



PLANNING SESSION - COMMON COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

**August 04, 2025 at 6:00 PM
1260 North Road, Mauston, WI**

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

The Mauston Common Council held a Planning Session on Monday, August 4, 2025. Mayor Darryl Teske called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kayla Thomas, Jim Allaby, Rick Noe, Mary Bender, Leanna Hagen, Barb Hoilien.

ALSO PRESENT: Mayor Darryl Teske, City Administrator Daron Haugh, Police Chief Mike Zilisch, Fire Chief Brent Lenorud, Director of Public Works Rob Nelson, Library Director Bridget Christenson, Park Board President Mike Taake, incoming Ward 1 Alderperson Vivian Gabower, and Deputy Clerk Carole Wolff.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Darryl Teske led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Discussion and Recommendation Regarding the Mayoral Appointment of Ward 1 Alderperson - Vivian Gabower

Motion by Hoilien, seconded by Noe, to recommend Council Approval of the Mayoral Appointment of Ward 1 Alderperson Vivian Gabower. Motion passed by voice vote.

4. Planning Session

City Administrator Daron Haugh reviewed the City's accomplishments from 2023–2025, noting:

- Strengthened interdepartmental collaboration, improved operational efficiency, and empowered staff leadership.
- Fiscal responsibility in 2024 produced a surplus, allowing one-time investments without tax increases.
- Key economic and housing initiatives: partnerships with Jay's of Mauston, Tractor Supply Company, RBJ Logistics, and Pelton Builders, expanding development and housing options.
- Secured grant funding for downtown revitalization, library renovation, and park/recreation upgrades.

Each department head shared both the challenges and accomplishments they have experienced within their respective departments.

Police Department

- Strong social media and community engagement; working toward a consistent digital presence.
- One officer vacancy; call volume supports an additional position.
- Exploring AI tools to automate report writing from bodycam footage—costly but increases patrol time and community engagement.
- Facility space not optimal for staff use.
- Considering extending the shooting range.
- Five (5) year plan includes succession planning as Chief plans to retire by 2030.

Fire Department

- Recruitment challenges; fewer community-based candidates compared to 20 years ago.
- Equipment in good condition; recently replaced older vehicles and tools.
- Maintaining ERF funding is essential.
- Training participation could improve; paid training nights are in place.
- Planning for full-time Fire Chief within 3–5 years.
- City calls now exceed rural calls.

Public Works & Parks

- Wastewater upgrades ongoing; phase 1 complete, phase 2 underway including lift station and electrical upgrades. Street projects planned when funding allows.
- Water tower repaint needed; estimated cost \$400,000-\$500,000.
- Conversion of all streetlight to LED is in progress and expected to save thousands annually.
- Salt shed nearing end of life and will need to be replaced.
- Jones Park field seeded; fence and existing bleachers to be installed.
- Vibrant Spaces project well-received and is now complete.
- Long-term plan for Lake Decorah restoration (~\$3.5M cost, 10-year plan).
- Pursuing grants for park and infrastructure improvements.

Administration

- Employee transitions going well; strengthening internal controls.
- Notable upcoming development: Tractor Supply opening in November.
- Public feedback notes improved transparency, communication, and teamwork.

- Downtown flowers well maintained. Riverside Park sidewalks cleaner with fewer goose droppings due to equipment enhancement.

Library

- Police walk-throughs increase safety and appreciated by staff and visitors.
- \$2.8M expansion underway; completion expected April 2026.
- Circulation includes books, pickle ball sets, and state park passes.
- Planning for long-term building maintenance fund.
- Anticipating increased traffic and business improvement along Mansion Street.

Public Safety & Infrastructure

- AI expected to increase efficiency in police and EMS reporting.
- Focus on maintaining staffing levels and rewarding employees.
- Unhoused population concerns.
- Code enforcement and zoning updates in progress.
- Zoning code rewrite planned to reflect updated rules and regulations.

5. Adjourn

Motion by Hoilien, seconded by Thomas, to adjourn. Motion passed by voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

Chair

Date