

The Common Council met in special session at City Hall in the City of Black River Falls on August 21, 2024 at 6:00 P.M. Alderpersons Gearing-Lancaster, Wussow, Ammann, M. Rave, and Dougherty were present. Alderpersons Peloquin and E. Rave attended remotely via Zoom meetings. Mayor J. Eddy presided.

Mayor Eddy presented Pete Olson with a service award recognizing Pete for his 17 years of service on Common Council and various committees.

It was moved by Alderperson Wussow, seconded by Alderperson Dougherty to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the August 6, 2024 Common Council meeting and approve as presented. Motion carried.

CITIZENS IN ATTENDANCE

There were 9 citizens in attendance – 7 in person and 2 via Zoom meetings. Brady Palmer shared concerns. Mayor Eddy advised him to contact department heads outside of the meeting.

There were no updates on the County jail/justice center project.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

It was moved by Alderperson Ammann, seconded by Alderperson M. Rave to place on file the minutes of the August 6, 2024 Joint Review Board meeting. Motion carried.

Nick Goeman from Baker Tilly presented highlights from the 2023 audit. The City is in good financial position.

It was moved by Alderperson Ammann, seconded by Alderperson Gearing-Lancaster to approve Amendment #3 to the Supplemental Letter Agreement with SEH, Inc. for the Riverview Drive Utility Extension Project. Motion carried.

Representatives from Jackson County Health & Human Services and WI Harm Reduction Response Team shared their proposal and request to use the city owned parking lot south of the fire station as an access location for mobile services from the Response Team for two days a month. Services include free Naloxone (Narcan), syringe services, wound care supplies, fentanyl and xylazine test strips, safer sex supplies, and infectious disease testing. They have reached out to local businesses but have not been able to secure a location. Questions from Council included how it would be marketed, other locations in the County these services might be offered, reason for resistance from private businesses for not wanting it in their parking lot, and how is this free service funded. Businesses are hesitant to participate in the program as it is new thing and can challenge your beliefs a little bit and the unknown. No locations were completely against it, just not ready at this time. The program is funded through opioid settlement dollars which comes from pharmaceutical lawsuits. It was suggested we get additional public feedback before deciding and consider operating out of DHHS parking lot or on the County owned property at the site of the old Federation building on N Water Street.

The City Administrator provided updates on preliminary numbers for the 2025 operating budget which included the city's equalized value increased 4% to just over \$348 million, the city's portion of County equalized value decreased 1.23% meaning the city taxpayers will pay less of the County's levy, closing TID #4 and TID #5 will allow us to increase the levy by \$23,217, Consumer Price Index (CPI) is hovering around 3%, Net New Construction came in at 2.69%, health insurance premiums went up 4%, proposing wage increases that would be equivalent to about 3% which equates to about 50-60 cents per hour for part-time, 80 cents per hour for full-time, and \$1.00-1.50 per hour for department heads. There were no objections to the proposed wage increases. All requests for capital items fit within the proposed 2025 capital budget including up to \$40,000 for HVAC project at the library. City wide revaluation is complete and assessed values went up an average of 55% which will result in a lower mill rate.

It was moved by Alderperson Peloquin to set the ambulance service fee at \$16 per capital for outlying municipalities and \$25 per capital for the City for FY2025. Motion failed due to lack of a second.

It was moved by Alderperson Ammann, seconded by Alderperson Dougherty to set the ambulance service fee at \$25 per capita for FY2025. Motion carried 7-1 with Alderperson M. Rave voting no.

David Walter from SEH, Inc explained the Buchanan Street sanitary sewer project and advised bid opening was done and only one bid was received from Haas Sons, Inc out of Thorp, WI at a cost of \$131,681 which is \$31,681 more than the engineer's estimate. Dave met with the Street Superintendent and the City Administrator to discuss other options and the block retaining wall as specified is the least costly.

It was moved by Alderperson Wussow, seconded by Alderperson M. Rave to award the Buchanan Street bid to Haas Sons, Inc. out of Thorp, WI in the amount of \$131,681. Motion carried.

It was moved by Alderperson Dougherty, seconded by M. Rave to approve the State/Municipal Agreement for State-Let Bridge Project for the North Third Street Bridge Project. Motion carried.

It was moved by Alderperson Wussow, seconded by Alderperson Gearing-Lancaster to approve the Police Department's request to donate a used Panasonic laptop and docking station to Bruce's Legacy. Motion carried.

It was moved by Alderperson Ammann, seconded by Alderperson Dougherty to approve the Police Department's request to purchase a 2024 Chevrolet Silverado 1500 4WD Crew Cab truck from Gross Motors for \$41,686.50 using 2025 capital outlay. Motion carried.

It was moved by Alderperson Gearing-Lancaster, seconded by Alderperson Dougherty to accept the offer from Modern Disposal Systems, LLC to purchase vacant land as presented. Motion carried.

It was moved by Alderperson Dougherty, seconded by Alderperson Gearing-Lancaster to approve vouchers for July 2024 Check #74253 - #74403 totaling \$525,864.77. Motion carried.

It was moved by Alderperson Wussow, seconded by Alderperson Peloquin to approve the City Treasurer's Report for July 2024. Motion carried.

It was moved by Alderperson Gearing-Lancaster, seconded by Alderperson Dougherty to approve the Revenue & Expense Report for July 2024. Motion carried.

The Council was advised of a Notice of Petition for Writ of Mandamus regarding open records fees.

Three letters of interest were received for the vacant Waard 4 Council position. Joel Busse and Timothy Knopps were in person and addressed the Council on their letters of interest. The Council voted by written ballot which were then read aloud. Joel Busse received 7 votes and was appointed to Ward 4 Alderperson.

It was moved by Alderperson Wussow, seconded by Alderperson Dougherty to adjourn. Motion carried at 8:23pm.

A. Brad Chown
City Administrator