

PUBLIC SAFETY & WELFARE COMMITTEE

July 5, 2023

6:15 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Members Present	Also in Attendance	Citizens Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Dana Davis, ChairBrad BlankeEric Schmid	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Police Chief Robert KaminskiAssistant Chief Benjamin OlsenAttorney Steven Chesebro – attending virtually	<ul style="list-style-type: none">None

2. **Receive Comments from the Public** – No person was present to speak at this point in the agenda.

3. **Approval of Minutes:** The minutes for the June 7, 2023 meeting have been presented to the Common Council without correction, so those minutes are simply noted at this point on this agenda.

4. **Review and take possible action: Ordinance to Amend 410-52(C)(2) Possession of Alcohol Beverage on Public Ways**

DISCUSSION

- Attorney Chesebro presented the issue that predicated this discussion. A proposed vendor for the Town Square Summer Concert Series, Brewfinity, was eligible for a brewer's permit under Wis. Stat. § 125.29. Prior to approving this vendor, a question arose as to whether Watertown Ordinance § 410-52 (B) prohibited any person from possessing alcohol at the Town Square. Watertown Ordinance § 410-52 (B) specifically prohibits any person from possessing an open intoxicant or drinking an intoxicant on the Watertown Riverwalk, the contiguous public property between Cady Street Bridge and the Milwaukee Street Bridge along both the east side and west side of the Rock River.

There are two exceptions incorporated into Watertown Ordinance § 410-52. The first applies only to events for which a Class "B" picnic license has been obtained under Watertown Ordinance Chapter 220. The second exception only applies to public right-of-way areas and parking lots. The Public Safety & Welfare Committee has been asked to provide a recommendation on modifying Watertown Ordinance § 410-52 to allow for the Town Square to host events which may serve alcohol in a safe and responsible manner. This matter is potentially complicated as the Wisconsin Legislature is in the process of revising Wis. Stat. Ch. 125 which addresses the licensing and permitting of the dispensing and sale of alcohol.

- Two Exceptions Considered by the Public Safety Committee:
 1. Revise §410-52 (C)(1) so that it reads: "This section shall not apply to such events for which an appropriate license to dispense or sell alcohol under Wis. Stat. Ch. 125 has been obtained and approved by the City or where the City is distributing malt beverages pursuant to Wis. Stat. Sec. 125.06(6)."
 2. Revise §410-52 (C)(2) so that it reads "This section shall not apply to those areas that may be temporarily closed for a City-approved event."

- The committee discussed that the Town Square is different from all other parks in Watertown. Davis mentioned that the high visibility, busy traffic of Main Street, proximity to the river and bridge and \$6 million dollar investment necessitated that the Town Square be treated differently than all other parks.
- Chief Kaminski explained that all special events that sell alcohol must also follow the Open Container Outdoor Entertainment guidelines that provide controls and safeguards.
- Schmid expressed concern about the high excessive drinking statistics in our area and city sponsored events that encourage drinking.
- Blanke and Schmid agreed that the Town Square investment needed to be protected and kept pristine.
- All agreed that the Summer Concert Series that have already occurred in the Town Square have been orderly. Chief Kaminski says that concerts have had no problems so far. The procedures that are currently being used to sell alcohol, but keep the participants safe are working.
- Schmid mentioned that he likes the idea of limiting alcohol to just the selling by appropriately permitted vendors (Exception 1) because then they are held responsible for the event.
- Blanke said that there are other parks (like Riverside) that are available for events that want to carry-in alcohol.
- Davis expressed concern that approving exception #2 could cause difficulty for special events that do not sell alcohol. Event attendees could bring their own alcohol and there would be no safeguards in place (like those found in the Open Container Outdoor Entertainment guidelines) to keep the alcohol contained to the park – especially since this is such a busy and congested area.

MOTION: Schmid presented a motion to Revise §410-52 (C)(1) so that it reads: “This section shall not apply to such events for which an appropriate license to dispense or sell alcohol under Wis. Stat. Ch. 125 has been obtained and approved by the City or where the City is distributing malt beverages pursuant to Wis. Stat. Sec. 125.06(6).” The motion was seconded by Blanke and passed unanimously.

ACTION: Attorney Chesebro will write an ordinance to revise §410-52 (C)(1).

5. **ADJOURNMENT:** There being no additional business to come before the Committee, a motion was made by Alderperson Blanke, seconded by Alderperson Schmid, to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted - Dana Davis, Chairperson