



City of Racine

City Hall
730 Washington Ave.
Racine, WI 53403
www.cityofracine.org

Meeting Minutes - Final Common Council

Mayor John T. Dickert, President, Alderman Raymond DeHahn

*Alderman Dennis Wisner, Alderman Jim Kaplan
Alderman Q.A. Shakoor, II, Alderman Ronald D. Hart,
Alderman Sandy Weidner*

*Alderman Krystyna Sarrazin, Alderman Jeff Coe, Alderman
Michael Shields*

*Alderman Melissa Kaprelian-Becker, Alderman Terry
McCarthy*

*Alderman Gregory Holding Alderman James Morgenroth
Alderman Edward E. Diehl, Alderman Henry Perez*

Monday, October 20, 2014

7:00 PM

Room 205, City Hall

A. Call To Order

PRESENT: 14 - Coe, Sarrazin, Shields, Kaplan, Kaprelian-Becker, Weidner, DeHahn, Shakoor, II, McCarthy, Holding, Perez, Morgenroth, Hart and Diehl

EXCUSED: 1 - Wisner

B. Pledge of Allegiance To The Flag

Mayor Dickert led the Council in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

C. Mayor Dickert's 2015 Budget Address

Budget Address 2014

As you know we had a large financial challenge before us this year. I want to thank the staff and the aldermen who started looking at options and new solutions to old problems as far back as March. I am happy to report that the Operations budget I am presenting tonight is balanced with a zero increase. The payment on our Debt service portion of the budget will be a 1.99% increase.

This budget continues to build our city and implement our long range planning while making changes that are necessary, but not welcomed. As we continue to face reduced funding from the State and Federal government we reach out to our local, state and federal partners to build a better community.

In my state of the city address I talked with you about Cathedral thinking, a way to build on –and for- future generations. This budget builds a stronger city with our eyes clearly set on a new normal, filled with more partnerships, collaboration and creativity than ever before.

We began the process knowing that we would be facing increases in Healthcare, cancelled property taxes, pothole replacement, snow and ice removal and overtime. However, we will not back down from our commitment to our residents and businesses; therefore we will be providing \$100,000 in additional funding to prevent cuts to our bus service.

This budget also includes funding at the appropriate level for Judgments and Claims, Legal services and Contingency to make up for cuts the Council made last year. We

cannot ignore the real costs of these programs and therefore I am asking the Council to keep the funding levels as budgeted so that we are not forced to dip into our reserves once again this year. Using these accounts to fund other programs is fiscally irresponsible.

--

Due to the State's continuation of levy limits, we have been forced to reduce personnel, as well as make reductions in Belle TV, the Civic Center, the Zoo and a small cut to the municipal band. With the \$6 million in revenue needed for the 2015 budget, we knew we had to work out a compromised agreement with our employee groups. And together we did.

I want to take a minute to thank those in the police and fire bargaining groups who came to the table with me to talk about building a better Racine together. Thank you for doing so - and turning a challenge into an opportunity. Thank you all, the city is a better place because of your commitment.

As you know we have used significant reserves to temporarily fund the loss of shared revenue coming into the city. The use of reserves has to stop. It is unsustainable and if we continue to use the reserves to fund city operations, we will put our credit rating at risk, costing taxpayers even more money going forward.

Thanks to everyone's hard work and some additional belt tightening, we were able to cut back our general fund reserve allocation to the budget from \$2.6 million to \$750,000. And we cut back the amount we used from the health reserve account balance from \$2 million to \$700,000. These efforts will retain a strong reserve but moving forward we must reduce this use further. We have hit our limit. There is nowhere else to go.

We have had to make numerous difficult decisions including additional service reductions in our Parks Department, Community Centers and Road maintenance and Repair. Going forward - we will be assessing the use of additional fees for non-residents who utilize such facilities.

We have all heard about the concerns from our residents, whether it's regarding street lights, garbage pickup, snow plowing or pot holes. So I ask the Council and the public to listen closely to the presentations by our department heads. There are a number of service and staff reductions that we have had to make to get here today that will not go unnoticed by the public.

However, as long as levy limits endure we will have to make cuts to much needed city services. The real question is at what time do these cuts hurt our ability to attract new businesses and investors?

--

The good news is that we can eliminate the 3 unpaid furlough days that our employees have taken. I cannot thank our employees enough for their dedication over these last 2 years. I know it was a burden on you, because I and some of the alderman took them too! The good news for our residents it means a return to the old level of service. Although, we will need to review this issue annually as long as levy limits are in place.

On another positive note, our efforts at the federal level have brought in vital funds from the EPA to help us redevelop our contaminated lands. This is not long term funding that we can count on year in and year out, but we will continue to apply for grants and programs that assist us with redevelopment areas of the city that we could never afford to remediate on our own.

While the budget continues to provide us with significant challenges, it does not stop us from working on the things that we can control. 2015 looks to be a year of opportunity with the Downtown and West Racine projects in our sights. At the end of October we look forward to the announcement of the Uptown plan, the most comprehensive plan ever created for Uptown by the residents, businesses and

planners.

So, we look locally, regionally and internationally for partners in this progress. We have worked hard to develop the relationships with our partners and they are paying dividends. As I said to start this speech, we must look toward and work for our future generations.

We must make every penny go further and every opportunity is a chance to grow our community. Racine is counting on us to make the tough decisions and do what is right. So let's get to work.

Thank You.

D. Communication

Refer to Committee of the Whole, by Ald. DeHahn

[14-10641](#)

Subject:Communication from Mayor Dickert submitting the 2015 proposed budgets for the General Fund, Special Revenue Funds, Debt Service Fund, Enterprise Funds and Internal Service Funds; Capital Projects and the 2015-2024 Capital Improvement Plan.

Referred to the Committee of the Whole

E. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:12p.m. by Alderman Shakoor. The next scheduled meeting of the Council is Tuesday, October 21, 2014.

ATTEST: JANICE M. JOHNSON-MARTIN
CITY CLERK