



CITY OF MERRILL
PERSONNEL AND FINANCE COMMITTEE
MINUTES • TUESDAY JULY 27, 2021

Regular Meeting

City Hall Council Chambers

5:15 PM

I. Call to Order

Alderman Hass called the meeting to order at 5:15 P.M.

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Rick Blake	Aldersperson - Third District	Present	
Steve Osness	Aldersperson - Fourth District	Present	
Steve Hass	Aldersperson - Second District	Present	

Other attendees included: Mayor Derek Woellner, City Administrator Dave Johnson, Finance Director Kathy Unertl, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Library Director Jessica Zellers, Fire Chief Josh Klug, Police Chief Corey Bennett, Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator Darin Pagel, Public Works Director/City Engineer Rod Akey, Alderman Mark Weix, Bryson Cruise, LaDonna Fermanich and City Clerk Bill Heideman. Merrill Productions was present to videotape the meeting.

II. Vouchers:

1. Vouchers

The vouchers were in the meeting packet.

Motion (Osness/Blake) to approve.

RESULT: APPROVED

III. Agenda items for consideration:

1. Status Review of 2020 Tax Settlement Overview

Finance Director Unertl reported on the information included in the meeting packet. She reported that the 2020 settlement was comparable to previous years.

On the whole, the data appears positive.

Attempts are still being made to collect some outstanding 2019 Personal Property taxes.

No action taken.

2. Mid-Year fiscal status review of 2021 City budgets

Finance Director Unertl reviewed the information included in the meeting packet.

No action taken.

3. Review and discuss preliminary 2022 budget development provisions

Finance Director Unertl reviewed the information included in the meeting packet.

No action taken.

4. Consider 2022 budget requests to Lincoln County for:

T.B. Scott Free Library

Library Director Zellers and Finance Director Unertl reviewed the proposed 2022 Library Budget, which was included in the meeting packet.

Motion (Osness/Blake) to approve the proposed 2022 Library Budget as presented and forward it to Lincoln County for consideration.

RESULT: APPROVED & SENT TO COUNCIL

Merrill Ambulance/EMS

Finance Director Unertl reviewed the proposed 2022 Ambulance/EMS Budget, which was included in the meeting packet.

Motion (Osness/Blake) to approve the proposed 2022 Ambulance/EMS Budget as presented and forward it to Lincoln County for consideration.

RESULT: APPROVED & SENT TO COUNTY

5. Review of 2021 borrowing plan, including Finance Director proposed revisions

Finance Director Unertl reviewed the information included in the meeting packet. She proposes several revisions to funding sources and plans for upcoming 2021 borrowing.

Motion (Blake/Osness) to approve all the revisions proposed by Finance Director Unertl.

RESULT: APPROVED & SENT TO COUNCIL **Next: 8/10/2021 6:00 PM**

6. Review of outside legal firms

Information that was submitted by legal firms was in the meeting packet. A submittal from one more firm was distributed at the meeting.

Two firms (Weld Reilly and Boardman & Clark) will be invited to make presentations at the next meeting. The other firms that submitted information will be invited to make presentations at future meetings.

No action taken at this time.

7. Consider complaint forms and procedures for non-union departments

Alderman Hass had placed this item on the agenda. He explained that he has been approached by non-union employees who have employer/employee concerns. He explained that, with a few minor changes, the "Citizen Feedback Form" could be used for employees to document and submit concerns.

Mayor Woellner questioned why City employees are contacting alderpersons with employer/employee issues.

Discussion was held on who should have the authority to receive these forms.

Consideration of this item will continue at the next meeting.

8. Consider request from Merrill Firefighters Local 847 to have only Personnel and Finance Committee involved in contract negotiations with Merrill Firefighters Local 847.

A letter from Merrill Firefighters Local 847 was in the meeting packet. The letter requested that the City's "team" for upcoming union negotiations be the Personnel and Finance Committee, rather than the City Administrator, City Attorney and Fire Chief.

Representing Merrill Firefighters Local 847, Bryson Cruise explained the reasons for the letter and read a statement.

Mayor Woellner stated that he felt "left out" of the process and stated that he would like to attend the first negotiation session when sessions commence.

Alderman Blake stated that the City should not put itself in a position of not being legally represented during negotiations. He also stated his opposition to the request.

Motion (Osness/Hass) to stipulate that the City "team" for upcoming union negotiations with Merrill Firefighters Local 847 consist of the Personnel and Finance Committee and the City's legal counsel.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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9. Consider initial budget proposal ordinance amendment (from Mayor Woellner)

An ordinance being proposed by Mayor Woellner was in the meeting packet.

The proposed ordinance would add the following language to the "City budget" ordinance (Section 15-21).

(b) Initial proposal. On or before the last Tuesday of September of each year, the director of finance shall submit to the personnel and finance committee an initial proposed budget that would result in a tax rate increase no more than that of the latest Social Security Cost-Of-Living Adjustment.

Mayor Woellner provided additional verbal details on the ordinance and his proposal.

Finance Director Unertl explained that it was not her duty as Finance Director to set policy on tax rates.

Mayor Woellner will continue to work on the proposed ordinance. No action was taken at this time.

IV. Monthly Reports:

1. Municipal Court

The report was in the meeting packet.

2. Finance Director Unertl

The report was in the meeting packet.

3. City Attorney Hayden

The report was in the meeting packet.

4. City Clerk Heideman

The report was in the meeting packet.

5. City Administrator Johnson

The report was in the meeting packet.

Aspirus will be officially assuming ownership of the hospital.

6. Fire Department Callback Report

The report was in the meeting packet.

7. Consider placing monthly reports on file

Motion (Blake/Osness) to place on file.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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V. Establish date, time and location of next regular meeting

Tuesday, August 31st at 5:15 P.M. in the City Hall Common Council Chambers.

VI. Public Comment Period

LaDonna Fermanich stated her opinion that both sides had valid points in the discussion of who should represent the City in Fire Department union negotiations. In her mind, it is evident that there are issues that need to be addressed.

VII. Closed Session(s):

1. The Committee may convene in closed session pursuant to Wisconsin State Statutes 19.85(1)(e) & (g) for deliberating or negotiating the purchasing of public properties, the investing of public funds, or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session and to confer with legal counsel for the governmental body who is rendering oral or written advice concerning strategy to be adopted by the body with respect to litigation in which it is or is likely to become involved in, to confer with legal counsel regarding advice on strategy for upcoming Police and Fire union negotiations.

Motion (Blake/Osness) to convene in closed session. Carried 3-0 on roll call vote.

The closed session minutes will be file separately and confidentially.

VIII. Adjournment

Motion (Osness/Blake) to adjourn. Carried. Adjourned (from closed session) at 7:08 P.M.