

MONONA CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
April 20, 2020

The regular meeting of the Monona City Council, via Zoom, was called to order by Mayor O'Connor at 7:06 p.m.

Present: Mayor Mary K. O'Connor, Alderpersons Jennifer Kuhr, Kathy Thomas, Molly Grupe, Nancy Moore, Andrew Kitslaar, and Doug Wood

Also Present: City Administrator Bryan Gadow, City Attorney William Cole, Finance Director Marc Houtakker, City Planner Doug Plowman, Library Director Ryan Claringbole, and City Clerk Joan Andrusz

ROLL CALL AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor O'Connor noted a correction of the word "covers" to "corners" in the second paragraph of Page 2.

A motion by Alder Thomas, seconded by Alder Moore to approve the Minutes of the March 16, 2020 City Council meeting as amended, was carried.

A motion by Alder Kitslaar, seconded by Alder Grupe to approve the Minutes of the April 6, 2020 City Council meeting, was carried.

APPEARANCES

Library Business and Facilities Coordinator Sally Buffat appeared via videotape to thank City Clerk Andrusz, Deputy Clerk Alene Houser, and City staff for their hard work with the April 7 Presidential Preference Primary/Spring Election.

PUBLIC HEARING AND CONSENT AGENDA

There was no Public Hearing or Consent Agenda.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no Unfinished Business.

NEW BUSINESS

City Planner Plowman provided information on Resolution 20-4-2403 Approving a Memorandum of Agreement Between the Wisconsin Historical Society and the City of Monona for the Completion of a Historic Preservation Project. A study in 2019 provided a full inventory of properties for National Register of Historic Places program nomination. There are now 15 properties eligible. The Landmarks Commission directed him to apply for a non-matching \$25,000 grant, which was awarded. \$2,000 to \$5,000 will be needed for each property.

Not every property owner will want to participate; the funds will be used to cover those that do. Eligible property owners were invited to a presentation on National Register standards. A letter will be sent to each owner notifying them that funds are available, gauge their interest, and provide more information.

The process is not finalized yet. It will most likely be a competitive process if there are more applications than funds. Historic Districts would not be covered and properties outside of Frost Woods would have priority. An Historic District designation would have to be in place to affect allowing sidewalk or other structure installation.

City Attorney Cole reviewed the Agreement and had these comments:

1. The mandatory September 20, 2021 deadline allows no leeway for the COVID-19 situation. The City can request an extension, but has no right to it. He suggests before signing the City see if an extension is allowed, otherwise the City won't get the money back.
2. Federal laws apply if the City hires consultants.
3. Any announcements have to give acknowledgement to the Historical Preservation Office.

City Administrator Gadow began Discussion and Update on Staffing, Budgetary and City Operations Contingency Plans for COVID-19. Revenues are down so undesignated funds may be needed. Funds are at 30% of the current year's budget so the City is in a good financial position. There is a hiring freeze except for Public Safety positions. The 2021 budget process will start soon and staff will look at various scenarios to discuss at committees for Council consideration. Full pay will be provided from May 5 to May 26 when the safer-at-home order lifts; this will be revisited if there are changes.

Finance Director Houtakker reported the Fund Balance is higher than the policy, so finances will be in good shape for this year. Property taxes cover operating expenses. \$9,000 in part-time Recreation Department salaries has been saved so far. Savings in gas costs, event costs, and court costs have been achieved. Department Heads do a good job in looking for savings. There won't be a revenue loss if the swimming pool is closed the whole summer. The Afterschool program pays for special events; if that program is cancelled the number of events may need to be a reduced.

Areas of concern with projected losses were outlined:

1. Interest income will be down \$50,000 to \$100,000.
2. Court fines will be down \$60,000; not many tickets are being written due to reduced traffic.
3. EMS revenue will be down \$75,000. Rates were increased but most patients are on Medicare and Medicaid and those programs don't pay in full.
4. Hotel tax is usually lowest in the first quarter, but with event cancellations and tax not allowed to be collected when the facility is used to house the homeless, it is projected to be down by \$50,000.
5. Boat launch fees are down by \$11,000 because of the Ace Hardware closure.
6. The 2021 budget will start \$80,000 down because of the reduced hotel tax and the last Walmart payment will be received in 2020.

Library Director Claringbole reported Library services are provided using as many digital resources as possible, including online classes. Governor Evers is opening Libraries to curbside pick-up but not until April 25. That and programs will be offered slowly. He will work on the logistics of curbside pick-up and put a plan in place after consulting with the Library Board. A Dane County Director meeting today suggested delivering materials into vehicle trunks. Staff temperatures will be taken when they come in to work and they will be using cloth masks and one-use gloves. There is a high number of at-risk staff so he needs to see who can work and the number hours they will be available. He will have information out as soon as a plan is finalized. The South Central Library System will not be available; items will have to already be in the Library. Staff will recommend other, similar books if what the patron wants is not in Monona. Returns remain closed as materials need to sit for 3 days to be safe to handle. That will open in stage 2 of the re-opening with no late or loss fees.

City Administrator Gadow reported City Hall remains closed until the order is lifted. Telephone, email, and remote work remain responsive to citizen inquires. The swimming pool and recreation programs are on hold based on information from Recreation Director Jake Anderson. FEMA reimbursement of costs will be pursued and applied for. Personal protective equipment for employees is being pursued. There is a separate COVID-19 webpage and there is now a business assistance page as well with resources and information-sharing with MESBA. Social media and WVMO continue to get information out to the public.

REPORTS

Members all thanked Alder Kitslaar for his service, guidance, and support, at this, his last meeting as an Alderperson. He will be missed by all.

Alder Wood announced there is an opening on the License Review Committee. Those interested should apply on the City's website.

Alder Moore reported the Plan Commission will meet on Monday. The 50th anniversary of Earth Day is Wednesday, April 22 and National Arbor Day is Friday, April 24. All related activities are now online. Check the Sustainable Monona Facebook page for information. She thanks the Sustainability Committee for their efforts.

Alder Kitslaar reported the parks need work, and citizen volunteers should contact Recreation Director Jake Anderson if they'd like to pitch in. He thanks all members and residents for working with him, and working with the amazing City staff was a true perk of his position.

City Clerk Andrusz thanks Library and City staff and their family members, Election Inspectors, and Alder Moore for their assistance with the April 7 Election. Especially the following: Library Business and Facilities Coordinator Sally Buffat, who put in many hours at City Hall and just showed up right when she was needed, more than once. Director of Administrative Services Leah Kimmell was involved through the whole process and was invaluable counsel as well as hands-on help. Public Works member Dan Edgington built attractive and much appreciated sneeze guards to help keep staff and voters safe. And most especially, Deputy Clerk Alene Houser, who's hard work, positive attitude, and high energy were incredible. Monona is lucky to have her! In 2016 there were more voters, but in 2020 there were 2,500 more absentee ballots. The highest number of absentees ever was 1,600 for a Presidential Election, and that was surpassed in the first week, ending with over 3,500 processed in total. Amazing!

Mayor O'Connor thanks staff and others for their work dealing with COVID-19 restrictions. She announced that the Memorial Day Parade is cancelled. She thanks all who worked at the polls and was very grateful to have Badger Books to handle all those absentee ballots. She thanks Alder Kitslaar for his invaluable service. The Organizational Meeting is tomorrow night and committee assignments will be announced then.

APPOINTMENTS

There were no Appointments.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion by Alder Kitslaar, seconded by Alder Moore, to adjourn was carried. (8:02 p.m.)

Joan Andrusz
City Clerk