

December 13, 2021

CITY OF WASHBURN COMMON COUNCIL MEETING

5:30PM

Washburn City Hall & Remote Call-In

City Council Members:

Present, in-person:

Karen Spears-Novachek, Laura Tulowitzky, Tom Neimes,
Carl Broberg, Mary McGrath, Dave Anderson

Present, remote:

Jennifer Maziasz

Municipal Personnel:

Present in-person:

Mayor Mary D. Motiff, City Administrator Scott J. Kluver,
Assistant City Administrator Tony Janisch, City Attorney Max
Lindsey, Director of Public Works Gerry Schuette, Interim
Director of Ambulance Service Jeff Bellile

Present, remote:

none

Absent:

none

Call to Order - Meeting called to order at 5:32PM by Mayor Motiff. Roll call attendance depicted seven (7) of seven (7) members of the Common Council in attendance. Quorum of the Council recognized.

Approval of Minutes – City Council Meeting of November 8, 2021 - A motion was made by Novachek to approve the November 8, 2021 minutes of the City Council, second by Neimes. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Expenditures - A motion was made by Novachek to approve the monthly expenditures as reviewed, second by McGrath. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment – There was no public comment.

Mayoral Announcements, Proclamations, Appointments- The Mayor began by thanking everyone for keeping things moving this past year. The Mayor next nominated Adeline Swiston, Cheryl Follis, Pauline Jimenez, Sherri Swiston, Lu Ann Opperman, Michelle McCumber, Florence Hagstrom, Valerie Dandeneau, Caroline Nelson, Donald Niles Eilertsen, Sharon Hacker, Eugene Dandeneau, Richard Avol, Elsa Brown, Ariadna Chediack, Joseph LeBouton to the Election Board. A motion was made by McGrath to appoint the named individuals to the Election Board for a two-year term expiring 12/31/2023, second by Tulowitzky. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion & Action on Special Event Request for Book Across the Bay on February 18 and 19, 2022 – Ben Thoen, Petitioner – The Mayor stated that in reviewing minutes from 2019, there was discussion of and for a path moving forward for the City to get reimbursed for expenses incurred from this event. Anderson moved to approve the requests for Book Across the Bay 2022 of noise ordinance waiver, temporary Class “B” retailer’s license, parking & driving restrictions, including no alcohol outside of designated areas and without additional fees, second by Novachek. Dalt Collins, 501 W 5th St., board member of Book Across the Bay, acknowledged the expenses to the City and further explained the community support from the proceeds of the event. He further explained that the volunteer labor groups use this event as fundraisers to support the school athletic clubs and music programs. Mr. Collins further stated that after the 2020 event, \$8,200 were paid out to these type of Washburn groups. He added that because the Book did not occur last year, and because of fixed costs, the organization is at a deficit. He concluded that if the City wants to be paid for expenses, then the Book Across the Bay probably would not happen then and asked to suspend any payment to cover City expenses.

Discussion ensued. McGrath stated that discussion of the City seeking reimbursement began with the past mayor. She is fine with no additional fees this year and added that, as a member of the Finance Committee, budgets are tight, and efforts need to be made for the City to recuperate costs. Tulowitzky added that in the past there has been property damage, staff overtime occurring because of lack of clean-up efforts, the Board needs to be accountable for the oversight of their event. Broberg noted that the information provided stated that medical staff are contracted and having worked the event as part of the Washburn EMS crew that this

staging appeared to be more of an “above & beyond” service. Broberg recommended, taking Ashland EMS’s lead, and discontinuing rescue services onsite and be available as a 911 call if needed. Jeff Bellile, Ambulance Service Interim Director, stated that there are currently only 10 EMTs active at this time, and the concern being that if all these staff are servicing the Book, and a call comes in for an emergency, would they be able to respond to it. Bellile added that at one time they approached the Book for a donation to the ambulance service and were told they were too late and needed to apply the next year. He concluded that the ambulance service is seen as an expectation at the event, but that service needs to be available to the service area, the City and surrounding Towns.

Maziasz stated support in reducing the burden to the City and meeting in future to discuss ways of covering costs. She also stated support with not charging additional fees this year but find ways to reduce the City’s costs. Anderson suggested looking to local ski patrols to provide transport on the ice to elevate the EMS and stated support with continuing as before through this year and reducing cost for the City. Maziasz further asked about the City of Ashland’s contribution to the Event. Janisch answered that Ashland has asked for reimbursement of costs in the past and has received none, and that they have reduced ambulance service to be “on-call” to reduce costs. The Mayor asked if there are any examples elsewhere where communities support private events like this. Collins stated that the City of Hayward did cover the costs of the Birkebeiner, but then a fee was charged per participant to cover city costs.

Melissa Martinez, Washburn Chamber of Commerce Director, stated that for Brownstone Days very little city resources are used. The Fire Department and the EMS are on-call for the fireworks display, but the City is part of this event. The Fire Department is also involved with the water fight, and a donation was given to them this year. Martinez further stated that the Chamber does promote and advertise the event, and when she started as director she met with City and Book representatives to discuss forms of compensation. The Chamber was promised that the participant email list would be shared, but it was not. Martinez concluded that if other communities are receiving compensation of costs for events like this, then why shouldn’t Washburn; and that the Book Board has known for several years about paying for expenses, it should not be continually pushed off to the next year.

Neimes asked how much work/time does Public Works do for the event. Kluver responded that the current public works director has not experienced Book Across the Bay yet, and that this varies each year depending on the amount of snow on the ground and clearing needed. It was noted that costs were \$3,014 in 2020 for Public Works. Janisch added the amount of time was 42 hrs. between 3 employees. Neimes added that these expenses must be figured out moving on. Discussion continued.

Janisch added that according to Book Across the Bay’s 990 tax information, which is available on-line of non-profits organizations, in 2019 one of the identified expenses was \$21,000 to Casual Labor Groups, the assumption that these are the donations given to their volunteer groups. It was the same amount in 2018. Janisch concluded that the Book is making a profit, a profit at the expense of the City. The Mayor asked if it was a break even event, or do they carry over a balance. Janisch answered that according to the 990’s, assets are carried over.

Broberg suggested amending the motion to include eliminating standby EMS coverage. This amendment was accepted by Anderson and Novachek. Anderson moved to approve the requests for Book Across the Bay 2022 of noise ordinance waiver, temporary Class “B” retailer’s license, parking & driving restrictions, including no alcohol outside of designated areas and without additional fees or standby EMS coverage, second by Novachek. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion & Action on Proposed Amendment to Contract with Republic Services for Refuse Collection Dates – Neimes moved to approve the Contract Amendment with Republic Services for Refuse Collection Dates, second by Novachek. Discussion occurred regarding how utility customers would be notified. Janisch stated this would occur with the January billing. Jane Matthias, Republic Services, stated that they would also contact customers to notify of the change. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion & Action on 2022 Pay Schedule – Novachek moved to approve the 2022 Pay Schedule, seconded by McGrath. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion & Action on Proposed 2022 TID #2 and TID #3 Budgets – The Mayor asked for clarification if action needed to be taken tonight. Kluver responded that the budgets would need approval, but the decision to extend TID #2 would need to be made before July. McGrath moved to approve the 2022 TID #2 & TID #3 Budgets, seconded by Novachek. Novachek encouraged Council to think carefully about a TID #2 extension to be able fund future housing projects. Kluver added that this was a once in 20 years opportunity that State Law allows, this could generate \$225,000 to be used for housing. Discussion ensued. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion & Action on Resolution #21-012 Adopting All 2022 Budgets and Expenditures – Moved by McGrath to approve Resolution #21-012 adopting all 2022 Budgets and Expenditures, seconded by Novachek. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion & Action on Writing-Off Certain Outstanding Ambulance Bills/Utility Bills – Moved by McGrath to approve the write-off of presented Outstanding Ambulance and Utility bills, seconded by Maziasz. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion & Action on Writing-Off Certain Uncashed Checks – Moved by McGrath to approve the write-off of presented Uncashed Checks, seconded by Tulowitzky. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion & Action on 2022 Meeting, Election, and Holiday Calendar – Discussion occurred. Moved by McGrath to approve the 2022 Meeting, Election, and Holiday Calendar with amended Council Meetings dates of February 7th, instead of the 14th; and August 1st, instead of the 8th, seconded by Neimes. Motion carried unanimously.

Adjourn – Mayor Motiff adjourned the meeting at 6:57PM.

Tony Janisch, Assistant City Administrator

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING 4:30pm

Committee Members Karen Spears Novachek, Mary McGrath & Laura Tulowitzky reviewed monthly expenditure vouchers.