



# City of Racine

City Hall  
730 Washington Ave.  
Racine, WI 53403  
[www.cityofracine.org](http://www.cityofracine.org)

## Meeting Minutes - Final Common Council

*Mayor John T. Dickert, Alderman Q.A. Shakoor, II, Alderman  
Eric Marcus,  
Alderman Michael Shields, Alderman Ronald D. Hart,  
Alderman Jim Kaplan,  
Alderman Dennis Wiser, Alderman Aron Wisneski, Alderman  
Sandy Weidner, Alderman Terry McCarthy, Alderman  
Raymond DeHahn, Alderman Gregory Holding, Alderman  
Robert Mozol, Alderman O. Keith Fair, Alderman Melissa  
Kaprelian-Becker, Alderman James Morgenroth*

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Monday, October 17, 2011

6:00 PM

Room 205, City Hall

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### A. Call To Order

**PRESENT:** 11 - Fair, Marcus, Kaplan, Kaprelian-Becker, DeHahn, Shakoor, II, McCarthy, Wiser, Holding, Wisneski and Mozol

**EXCUSED:** 4 - Shields, Weidner, Morgenroth and Hart

### B. Pledge of Allegiance To The Flag

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

*Mayor Dickert presented his 2012 Budget.*

*2012 Budget Speech - As prepared by Mayor John Dickert*

*Residents, friends, department heads, council members and  
President Holding, I introduce to you the 2012 budget. Reverend Jesse Jackson said  
"Leadership has a harder job to do than just choose sides, it must bring sides  
together."*

*2011 has been an exciting and challenging year for all of us. Throughout my time as  
Mayor I remind people of the importance of celebrating wins, large or small. We have  
to reflect on the positive results in our life. It is all too easy to get bogged down in our  
challenges and lose sight of our accomplishments.*

*We initiated one of the largest joint services agreements in recent history. Our staff  
worked tirelessly to bring in millions of dollars in grants to offset property taxes.  
Through the Neighborhood Stabilization Program, we have turned foreclosures into  
family homes. And in 2011, Racine was recognized as having the best tasting  
drinking water in the country as well as received a national award for city livability.  
Once again North Beach was named one of the best beaches in the Country by a  
variety of national & international publications.*

*We were the First City in the Country to hold a town hall meeting with the White  
House with the job Creators in Racine. With our incredible partners we gave away  
backpacks to our children and committed to reading one million books by the end of  
this school year. We brought a Fountain back to life and we dug our way out of one of*

*the worst snow storms in History and we did all of this together!  
Now let's talk about the work we have ahead of us. I know we have all been struggling these past few years and the City has worked consistently to bring you the best services while keeping your pocketbook in mind.  
During our public budget sessions you asked us to make tough decisions and we did, while retaining as many services as possible. Now, I am asking the Council to stand with me as we work through our challenges and build a better city.*

*Up until today, the city's ability to keep our costs down in recent years was driven by having no increase in pay for City employees for the last 3 years. In addition, the City implemented changes in the Healthcare and Wellness program that kept those costs to little or no increase for the last 3 years.  
Because of the state budget shortfall, we expected the state would be sending less of your tax dollars to the city. What we did not expect were reductions in support of local road maintenance, the transit system and recycling, these funds were redirected to other priorities like building more freeways making it easier to drive past Racine. The Governor's Budget was intended to allow for tools to help resolve the cuts; however, the Budget language limited our options and did not allow us to cut our largest expenses. Police and Fire account for 56% and cannot be reduced  
When faced with this dilemma we went back to the 3 largest organizations in the city and asked for help. Unfortunately, these three unions did not come to the table. Even after the head of AFSCME publically stated they would work with us, they did not. Therefore, the full brunt of the \$2 million in state cuts was laid on the backs of the remaining areas, which will lead to the cuts in services we are going to discuss tonight. Let me remind you, we are not even talking about the Federal cuts imposed on the City.  
Our plan of action is simple; no surprises and no gimmicks. I can honestly say that I am not happy with this budget, nor am I excited about the box the City has been put in. We are facing a no-win situation designed by people who do not understand or simply chose to ignore the fact that the City of Racine has been and will always be the model of fiscal efficiency.*

*Knowing how difficult this will be on our residents, one of the first cuts I made was my own. If I am going to ask others to sacrifice, then I must do the same and put my money where my mouth is.*

*If the Council chooses to eliminate one of these cuts they will be required to find an offsetting reduction.*

*Unfortunately for our youth, workers and seniors our hardest hit area by the state is our bus service. The Governor has moved our bus money to build new highways where there are likely to be more animals than cars on the roads.*

*Recycling, which has been one of our most successful accomplishments, saving taxpayers' dollars was cut by the state. Even though the tipping fees we pay remain the same. Your taxpayer funds were simply stripped away and transferred to another state department.*

*The Governor and the legislature have mandated that there will be no more increases in levy – which guarantees that as we move forward, each year you will continue to see more and more of your services cut as our costs rise. Due to the State's actions, these cuts will be permanent.*

*Let me be clear about the budget the State passed. Racine has been mandated by*

*the State of Wisconsin to never, I repeat never increase our operations levy. Our costs for fuel, salt, electricity, emergency services to name a few, continue to rise, and as they do, your services will continually have to be cut. It's an unwinnable situation.*

*The fact is: An out of touch Madison should not be telling a very efficient Racine how to run its government. It's like me trying to tell Aaron Rodgers how to run an offense. While the challenges are daunting - We have not given up on new ideas and innovative thinking. The City will be:*

- A. Sending out a letter to non - property taxpayers. Asking them to assist us in any way they can.*
- B. Evaluating additional costs savings in; Departmental Consolidation*
- C. Continue to look at Service sharing with other entities.*

*Furthermore, we are preparing a list of unfunded mandates that we will be sending to the State to inform them of our intentions to have the state either fund or take over those services.*

*The City will no longer burden our taxpayers by picking up the tab of other governmental entities. It is not fair to you the taxpayers and it cannot continue.*

*As the State required – we are coming in at a zero increase in our operations budget. And by an effective use of refinancing we have cut our debt interest payment which would have been a 4% levy increase to 2.8%.*

*As I have said before, we cannot cut our way to greatness. That's why we look to innovation and partnerships, because in the end, our parents, grandparents, neighbors and most importantly our children have a right to a better future.*

*Tonight as I wrap up, I want to leave you on a high note. In an effort to expand and grow jobs in Racine and solve international water challenges; in partnership with Wingspread and the US Conf. of Mayors Racine will host the 1st International Water Summit in December.*

*Because in Racine - We will not accept mediocrity – we will always strive to be extraordinary.*

*God Bless and Good night.*

## **C. Communications**

### **Refer to Committee of the Whole, by Ald. Holding**

[11-7007](#)

**Subject:** Communication from Mayor Dickert submitting the 2012 proposed budgets for the General Fund, Special Revenue Funds, Debt Service, Enterprise Funds, Utilities, and Internal Service Funds.

**Referred to Committee of the Whole**

## **D. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:19p.m. by Alderman Shakoor.