



***JOINT MEETING WITH RIVER FALLS CITY COUNCIL AND
RIVER FALLS BOARD OF EDUCATION***

August 13, 2019 – 5 p.m.

City Council Members Present: Mayor Dan Toland, Todd Bjerstedt, Sean Downing, Chris Gagne, Scott Morrissette, Diane Odeen, Michael Page, Hal Watson

River Falls Board of Education Present: President Stacy Johnson Myers, Vice President Amy Halvorson, Ramona Gunter, Clerk Alan Tuchtenhagen, Treasurer Mike Miller, Cindy Holbrook, Mike Thompson

City Staff Present: Julie Bergstrom, Assistant City Administrator; Scot Simpson, City Administrator; Amy Peterson, Development Services Director; Cindi Danke, Park and Recreation Coordinator; Mike Stifter, Operations Director; Brandt Johnson, Assistant to the City Administrator; Sarah Karlsson, Finance Director; Kevin Westhuis, Utility Director

River Falls School District Staff Present: Jamie Benson, Superintendent

Others present: Rachel; Joel

The workshop was called to order at 5:01 p.m. by Mayor Dan Toland. It was followed by introductions. City Administrator Simpson talked about previous collaborations with the School Board and officials.

HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT TRENDS – CITY

Development Services Director Amy Peterson talked about two housing projects in Sterling Ponds. Anchor Paper has been built with 20 projected new jobs. Development is happening on the north side of the City. The Food Pantry has a new location. She talked about another housing development near City Hall. The Glen Park plan is coming along.

Peterson talked about other housing developments. Sterling Ponds has upward of 100 units coming in; Highview has 40 units coming in; DeSanctis has 40 and upward. Staff have been talking to developers regarding 700 South Main for student housing. More housing is slated for 1300 South Main and Sixth and Cemetery. Housing is booming in River Falls.

Alan Tuchtenhagen asked about housing trends. Peterson said the housing trend is increasing. Seventy-two lots are typical in a year. There was more discussion about housing and multifamily housing. Simpson said to expect two to three industrial projects in 2020. He provided details.

GLEN PARK UPDATE - CITY

Operations Director Mike Stifter talked about the \$4 million project which is being completed in two phases. It is hoped that the park will be available for use this fall. The pavilion will be available for reservations in January 2020. The splash pad is scheduled to be ready when the pool opens next spring.

Stifter showed photos of the construction. He talked about play areas. Pool filtration and lining work are to be done this year.

STATE BUDGET UPDATE – CITY

Simpson said the state budget has worked out okay for the City. \$60,000 was received for road maintenance. There has been some effort by the state to deal with mental health regarding involuntary commitments.

SCHOOL DISTRICT UPDATES

Superintendent Benson said the school did fine with the state budget. Every two years, they are in a predicament. He talked about a student enrollment count in September that affects the amount of state funding they will receive. He is projecting 60+ new students. He likes to hear about housing updates from the City as it impacts enrollment. The district may get \$200,000 more than anticipated.

FOOTBALL LIGHTING

Vice President Halvorson has toured all the school district buildings. There is new lighting and sound in the high school auditorium. The football field has turf and lighting. At the end of August, there will be a meeting with the neighbors and consultant to discuss the football field lighting.

Halvorson talked about the renovations being made including stem labs and tennis, pickleball and basketball courts. The science labs are in progress and all work will be done in the next three weeks. She shared information about construction at the elementary schools.

Clerk Mike Miller passed out a map of the proposed traffic flow at the Rivertowns' location. Superintendent Benson talked about how school staff met with City staff to brainstorm on this arrangement. He expressed appreciation in working with the City. Traffic flow is a challenge, and they will be queueing cars at Viking Coke. Once the parents are trained, that will help with the flow.

Aldersperson Morrisette asked about the number of students who get dropped off versus take the bus. Benson thought half got dropped off. Morrisette asked how Benson felt about the time frame of the lease. Benson felt good about it right now as he thought the building should be ready in August 2020.

President Johnson Myers thought it was great that the school district was able to lease the building for a year. The space is working, and she was appreciative. Tuchenhausen received positive feedback about two local governments working together. He talked about the importance of knowing what is happening in the City.

Aldersperson Watson felt the cooperative nature of the agreement was great. It is an advantage for us, and he likes maximizing the resource.

DISCUSSION IDEAS – VAPING ORDINANCE

President Johnson Myers felt this was a significant issue which she described it as an epidemic. She is concerned about health/safety and its negative effects on students. She noted the time it takes for administrators to deal with this issue – it a big deal for them. She asked if the Council would be willing to help and consider passing an ordinance raising the vaping age to 21.

The Mayor asked about the current age. It is 18. The Mayor expressed an interest in talking with City's Community Service Officers (CSOs) to get their perspective on the problem.

Superintendent Benson said the school has a policy on vaping. It is a concern for them - an epidemic. He feels cigarettes were tackled and that it can also be done with vaping. He doesn't know if it will help stop people, but it is a position/value statement. He also understands the 'big brother' point of view.

Aldersperson Odeen noted that college students may have differing view/thoughts on this. Tuchtenhagen thought that was a good point. He encouraged speaking with the CSOs. He has reservations about criminalizing things.

Morrisette asked about the age for vaping. He hasn't analyzed the data and was curious. Benson said 18 is not a magic age for vaping. Aldersperson Gagne asked about vaping at the middle school. Benson said there is no vaping or smoking on school grounds.

City Administrator Simpson said further discussion could be had if the Council wants to pursue. Benson would feel remiss if they didn't ask about it. Gagne was glad it was brought up.

RECOGNITIONS/COLLABORATIONS – SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER

Benson said this was another example of a partnership. He is very pleased with Officers Gottfredsen and Jensen. He is looking for people who can build relationships with kids. Benson talked about how the officers' preventive measures have successfully mitigated possible bad outcomes. Johnson Myers thinks of them as educators who happen to be Police Officers. Watson asked if there was special training for the officers. Benson thought there was an annual training. Simpson talked about the training the officers participate in. Benson talked about the ALICE training. There was further discussion about the importance of the CSOs.

Simpson said the City has appreciated the use of the school's pool during the Glen Park reconstruction. Recreation Manager Cindi Danke said there were 426 participants in swimming lessons this year. It was nice to use the pool especially when the weather wasn't good in the spring. This spring, 163 students took swimming lessons. Danke appreciated the use of the pool.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:17 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristi McKahan, Deputy City Clerk