



Common Council Agenda Item

Meeting Date: July 15, 2025

Agenda Item: Update on City Attorney Position

Staff Contact (name, email, phone): Sara Marquardt, smarquardt@whitewater-wi.gov, 262-473-1387

BACKGROUND

(Enter the who, what when, where, why)

On June 19, 2025, the Russell Law Office submitted a formal 30-day notice of termination, in accordance with the terms of their service agreement with the City. Their services will conclude on July 31, 2025. In their notice, the firm indicated that the volume and scope of work required by the City had exceeded their capacity to provide adequate legal representation.

Through its online job posting system the City identify a qualified candidate to serve as full-time City Attorney. Several applicants were interviewed, and Attorney Steven Chesebro was selected as the candidate best suited to meet the legal needs of the City of Whitewater.

Attorney Chesebro is scheduled to begin his tenure on August 1, 2025. Additional information about his background and appointment will be presented at the August 5, 2025, Common Council meeting.

PREVIOUS ACTIONS – COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

(Dates, committees, action taken)

FINANCIAL IMPACT

(If none, state N/A)

N/A

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

N/A

ATTACHMENT(S) INCLUDED

(If none, state N/A)

1. Russell 30-Day Notice



Russell Law Offices, SC
Senior Associate Attorney Tim Brovold
tbrovold@russelllawwi.com
Phone: 608.448.3680

Respond to the Sender Directly:
tbrovold@russelllawwi.com

June 19, 2025

Mr. John Weidl, Administrator
City of Whitewater
312 West Whitewater Street
Whitewater, WI 53190

Re: City of Whitewater Legal Services Contract

Dear Mr. Weidl,

I hope this letter finds you well. Regrettably, I am writing to inform you that Russell Law Offices, SC is unable to continue serving as the City Attorney for Whitewater beyond July 31, 2025. While we have greatly enjoyed working with the City and value the professional relationship we have built, the current workload has become unsustainable under the terms of our existing contract.

When we initially bid on this project, we estimated dedicating approximately 40-45 hours per month to the City's legal matters. However, we are now consistently putting in more than double that amount each month. The volume of work required exceeds what can reasonably be handled by a single full-time attorney, and we currently have 3-5 staff attorneys working on your projects at any given time. Despite our best efforts, we are unable to break even financially under the current arrangement.

As a result, we must invoke the 30-day termination clause in our agreement, with our services concluding on July 31, 2025. We understand the importance of continuity in legal representation and would be happy to assist the City after that date if new legal counsel has not yet been secured. However, any services provided beyond July 31 would need to be billed at a rate of \$175 per hour. We are truly sorry that we cannot make this arrangement work and appreciate your understanding. Please rest assured that we will work diligently over the remainder of the contract period to ensure that all ongoing matters are handled with the utmost care. Additionally, we are committed to assisting in a smooth transition to new legal counsel and will provide any necessary support during this process.



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Phone: 608.448.3680

Thank you for the opportunity to serve the City of Whitewater. Should you have any questions or require further clarification, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

Senior Associate Attorney Tim Brovold
Russell Law Offices, SC