

Alder Thomas questioned the use of the \$40,000 Building Fund. City Administrator Gadow responded it is used as needed but he doesn't want to use it until the cost is known in case it's needed for other issues. He reviewed the funds needed and the plan if the work is done in the Administration wing.

Amendment 22-07: Had a neutral effect on the 2022 Capital Budget; changing the funding of \$40,000 for building improvement from a General Obligation note to the Capital Fund balance. It was withdrawn by Alder Thomas.

A motion by Alder Kuhr, seconded by Alder Thomas move approval of Resolution 21-10-2514 Approving the 2022–2026 Capital Improvements Program and 2022 Capital Borrowing to the first meeting in November, 2021, was carried.

Alder Moore questioned whether an envelope study should be done at City Hall when other building study results haven't been addressed. She had several questions for staff. Recreation Director Anderson responded the mower is bio-diesel capable and the air going in and out is clean. Pool painting needs to be done even though it was shut down for two years; the sun causes worse wear than when it's filled. He and Public Works Director Stephany responded to questions about right-of-way tree failure. The City uses McKay Nursery and trees from the City-approved species list. New trees are watered for three years, after that residents' help, if needed, is greatly appreciated. There is a less than 5% failure rate. Public Works Director Stephany reported vehicles are typically purchased through Ewald Automotive; there isn't a ¾ to 1-ton electric truck available yet.

Mayor O'Connor began Discussion of Committee Appointment Process Procedure, reviewing the history of the process, including that 4 years ago there wasn't a policy for that or issues like non-attendance, and no information was provided to new members. Alder Moore volunteered to help draft this, along with then-City Administrator April Little. It was presented to the Council but not for a formal vote. It is time to update it. City Attorney Cole has reviewed it. Applications are kept for 3 years. Her data shows there is a misconception that most members are long-term; some of those are members who provide valuable expertise. She needs Council member's help to find diverse appointees.

Members provided comments, including that some sections are not followed and that the process isn't visible to the public. Alder Kuhr suggested applicants be sought year-round, building a pool of potential members. Information could go out to new residents, and for diversity efforts to One City and Nuestro Mundo schools. Alder Thomas questioned the Council's role in this process. The Ordinance says the Mayor appoints and the Council confirms; care should be taken not to tell the Mayor how to do her job. Some Mayors won't ask for Council input. Mayor O'Connor stated that while she likes to work collaboratively, City Attorney Cole has told her some appointments are the purview of the Mayor per statute.

Mayor O'Connor reported an automatic email response, which can be updated, is sent to those who apply on the City's website. Director of Administrative Services Kimmell reported a letter or individual emails can be mailed after communication with staff and the Council to make sure it's not already been done. Alder Grupe reminded all that not everyone has a computer and that this is not anything personal against the current appointees. Alder Goforth questioned whether the application should also be reviewed, with more questions added. Alder Wood stated the Council doesn't have the power to dictate to the Mayor how appointments are done. A future Mayor may not ask for Council input. Alder Moore suggested that this be addressed in the policy to ensure collaboration when allowed and it should include committee Chairs and staff.

Mayor O'Connor reviewed the applicants on tonight's Agenda and the rationale for appointing them. She asks members to send her policy edits within one month and asks for a list of what each member would like, not a red-line of the document; that would be difficult to work with.

REPORTS

Alder Goforth began Updates/Discussion on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Efforts, thanking City Administrator Gadow for his help on the Indigenous Peoples' Day proclamation; it is important to celebrate everyone. She thanks Mayor O'Connor for being open to this effort. The Ho-Chunk flag raising ceremony is Monday, October 11 at 11:00 a.m. City Administrator Gadow reported staff groups have been formed to go through the Nehemiah Center's Justified Anger history series. Mayor O'Connor reported she attended the One City ribbon cutting, made remarks, and toured the facility.

Members announced meeting dates, times, and cancellations.

Alder Grupe reported a driver shortage is causing bus route reductions. Alder Goforth requests more information be on the City's website.

Alder Moore reported that after being out of the City for 33 days, distance gave her a new perspective. She was so impressed when listening in to meetings and thanks Department Heads, staff, and the Council for the work being done out of love for the City.

Alder Wood thanks City Clerk Andrusz for her effort in reviewing 17 redistricting maps.

Alder Goforth encourages the public to tour the Police and Fire Departments at their Open House, October 12, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. to see their needs; great information will be provided.

Alder Kuhr reported notification by the U. S. Board on Geographic Names that the name change, delayed by COVID-19, of Squaw Bay to Wiicawak Bay was approved.

Police Chief Chaney Austin reported the Fire Department has a safety event tomorrow evening as well. He wants to also do video tours to allow more visits. Alder Moore suggested that a realtor with expertise in making videos of spaces would be helpful. Police Chief Chaney Austin reported property crimes have increased in the City and region. More patrols are being done and he will have a report on the results of this special effort. He urges everyone to lock doors, close unattended garages, and watch out for neighbors, too. The School Resource Officer is back in school; numerous incidents were addressed with a school-based outcome, not citations. There is a debriefing after each incident and meetings are regularly planned. Individuals were referred to Dane County Restorative Court, which members applauded. This was the first time in Monona, which was formally recognized by the County Department. Two trainers were hired; Gloria Reyes from Badge of Equity and Tamra Oman from Trauma Informed Care. The two new Officers are doing well in the Academy. Public Safety Open Houses are scheduled for 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. on October 12, November 2, and November 9. His pink pen and bracelet are worn in acknowledgement of October as Breast Cancer Awareness month. Mayor O'Connor asked about efforts to reduce speeding near schools. Police Chief Chaney Austin reported the SRO is tasked with drafting school traffic plans, which he is working on now, and focused patrols are being done in school areas, including traffic stops and just being a presence. He has spoken with the Crossing Guard about it as well.

City Clerk Andrusz reported the License Review Committee will review Walmart's parking lot alcohol delivery plan at its October 12th meeting. She will be working on a redistricting Ordinance once a final map is received from the Dane County Clerk's office.

City Administrator Gadow reported the Committee of the Whole for the Operating Budget will meet on October 20th and 27th.

Mayor O'Connor reported Senator Melissa Agard will hold a listening session at the Dream Park on October 11th from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. Please wear masks. The Monona Grove Education Foundation held a golf ball drop on Saturday at the Dream Park to support the Pay It Forward Fund and Teacher Innovation Grants; over \$20,000 was raised. Stone Bridge Park is gorgeous! She thanks the Public Works and Parks Departments for their work.

APPOINTMENTS

A motion by Alder Wood, seconded by Alder Goforth to approve the following:

1. Sam Bohrod to the Public Works Committee, effective immediately–April 2023.
2. Teresa Adams to the Library Board, effective immediately–June 2024.

Alder Kuhr, Grupe, Moore, and Thomas voted against the motion; the motion did not carry.

Alder Kuhr stated she has concerns the process wasn't followed. The person on the Library Board would be on two Library-related boards, and the male demographic should be reached out to. The Public Works Committee needs technical knowledge. Mayor O'Connor responded the Board applicant is on the Friends Board and this criterion may affect other boards and committees. It is in the bylaws that a Friends member is required to represent on the Library Board. The applicant is from a different age group than the other women on the Board. She reached out to a Person of Color but they didn't want to serve. Alder Moore stated the Council has nothing against the appointees but has concerns about the outreach and process.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion by Alder Wood, seconded by Alder Grupe, to adjourn was carried. (9:38 p.m.)

Joan Andrusz
City Clerk