

**CITY OF MERRILL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
TUESDAY, APRIL 22, 2025 MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS 5:30 PM**

- I. **Call to Order** Mayor Hass called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.
Present: Mayor Hass, D1 Alderperson A. Caylor, D2 Alderperson M. Caylor, D3 Alderperson Meyer, D4 Alderperson Fermanich, D5 Alderperson Holdorf, D6 Alderperson Rick (remote), D7 Alderperson Weix Jr., D8 Alderperson Rutkowski, City Administrator Akey, Finance Director Ley, City Attorney Hayden, City Clerk Anderson-Malm, Library Director Ollhoff, Evan Krueger, Gary Schwartz, Carl Kemper - Becher Hoppe, Deb Burnette, Rick McCollough, Vinnie Bonino - Van Der Wahl Law Firm, Nathan Miller - Weld Riley Law Firm, various other citizens, Merrill Community Media.
- II. **Roll Call** Roll call was taken with all nine members present or remote.
- III. **Public Comment** Deb Burnett - W2548 Violet Lane, Merrill - spoke regarding Merrill Productions which she started in 2001 until her retirement. She gave the background of the program and stated that students film meetings, sporting events, concerts, and shows. They edit and produce programs for which have received various awards. She provided documents from former students regarding the benefits of the program.

Nathan Meyer - 208 E 4th St, Merrill - spoke regarding Merrill Community Media. He is the only full-time person at MP3. He talked about the Spectrum Channel and trying to get the channel up and running. He spoke about his concern regarding losing franchise fees from Spectrum if this funding is ended.

IV. Minutes from Previous Meeting

1. **Consider placing the minutes from the previous meeting on file.** - (D8 Alderperson Rutkowski/D5 Alderperson Holdorf) motion/second to place the minutes on file. The motion passed.

V. General Agenda Items for Consideration

1. **Consider a sponsor-only memo of approximately \$484,659.18 for the FBO Hangar at Merrill Airport** - City Administrator Akey gave an overview regarding the sponsor-only memo. Carl Kemper from Becher Hoppe approached the committee and provided project costs and discussed the bidding process. Evan Krueger addressed the committee regarding entitlement transfers for Merrill Airport. There are \$800,000 entitlement transfers available that must be used by August 19, 2025. The reason for the sponsor-only memo is due to timing regarding the validity of the entitlement transfers and grant money receipt. Finance Director Ley stated there is not a financial obligation from the City because of the timing. Following discussion, (D2 Alderperson M. Caylor/D8 Alderperson Rutkowski) motion/second to approve the sponsor-only memo of \$484,659.18 for the FBO Hangar. The motion passed on an 8/1 voice vote.

2. Discuss a borrowing plan for 2025

- Finance Director Ley provided information to the committee regarding a borrowing plan for 2025 and answered questions from the committee.

VI. Closed Session Closed session language was read by City Attorney Hayden. (D2 Alderperson M. Caylor/D3 Alderperson Meyer) motion/second to enter into a closed session. The motion passed on an 8/0 roll call vote. D6 Alderperson Rick was remote, so he could not partake in the closed-session discussion. The committee entered into closed at 6:02 pm with the following in addition to the committee for the first closed session item: City Attorney Hayden, Finance Director Ley, City Administrator Akey, City Clerk Anderson-Malm, Vinnie Bonino - Van Der Wahl Law Firm, Nathan Miller - Weld Riley Law Firm. City Clerk Anderson-Malm recorded minutes without objection.

- 1. The Committee may convene in closed session pursuant to Wisconsin State Statutes 19.85 (1)(c) and (e) for considering employment promotion, compensation or performance valuation data of any public employee over which the government body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility and 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; for purposes of hiring and considering compensation of outside counsel.** - The Committee interviewed both candidates regarding hiring outside counsel.
- 2. The Committee may convene in closed session pursuant to Wisconsin State Statutes 19.85 (1)(e) 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; to discuss MAPS coverage of City meetings, MAPS employees and compensation related thereto.** - The following were present for the second closed-session item: Mayor Hass, D1 Alderperson A, Caylor, D2 Alderperson M. Caylor, D4 Alderperson Fermanich, D5 Alderperson Holdorf, D7 Alderperson Weix, D8 Alderperson Rutkowski, City Administrator Akey, City Attorney Hayden, Finance Director Ley, City Clerk Anderson-Malm. D3 Alderperson Meyer removed himself from the closed-session. City Clerk Anderson-Malm recorded the minutes without objection. The Committee discussed MAPS coverage of City meetings, MAPS employees and compensation related thereto.
- 3. Consider placing the minutes from the previous Closed Meetings on file: January 28, 2025 and February 11, 2025 -**

VII. Reconvene in Open Session

- 1. The Committee may reconvene in an open session for potential action on the closed session items.** - The Committee reconvened in open session at 6:52 pm. The following recommendations were read regarding the closed session items.

1. There was a motion to recommend Van Der Wahl Law Firm as outside counsel and forward to the Common Council meeting. The motion passed on an 8/0 voice vote.
2. There was a motion to recommend severing ties with MAPS effective at the end of the school year for coverage of City meetings, MAPS employees and compensation related thereto and forward to the Common Council meeting. The motion passed on a 4/3 voice vote.
3. The minutes from the previous closed sessions were placed on file. That motion passed on an 8/0 voice vote.

VIII. Adjournment (D2 Alderperson M. Caylor/D7 Alderperson Weix) motion/second to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 6:53 pm.

Minutes submitted by City Clerk Anderson-Malm

Minutes are in draft form until approved at the next scheduled meeting