

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Monday, October 17, 2022

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
LaDonna Fermanich – District 4
Dick Lupton – District 5
Mike Rick – District 6
Mark Weix – District 7
Steve Sabatke – District 8

Other’s present: Mayor Steve Hass, Finance Director Unertl, City Attorney Hayden, City Clerk Anderson-Malm, Fire Chief Klug, Park & Recreation Director Wendorf, Police Chief Bennett, Street Superintendent Bonack, Enrichment Center Director Mrachek, Interim Library Director Ollhoff, Facilities Maintenance Manager Wszalek, Utility Operations Steinagel, Clyde Nelson and Merrill Productions

II. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

III. Public Comment

Clyde Nelson, 709 Cottage Street, spoke as the President of the Merrill Chamber of Commerce. He spoke in favor of the logo and branding and opposed reconsideration of the logo. He stated the logo was approved by the Council.

Marketing Specialist Chantel Kuczmarski addressed the negative comments from Facebook. She agrees to have a town hall meeting to answer questions and to present the logo and branding.

Clyde Nelson, 709 Cottage Street, mentioned the Secretary of Economic Development will be in Merrill on October 18th regarding the Bounce Back Grant Loans. She will be in the Common Council Chambers at 2:00 pm and requested all Alderperson’s to attend if possible.

IV. Possible reconsideration of the logo vote

Aldersperson Blake made a motion to refer the logo back to the Marketing and Communications committee. Aldersperson Sabatke seconded the motion for discussion.

Discussion occurred between the Aldersperson's. It was decided to have a public forum and run it through the Marketing and Communications committee. It was suggested Scott Steele and Chantel Kuczmarski would have a presentation. This will tentatively be part of the Marketing and Communications November meeting. The committee would report back to the Common Council after the forum. Aldersperson Fermanich stated she is in favor of the town hall meeting format.

The original motion was restated and the motion carried.

V. Consider 2023 Operational Budget Requests:

1. Marketing & Communications – Aldersperson Blake stated the budget includes approximately the same as the 2022 budget. Discussion regarding the signage with the logo took place. It was stated the signs would be phased in and the Fab Lab at the high school would be contacted for the signs to keep the cost down.

Aldersperson Blake and Marketing Specialist Kuczmarski spoke on the Social Media Specialist position. This position would expand the cities presence on social media and highlight activities in Merrill.

Aldersperson Caylor made a motion to cut the social media position from the 2023 budget. Aldersperson Sabatke seconded. The motion carried on a 5-4 roll call vote. Aldersperson's Blake, Fermanich, Lupton and Weix voted no.

2. Fund 24 – Merrill Festival Grounds & Bierman Building – Finance Director Unertl gave an overview of Fund 24.

3. Non-Departmental Revenues – Finance Director Unertl gave a brief explanation regarding the non-department revenues. She answered questions from the Alderspersons.

4. Public Safety – Police, Fire and Ambulance-EMS – Police Chief Bennett answered questions from Aldersperson's. Fire Chief Klug answered questions from the Aldersperson's.

5. Other City Functions – Enrichment Center Director Mrachek explained her budget and stated the activities have rebounded well after Covid. She answered questions from the Aldersperson's.

6. Community Events and Organizations – Finance Director Unertl explained some of the community events and organizations.

Aldersperson Fermanich made a motion to increase the allocation to Haven from \$6,000 to \$10,000. Aldersperson Blake seconded. The motion carried on a 6-2 roll call vote. Aldersperson's Caylor and Lupton voted no.

Aldersperson Fermanich made a motion to reduce the allocation to the Humane Society from \$15,000 to \$6,000. There was no second.

VI. Overall General-Tax Levy Budget and Preliminary Tax Levy Projection

Finance Director Unertl gave a brief explanation.

VII. Schedule additional budget meeting – if needed

The next budget meeting will be Tuesday, November 1st at 6:30 PM in the Common Council Chambers.

VIII. Adjournment

Aldersperson Lupton motioned to adjourn. Aldersperson Russell seconded and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori L. Anderson-Malm – City Clerk