



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

February 27, 2018

City Council President Scott Morrisette 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, Jeff Bjork, Sean Downing, Christopher Gagne, Scott Morrisette, Diane Odeen, Hal Watson

Members Absent: Mayor Dan Toland

Staff Present: City Administrator Scot Simpson; City Attorney Dan Gustafson; Police Chief Gordon Young; Utility Director Kevin Westhuis; Assistant City Administrator Julie Bergstrom; Communications Manager Mary Zimmerman; Management Analyst Keri Schreiner; Development Services Director Amy Peterson; Community Development Director Buddy Lucero; Operations Director Mike Stifter; City Engineer Reid Wronski; Human Resource Director Karen Bergstrom; Electric Superintendent Wayne Siverling; Management Analyst Follows Brandt Johnson and Jason Rohloff; Administrative Assistant Angie Bond

Others Present: Michael Page, Judie Foster Babcock, Aaron Taylor; Neal Gilbertson; Patricia LaRue, Lauren Kaminski, Nick Breintz, Nathaniel Dodge, Adrian Amundsen, Gary Horvath, Dave Drewiske, Bill Hanson, Eric Forward, Alison Page, Eric Amundsen, Peter Rayn and others

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

February 13, 2018, Regular Meeting Minutes

MSC Watson/Odeen approve minutes. Unanimous.

APPROVAL OF BILLS:

Bills \$1,798,485.04

MSC Bjerstedt/Watson move to approve bills subject to the comptroller. Unanimous.

PUBLIC COMMENT, PETITIONS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

Neal Gilbertson – he wonders why we would remove the dams if they are making money. It does not make sense. He would like to see the money used for other projects in the City.

Adrian Amundsen, 310 N. 4th Street – not everyone holds the position to free the Kinni. The only way he would be in support of removing the dams would be to establish a fund to ensure no public money is used.

Nathaniel Dodge, 209 Hamilton Drive – supports full restoration of river through dam removal, but the time line is too long.

Nick Breintz, Stillwater, MN – he lives in Stillwater, but fishes in the three-county area. He is an aspiring fisheries biologist who would like to see both dams removed, if we continue the timeline proposed, it will cause increased costs, higher silt and continued deterioration which would lead to higher costs.

Lauren Kaminski, 1110 Wasson Circle – the current hydros only provide a small portion of the City's power at a high operating cost. We need to embrace the river and should not wait to restore the flowing river to downtown.

Bill Hanson, 32 Pine Ridge – one sentence rewording of the resolution could keep the option open for hydro electric opportunities and investment if the return on investment makes sense. He would like to make sure there is enough money in place before anything is started as he feels strongly City taxes should not be used to destroy a money-making asset.

Eric Forward, 603 Spring Street – he thanked Council for its commitment to the process. It is important to have a community-based process and this is what happened here. He commended everyone involved. The removal will provide a transformation opportunity for the community.

Gary Horvath, 623 W. Pine Street – he is Vice President of Trout Unlimited. Horvath was concerned about rising river temperatures. The removal in 2026 is very important but would like to move the removal date up for Junction Falls. Would Council consider 2036?

Tonya Schmitt, 622 West Elm Street – she believes in the health of river. It will be better for the dams to go.

Alison Page, 430 Crescent Street – thanked the City and the Corridor Committee for their work. She is proud we have been able to come together as a community that one day the river will flow freely. The faster we do this the better for the community.

Patricia LaRue, 489 Marcella Court – she is a member of the Kinni Corridor committee. She wanted Council to pay specific attention to the proposed dates in the resolution. This is not a two-year project and if you move any of the projected dates back for Junction falls you will have to move all the dates. The committee talked about all options and took a lot of votes before making its recommendation. It was important to the committee that they hand to Council an unanimous decision on how the resolution should be read and adopt the time frames that are in the resolution.

David Drewiske, Town of Troy – over 40 years ago he wrote a grant to preserve the Kinni, from Glen Park to the new state park. However, then we were not ready for it, stating that development will never come here. Now it has. The quality of life has been the attraction and that quality is, in part, due to the river. He offered, by way of the Kinni River-Land Trust, to be a part of the public private partnership. They are committed to working together with the City.

Eric Amundson, 500 Marcella Court – one thing everyone can agree upon is Council has been well informed on both sides of the issue. Years ago, Council decided to put in the dam to create green energy and removal anytime soon would be an error as we are currently getting the highest rate on our return of that investment. In moving forward, please do what is right for the City's future.

Peter Rayn – people have this misconception that the water going through the turbines is a free energy source and that it is green energy but it cannot be classified as such; it's more like brown energy.

Council President Morrissette reminded citizens of the recent large snow falls and asked them to make sure hydrants are cleared.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Acknowledgement of the following minutes:

Utility Advisory Board – 1/15/18; EMS Advisory Board – 1/8/18; Park and Recreation Advisory Board – 1/17/18; Historic Preservation Commission – 1/10/18; Plan Commission – 2/6/18; Business Improvement District – 1/9/18; Library Board – 1/8/18→→***Pulled by Gagne***

Resolution in Support of Increasing the State Limit on the Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit→→***Pulled by Downing***

MSC Morrissette/Odeen move to approve remainder of Consent Agenda. Unanimous.

Resolution No. 6233 - Support of Increasing the State Limit on the Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit

Aldersperson Downing was in favor of the resolution and provided his reasons why.

MSC Downing/Gagne move to approve resolution. Unanimous.

Library Board Minutes from 1/8/18

Aldersperson Gagne wanted to give an update on the Library Director recruitment.

MSC Gagne/Odeen move to approve minutes. Unanimous.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 6234 – Authorizing Hydro Relicensing

MS Watson/Bjerstedt move to approve the resolution.

Council President Morrissette asked for general Council member discussion to take place, then move into discussion regarding the proposed amendments.

Aldersperson Bjork requested to go immediately into discussion on the amendments as it will assist in prompting discussion. He would like further discussion on the information received regarding Aldersperson Downing's new amendment.

Aldersperson Downing explained his newest proposed amendment is intended to further define risk management and what fiscal responsibility means.

Aldersperson Odeen took a moment to thank the Corridor Committee, the community and those in attendance for their continued communication with Council leading to the realization that River Falls is not just the river - it's the people. The community has shown how dear this City is to them.

Aldersperson Gagne echoed Aldersperson Odeen's sentiments and his previous comments commending the people of River Falls and the surrounding communities. He agrees with general framework of the resolution and believes the proposed dates represent a happy medium among everyone in the City. He knows 2048 seems like a long time to wait but we will get there. We have a fiduciary responsibility to our residents to see the investment through. There is only one area change in the resolution he would note, in area five, stating every expenditure over \$5,000 needs to come back before the City Council. He would like to see anything over \$5,000 brought before the Utility Advisory Board and anything over \$15,000 brought before Council.

Aldersperson Watson echoed previous sentiments regarding the appreciation of community participation, adding how important river restoration is to the community. The general framework of the resolution is good and fully supports almost everything in it.

Aldersperson Bjork would like to commend the groups on both sides of this issue. They worked really hard at getting their information presented and communicated to Council.

Aldersperson Bjerstedt said this is a very important topic to everyone but we also have other things on our plate. This is a financial decision on behalf of the citizens of River Falls.

Council President Morrisette recognized the Corridor Committee and thanked them for the work they have done - noting all members did not necessarily agree on every point, but the members support the end resolution. His biggest fear regarding the topic is ending with a divided community. Therefore, he hopes the community concludes in the same manner as the committee with the sentiment; while you may not all agree with the outcome, you can support it. He is overall in support of the resolution.

Council President Morrisette opened discussion regarding the proposed amendments to the resolution as provided by Alderspersons Downing, Watson and Gagne.

Aldersperson Downing's amendment proposal will clarify the understanding that fiscally responsible financing meaning no use of local general property tax levy will be applied. The section with the amendment was read. **MS Downing/Gagne to approve the amendment.**

Aldersperson Odeen commented she is in favor of a public/private partnership as she is not in favor in raising taxes. However, she would like the flexibility to, if it makes sense, to use some of the City's general tax levy to complete related projects to the dams.

Aldersperson Watson overall agrees with what the amendment says but also he does not want to put the City in a position where other sources of future income cannot be used toward the project.

Morrisette asked for vote on the amendment. The amendment passed 5-2 with Downing, Gagne, Morrisette, Bjork and Bjerstedt voting in favor and Odeen and Watson against.

Aldersperson Watson's amendment proposal makes changes to the targeted time period for the removal of Junction Falls. Aldersperson read the amendment. **MS Watson/Odeen at approve the amendment.**

Aldersperson Watson added his goal is to restore the biotic integrity of this river to the way it was created. That means taking care of the river in River Falls. The dates are important because the mechanicals of the upper dam will reach the end of life in the 2035-2040 range and to recognize the reality of the situation. He does not want to put more money into the facility before its removal.

Aldersperson Odeen is in favor of the target date and flexibility gives us something more immediate to shoot for.

Aldersperson Gagne appreciates the sentiment of providing a target date. He thinks the original dates were well-drafted by the committee. If the Council sticks with the 2048 proposed date, there is nothing that says we or a future Council cannot go back and speed that up if needed.

Aldersperson Downing fears if the date is not moved up, the City may be unable to secure the funds needed to complete the project and it will fall on the backs of the taxpayers.

Aldersperson Bjork commented if the Council reviews Aldersperson Downing's proposed amendment in conjunction with Aldersperson Watson's proposed amendment it has credence to it to help solidify it (Aldersperson Watson's amendment).

Council entertained a friendly amendment to include a recent proposal by Aldersperson Downing. Aldersperson Downing read the full recommendation for amendments to the proposed resolution noting risk management was not considered through the process. He is in favor of amending the removal dates; however, his biggest concern is reimbursement of funds if accelerated removal is implemented. We lack a plan for that.

Council President Morrissette is in favor of portions of the proposed amendment and if we could find a way to condense what is said in conjunction with Aldersperson Watson's, it could pass.

City Administrator Simpson suggested the appropriate policy drive in Aldersperson Downing's proposal is asking his colleagues to join him in valuing the lost electricity. He added the other items in the proposed amendment are better acted upon in a Memorandum of Understanding, Management Agreement or Resolution of some type in establishing the public/private partnership.

MS Watson/Odeen to approve friendly amendment

Aldersperson Watson offered language to be added to his original proposed amendment to include the sentiments of reimbursement of funds.

City Administrator Simpson suggested, with Council approval, that one sentence being added would address what Council is trying to accomplish. The public-private partnership will address projected revenue loss from accelerated dam removal.

Aldersperson Watson concurred.

Council President Morrissette asked for vote on the amendment. The amendment passed 6-1 with in Downing, Watson, Morrissette, Bjork, Odeen and Bjerstedt voting in favor and Gagne against.

Aldersperson Gagne's amendment proposal makes changes to the dollar amount needed for Council approval. He would like to allow the Utility Advisory Board to approve expenditures up to \$15,000, with amounts over to be presented to Council.

MS Gagne/Odeen moved to approve amendment. Morrissette asked for vote on the amendment. It passed unanimously.

Council President Morrissette asked for vote on the original resolution as amended. It passed unanimously.

REPORTS

Administrator's Report

City Administrator gave kudos to staff for their work on ice removal during the February election and those who received the Environmental Leadership Award. He recognized to Deputy Chief Aubart for his years of service. He also provided important upcoming dates.

Aldersperson Gagne asked Clerk White to provide the dates of the upcoming election and early voting. Clerk White provided the update.

Comptroller's Report for January 2018

Comptroller Odeen read the report as follows: General Fund revenues through the end of January were \$1,085,964 and include the January property tax settlement and first quarter transportation aids.

Expenditures for the same period were \$525,146 or five percent of budgeted, for a net of revenues over expenditures of \$560,818.

MSC Bjerstedt/Downing move to adjourn at 8:28 p.m. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy White, City Clerk