



City of Racine

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

Meeting Minutes - Final Common Council

Mayor John T. Dickert, Alderman Q.A. Shakoor, II, Alderman Michael Shields, Alderman Ronald D. Hart, Alderman Jim Kaplan, Alderman Dennis Wisner, 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, Alderman Krystyna Sarrazin, Alderman Molly Hall

Wednesday, October 24, 2012

6:00 PM

Room 205, City Hall

A. Call To Order

PRESENT: 13 - Fair, Shields, Kaprelian-Becker, DeHahn, McCarthy, Morgenroth, Mozol, Wisner, Kaplan, Shakoor, II, Hart, Weidner and Hall

EXCUSED: 2 - Holding and Sarrazin

B. Pledge of Allegiance To The Flag

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

C. Communication

[12-8277](#)

Subject: Communication from Mayor Dickert submitting the 2013 proposed budgets for the General Fund, Special Revenue Funds, Debt Service Fund, Enterprise Funds and Internal Service Funds; Capital Projects and Capital Improvement Plan.

Referred to Committee of the Whole

D. Mayor's Budget Presentation

2013 Budget Speech – October 24, 2012

Mr. President, Aldermen and residents of the City of Racine, I introduce to you the 2013 City Budget.

I will not beat around the bush, we face difficult times. We have tough decisions to make regarding this budget. While our financial situation is not good, it reminds me of a saying by Henry Ford, "When everything seems to be going against you remember that the airplane takes off against the wind."

Despite the strong head wind, I believe our council and our residents will face these challenges head on, we just need a little wind under our wings to get us soaring again.

Our job is to provide you the best services possible, while creating efficient and long term solutions to complex problems, so Racine can compete in the marketplace, attract new businesses and provide the quality of life our residents deserve.

For the last three years my administration and the Council have worked hand in hand to provide greater efficiencies, long term planning and a stable fiscal budget which protects our taxpayers and our children.

However, the leadership in Madison continues to make it more difficult to provide our residents with the services they deserve and return our fair share of the very taxes that you pay - back to Racine where they belong.

Despite our efforts to be leaner and a more effective local government, State leaders have diverted funds away from municipal programs, causing further budget challenges in Racine. As we have for the past three years, we will overcome, because we have the leadership and the will, to move this city forward.

All of these funds were designed to send your tax dollars back to your city to pay for these services. Programs like recycling were designed to keep trash out of landfills and recycle it to save us money and help save the planet. The State cuts to these programs provide no encouragement or reward for efficiency.

While our staff has brought us a new proposal which cuts out recycling transfer stations – thus saving residents taxes, it is simply not enough to make up for the cuts the State imposed. We have also seen increases in the following areas; healthcare costs, animal control and WRS payments.

With regard to Animal Control, I want to give Tom Friedel and Dottie Kay Bowersox a special thank you for their incredible effort to put the contract together saving the city taxpayers millions of dollars in future costs. Their patience and determination cannot go unnoticed. Thank you.

The city has also seen decreases in interest income, as well as reserve accounts. So what does this all mean? Well we are looking at a decrease in funds to the city of nearly 1 million and an increase in costs to the city of over \$3 million.

While people from all over the area utilize assets like North Beach, Festival and Memorial Hall, as well as the parks and our 4th of July Parade, the taxpayers of

Racine have been bearing the brunt of the costs to maintain them. That's not sustainable and it's not a true partnership.

In order to protect our assets for the future we will need to begin assessing charges for services we provide to non-city residents. We will also be implementing new fees to services we provide outside the city for protective services. Simply said - If other municipalities are not willing to fully fund the protection of their residents I will not put our city at risk for those decisions. It is time everyone pays their fair share.

In order to balance the budget you will be seeing cuts in services in this budget, cuts that directly impact us. We will be going through those specifically over the next week or two.

It is obvious that the challenge before us is a great one, but let me be clear – if the State's actions continue -the City will be forced to evaluate if, and how we can afford the quality of life issues that make our city great, like the zoo, North Beach, Festival and Memorial Hall, our parks and even our BUS system.

In preparation, I have asked my department heads to look long term at what the city will look like in the next 5-7 years if these cuts continue. I will tell you that it is likely the items I just mentioned will all have to be on the table.

These cuts will impact all of us, but it is not enough to just cut budgets. I believe that you have to work smarter and harder to build a great city, and that is what this administration is doing. Therefore, we continue to work to make sure we are fiscally responsible and plan for a successful tomorrow. What have we done to prepare for success?

1. Keeping our bond rating higher because of long term decision making based on a secure future for you and your kids. I will not take the bait our state and federal governments have taken by simply shifting all our costs to long term debt to pass to our future councils and our kids. This course of action is irresponsible and lacks leadership.
2. Paying down or paying off TIFS
3. Working with new developers and investors to rebuild Racine and bring in additional revenue to lower taxes.
4. Rebuilding our infrastructure where we can to attract development and save money over the long run.
5. Consolidating Departments to keep the highest level of service.
6. Most importantly – we will be introducing a comprehensive plan that will attract investors and developers to Racine. I believe you don't cut your way to a great city – you work in partnership to build a better community.

What can we do together? We are doing the hard work and now I am asking for your help. Recycling is one area where our efforts as a community help us generate more revenue, yet many still do not recycle. Please do your part to help and we can all benefit together.

As we see services lost to budget cuts I ask those of you who can to volunteer to help our community. Whether you are assisting with our kids or our seniors, every little bit helps. Or just be a good neighbor to keep an eye on your neighborhood.

I know these are difficult times but I pledge we will continue to work to build our city to one of the greatest in the country. I am determined because you give me hope with your comments and well wishes, your prayers and your help.

We have work to do on this budget and it is likely that the budget will go through several versions, but I am confident we will work together with partnerships and pride we will build a better Racine.

Thank you, God bless you and let's get to work.

E. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30p.m. by Alderman Shakoor. The next scheduled meeting of the Council is November 7, 2012.

ATTEST: JANICE M. JOHNSON-MARTIN
CITY CLERK