

Common Council Minutes
Wednesday, February 21, 2024 at 7:00 PM

The Common Council of the City of Neenah, Winnebago County, Wisconsin, met in regular session at 7:00 PM, February 21, 2024 in the Council Chambers of Neenah City Hall.

Mayor Lang in the chair.

Present: Aldermen Boyette, Erickson, Hillstrom, Lendrum, Steiner, Stevenson, Skyrms, and Council President Borchardt. Alderman Weber was excused. Staff present Director of Finance Rasmussen, Director of Community Development & Assessment Haese, Director of Public Works Kaiser, City Attorney Rashid, and City Clerk Nagel.

Also Present: Police Chief Olson, Assistant Police Chief Bernice, Police Lieutenant Van Sambeek, Fire Chief Teesch, and citizens listed on the attached attendance sheets.

Mayor Lang called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

- I. The Mayor/Alderpersons recorded their attendance on the RollCall-Pro System as the Clerk called the roll. Alderman Boyette led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- II. Introduction and Confirmation of Mayor's Appointment(s)
 - A. Appoint Holly Folyer to Sustainable Neenah Committee for a three-year term ending December 2026. **(UC)**
 - B. Swearing in
There being no objections, the Mayor's appointments were ordered approved as presented by unanimous consent.
- III. Approval of Council Proceedings
 - A. Approval of the Council Minutes and Proceedings of February 7, 2024 regular session. **(UC)**
There being no objections, the February 7, 2024 Council Minutes and Proceedings were ordered approved as written by unanimous consent.
- IV. Public Forum
 - A. Speakers should give their name and residential address (not mailing address) and are allowed five minutes to speak on any topic.
 1. Jeff Linski, 1563 Kingswood Drive – Candidate for Aldermanic District 3. Mr. Linski introduced himself and spoke on his campaign platform.
 2. Kristen Sandvick, 312 Caroline Street – Candidate for Aldermanic District 1. Ms. Sandvick introduced herself and spoke on her campaign platform.
 3. Adam Hendryx, 641 Belmont Court – Gave the Council and Director Kaiser accolades for making sure questions and concerns of residents on Belmont Court were heard and addressed. Especially for Director Kaiser who went above and beyond to meet with Mr. Hendryx as well as other residents in the neighborhood. Director Kaiser's dedication is very much appreciated.
 4. Ryan Batley, General Manager of Best Western Hotel, Resort and Conference Center, 1000 Cameron Way – Is present to answer questions or concerns regarding the proposed TIF #12 Financing Development Agreement.
- V. Mayor/Council consideration of public forum issues
- VI. Consent Agenda
 - A. None.
- VII. Reports of standing committees

A. Regular Public Services and Safety Committee meeting of February 13, 2024: (Chairperson Lendrum/Vice Chairperson Hillstrom) (Minutes can be found on the City web site)

1. Committee recommends Council approve Final Resolution 2024-01: Installation of sanitary sewer laterals and water services for properties serviced on the following streets: Bayview Road, Belmont Avenue, Belmont Court, Cedar Street, E. Doty Avenue, North Street, Quarry Lane, Stevens Street, and S. Park Avenue. **(RollCall-Pro)**

MSCRCP Lendrum/Hillstrom to approve Final Resolution 2024-01 as presented, all voting aye. No discussion

2. Committee recommends Council approve the purchase of 28x Meridian Archer 1200 barriers, two Meridian Drop Down Trailers and miscellaneous accessories at the cost of \$245,860.09 from the 2024 Capital Improvement Plan Funds. **(RollCall-Pro)**

MSCRCP Lendrum/Skyrms to approve the purchase of the barriers as presented, all voting.

Alderman Lendrum explained the barriers are for protecting the crowds when streets are closed for special events. Alderman Lendrum added that currently the city is using city owned larger trucks as barriers. The use of actual barriers is clearly a better choice because the vehicles are not being used in a manner they were intended which could cause insurance issues.

Alderman Stevenson clarified ARPA funds are being used to purchase the barriers which came to the city as a response to the pandemic. The city chose to fund the barriers because they are needed to protect citizens during a special event. It should be noted that the police department has done extensive research on the barriers and justified the purchase.

Alderman Skyrms supports the barrier purchase and encourages citizen to look up the Meridian Rapid Respond Group website to view the demonstration on how they work.

3. Committee recommends Council approve the creation of the Houses Into Homes program as recommended by the Department of Community Development and funded with proceeds from the affordable housing tax incremental district one year extension. **(RollCall-Pro)**

MSCRCP Lendrum/Hillstrom to approve the Houses into Homes Program as presented, all voting aye.

Alderman Steiner questioned if part of the program could be used for expanding the housing stock and not just for improving the current stock. Director Haese advised that yes, TIF extension funds financing the Houses Into Homes program could also be allocated for adding to the current housing stock, but this year is considered a pilot year to see if there is interest in the program and how the program will function. A housing study is planned to be conducted this year that could shed some light on opportunities on how some of these TIF extension funds could be used to add to the housing stock, especially the affordable housing stock.

Community Development Specialist Jefferson gave a presentation on the Houses Into Homes Program. A copy of the presentation is attached to the meeting minutes.

Alderman Skyrms inquired on what data points are going to be used in determining a successful program. Specialist Jefferson answered that the data points of measurability are still being worked out and discussed, although staff has discussed possibly using assessed value, aesthetic criteria, or the number of people who move into the city.

Alderman Borchardt asked how a resident would be able to apply for the Houses Into Homes Program. Specialist Jefferson advised advertisements will be put on Facebook, potentially Neenah News, Neenah Notes, presented at Rock the Block Event, referral by city building inspectors and code enforcement, and will have a dedicated webpage on the city's website. The dedicated webpage will be where the property owner would apply. Once a project is identified as eligible, the property owner will be asked to meet with staff to determine if the project is a loan project. If the project is a loan project, then the loan would have to be approved by the Loan Assistance Board.

Alderman Erickson clarified the boundary of the Houses Into Homes Program as being only on Doty Island at this point. Specialist Jefferson stated that when staff analyzed the data of eligible properties, the data overwhelmingly showed that Doty Island was an excellent targeted area to begin with. The intent is to get the program to other areas of the city, but this year is considered a pilot year to see how the program will function and if there is interest.

Alderman Erickson asked if investment properties would be eligible for this program because it would be a great way for house flipper to make more money. Specialist Jefferson answered that yes, investment properties would be eligible at a lower dollar cap and a lower city investment rate. Director Haese also advised there would be a lien on any investment house in which the city would be reimbursed with the sale of the home. Director Haese is not overly concerned about investment properties using the Houses Into Homes Program because any improvements in the housing stock is an improvement. Specialist Jefferson advised staff will be monitoring who applies for the program during the pilot as well. The City of Menasha, in their Houses Into Homes Program found that most projects were owner occupied.

4. Committee recommends Council approve Westwood Professional Services to perform a redesign of the storm sewer for the S. Commercial Street reconstruction project for an amount not to exceed \$10,560.00, which shall be funded with the S. Commercial Street design dollars. **(RollCall-Pro)**
MSCRP Lendrum/Borchardt to approve the Westwood Professional Services contract as presented, all voting aye. No discussion
5. Committee recommends Council approve Contract Amendment 1 for design and construction administration services on the Neenah Creek Bridge with GRAEFUSA, Inc., in the amount of \$31,600.00. **(RollCall-Pro)**
MSCRP Lendrum/Borchardt to approve the GRAEFUSA, Inc. Contract Amendment 1 as presented, all voting aye.

Alderman Lendrum clarified the location of the Neenah Creek Bridge as the one nearest to the resort.

6. Committee recommends Council approve the contract with Westwood Professional Services for design services on the Douglas Pond at a cost of \$45,300.00. **(RollCall-Pro)**

MSCRP Lendrum/Stevenson to approve the approve the Westwood Professional Services contract as presented. Motion carried in a roll call vote, 7-1 with Boyette dissenting.

Alderman Stevenson thanked Director Kaiser for bringing the contact back trough committee and counsel. Alderman Stevenson reminded everyone, as he is preparing to step down, that staff needs council approval to subcontract with contractors.

Alderman Boyette will be voting against this item per feedback she received from her constituents.

- B. Regular Finance and Personnel Committee meeting of February 12, 2024: (Chairperson Erickson/Vice Chairperson Skyrms) (Minutes can be found on the City web site)

1. Committee recommends Council approve Tax Incremental District #12 Development Agreement with Bridgewood Holdings of Neenah, LLC to assist with the construction of 40 new guest rooms and ancillary improvements to the Bridgewood Resort Hotel and Conference Center at 1000 Cameron Way. **(RollCall-Pro)**

MSCRP Erickson/Hillstrom to approve the Tax Incremental District #12 Development Agreement with Bridgewood Holdings of Neenah, LLC as presented. Motion carried in a roll call vote, 7-0-1 with Stevenson abstaining.

Alderman Steiner asked Mr. Batley if he could speak on how the project fits into the "but/for" test in which city financial assistance is needed to move forward with the expansion project.

Mr. Batley explained that construction costs are higher than ever and continue to increase. For the resort, it is the unexpected ancillary costs hindering the forward progress of the project, specifically the area of the old golf course that is in the floodplain. The substantial costs to get this area out of the floodplain to make this project happen would be prohibitive to the resort. The floodplain is an excessive amount, above and beyond, what would normally be a part of an expansion project of this size. The construction costs alone would be prohibitive as well.

Alderman Skyrms believes the true impact of this project is the forty addition guest rooms. Some percentage of those rooms will be occupied every night. If half the rooms are filled, that is 7,000 room nights per year. Alderman Skyrms' research showed that for every \$100 spent on lodging, another \$222 is spent at the destination. After doing some yearly calculations, this seems like a reasonable and worthwhile investment, and Alderman Skyrms will be supporting it.

2. Committee recommends Council approve an interest rate of 5% for 2024 special assessments paid in installments. **(RollCall-Pro)**
MSCRP Erickson/Steiner to approve the 5% interest rate for 2024 special assessments paid in installments as presented, all voting aye. No discussion

VIII. Reports of special committees and liaisons and various special projects committees

- A. Regular Plan Commission meeting of February 13, 2024: (Council Rep Steiner) (Minutes can be found on the City web site)
 - 1. No report.
 - 2. Alderman Steiner advised that the Plan Commission has been updating the City's Comprehensive Plan. Alderman Steiner encourages everyone to look at the document as it is full of great information and ideas for the future of Neenah. The Commission is on the cusp of completing the update and will bring it to the Council soon. Accolades were given to Deputy Director of Community Development Schmidt for his organization and leadership in walking the Commission through the update process.
- B. Board of Public Works meeting of February 13, 2024: (Vice Chairperson Hillstrom) (Minutes can be found on the City web site)
 - 1. Information Only Items:
 - a. The Board approved Pay Request No.2, Contract 7-23, Sanitary & Storm Sewer, Water Main, and Street Construction, on High Street and River Street, to Carl Bowers & Sons Construction Co., Inc., in the amount of \$98,095.33.
 - b. The Board approved Pay Request No. 2, Contract 2-23W West Side Booster Station Building Construction, to RJM construction, LLC., in the amount of \$12,622.65.
 - 2. Council Action Items:
 - a. The Board recommends Council approve award Contract 1-24, Sanitary Sewer & Laterals, Storm Sewer, Water Main & Services and Street Construction on Belmont Avenue, Belmont Court, Cedar Street, and Stevens Street, using the concrete pavement alternative, to David Tenor Corporation in the amount of \$3,295,454.70. **(RollCall-Pro)**
MSCRP Hillstrom/Lendrum to award Contract 1-24 as recommended by the Board of Public Works, all voting aye. No discussion
- C. Reports on neighborhood groups.
 - 1. Business Improvement District Board (BID Board) Meeting of February 20, 2024 – Alderman Skyrms
 - a. The Warm Your Hearts Event was a very successful event.
 - b. Future Neenah, Inc. announced their awards for 2023 which were Grainworks Old + New as the Downtown Business of the Year, Plexus, Inc. was the Champion of the Year, Santiago Sanchez was awarded Volunteer of the Year, and the City of Neenah was the Civic Partner of the Year.
 - c. The tree beds will be decorated in May.
 - d. March 19th is the next Meeting which will be an open house at Future Neenah, Inc. It is a chance to meet and mingle with downtown business owners.
 - e. Urban Market should be opening next month.
 - f. Moving into 433 S. Commercial, previous Scanlan Studio, is “Mello” by Salon di Amici, a hair salon studio.
 - g. BID Board awarded three businesses sign grants.
- D. Library Board Meeting of February 21, 2024
 - 1. Report from the Library Board – Alderman Erickson
 - a. The Year-End Review statistics were given at this meeting: There were 210,149 library visits, 24,211 attended programs, 603,626 checkouts, 52,627 reference questions answered. The library is very popular and well used.
- E. Neenah Arts Council Meeting of February 14, 2024
 - 1. Meeting cancelled, no report.
- F. Landmarks Commission Meeting of February 15, 2024

1. Report from the Landmarks Commission – Alderman Weber

IX. Presentation of petitions

- A. Any other petition received by the City Clerk’s Office after distribution of the agenda.
1. None.

X. Council Directives

XI. Unfinished Business

- A. Alderman Erickson would like someone from Information Systems to attend the next Council Meeting to give an update on Council members receiving iPads for Council work and an onboarding plan outline for new Council member.
B. Alderman Boyette updated the Council on SB752 the Service Animal Bill passed the Legislature and is waiting Governor Evers’ signature on April 25th.

XII. New Business

- A. Arrowhead Park Development Status Report. (Alderman Hillstrom)
Nothing new to report.
B. Any announcements/questions that may legally come before the Council.

XIII. Closed Session

- A. The Common Council may convene into closed session pursuant to Wis. Stat. §19.85(1)(e) for the purpose of deliberating or negotiating the purchase of public properties, the investing of public funds, or the conducting of other specified public business as long as competitive or bargaining reasons required closed session related to land acquisition adjacent to or in the vicinity of the downtown area.
B. The Common Council may reconvene into open session pursuant to Wis. Stats. § 19.85(2) to consider or act on any item (s) discussed in closed session.

Motion by Stevenson/Borchardt for the Council to move into closed session. The Council may reconvene into open session to consider action on any item(s) discussed in closed session, all voting aye.

At 7:52 PM, the Council took a ten-minute recess.


At 8:00 PM, the Council convened into closed session.

The meeting adjourned in closed session.

XIV. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned in closed session. Motion by Lendrum/Borchardt to adjourn, all voting aye. Meeting adjourned at 8:16 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Charlotte Nagel, City Clerk