



**CITY OF RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN
COMMON COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS**

February 11, 2020

Mayor Dan Toland called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers located in City Hall.

City Council Members Present: Todd Bjerstedt, Sean Downing, Christopher Gagne (came at 6:33 p.m.), Scott Morrissette, Diane Odeen, Michael Page, Hal Watson

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: City Administrator Scot Simpson; City Attorney Dan Gustafson; Police Sergeant Posel; Assistant City Administrator Jason Stroud; Operations Director Mike Stifter; City Engineer Crystal Raleigh; Community Development Director Amy Peterson; Finance Director Sarah Karlsson; Utility Director Kevin Westhuis; Communications Intern Josie Hayes; City Clerk Amy White; EMS Interim Coordinator Katy Frey; Communications Manager Mary Zimmermann; Assistant to the City Administrator Brandt Johnson; Human Resources Director Karen Bergstrom

Others Present: Carole Mottaz, Diana Smith, Kevin Miller, Jennifer Loesch, others

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

January 28, 2020, Regular Session and Workshop Meeting Minutes

MSC Morrissette/Odeen approve minutes. Unanimous.

APPROVAL OF BILLS:

Bills \$1,677,423.21

MSC Morrissette/Downing move to approve bills subject to the comptroller. Unanimous.

PUBLIC COMMENT, PETITIONS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

There were no public comments.

State of the City Presentation

City Administrator Scot Simpson provided a State of the City presentation. He began by showing a video. At the conclusion of the video, he recognized the great work of the video's creator Communications Intern Josie Hayes.

Simpson talked about one of the City's strategic goals – a connected community. He talked about the Citizen Survey and the results. While happy with the results, the City is continuously trying to do better. Simpson spoke about the City's housing needs analysis. We have been following the recommendations from the study. There has been a surge in housing development. In 2019, 221 housing units were completed or in progress which is a 300 percent increase over 2018. Industrial development is keeping a steady pace. He talked about projects that are underway.

Simpson talked about construction news including the Glen Park project. He feels results will be worth the wait. There is a pavilion, splash pad, and new trails. He talked about the over and under conversation electric project on Clark Street and installation of wayfinding signage. Simpson spoke about the City's EMS Service and its future. He also talked AMI meters, Badger Books, Community Development's interactive maps.

Simpson talked about City outreach including Police Department community events, the Mayor's Cookout Conversations, Facebook likes, Customer Appreciation Day, City Hall Selfie Day, the Library's Big Fun Lab, the Fire Department's Open House.

Simpson recognized some of the City's community partners including the Kinni Corridor Collaborative, Rain to Rivers, River Falls School District, RFEDC, Business Improvement District Board, and more. Simpson talked about large infrastructure projects and other plans including park plan, downtown plan, the Renewable River Falls campaign, and the 2020 Census. Simpson talked about the importance of being counted in the census. Simpson concluded by thanking City staff, the community and the City Council. Upon the completion of the presentation, Simpson stood for questions.

Aldersperson Bjerstedt asked Simpson for a population guess. Simpson thought the best guess would be 20,000. He talked about UWRF students being counted in this census. The Mayor talked Simpson for the presentation.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Ordinance 2020-04 – Annexing and Rezoning of 1110 W. Maple Street – Second Reading and Disposition

At 6:56 p.m., Mayor Toland recessed into a Public Hearing for comments. There were none. At 6:57 p.m., the Mayor moved into Open Session. MSC Watson/Bjerstedt move to approve the ordinance. Unanimous.

Ordinance 2020-05 – Amending the Official Traffic Control Map (No Left Turn from Union Street onto N. Main Street) – Second Reading and Disposition

At 6:57 p.m., Mayor Toland recessed into a Public Hearing for comments. There were none. At 6:57 p.m., the Mayor moved into Open Session. MSC Downing/Page move to approve the ordinance. Unanimous.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Resolution No. 6443 - Designating May 9, 2020, as "International Migratory Bird Day"

MSC Odeen/Downing move to approve the resolution. Unanimous.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

Resolution No. 6444 - Introducing the Vacation of a Portion of River Street Right-of-Way

MSC Page/Watson move to approve the resolution. Unanimous.

Resolution No. 6445 - Authorizing the Transition of the Emergency Medical Services to the Allina Health System

Assistant City Administrator Stroud provided a presentation. Over the past year, staff has done a comprehensive review of the EMS Department in terms of operational and financial sustainability. Staff has repeatedly assessed the situation and evaluated the potential impacts of different delivery scenarios. The City should be proud of its EMS Department. Stroud talked about department growth along with the corresponding increase in expenditures without a correlating increase in revenues. He provided statistics. Stroud said it is possible to sustain an EMS Department, but it would require significant increases in per capita rates and subsidies. After the findings of the feasibility assessment, staff believes a transition to Allina for the City's EMS needs is a more viable and feasible option.

Stroud talked about Allina's proposal assures many things will remain the same. He talked about the City's EMS staff having opportunities for continued employment and Allina is willingness to serve our municipal partners throughout the River Falls EMS Service area. Stroud noted some service enhancements. He talked about the financial impact which includes a three percent increase. He talked about some different possibilities to cover the cost – the City covering versus passing it along to the participating municipalities. Stroud thought it would result in a close to 'break even' scenario. With the support of the EMS Advisory Board, staff is seeking Council approval to transition to Allina no later than January 1, 2021. A draft contract was included in the packet. Stroud recognized the EMS Advisory Board Chair, Carole Mottaz, who has come to signal a sign of

support, and also Jennifer Loesch, from the River Falls Area Hospital, and Kevin Miller from Allina Health EMS. Stroud stood for questions.

Alderson Downing thanked Stroud and the EMS Advisory Board for the work. He asked about the opportunity for oversight if we move forward with Allina. Stroud said we have briefly scratched the surface of this topic. Over the next couple of months, they would revisit the role of that board as an oversight body in conjunction with City staff. Downing asked about annual reporting. Stroud is proposing quarterly data metrics with an annual report before Council or its designated board.

Alderson Watson asked about the current balance of the reserve fund. Finance Director Sarah Karlsson talked about receivables we are waiting to collect with a balance of \$600,000. Watson was wondering where we would sit cash wise at the end of the calendar year when we start the contract. Will we have enough to cover \$35,000 or more to make up the difference for the five-year contract? How are we planning to pay for that? Karlsson had some thoughts for that but wanted to provide them in more detail with the final contract.

Alderson Morrissette asked if the \$600,000 includes projected write downs. Karlsson said yes.

City Administrator Simpson wanted to provide clarification. We have precise balances for these funds. He said that going into 2019, we had a balance - combination of cash and collectibles - that exceeded that \$500,000 loss number. The hope was going into 2020, we would have a little more wind in our sails. He feels we are a little behind. We are counting on those receivables. Simpson believes based on the data and conversations with staff that the fund should be about even if you consider the sale of assets. If you don't consider the sale of assets, the fund will likely end 2020 with a deficit. He talked about the ambulance building being an asset and about the fund. He provided further details. Alderson Morrissette wished to comment but wanted a motion on the floor first. **MS Morrissette/Watson move to approve the resolution.**

Alderson Morrissette shared that the discussion at the Advisory Board was about the three percent. Morrissette thinks it would be in the City's and Town's best interest to have the three percent happen annually. There was some discussion about not having it but at the end of the five-year period, it would be pretty clear that there would have to be an increase to the Towns. He talked about being a conduit with the Town and asked that staff speak to the relationships between the parties.

Stroud said there were Town representatives at the EMS Advisory Board meeting. A straw poll was taken, and they supported the City being the 'contract administrator'. The City will contract with Allina and the Towns will contract with the City. Stroud provided further details and acknowledged Diana Smith, Town of River Falls Board Chair, in the audience as a show of support. He feels all the Towns are on board.

Alderson Odeen thanked Stroud, City staff, the EMS Advisory Board on all the work has been done. She feels confident that Council has all the information needed to decide. Stroud thanked her and noted it was a team effort. **With no other comments, the Mayor asked for a vote on the resolution. The resolution passed with all voting in favor.**

REPORTS:

Administrator's Report

City Administrator Simpson provided updates.

MSC Bjerstedt/Watson move to adjourn at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristi McKahan, Deputy Clerk