



CITY OF MERRILL
PERSONNEL AND FINANCE COMMITTEE
MINUTES • TUESDAY JUNE 23, 2020

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	

Others in attendance: Mayor Derek Woellner, City Administrator Dave Johnson, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Finance Director Kathy Unertl (remote), Alderman John Van Lieshout, Alderman Mark Weix, Al Wix, John Garihee and City Clerk Bill Heideman. A representative from Merrill Productions was present to videotape the open session portion of the meeting.

II. Vouchers:

1. Vouchers

The vouchers were in the meeting packet.

Finance Director Unertl and City Clerk Heideman answered questions on the vouchers.

Motion (Osness/Blake) to approve.

RESULT: APPROVED

III. Agenda items for consideration:

1. Consider lifting hiring freeze to fill Street Department position(s).

Alderman Hass announced that, at this time, there are no open positions in the Street Department. If position(s) become open, a special meeting could be called to consider filling open position(s).

No action was taken at this time.

2. Six-month status review of 2020 City Budget

Alderman Hass has this item placed on the agenda.

Finance Director Unertl reported. There are still questions to be answered on whether the state will reimburse the City for certain expenditures.

Finance Director Unertl reported that, at this time, the 2020 budget seems to be in adequate shape. At the end of July, she will provide up-to-date six month figures.

No action was taken.

3. Ordinance amending Code of Ordinances Chapter 18, Article II, Section 18-21, related to policy to limit tax rate increase in annual City budgets.

The proposed ordinance was in the meeting packet. It was on the agenda at the request of Mayor Woellner.

To begin, Mayor Woellner asked for one minor amendment to the proposed ordinance. The amendment would involve deleted the word “budget” and inserting “tax rate” instead. Mayor Woellner.

Mayor Woellner explained that one reason he is proposing the ordinance is to allow the Common Council to concentrate more on adding items during the budget process, rather than the historic focus on budget cutting.

Alderman Osness does not think the ordinance is necessary. He stated that he is fearful that the ordinance could result in residents being responsible for annual budget increases greater than their annual income increases.

Motion (Osness/Blake) to refer the ordinance to a future Personnel and Finance Committee meeting. No action was taken on the motion.

Alderman Blake suggested the possibility of forming an ad-hoc committee to consider the ordinance.

Alderman Hass suggested that, instead of an ordinance, a Committee of the Whole meeting could be held annually in July, at the beginning of the budget process. The purpose of that meeting would be to establish budgetary goal(s) for the next year’s budget.

Mayor Woellner and Alderman Osness will work together to “tweak” the proposed ordinance and then submit it to the Personnel and Finance Committee meeting in July. No action was taken at this time.

4. Ordinance amending Code of Ordinances Chapter 2, Article IV, Section 2-85, related to the scope of authority to call special meetings.

At a meeting on June 9th, 2020, the Common Council referred the proposed ordinance to the Personnel and Finance Committee. A copy of the proposed ordinance was in the meeting packet.

Motion (Osness/Blake) to approve the ordinance.

Mayor Woellner stated that he is not in favor of the ordinance as drafted. In his opinion, the ordinance limits mayoral power.

There was discussion on whether “special meetings” means only special Common Council meetings, or if the term includes Committee of the Whole meetings. After further discussion, Alderman Osness requested that his motion be withdrawn. Without objection, it was so ordered.

City Attorney Hayden was directed to prepare an amended draft ordinance for consideration at the July Personnel and Finance Committee meeting.

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.

6. Consider placing monthly reports on file

Motion (Osness/Blake) to place on file.

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

Tuesday, July 28th, 2020 at 515 P.M. in the City Hall Common Council Chambers.

VI. Public Comment Period

None.

VII. Closed Session:

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 continue consideration of the Festival Grounds Manager contract.

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

Convened in closed session at 6:13 P.M.

Discussion on the Festival Grounds Manager contract continued.

VIII. Open Session:

1. The Committee may reconvene in open session for potential action(s) on closed session issues(s).

The Committee opted not to reconvene in open session.

IX. Adjournment

Motion (Osness/Blake) to adjourn. Carried. Adjourned (from closed session) at 6:34 P.M.