

**APRIL 15, 2014 REORGANIZATIONAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

**5:30 PM**

Present: City Council Members: Richard M. Avol; Kristy M. Jensch; Christine M. Kelly; Mary McGrath; Mary C. Nowakowski; and Jeremy P. Oswald.

Municipal Personnel: Mayor Scott A. Griffiths; City Administrator Scott J. Kluver; Assistant Administrator Kenneth Cammilleri; Library Director C. Darrell Pendergrass; and Public Works Director Mike Decur.

Excused Absence: Councilor Linda S. Barnes; City Attorney David Siegler.

**Call to Order** – Mayor Griffiths calls the meeting to order at 5:30PM. Roll call attendance indicated six members of Council in attendance with Councilor Barnes absent. Quorum recognized. **Pledge of Allegiance.**

**Mayoral Announcements - Notification of Opportunity to Attend New Officials Workshop Sponsored by League of Wisconsin Municipalities** – Each Councilor was offered an opportunity to view the brochure of upcoming event and was invited to participate.

**Election of Council President** – Avol nominated Oswald for Council President and McGrath seconded. No additional nominations. The Council choose not to exercise the privilege of closed ballot as permissible by Statute in the election of Council President. The nomination for Oswald carried unanimously. Oswald elected Common Council President.

**Election of Plan Commission Member** – Council was advised of the 2/3 election requirement. Avol nominated Oswald and McGrath seconded. No additional nominations. The Council unanimously selects Oswald as its Liaison to the Plan Commission.

**Confirmation of Council Committee Appointments – Mayoral Appointments / Committee Membership** – the following Council Liaison appointments were addressed and unanimously confirmed on motion of Avol, seconded by Nowakowski, and unanimously carried: **Finance/Personnel Committee** Richard Avol, Mary McGrath, and Mary Nowakowski. **Historical Preservation Commission Liaison** - Jensch; **Library Board Liaison** - Barnes; **Harbor Commission Liaison** - Nowakowski, **Washburn Development Authority (WDA) Liaison** - Kelly, and **West End Ad-Hoc Committee** – McGrath and Oswald.

**Confirmation of Citizen Board Appointments** – Mayor Griffiths, having contacted individuals for indication of interest in continue service for seat presently held, he announced that two vacancies remain on the Historic Preservation Commission with terms of 2016. The following Citizen Board appointments were addressed and unanimously confirmed on motion of Nowakowski, seconded by McGrath, and unanimously carried: **Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) Board** - Donald C. Ekstrom. **Plan Commission** – John Baregi with term ending 2016. **Historical Preservation Commission** – None. **WDA** – Peter Bremner with term ending 2016. **West End Ad-Hoc Committee** Gary Holman, Dick Olson, John Gray, and Niles Eilertson

with terms ending 2016. **Zoning Board of Appeals** – Robert Arquette with a term ending 2016.

**Designation of Public Depositories** - Designation of the three community institutions, Bremer Bank, Chippewa Valley, and Northern State Bank (branch office-Washburn IGA) moved by McGrath, seconded by Kelly, and unanimously carried.

**Designation of Official Newspaper** – The Ashland Daily Press is designated as the official newspaper on motion of Nowakowski, seconded by Oswald, and unanimously carried.

**Council Retreat Session - Discussion on Identifying and Ranking Capital Needs and Budgetary Priorities** - No official action was taken with regards to this discussion. It was limited only to sparking a conversation to identify a mutually agreeable understanding of City needs and the resources needed to address them.

It was recognized by consensus of the Council that the City will likely need to take out a bond issue in order to meet some of its most pressing capital needs with the understanding that such an action would cause an increase to property taxes by way of an increase to the mil rate.

Council identified consensus with regards to setting aside the \$200,000 needed to meet grant matching requirements for the completion of State-mandated upgrades at the Waste Water Treatment Plant. This was agreed to be the City's top capital priority. Currently, the Waste Water Utility is unable to support this cost on its own, as it is currently not even capable of obtaining enough revenue to meet its current operating expenses.

Council was also in agreement that the next area of capital priorities is to potentially replacing some of the Public Work Department's most aged and deteriorating equipment, including: the City's 29 year-old loader at an estimated cost of \$200,000, the 15-year-old backhoe at approximately \$200,000, the 15-year old grader at approximately \$240,000, and the 15-year-old Sterling Dump Truck at approximately \$180,000. There was also agreement that staff should research quotes for new equipment with the goal of achieving the greatest amount of savings for the City by potentially negotiating a discount by way of purchasing multiple pieces of equipment at the same time. The Council recognized the value of obtaining warranties for this equipment and also instructed staff to focus on obtaining quotes for new equipment for this reason. Council also recognized that based on the brand of equipment, the distances to different service centers, might create added costs that could otherwise be avoided.

The next area of priority as identified by consensus of the Council was to replace or retrofit the Fire Department's pumper truck and to replace the Fire Hall roof. The pumper truck's chase is currently in an extremely deteriorated state. Furthermore, the truck exceedingly difficult and dangerous to drive. Chief Pederson only allows select individuals to operate this truck for this reason. The full replacement cost for this truck is estimated to be approximately \$200,000, while a retrofit is anticipated to cost approximately \$150,000. The cost of replacing the Fire Hall's roof is estimated to be approximately \$30,000.

Council agreed that setting aside money for grant matching, (example of \$100,000) or the purchasing of the property south of Stage North, (estimated cost of \$160,000,) was not as pressing as the other priorities that they identified. However, they agreed to revisit these items as part of future discussions related to a potential bond issue.

The Council also agreed that should there be available funds as part of this possible bond issue, small

projects such as the replacement of the windows at City hall should be completed. The estimated cost of this project is \$30,000. It was agreed that this repair would likely assist the City with obtaining long-term cost savings with regard to utility bills. The current windows are drafty and have very little insulating capacity. There was also agreement that some of these monies could be spent to improve the appearance of the City Hall Plaza. Currently, the Plaza's lighting needs to be replaced and its fountain is not functioning. Council agreed that spending money to keep fixing the fountain has become a wasteful expense. One of the recommendations offered for possible future consideration was to modifying the fountain's basin for use as a potential flower garden.

Overall, after considering all of their mutually agreeable priorities, Council anticipated that the City would need to take out bond issue for approximately \$1.4 Million Dollars in order to address its major capital needs. However, the Mayor and Council agreed that before any further consideration of a bond issue moves forward, it will be critically important to educate residents about the City's justifications for considering a bond issue and the very real needs that the City is currently facing.

**Council Retreat Session - Discussion of Other Goals and Objectives (Time Permitting)** – Item skipped due to time constraints.

**Adjourn** – Motion to adjourn at 8:33pm by Avol, seconded by Nowakowski. Motion carried unanimously.