

**COMMON COUNCIL PROCEEDING OF
THE CITY OF LADYSMITH**

Monday, February 26th, 2024

5:15pm

Ladysmith Council Chambers

Members Present: Mayor Robert Grotzinger, Nathan Johnson, Mike Hraban, Al Christianson, Steve Weiss, Al Hraban, John Hoover. **Absent:** Richard Ostenso

Others Present: Jim West, Chief Kevin Julien, Terry Carter, Chief Kyle Gibbs, Luke Klink, Sara Nelson, Doug Parker, Attorney Patrick Rowe, Al Christianson.

Call to Order: Mayor Grotzinger called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

Roll Call: Clerk Nelson took roll call and a quorum was present.

Pledge of Allegiance: Led by Mr. Christianson.

Minutes and Agenda: Motion by A. Hraban, seconded by N. Johnson to approve the February 12th, 2024 Common Council minutes, February 19th, 2024 Special Common Council minutes and this evening's agenda. Motion passes by voice vote. 6-yes. 0-no.

Introduction of Guest, Public Hearings, Comments:

Resolution 2024-03 – Motion by M. Hraban, seconded by N. Johnson to approve Final Resolution authorizing sidewalk, curb, gutter, watermain, sanitary sewer installation, street reconstruction and levying special assessments against benefited property pursuant to special assessment police powers under section 66.0703, Wisconsin Statutes. Motion passed by roll call vote. N. Johnson-yes. M. Hraban-yes. A. Christianson-yes. S. Weiss-yes. A. Hraban-yes. J. Hoover-yes. 6-yes. 0-no.

Ordinance 2024-01 – Motion by A. Hraban, seconded by N. Johnson to approve Ordinance 2024-01 Amending City Public Protection Service. Motion passed by roll call vote. N. Johnson-yes. M. Hraban-yes. A. Christianson-yes. S. Weiss-yes. A. Hraban-yes. J. Hoover-yes. 6-yes. 0-no.

Ordinance 2024-02 – Motion by N. Johnson, seconded by A. Hraban to approve Ordinance 2024-02 Amending City Private Fire Protection Service – Unmetered. Motion passed by roll call vote. M. Hraban-yes. A. Christianson-yes. S. Weiss-yes. A. Hraban-yes. J. Hoover-yes. N. Johnson-yes. 6-yes. 0-no.

Ordinance 2024-03 – Motion by M. Hraban, seconded by N. Johnson to approve Ordinance 2024-03 Amending General Service – Metered. Motion passed by roll call vote. A. Christianson-yes. S. Weiss-yes. A. Hraban-yes. J. Hoover-yes. N. Johnson-yes. M. Hraban-yes. 6-yes. 0-no.

Ordinance 2024-04 – Motion by A. Hraban, seconded by M. Hraban to approve Ordinance 2024-04 Amending Additional Meter Rental Charge. Motion passed by roll call vote. S. Weiss-yes. A. Hraban-yes. J. Hoover-yes. N. Johnson-yes. M. Hraban-yes. A. Christianson-yes. 6-yes. 0-no.

District One – R. Ostenso: Absent.

District Two – N. Johnson:

Proposal to create children's area adjacent to Farmer's Market contingent upon County concurrence: Admn Christianson reported a local parent stated with the new pavilion being built, there isn't a lot of greenspaces in the area to sit and enjoy the market with your family. Admn Christianson reported there is ample funding available. The location of the greenspace would be well off the highway. Terry Carter questioned the location being close to the alley. Admn Christianson stated that the alley is closed to traffic when there is a farmer's market. Motion by S. Weiss, seconded by A. Christianson to approve bid from Anderson Landscape in the amount of \$14,800.00 to create children's area adjacent to Farmer's Market contingent upon County concurrence. Motion passed by roll call vote. A. Hraban-yes. J. Hoover-yes. N. Johnson-yes. M. Hraban-Abstain. A. Christianson-yes. 5-yes. 0-no.

Partnership with Rusk Area Chamber of Commerce for downtown promotion during Miner Ave project and any other advertising proposals: Admn Christianson reported that \$5,000 with Armada advertising; which utilizes FOX99, Star 97.7, WJMC, ads will run for a total of 5 months. These ads would typically be roughly \$40,000. Admn Christianson reported that he has received various quotes from multiple different advertising platforms. Admn Christianson reported the goal would be to encourage the community to visit the downtown businesses. Potentially having the Chamber use their funds to promote Chamber Bucks giveaways throughout downtown. The preconstruction meeting with contractors is March 7th, 2024. Admn Christianson reported that once he receives quotes from the Ladysmith Newspaper, he will make the Council aware of them.

Motion by S. Weiss, seconded by N. Johnson to approve partnership with Rusk Area Chamber of Commerce for downtown promotion during Miner Ave project and any other advertising proposals. Motion passed by roll call vote. J. Hoover-yes. N. Johnson-yes. M. Hraban-yes. A. Christianson-yes. S. Weiss-yes. A. Hraban-yes. 6-yes. 0-no.

District Three – M. Hraban: M. Hraban reported that at a recent Joint Animal Board meeting there have been additional discussions with the engineer regarding trying to slim down the current costs of the addition. The goal is to separate what needs to be upgraded at the current Animal Shelter to enhance the addition vs. the actual cost of the new addition.

District Four – A. Christianson:

Ayres Associates Proposal to design infill addition to industrial park buildings at 501 Doughty Rd. and 1402 Barnett Rd. contingent upon County concurrence, as a cost to TIFD #14: Motion by A. Christianson, seconded by N. Johnson to accept Ayres Associates Proposal of \$166,950 plus an optional \$6,000 towards assistance with identification of funding services to design infill addition to industrial park buildings at 501 Doughty Rd. and 1402 Barnett Rd. contingent upon County concurrence, as a cost to TIFD #14.

M. Hraban stated that these building are jointly owned by both the City and the County. J. Hoover discussed possibility of County disagreeing with project. S. Weiss requested more information. A. Christianson withdrew his motion. N. Johnson withdrew his second. Item was tabled to go on future agenda.

A. Christianson provided a draft handout for the Council to review regarding a one time increase in the City's local real estate tax levy in 2024 for City purposes to be used exclusively for road reconstruction. A. Christianson asked that the Council give him any additional feedback after reviewing the document.

District Five – S. Weiss: Nothing to report. Chief Kevin Julien requested that a Legal Affairs meeting be scheduled in the next week to address a Vaping Ordinance. He has been in touch with the City Attorney and has a draft available for review. Chief Kevin Julien reported that this issue is becoming a serious problem at the school.

District Six – A. Hraban: Nothing to report.

District Seven – J. Hoover: Nothing to report.

Police and Fire Report: Chief Kevin Julien reported they will be interviewing six (6) candidates this Wednesday for the vacancies at the Police Department. They did not receive any applicants that were certified or certifiable. Chief Julien reported that he will keep the Council updated on their progress.

Chief Kyle Gibbs reported they will be traveling to Saux Falls, South Dakota for a preconstruction meeting for the new pumper truck. The new pumper truck will not be available for at least a couple more years.

Public Works Report: Absent.

Administrator's Report:

Action on proposal for additional landfill monitoring related to post closure modification request to be filed with WI DNR (copy attached) Admn Christianson reported that currently they are performing testing twice a year; in the future the City would like to only have this done annually to reduce our yearly cost. Prior to this being in effect, they require additional testing be done. The testing would be performed in April, assuming the test results reflect what was done last April, it would be submitted to the DNR for their consideration in going down to performing the test once a year. Landfill is located in Town of Flambeau, north of Riverside Cemetery. Motion by A. Hraban, seconded by A. Christianson to approve supplemental letter agreement in the amount of \$8,500.00 for additional landfill monitoring related to post closure modification request to be filed with WI DNR. Motion passed by roll call vote. M. Hraban-yes. A. Christianson-yes. S. Weiss-yes. A. Hraban-yes. J. Hoover-yes. N. Johnson-yes. 6-yes. 0-no.

Note request to close portion of Miner Avenue for Easter Egg Hunt on 3/23/24 with possible action. Admn Christianson reported that the Easter Egg Hunt typically takes place at the old Elementary school building, because of the renovations, that is not available. Chief Kyle Gibbs has made the Fire Hall available for the event. Given the large turnout they would like the portion of Miner Ave located by the fire hall to be blocked off. Motion by S. Weiss, seconded by N. Johnson to close portion of Miner Avenue for Easter Egg Hunt on 3/23/24. Motion passed by voice vote. 6-yes. 0-no.

Updates on various projects, set possible date for tour of old school project.

Admn Christianson reported that all projects are moving along. The general contractor will began work on the new connections store this week. The electrician has been in there and the HVAC is basically done as well.

Admn Christianson reported they have trenched in new 6" sewer lines at the old elementary school building. They are expecting the new concrete to be poured this week. Admn Christianson reported that after that is completed, the council can set a date for a tour. They expect the project to be completed mid-November; weather permitting.

Admn Christianson stated as mentioned before the preconference for Miner Ave project will be March 7th, 2024.

Discussion of housing needs and projects occurring throughout the state. Admn Christianson presented multiple articles surrounding Lincoln Middle School located in Lacrosse that was closed. The School District of La Crosse sold the former Lincoln Middle School building to Commonwealth Development Corporation and the Wisconsin Partnership for Housing Development for 2.2million dollars. Their vision is to "redevelop the property that addresses the urgent need for safe and affordable housing while serving the diverse needs of mixed-income individuals and families."

Admn Christianson reported that this month's copy The Municipality is all related to housing and land use. If anyone would like a copy to review, a copy would be provided.

Attorney's Report: Attorney Rowe reported that after review of the \$5,000 donation to the Rusk County Lighthouse Homeless Shelter, the donation is a proper use of ARPA funds, and it is within the City Council's authority to make this donation.

Attorney Rowe reported that he reviewed the current ordinances related to nuisance properties. He would like to learn more about how the current ordinances are currently being enforced and the types of fees being charged before he makes further recommendations.

License and Permits:

Motion by A. Hraban, seconded by M. Hraban to approve Chicken Keeping Permit renewal permit for N. Johnson. Motion passed by voice vote. 5-yes. 0-no. N. Johnson-abstained.

Mayor's Forum: Mayor Robert Grotzinger reported that the next meeting will be held at the Fire Hall due to the remodel of the Council Chambers.

Motion by N. Johnson, seconded by M. Hraban to move Closed Session listed under item 21, to come prior to Closed Session listed as 19. Motion passed by voice vote. 6-yes. 0-no.

Closed Session: Motion by N. Johnson, seconded by A. Hraban to go into closed session under authority granted in Wis Stat. 19.85(1)(e) Wis. Stats. to deliberate or negotiate the purchasing of public property, the investing of public funds or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a Closed Session; to wit; to discuss sale

and/or developer agreement for commercial property and/or industrial property with possible action. Motion passed by roll call vote. A. Christianson-yes. S. Wiess-yes. A. Hraban-yes. J. Hoover-yes. N. Johnson-yes. M. Hraban-yes. 6-yes. 0-no.

Motion by A. Hraban, seconded by N. Johnson to come out of Closed Session. Motion passed by voice vote. 6-yes. 0-no.

Return to Open Session: Mayor Grotzinger reported that no action was taken.

Closed Session. Motion by N. Johnson, seconded by A. Hraban to go into Closed Session under authority granted in S. 19.85 (1) (e) Wis. Stats. to deliberate or negotiate the purchasing of public property, the investing of public funds, or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a Closed Session; to wit; to consider purchase, sale, trade or lease of various industrial properties and at what prices, and possible action thereon. Motion passed by roll call vote. N. Johnson-yes. M. Hraban-yes. A. Christianson-yes. S-Weiss-yes. A. Hraban-yes. J. Hoover-yes. 6-yes. 0-no.

Motion by A. Hraban, seconded by N. Johnson to come out of Closed Session. Motion passed by voice vote. 6-yes. 0-no.

Return to Open Session: Mayor Grotzinger reported that no action was taken.

Adjourn: Motion by A. Hraban, seconded by N. Johnson to adjourn at 7:40 p.m. Motion passed by voice vote. 6-yes. 0-no.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Nelson, City Clerk