



CITY OF MERRILL
HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
MINUTES • MONDAY JULY 27, 2020

Regular Meeting

City Hall Council Chambers

5:15 PM

I. Call to Order

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

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Rick Blake	Aldersperson - Third District	Present	
Paul Russell	Aldersperson - First District	Present	
Mark Weix	Aldersperson - Seventh District	Present	

Also in attendance: Mayor Derek Woellner, City Administrator Dave Johnson, Fire Chief Josh Klug, Police Chief Corey Bennett, Deputy Health Officer Norbert Ashbeck, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Alderman Steve Sabatke, Alderman Steve Osness, Alderman Mick Rick, Alderman John Van Lieshout and City Clerk Bill Heideman.

Several members of the public (both City of Merrill residents and non -residents) were also in attendance.

II. Public Comment Period

Several people spoke against any type of mask mandate. One lady spoke in favor of a mask mandate.

One lady also spoke in favor of removing the fluoride from City water.

III. Agenda item related to masks:

1. Consider making wearing of masks mandatory in public buildings, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the upcoming school year.

Alderman Weix thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Alderman Blake stated that he is in favor of some type of mandate, but not for private businesses. In his opinion, more information needs to be available before a mandate is enacted. He stated that the majority of the feedback he received from constituents was in favor of a mandate. This was the opposite of the feedback Alderman Osness cited under public comment. The majority of feedback Alderman Osness received from constituents was in opposition to a mandate.

Alderman Russell stated that the City is working closely with Lincoln County on COVID-19 issues. He expressed disappointment that the State of Wisconsin was not taking a more active role.

City Attorney Hayden suggested that any type of mask-mandate legislation would in all probability result in legal challenge(s).

Alderman Van Lieshout stated his opinion that mask do not work.

Mayor Woellner responded that data demonstrates that masks do work. He is not necessary in favor of a mask-mandate, but would like to see time spent on educating people on the rationale for mask-wearing and how to wear them properly. He urged people to access the Lincoln County Health Department website for COVID-19 related information.

Police Chief Bennett stated that, if a mask mandate is adopted, it would be problematic, if not impossible, to enforce.

Motion (Russell/Weix) to table.

RESULT:	TABLED
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IV. Recess

At 6:13 P.M., Alderman Russell announced a recess. At 6:19 P.M., Alderman Russell called the meeting back to order.

V. COVID-19 Updates:

1. Lincoln County Health Department Director Shelley Hersil

Lincoln County Health Department Director Hersil was unable to attend the meeting, so no report was given.

Deputy Health Officer Ashbeck noted that the Merrill Area Public Schools are currently following the Lincoln County Health Department guidelines related to COVID-19.

2. Lincoln County Emergency Planning Manager September Murphy

Lincoln County Emergency Planning Manager Murphy was unable to attend the meeting, so no report was given.

VI. Nuisance Complaints and Vouchers:

1. Nuisance Complaints

The nuisance complaint summary report was in the meeting packet.

Deputy Health Officer Ashbeck reported that there is currently only one case not in compliance, and that person has an August 15th deadline to comply.

2. Vouchers

The vouchers were in the meeting packet.

The committee members all signed the vouchers signature sheet.

VII. Picnic and/or Liquor License Applications:

1. Consider application for "Class A" (liquor) license for Northwoods Maple Farm, LLC, Rebecca Renken, Agent, doing business as Northwoods Maple & More at 811 East First Street.

A copy of the application was in the meeting packet.

There are no concerns with the application as submitted.

Motion (Blake/Weix) to approve the application.

RESULT:

APPROVED & SENT TO COUNCIL

Next: 8/12/2020 6:00 PM

VIII. Other agenda items to consider:

1. Continue discussion related to parking issues in 700 block of East Second Street.

This was originally discussed at the June 22nd meeting.

After researching this issue and gathering input, Police Chief Bennett recommends the status-quo. He noted there is a parking lot nearby.

Alderman Russell requested that discussion on this continue at the next meeting. No action was taken at this time.

2. Continue consideration of request to create Fire Marshal position in the Fire Department.

This was originally discussed at the June 22nd meeting.

Fire Chief Klug reported that this part-time position would not be eligible for health insurance.

City Administrator Johnson reported that, as requested, Carlson-Dettmann has done a wage analysis of the position. Their recommendation is to slot the position at Grade 10. This would result in a starting wage of \$22+ per hour, with the position “maxed out” at \$29 per hour. This would be a non-union, non-management position.

It was noted that this position will also be considered at the July 28th Personnel and Finance Committee meeting.

Fire Chief Klug stated that he had contacted businesses regarding this potential position. He asked the businesses to contact the alderpersons to provide feedback. The alderpersons that were present at the meeting reported that they did not receive much feedback.

Motion (Weix/Blake) to recommend approving the position (funded by the 2% Fire Dues), and to refer this recommendation to the July 28th Personnel and Finance Committee meeting. Motion carried.

3. Continue discussion of ATV/UTV Ordinance

Police Chief Bennett reported that it has been some time since the ATV/UTV ordinance was adopted, and that it should be updated. Signage should also be updated to reflect any changes made.

Police Chief Bennett will submit some “draft” language to be considered at the next meeting. No action was taken at this time.

4. Discuss potential removal of fluoride from City water. On June 24th, 2020, the Water & Sewage Disposal Committee recommended removal of the fluoride.

This item will also be discussed at the July 29th Water and Sewage Disposal Committee meeting.

It appears that the Lincoln County Health Department favors retaining the fluoride.

Alderman Blake reported that his dentist was against removing the fluoride.

Mayor Woellner stated that he was in favor of removing the fluoride. He added that a small percentage of fluoride actually reaches people’s teeth, and there are other methods to provide fluoride.

This item will be on the August agenda. No action was taken.

IX. Monthly Reports:

1. Minutes of June 22, 2020 meeting

Motion (Blake/Weix) to approve.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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2. Monthly Report - Fire Chief Klug

The report was in the meeting packet.

Fire Chief Klug reviewed the report and answered questions.

3. Monthly Report - Police Chief Bennett

The report was in the meeting packet.

Police Chief Bennett reported there was more activity last month.

The Police Department is in the process of seeking and accepting employment applications.

4. Monthly Report - Lincoln County Humane Society

The report was in the meeting packet.

5. Consider placing monthly reports on file

Motion (Blake/Weix) to place on file.

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

Monday, August 24th, 2020 at 5:00 P.M. in the City Hall Common Council Chambers.

XI. Adjournment

Motion (Blake/Weix) to adjourn. Carried. Adjourned at 6:57 P.M.