

**CITY OF MERRILL
COMMON COUNCIL
Tuesday, April 11, 2023 MINUTES**

Regular Meeting City Hall Council Chambers 7:00 p.m.

- I. **Call to Order:** Mayor Hass called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The following elected officials, department heads and residents were in attendance:

Elected Officials and Department Heads present: Mayor Hass, City Attorney Hayden, City Clerk Anderson-Malm, Finance Director Unertl, Fire Chief Klug, Public Works Director/City Engineer Akey, Library Director Ollhoff, Police Chief Bennett, Street Superintendent Bonack, Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator Pagel, Enrichment Center Director Mrachek, Facilities Maintenance Manager Wszalek, and Utility Operations Manager Steinagel.

Others in attendance: Mike Ravn, Alli Henkelman, Sister Peggy Jacklein, Sister Mary Ann, Brad Becker, Reps from Cobblestone, Al Wix, Eric Malm and Merrill Productions.

- II. **Invocation** by Sister Peggy Jacklein – Sisters of Holy Cross

- III. **Pledge of Allegiance** was recited.

- IV. **Roll Call** was taken and the following alderperson's were in attendance:

Paul Russell – First District	Present
Michael “Gus” Caylor – Second District	Present
Rick Blake – Third District	Present (remote)
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

- V. **Public Comment** – There was no public comment.

- VI. **Minutes of previous Common Council meeting** – March 14, 2023
Aldersperson Russell made a motion to place the minutes from the March 14, 2023 Common Council meeting on file. Aldersperson Rick seconded and the motion carried.

- VII. **Revenue & Expense Reports:**
Aldersperson Caylor made a motion to approve the March 2023 Revenue and Expense reports. Aldersperson Lupton seconded and the motion carried.

- VIII. **General Agenda Items:**
1. Consider an alcohol beverage retail license for Abuda WI, LLC dba/Cobblestone Inn & Suites – Police Chief Bennett stated there were no issues and beer would be sold behind the counter. Aldersperson Rick made a motion to approve the alcohol beverage retail license. Aldersperson Lupton seconded and the motion carried.

- IX. **Personnel & Finance Committee:**
1. Consider using ARPA funds in addition to \$50,509 from the General Fund to apply to the 2022 budget deficit. \$77,000 of the ARPA funds would be retained and used for the 2024 revaluation.

Alderson Russell made a motion to approve using ARPA funds in addition to \$50,509 from the General Fund to apply to the 2022 budget deficit and the remaining as written. Alderson Weix seconded for discussion.

Alderson Fermanich asked for a clarification regarding the amount from the General Fund. The actual amount was \$49,509 not \$50,509 as stated in the motion from P&F.

Alderson Russell stated if anyone has any other ideas this is the time to bring them forward.

Alderson Fermanich asked Finance Director Unertl when the transfers would take place if this is approved. Finance Director Unertl stated the auditors were here last week and basically the transfers have been incorporated. Alderson Fermanich responded as being surprised to hear the transfers were already completed and thought it needed to go through council for approval.

Mayor Hass called for a roll call vote. The motion carried on a 6/2 roll call vote. Alderson's Caylor and Rick voted no.

2. Consider the call-in policy addition regarding a closed session policy to exclude remote access for committee members.

Alderson Caylor made a motion to approve the policy regarding a closed session policy to exclude remote access for committee members. Alderson Rick seconded.

Alderson Fermanich wanted to clarify this is for closed session only.

Alderson Blake spoke against this type of policy because it is not secure. He stated people attending meetings in person could speak about closed session items after the meeting or could have a phone on during closed sessions. He stated there were two years of remote meetings due to Covid and there were not any issues and does not think it is any less secure attending remotely versus attending in person. He suggested amending the policy to include a medical excuse.

Alderson Russell had an issue with the one sentence policy. He wanted clarification regarding committee members versus voting members and other attendees.

City Attorney Hayden said this would be a rule of procedure for the Common Council.

Alderson Caylor stated this is a policy regarding discussing financial and confidential information in a closed session and does not think this is too much to ask for a closed session policy. He also stated this passed Personnel and Finance on a 3/0 vote.

After further discussion, Alderson Caylor amended his motion to read: Due to the confidential nature of the topics discussed, attendees and committee members may not attend closed session portions of meetings remotely. Alderson Rick seconded the amended motion.

Alderson Blake made an amended motion to include documented medical reasons. There was no second so the motion died.

Mayor Hass asked for further discussion on the first amended motion and the motion carried on a 7/1 voice vote.

- X. Community Development Committee:**
1. Consider the approval of an Economic Development loan of \$75,000 for Brooke’s School of Dance.
Alderson Russell made a motion to approve the economic development loan of \$75,000 for Brooke’s School of Dance. Alderson Weix seconded and the motion carried.
- XI. Employee Recognition:**
Katherine Unertl, 20 years (Finance Director)
Mayor Hass and Council President Russell presented Finance Director Unertl with her certificate.
- XII. Place Committee Reports on File:**
Alderson Rick made a motion to place the committee reports on file. Alderson Caylor seconded and the motion carried.
- XIII. Ordinances:**
City Attorney Hayden read the ordinance amending Chapter 2, Article VI, Section 2-148 Transit Commission. Alderson Caylor made a motion to suspend the rules and give the second and third readings by title only. Alderson Rick seconded. City Attorney Hayden gave the Ordinance the second and third readings by title only.

Alderson Caylor made a motion to accept the amended ordinance. Alderson Rick seconded and the motion carried on an 8/0 roll call vote.
- XIV. Mayor’s Appointments:**
Alderson Caylor made a motion to approve the Mayor’s Appointments as printed with the substitution of Kathy Lezotte appointed to the Tourism Commission with a term expiring 05/01/2024 replacing Ketul Patel. Alderson Rick seconded and the motion carried.

Alderson Russell asked to have the list of appointments read. City Clerk Anderson-Malm read the list of the Mayor’s Appointments.
- XV. Mayor’s Communications:**
Mayor Hass had the following communications:
April 20 – Enrichment Center – Estate Planning Basics at 6pm
April 21 & 22 – Friends of the Library Book Sale
April 26 – Critic’s Choice Movie – Green Book at TB Scott Library from 1pm – 3:30pm
April 29 – Adult Puzzle Competition from 11am – 2pm
April 29 – Loyalty Day Parade starting at 10:30
May 4 – Business After Hours at FreMarq at 5pm
- XVI. Adjournment:**
Alderson Russell made a motion to adjourn. Alderson Rick seconded and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:37 PM.

The complete Ordinance is available on the City of Merrill website: <https://www.ci.merrill.wi.us/>

Minutes respectfully submitted by Lori L Anderson-Malm – City Clerk