

CITY OF MERRILL
COMMON COUNCIL
TUESDAY, MAY 10, 2022 MINUTES

Regular Meeting

City Hall Council Chambers

6:00 p.m.

1. Mayor Hass called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. with the following members:

Paul Russell – First District	Present
Michael “Gus” Caylor – Second District	Present
Rick Blake – Third District	Present
LaDonna Fermanich – Fourth District	Present
Dick Lupton – Fifth District	Present
Mike Rick - Sixth District	Present
Mark Weix – Seventh District	Present
Steve Sabatke – Eighth District	Present
Steve Hass – Mayor	Present

Elected Officials and Department Heads present: City Attorney – Tom Hayden, City Administrator – Dave Johnson, City Clerk – Lori Anderson-Malm, Enrichment Center Director – Tammie Mrachek, Facilities Maintenance Manager – Nick Wszalek, Finance Director – Kathy Unertl, Fire Chief – Josh Klug, Library Director – Jessica Zellers, Police Chief – Corey Bennett, Public Works Director/ City Engineer – Rod Akey. Park & Recreation Director – Dan Wendorf was excused.

2. Invocation by Father Maridas “Maria”, St. Francis Xavier Church
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Roll Call
5. Proclamation – Merrill Area United Way is celebrating its 75th Anniversary. Mike Ravn shared information regarding the history of the United Way in this area.
6. Public Comment - none
7. Minutes of previous Common Council meeting(s) – April 12 and April 19 – Motion (Rick/Russell) to approve. Carried.
8. Revenue & Expense Reports for period ending April 30, 2022 – There was a question from Alderperson Sabatke regarding the increase in fuel prices in relation to the future reports. Alderperson Fermanich asked for clarification regarding miscellaneous categories. Finance Director answered both questions and explained some miscellaneous categories.

Motion (Russell/Weix) to approve. Carried.

9. Consider sale of properties City purchased as Lincoln County delinquent tax foreclosures.

1. Consider the bids received for tax delinquent properties. It is recommended that the three parcels be sold to Tyson Fisher for his bid of \$6,500 (405 E 7th St, 607 Douglas St and 609 Douglas St). It is recommended that 405 N Genesee be sold to Mark Rosengren at the bid amount of \$4,000 and that 410 N Prospect St be sold to Brooke Hanke at the bid amount of \$3,500. This was brought directly to the Council by Mayor Hass.

City Administrator Johnson said Brooke Hanke withdrew her bid for 410 N Prospect St after realizing this was an empty lot. The next highest bid received was \$500 however, after discussion; no action was taken on the 410 N Prospect St property.

There was discussion regarding the \$500 minimum bid standard, Alderperson Caylor requested this item be on the Board of Public Works agenda for their May meeting to discuss further.

Alderperson Russell made a motion to approve the 4 parcels; three for Tyson Fischer and one for Mark Rosengren. Alderperson Weix seconded. Motion carried.

10. Health and Safety

1. Fire Chief Klug to request compensation for EMS Medical Director. The Health and Safety Committee recommends approval.

Alderperson Weix asked the reason for compensating Dr. Clark. Fire Chief Klug explained there was a change in the DEA which now requires medical directors, in the City of Merrill's type of situation, to be compensated so they have tax exempt status when purchasing narcotics. This would be budgeted through the ambulance service budget.

Motion (Rick/Weix) to compensate Dr. Clark for \$250 so he maintains the tax exempt status for purchasing narcotics. Motion carried.

2. Application from the Lincoln County Rodeo Association Inc. for three temporary Class "B" (picnic) licenses to sell fermented malt beverages at the Merrill Festival Grounds during the Wisconsin River Pro Rodeo, June 10-12, 2022. The Health and Safety committee recommends approval.

Motion (Caylor/Lupton) to approve the three temporary Class "B" (picnic) licenses for the Lincoln County Rodeo Association Inc. Motion carried.

3. Application from the Merrill Baseball Association for nine temporary Class "B" (picnic) licenses to sell fermented malt beverages at Lion's Park, Athletic Park and the Merrill Area Recreation Complex (MARC), on June 10-12, 2022, in conjunction with the Merrill Baseball Tournament. The Health and Safety committee recommends approval.

Motion (Weix/Blake) to approve the nine temporary Class "B" (picnic) licenses for the Merrill Baseball Association. Motion carried.

4. Consider application from the Merrill Historical Society for one temporary Class “B” (picnic) license to sell fermented malt beverages at the Expo Center – Bierman Building on Saturday, June 4, 2022, in conjunction with the GLCW – Oh, You Didn’t Know?!? Wrestling event. This is being brought directly to the Common Council.

Motion (Rick/Sabatke) to approve the temporary Class “B” (picnic) license for the Merrill Historical Society. Motion carried.

11. Redevelopment Authority (RDA):

1. Consider the purchase of 2.61 acres on Johnson Street for \$50,000 from Church Mutual Insurance Company through TID No. 4. The Redevelopment Authority recommends approval.

Aldersperson Russell addressed his concerns regarding this purchase does not address affordable housing. This type of housing is not geared toward a young family being able to purchase their first home.

Aldersperson Sabatke responded and stated he agreed with Aldersperson Russell however he also felt this was a fair offer for the land and 8 lots. He mentioned that the taxes received from these houses would pay back the initial investment in about 2 years. He also stated there is a need for housing people can afford.

Aldersperson Blake stated he hopes the people who build these homes will be moving from more affordable homes.

Aldersperson Caylor has concerns with the city buying land for speculation purposes. There was discussion between him and Finance Director Unertl regarding the ability to build three homes the first year due to the fact the State is behind doing plat reviews. The most that can be built in a year is three with certified survey maps.

Further discussion with Aldersperson Fermanich regarding RFP’s and how it is determined which contractor will receive the bid. City Administrator Johnson said the contractor will provide a plan which will include the style of homes they will build. The RFP process goes to the Redevelopment Authority and then will need to be approved by the Common Council.

After lengthy discussion, there was a motion to approve the purchase of the 2.61 acres on Johnson Street for \$50,000 from Church Mutual Insurance Company (Rick/Lupton). Motion carried on a 7 to 1 vote.

12. Placing Committee Reports on File:

Consider placing the following committee reports on file: Airport Commission, Board of Public Works, Enrichment Center Committee, Festival Grounds Committee, Health & Safety Committee, Historical Preservation Committee, T.B. Scott Free Library Board, Marketing & Communications Committee, Parks & Recreation Commission and Redevelopment Authority.

Motion (Russell/Caylor) to place Committee Reports on File. Carried.

13. Mayor's Appointments:

1. Teresa Baker, Enrichment Center Committee, term to expire May 1, 2023; replaces Josh Jaeger.
2. Kyle Gulke, City Plan, term to expire May 1, 2023
3. Ketul Patel, Tourism Committee, term to expire May 1, 2023

Motion to approve the Mayor's appointments (Russell/Sabatke). Motion carried.

14. Mayor's Communications – Mayor Hass stated he had a long list of announcements.

- May 25th is the last day of school; please be aware of more children out and about
- There was a Council Orientation May 6th. Any questions should be addressed to the Mayor or appropriate Department Head.
- The Committee of the Whole meeting will be rescheduled from May 16th; no date has been assigned.
- Merrill Water Utility will be flushing the system from May 16 – 19. There may be discoloration in water during this process.
- Lincoln County Rodeo is June 10-12 at the Festival Grounds.
- Wrestling event is June 4th at the Expo Center
- New garbage system starts in June. Carts will be delivered mid-May. Please call the City Garage with any questions.
- Merrill Historical Society is having a History Hunt on May 14th.
- Questions have been received as to why Alderperson Russell was removed from the Police and Fire Commission. This is from a court case. It was suggested Council members are not on that commission only non-elected citizens should be appointed to that commission.
- Memorial Day is Monday May 30th. There will be a ceremony at 11am at the VFW Memorial St. Francis Cemetery. If there is inclement weather, the ceremony will be moved to the Northwood's Veterans Post. There will be a free will meal served at the VFW following the ceremony.
- May is Military Appreciation Month. Please thank Veteran's for their service.

15. Motion (Rick/Lupton) to adjourn at 6:36 p.m. Motion carried.