

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
Tuesday, February 14, 2023
6:00 PM
Common Council Chambers

I. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Mayor Steve Hass with the following attending:

Paul Russell – District 1
Michael “Gus” Caylor – District 2
Rick Blake – District 3 (remote)
LaDonna Fermanich – District 4
Dick Lupton – District 5
Mike Rick – District 6
Mark Weix – District 7
Steve Sabatke – District 8

Other’s present: Mayor Hass, City Clerk Anderson-Malm, Finance Director Unertl, City Attorney Hayden, Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator Pagel, Enrichment Center Director Mrachek, Facilities Maintenance Manager Wszalek, Fire Chief Klug, Library Director Ollhoff, Police Chief Bennett, Public Works/City Engineer Akey, Transit Director Brummond, Utility Operations Manager Steinagel, Rebecca Rutkowski, Chris Malm, Nancy Kwiesielewicz, Al Wix, Steve Osness, Clyde Nelson and Merrill Productions.

Park and Recreation Director Wendorf was excused.

II. Public Comment

Clyde Nelson – 709 Cottage Street – spoke regarding the City Administrator position. He stated there is an overwhelming response to fill the City Administrator position from the business community. He is in favor of filling the position. He also stated the city needs to move forward. He mentioned Mayor Hass, Interim’s Akey and Bennett are doing a great job but the city needs a constant contact.

III. City Administrator Position:

1. Discussion on future Administrator Budgeting Strategies – Mayor Hass brought attention to the information that was provided in the agenda packet regarding financing the City Administrator position. He reminded the council the budget will be very tight over the next few years. He does think the City Administrator is needed but does not want to put the City in jeopardy to finance it.

Finance Director Unertl explained the position is financed through TID’s and water and sewer funds. It is an important position for economic development.

Aldersperson Fermanich is not in disagreement the position is not an important one however does not see how it can be funded. The position is needed but the City does not have the finances to do it at this time.

Aldersperson Caylor stated he was not aware the position was paid by 25% of water and sewer funds. He agreed with Aldersperson's Fermanich and Russell regarding the importance of the position but the funds are not available.

Nancy Kwiesielewicz spoke for the AD-Hoc Committee and asked the question "Are we progressive thinking if we don't hire a City Administrator?" She stated the City needs a leader and hopes all will consider the position and leadership and moving Merrill forward.

There was further discussion regarding lowering the criteria for candidates. It was decided this would be brought back for discussion at the next Committee of the Whole.

2. Discussion on how to proceed in the future with the City Administrator position – Rebecca Rutkowski from the Ad-Hoc Committee, was in favor of looking for a lower level position.

Aldersperson Fermanich stated she was open to look at if the financial situation improves. She suggested we hold off and revisit in 2-3 months.

Mayor Hass said this will be considered after the February Personnel & Finance meeting and a possible decision from the State. This topic will be revisited in May.

IV. Closed Session:

City Attorney Hayden read the Closed Session statement.

Aldersperson Caylor made a motion to go into closed session. Aldersperson Rick seconded and the motion carried on a 9-0 roll call vote.

Closed session commenced at 6:25 PM with City Clerk Anderson-Malm taking minutes without objection.

The council discussed the performance of Interim City Administrator's Akey and Bennett.

V. Reconvene in Open Session:

The committee did not reconvene in open because no action was taken in the closed session.

VI. Adjournment:

Aldersperson Rick motioned to adjourn from closed and not reconvene in open.
Aldersperson Caylor seconded and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 6:54 PM.

Minutes prepared by: Lori Anderson-Malm – City Clerk