



MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 03, 2024 AT 6:30 PM

[BIT.LY/RCMEETING12-03-2024](https://bit.ly/RCMEETING12-03-2024)

COUNCIL ROOM, MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 450 S. MAIN ST., RICHLAND CENTER, WI 53581 & VIRTUALLY

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting was called to order by Mayor Coppernoll at 6:31 PM. Members present were Ron Fruit, Karin Tepley, Tom McCarthy, Kevin Melby, Melany Walters, Steve Downs, and Ryan Cairns. Members absent: Mark Chambers.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Alderperson Melby to waive the reading and approve the amended minutes of the November 12, 2024 meeting. Seconded by Walters. Motion carried 7-0.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Motion by Alderperson Tepley to approve the Council agenda. Seconded by Fruit. Motion carried 7-0.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS AND CONCERNS

Police Chief Billy Jones shared the recent 2024 “Shop with a Cop” event was successful and expressed gratitude to Walmart and the Salvation Army for their support.

Utility Manager Scott Gald reported on staffing changes and progress on merging servers with the city offices to streamline operations. Utilities received approval to install 2,500-3,000 AMI electric meters. Frontier will be installing fiber throughout the community. An adjustment to wastewater rates will be presented at the next Utility Commission meeting.

Fire Chief Gald also reported that fire calls have increased significantly with 211 already in 2024 with prior years averaging 60-80 calls.

Zoning Administrator Matt Williams reported the Zoning Department remains active with permits request, even in colder weather. He is working on improving records management and access to historical permit data. Williams continues issuing violation letters to address ordinance violations.

Director Jasen Glasbrenner reported optimism in completing the Panorama Development soon. His office is actively administering WEDC grants. Forward progress is being made on a future housing subdivision in Allison Park. Additionally, there is a continued focus on the Orange Street Redevelopment.

Clerk Amanda Keller announced that four Aldermanic positions are up for reelection in April. Ballot access papers can be obtained in the Clerk's Office and on the city website. Property tax bills to be mailed mid-December, and an online payment portal is now available. Efforts are ongoing to enhance website usability and develop a more efficient online payment system, along with creating a fee schedule.

City Administrator Ashley Oliphant provided updated committee meeting dates to include the ADA Committee on December 5th, Special Council session on December 10th, and Joint Review Board with Planning Commission on December 18th. All elected and appointed officials were encouraged to attend the employee Christmas party at 12pm on December 18th at the Community Center.

MAYOR AND ALDERPERSONS

Alderperson Ron Fruit announced the Richland Center Tourism Commissioner vacancy was filled. The 2025 budget has been approved and they will soon be gathering input on goals for Greater Richland Tourism. A priority for the new year will be maintaining accessibility of the Pine River for canoes and kayaks after Mark McCauley ceases efforts.

Alderperson Karin Tepley reported that the Historic Preservation Commission received two options for the Governor Vernon Thompson Memorial plaque from the state's historical society. The committee selected the wording option two for the 36"X24" sign with a photo and plans for unveiling. Tepley also reported from the Library Board on recent successful programs with significant community attendance and the utilization of library spaces by the Richland Center School District. Library Director Stacy Pilla attended a conference and is

collaborating with CESA 3 on the “Real” program for young children. While the Library’s budget was passed, costs for Southwest Wisconsin Library Services rose significantly, leading to a detailed report from Pilla on the association’s significant contributions.

Mayor Todd Coppernoll noted a scheduling issue caused the last Ambulance Commission meeting to be rescheduled with an updated date being available soon.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Motion by Alderperson Tepley to approve the Treasurer’s Report as presented. Seconded by Walters. Motion carried 7-0.

PAYMENT OF BILLS: Motion by Alderperson Downs to pay the December 3, 2024 bills as presented. Seconded by Melby. Motion carried 7-0.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

5. **Consider approving contracted assessor services for revaluation and maintenance:** Andy Kurtz from Vierbicher Associates explained the urgent need for a revaluation to gain compliance with Wisconsin law. The law requires assessments to fall within a 10% range of equalized value every four years. The last revaluation was conducted in 2008. The current assessment ratio is .67, which poses the risk of incurring a costly state assessment. Vierbicher was contracted to facilitate the RFP process, during which only Accurate Appraisals LLC submitted a proposal. Five proposed options were reviewed with the option to enter into a five-year contract with Accurate Appraisals for a 2025 Market Update, along with Annual Assessment Maintenance from 2026 to 2029, at an annual cost of \$45,000 being recommended. Funding for the first year will be sourced from the 2025 Capital Outlay. Motion by Alderperson McCarthy to approve executing a five-year contract with Accurate Appraisals LLC for a 2025 Market Update and Annual Assessment Maintenance for the years 2026 through 2029 at a cost of \$45,000 per year. Seconded by Melby. Motion carried 7-0.
6. **2023 Audit Presentation:** Bill Moilien from Johnson Block presented the 2023 financial statements, highlighting a strong position with increased cash liquidity and fund balance. The general fund rose by \$295,006, leading to a \$360,480 overall increase in government fund balances. The TID reported \$170,533 in revenues, with \$127,712 from taxes and \$42,821 from developer contributions. Expenses were \$92,068 for projects and debt service. Economic development and housing loans had receivables of \$653,604, including \$67,076 in Revolving Loan Funds and \$497,600 for the Housing Fund. The General Fund has a committed balance of \$1,730,533 for future projects.
7. **2024 Audit Engagement:** Motion by Alderperson Walters to approve and sign the 2024 Audit Engagement with Johnson Block. Seconded by Downs. Motion carried 7-0.
8. **Resolution 2024-05 Authorizing the Zoning Administrator to Issue Raze Orders & Declaration of Unfitness for Occupancy or Use:** The proposed resolution addresses buildings unfit for habitation or dangerous to the public by enabling swift action. The zoning administrator, equipped with the necessary knowledge, would be a designated authorized agent for issuing these orders with the intention to streamline the process, ensuring timely decisions on repairs or demolitions, and improving overall efficiency in zoning enforcement. Motion by Alderperson Melby to approve Resolution 2024-5 Authorizing the Zoning Administrator to Issue Raze Orders and Declarations of Unfitness for Occupancy or Use. Seconded by Walters. Motion carried 7-0.

FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION: (CAIRNS)

9. **Consider Purchase of a Dodge Ram Truck from City Utilities:** Requesting the purchase of a used 2017 Dodge Ram 3500 from Utilities at \$34,000 for the Public Works Department. The Public Works Department intends to sell an underutilized 2022 Ford F250 purchased in January 2023, valued at approximately \$38,375. The Finance Committee recommends the Common Council approve the purchase, using unallocated contingency reserves and proceeds from the Ford F250 sale. Motion by Alderperson Cairns to approve the purchase of a 2017 Dodge Ram 3500 truck for \$34,000 using funds

from Unallocated Contingency and the future sale of a 2022 Ford F250XL. Seconded by Tepley. Motion Carried 7-0.

10. **Consider Radio/Repeater Purchase for the Police Department:** Alderperson Cairns reported that Richland County is in the process of updating their radio towers, which are used by the City. Consequently, the police radios require an upgrade. Police Chief Jones has solicited bids for new radios, and the preferred option is the GenCom Kenwood NX5000 radios, as they represent the most cost-effective and appropriate choice for the department's requirements. Motion by Alderperson Cairns to approve the purchase of Kenwood NX-5000 from GenCom in the amount of \$7,644.30 from the priority equipment line and 1 Kenwood NX-5000 in the amount of \$1,528.86 from the response team line for a total of 6 radios. Seconded by Downs. Motion carried 7-0.

Motion by Alderperson Cairns to approve the Police Department to use the insurance check in the amount of \$6,558 that has been received along with any new funds received in the future and the remaining \$4,427.75 in the radio line to purchase the repeater, antenna and cabling from GenCom. Seconded by Tepley. Motion carried 7-0.

11. **Consider Renewal of Agreement for Warning System Annual Inspection & Preventative Maintenance:** The current five-year contract with Emergency Communication Systems for maintaining Warning System sirens is due for renewal. The proposed contract includes a 5% annual cost increase. The current annual contract cost is \$2,275 and the new annual cost is to be \$3,325. Given the need for ongoing inspection and maintenance services coupled with an imminent need to replace a siren on Industrial Drive, a one-year contract renewal was recommended allowing for other options to be thoroughly explored. Motion by Alderperson Cairns to approve a one-year agreement with Emergency Communication Systems for warning system annual inspection & preventative maintenance. Seconded by Walters. Motion carried 7-0.
12. **Resolution 2024-06 Allocating ARPA Funds:** City Administrator Ashley Oliphant stated that the remaining ARPA funds must be allocated by year-end. This Resolution would designate the remaining \$122,800 funds for planned capital outlay projects in 2025. Motion by Alderperson Cairns to approve Resolution 2024-6 Allocating the remaining SLFRF funds in the amount of \$122,815.18 for the purpose of capital outlay. Seconded by Downs. Motion Carried 7-0.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION: (COPPERNOLL)

13. **Consider the Application of Ron Parker for a Conditional Use Permit to Allow for an Accessory Structure at 1420 Rainbow Dr (Tax Parcel ID 276-1714-3000):** Motion by Alderperson Tepley to approve Application of Ron Parker for a Conditional Use Permit to Allow for an Accessory Structure at 1420 Rainbow Dr (Tax Parcel ID 276-1714-3000). Seconded by Downs. Motion carried 7-0.
14. **Consider the Application of Doris Schmidt to divide a parcel of land located at 361 S. Ira Street (Tax Parcel 276-2100-7460):** Motion by Alderperson Melby to approve the Application of Doris Schmidt to divide a parcel of land located at 361 S. Ira Street (Tax Parcel 276-2100-7460). Seconded by Downs. Motion carried 7-0.
15. **Consider the Application of Johnson LLC for a Conditional Use Permit to Allow for an Auto Repair Garage or Facility at 943 Sextonville Rd (Tax Parcel ID 276-22159-2000):** Motion by Alderperson Tepley to approve the Application of Johnson LLC for a Conditional Use Permit to Allow for an Auto Repair Garage or Facility at 943 Sextonville Rd (Tax Parcel ID 276-22159-2000). Seconded by McCarthy. Motion carried 7-0.

APPOINTMENT & CONFIRMATION: None

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

COBBLESTONE PRESENTATION - Anna Jakubek, VP of Development

16. **Cobblestone Development Presentation:** Anna Jakubek, Vice President of Development at Cobblestone Hotels, presented the company's unique advantages stemming from its dual role as both a franchisor and builder, facilitated through BriMark Builders and Slate Hospitality Group. This duality enables the customization of hotel construction to meet the specific needs of local communities. A recent feasibility study has indicated a demand for a 54-room hotel in Richland Center, prompting Cobblestone to propose a four-story prototype equipped with a range of amenities. Cobblestone actively collaborates with municipalities to develop incentive packages, often leveraging grants and land contributions. Following the acquisition of the necessary permits, the construction process typically spans 12 to 14 months, although the timeline for securing investors can vary significantly. Once incentives are established, a development agreement is utilized to facilitate funding from investors and banks.

CLOSED SESSION

17. **Closed session for the purpose of discussing hotel development and possible incentives and tax assessment appeal litigation.** Motion by Alderperson Downs to enter Closed Session. Seconded by Alderperson Melby. Motion carried unanimously at 8:17 PM.

****CLOSED SESSION****

18. **Reconvene in open session.** Motion by Alderperson Downs to reconvene into open session. Seconded by Alderperson Melby. Motion carried unanimously at 10:25 PM.

Motion by Alderperson McCarthy to approve the development and execution of a Hotel Project RFP as discussed in closed session. Seconded by Downs. Motion carried 7-0.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Alderperson Downs to adjourn. Seconded by Walters. Motion carried unanimously at 10:27 PM.

Meeting Minutes Recorded by Clerk Amanda Keller