



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

March 24, 2020

Mayor Dan Toland called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m. in a virtual meeting format due to the Covid 19 pandemic. The City Council Chambers was open for public to attend.

City Council Members Present: Todd Bjerstedt, Sean Downing, Christopher Gagne, Scott Morrissette, Diane Odeen, Michael Page, Hal Watson

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: City Administrator Scot Simpson; City Attorney Chris Gierhart; Assistant City Administrator Jason Stroud; IT Manager Mike Reardon

Others Present: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

March 10, 2020, Regular Meeting Minutes

MS Watson/Downing approve minutes. The Mayor announced there would be a roll call vote on every item. **The roll call vote passed 7-0 with all voting in favor.**

APPROVAL OF BILLS:

Bills \$664,832.44

MS Bjerstedt/Morrissette move to approve bills subject to the comptroller. The roll call vote passed 7-0 with all voting in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENT, PETITIONS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

The Mayor asked if anyone from the public was present in the Council Chambers who might want to comment. IT Manager Mike Reardon said no.

Aldersperson Downing encouraged everyone to take part in the 2020 Census.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Acknowledgement of the following minutes:

Park and Recreation Advisory Board – 1/15/20; 2/19/20; River Falls Housing Authority – 2/12/20;
Plan Commission – 2/4/20; Historic Preservation Commission – 2/19/20; Utility Advisory Board –
2/17/20; West Central Wisconsin Biosolids Facility – 1/23/20; Powerful Choices – 2/13/20; BID Board
– 11/12/19; Library Board – 3/2/20

Resolution No. 6457 - Approving EMS Agreement, Lease, and Bill of Sale with Allina Health Emergency Medical Services

Resolution No. 6458 - Approving EMS Service Agreements with Area Municipalities

Resolution No. 6459 - Authorizing Purchase of Professional Services and Equipment from Advanced Light & Sound

Resolution No. 6460 - Awarding 2020 Manhole Rehabilitation Bid to Hydro-Klean, LLC

Resolution Approving Revolving Loan for Bikes and Brews→→*pulled by Gagne*

MS Odeen/Morrisette move to approve the remainder of the Consent Agenda. The roll call vote passed 7-0 with all voting in favor.

Resolution No. 6461 - Approving Revolving Loan for Bikes and Brews

Aldersperson Gagne thought it was a great concept but asked City Administrator Simpson if he could provide some clarity on the loan and where the funding is coming from. Simpson said yes. He also said that the applicants, Stephanie and Matt Johnson, were interested in speaking if the item were pulled off the Consent Agenda and there was a concern about passing it.

Simpson said the commercial revolving loan fund is a tool of the City that has been assembled through some funds returned through grants. There is a committee comprised of commercial bankers and the Finance Director. Currently, there are three outstanding loans that have a combined balance of \$90,000. The fund has been approved for a total of \$300,000 by the Council. Garage Bikes and Brews is a new business asking for \$50,000. The loan committee did meet and recommend approval to the Council.

Gagne is in favor of Garage Bikes and Brews and wanted to clarify that the City isn't generally in the business of giving out loan money outside of economic development.

MS Gagne/Downing move to approve the resolution. Aldersperson Page asked if the program would be available in the near future to local businesses that are looking for funds in this time of crisis. Simpson said if the Council approved this loan, there would be immediate access to \$160,000. Staff have been asked to identify some target fund amounts to look at other funding mechanisms for businesses in town through a loan fund like this. Simpson spoke further. Page appreciated the information and that the funding mechanism is there. He asked if interested businesses should call City Hall for information. Simpson said yes but he also thought businesses could apply online.

Aldersperson Morrisette believed this loan was originally intended for downtown businesses. Simpson said yes, he thought that was the original intent but believed the Council amended the boundary a couple of years ago. He didn't think it was restricted to just the BID District. Morrisette thought Council may need to revisit the boundaries at some point. Aldersperson Watson felt Council could take it up to review the boundary. Gagne agreed. Morrisette was in support too.

The Mayor asked for questions or comments. There were none. Simpson asked if he should call the applicants. Gagne said he pulled it in context of asking about the commercial revolving loan fund - he has no objection.

The Mayor noted that the committee met before the Coronavirus closed businesses. He was concerned if there would be stress on them because the first payment is due September 1. Aldersperson Odeen asked to speak to his concern. Odeen is on the revolving loan fund committee. She believes the committee was unanimous in its decision to recommend the loan. She felt there was some concern about security on the loan, but they did get it through a second mortgage. That was the only concern she remembered being expressed at the meeting.

Gagne said if there is hesitation based on the coronavirus, he wondered if number 9 would help based on that. He asked Simpson if it could come back to the Council for relief. Simpson believed the Council is approving it as it is, but there would be some potential under the emergency to make modifications as the Council would set policy.

With no other comments, the Mayor asked for a roll call vote. The roll call vote passed 7-0 with all voting in favor.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

Resolution No. 6462 - Creating Tax Incremental District No. 15, Approving Its Project Plan and Establishing Its Boundaries City of River Falls, Wisconsin-6462

MS Gagne/Bjerstedt move to approve resolution. With no other comments, the Mayor asked for a roll call vote. The roll call vote passed 7-0 with all voting in favor.

Resolution No. 6463 - Declaring an Emergency as a Result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

MS Downing/Odeen move to approve resolution. The Mayor asked for questions/comments.

Aldersperson Gagne asked Simpson at what amount do purchases come back to Council for approval. Simpson said typically it is \$50,000, but there are some exceptions with electric inventory items or the public bidding process. Gagne asked there was anything the City may need to purchase that would be more than \$50,000. Simpson didn't want to speculate but thought there may be things the City needs to purchase which can't wait 30 days for Council approval. He said this doesn't give blanket authority to purchase – it needs to be related to the public health emergency. He thinks the City's Covid response will cost in excess of \$1 million.

Gagne said generally he would like to have a Council meeting for purchases of \$50,000, but he is in favor of this and has no objections.

Aldersperson Morrissette asked what Simpson thought the City may need going into the Covid response. Simpson said it is a dual impact – revenues and expenditures. He expects the utility revenues will be reduced by 25 percent or more in the short term depending on how long the shutdown is. He talked about overtime, equipment, leases and purchases. Simpson said a lot of money has been spent on technology. There has been equipment and license purchases.

Morrissette asked if there would be an accounting of the expenditures after the emergency declaration was removed or would it need to be added in the declaration? Simpson said under the powers in 62.15 it is required for when an emergency is declared. In accordance with the statutes, a report is required at the next meeting. Simpson said Council would get preliminary numbers with a final accounting at the end.

Morrissette asked if Council meetings were going to once a month or if they would remain twice a month. Simpson strongly recommended going to one meeting a month as it would be a significant amount less of work for staff. It gives a 30-day window between each meeting to set operations planning. Simpson also wanted to find a better system for citizen participation.

Morrissette asked about committee assignments at the next meeting. Simpson believed there would be an organizational meeting. Odeen clarified that the Mayor can call a special meeting if needed.

Aldersperson Watson feels the Council should be getting an Administrator's Report on the days when the Council doesn't meet. He would like it to be available for the public. Gagne agreed and would like major purchases to be included in the report. Morrissette agreed with Watson. The Mayor asked Simpson if that was possible. Simpson said yes and thought reports would be more frequent than two weeks.

Odeen is in favor of giving the staff some slack as we don't know what they are facing as that's why we are declaring an emergency. She appreciates being copied on emails and minutes.

With no other comments, the Mayor asked for a roll call vote. The roll call vote passed 7-0 with all voting in favor.

REPORTS:

Administrator's Report

City Administrator Simpson talked about the emergency declaration and provided details. Downing asked Simpson to talk about absentee voting. Simpson provided details and encouraged residents to vote absentee.

Gagne thanked IT Manager Mike Reardon for his work on getting the meeting and Council Chamber set up.

Comptroller's Report for February 2020

Comptroller Odeen read the following: General Fund revenues through the end of February were \$3,070,368 or 28 percent of revenues. Revenues in February include property tax settlement, annual payment for state facilities, and a \$10,000 donation to the Fire Department. Expenditures for the same period were \$1,481,077 or 13 percent of expenses, for a net of revenues over expenditures of \$1,589,290.

CLOSED SESSION:

*At 7:19 p.m. MS Watson/Morrisette move to recess into Closed Session per Wisconsin State Statutes for the following purposes: § 19.85(1)(c) “considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercise responsibility, to wit: City Administrator”. **The roll call vote passed 7-0 with all voting in favor.***

Simpson asked if he should stay for the Closed Session. The Council agreed that he should.

RECONVENE INTO OPEN SESSION:

At 7:29 p.m., MS Morrisette/Downing move to return to Open Session. The roll call vote passed 7-0 with all voting in favor.

Resolution No. 6464 - Regarding City Administrator Compensation

MS Morrisette/Gagne move to approve resolution. The roll call vote passed 7-0 with all voting in favor.

MS Bjerstedt/Watson move to adjourn at 7:31 p.m. The roll call vote passed 7-0 with all voting in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristi McKahan, Deputy Clerk