



# Administrative & Judiciary Committee Agenda

Wednesday, February 8, 2023 @ 5:30 PM

415 Main Street, Onalaska WI 54650

Meeting in person in Council Chambers & remotely on Zoom

Members of the public wishing to attend remotely and provide public input:  
Meeting Link: <https://zoom.us/j/91766900493?pwd=M2I3WjJlc2lSZVdML1NwODJSNlVxdz09>  
Phone Number: 1-312-626-6799 Meeting ID: 917 6690 0493 Password: 54650

1. Call to Order and roll call.
2. Consideration and action on minutes from the previous meeting.
3. Public Input (limited to 3 minutes per individual).

## Consideration and possible action on the following items:

### Administrative

4. Request for Waiver to City Ordinance 7.04.11.D.2: Limitation on Number of Dogs and Cats for Todd & Whitney Douglas, 1558 West Young Drive, Onalaska

### Judiciary

5. None.
6. Adjournment.

Notice is hereby given that members of and possibly a quorum of the Common Council of the City of Onalaska who do not serve on the Committee and members of and possibly a quorum of members of other governmental bodies may attend this meeting to gather information about a subject over which they have decision making responsibility. No action will be taken by any governmental body at the above stated meeting other than the governmental body specifically referred to above in this notice

Notices provided to: Mayor Kim Smith, Common Council (**Ald. Diane Wulf – Administrative Chair, Ald. Leanne Stokes, Judiciary Chair, Ald. Larry Jiracek – A&J Committee Member**, Ald. Tom Smith, Ald. Dan Stevens, Ald. Steve Nott), Interim City Administrator Amanda Jackson, Department Heads, Media & Applicants

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the City of Onalaska will provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with a disability to ensure equal access to public meetings provided notification is given to the City Clerk within seventy-two (72) hours prior to the public meeting and that the requested accommodation does not create an undue hardship for the City.

Statutory Notice Posted: 2/1/2023

**Administrative & Judiciary Committee  
of the City of Onalaska**

Wednesday, February 8, 2023

1

1 The meeting of the Administrative & Judiciary Committee of the City of Onalaska was called to  
2 order at 5:31 p.m. on Wednesday, February 8, 2023. It was noted that the meeting had been  
3 announced and posted at City Hall.

4  
5 Roll call was taken with the following members present: Ald. Diane Wulf, Ald. Leanne Stokes.

6  
7 Also Present (either in person or remotely): City Clerk JoAnn Marcon, Planning Manager Katie  
8 Aspenson, Police Chief Charles Ashbeck, Ald. Tom Smith.

9  
10 Excused Absence: Ald. Larry Jiracek.

11  
12 A quorum of the Common Council were present for this meeting.

13  
14 **Item 2 – Consideration and action on minutes from the previous meeting**

15  
16 Motion by Ald. Stokes, second by Ald. Wulf, to approve the minutes from the previous meeting  
17 as printed and on file in the City Clerk’s Office.

18  
19 On voice vote, motion carried.

20  
21 **Item 3 – Public Input (limited to 3 minutes/individual)**

22  
23 Ald. Wulf called for anyone wishing to provide public input.

24  
25 **Todd Douglas**  
26 **1558 West Young Drive**  
27 **Onalaska**

28  
29 “I’m here because my wife [Whitney] was a former military member in the United States Air  
30 Force – she was medically retired. I was a volunteer firefighter, commuting from Denver to  
31 Cheyenne, Wyoming. We were looking for a place to put down roots, finally, with my wife  
32 being out of the military. I grew up here as a kid 30 years ago, and out of all the states in the  
33 United States, we chose to live here in Onalaska. The other side effect of this was my mother-in-  
34 law has mental health issues, [and] we take care of her. That’s really why we have ... We didn’t  
35 know about the city ordinance for the pets. Two of the cats are her emotional support animals,  
36 the other four are ours. One of them was rescued by the USS Ohio, a nuclear submarine, in  
37 Guam. We took on the cat because at the time they were just euthanizing all animals. They put  
38 it out on Facebook, so I’m actually still in touch with a bunch of the crew from the USS Ohio.  
39 We didn’t know about the ordinance. We wanted to put roots down here and raise our daughters  
40 here. We’re getting actively involved in the community, which has exceeded our expectations  
41 between our neighbors and the other people that we’ve met.

42  
Reviewed 2/9/2023 by JoAnn Marcon

**Administrative & Judiciary Committee  
of the City of Onalaska**

Wednesday, February 8, 2023

2

43 Our pets are our family. They have been halfway around the world and back with us again, and  
44 we would like to keep our family whole. With your consideration, if you would please exempt  
45 us on this so that we can keep our family together ... Three of the animals are ... Two of them  
46 for sure are kind of on their way out. It's a matter of time before the Husky, who's 14, [passes  
47 away]. The other cat is very old as well. The other one is having health issues too, so we will be  
48 within the city ordinance within the next year or two – it's just a waiting game at this point. But  
49 with your consideration, we beg of you to please allow us to stay a family. Thank you for your  
50 time.”

51

52 Ald. Wulf called three times for anyone else wishing to provide public input and closed that  
53 portion of the meeting.

54

55 **Consideration and possible action on the following items:**

56

57 **Administrative**

58

59 **Item 4 – Request for Waiver to City Ordinance 7.04.11.D.2: Limitation on Number of Dogs**  
60 **and Cats for Todd & Whitney Douglas, 1558 West Young Drive, Onalaska**

61

62 Ald. Wulf noted she has been in contact with Interim City Administrator/City Attorney Amanda  
63 Jackson and said she has passed out a suggested motion she will be making this evening. Ald.  
64 Wulf said, “My question to [Amanda] with this recommendation [was], are we looking ... This  
65 could be more kind of like the standardized language that maybe we would be using. [Amanda]  
66 said yes. She thinks it clarifies what our specific concerns are, but it also makes clear that if  
67 someone were to violate the conditions they would lose their exception.” Ald. Wulf noted a  
68 “handful” of these requests have come forward over the past four to five years, and she said she  
69 wants to ensure that the city treats everyone the same and utilizes the same conditions. Thus,  
70 Ald. Wulf said this is why she is seeking a standardized motion.

71

72 Motion by Ald. Wulf, second by Ald. Stokes, to approve a Request for Waiver to City Ordinance  
73 7.04.11.D.2: Limitation on Number of Dogs and Cats for Todd & Whitney Douglas, 1558 West  
74 Young Drive, Onalaska, on the conditions that, (1), if any of the named animals pass away, they  
75 will not be replaced until such time as the applicant is below four pets, and (2), applicant shall  
76 comply with any requests from City Planning staff to verify the number of animals living at the  
77 house including but not limited to providing any veterinarian records or inspecting the premises  
78 for the limited purpose of verifying the number of animals present and the health, safety and  
79 welfare of the animals. Failure to comply with these two conditions will result in the loss of the  
80 special exception.

81

82 Katie noted city staff had sent letters to all the abutting property owners to notify them of the  
83 Douglas' request and ask if they had any questions, comments or concerns. Katie noted the lone

**Administrative & Judiciary Committee  
of the City of Onalaska**

Wednesday, February 8, 2023

3

84 comment city staff had received was included in committee members' packets, and she said staff  
85 had not received any negative comments regarding the Douglas' request.

86  
87 Ald. Wulf asked Katie if sending notices to the abutting property owners is new, noting there had  
88 been a previous discussion regarding perhaps treating a request such as this one in the same  
89 manner that the city treats requests from citizens who wish to own chickens or have other special  
90 animal situations.

91  
92 Katie told Ald. Wulf that is correct and said, "This is modeled after our Raising Chickens  
93 Ordinance where we have an application and city staff go out and we send out notification, and  
94 people are essentially give their 'yes' or 'no.' In this particular case, it is ultimately only up to  
95 the Common Council whether or not the exception would be granted. But we do want to allow  
96 neighbors who would probably more closely experience the number of animals – at least those  
97 that go outside – and that they would have some feedback as it's directly related to their living  
98 situation. Hopefully moving forward this will be the process that we continue to use, and it will  
99 be successful in providing you with information related to the request as they come forward."

100  
101 Ald. Wulf thanked Todd Douglas for providing what she described as being one of the most  
102 detailed requests she has ever seen. Ald. Wulf said it is obvious to her that Todd and Whitney  
103 Douglas care for their pets, and she noted this item will go before the Common Council for  
104 approval at its February 14 meeting if the committee approves it this evening.

105  
106 On voice vote, motion carried.

107  
108 **Judiciary**

109  
110 None

111  
112 **Adjournment**

113  
114 Motion by Ald. Wulf, second by Ald. Stokes, to adjourn at 5:41 p.m.

115  
116 On voice vote, motion carried.

117  
118  
119 Recorded by:

120  
121 Kirk Bey

**7.04.11. Dog and cat licensing procedures.****D. Limitation on number of dogs and cats.**

1. **Purpose.** The keeping of a large number of dogs and/or cats within the City for a considerable period of time detracts from and, in many instances, is detrimental to, healthful and comfortable life in such areas. The keeping of a large number of dogs and/or cats is, therefore, declared a public nuisance.
2. **Number limited.** Under no circumstances shall any persons residing within any one residential unit or any one home located on any residentially zoned property or lot, own, harbor, board or keep in its possession more than four dogs or four cats, or a combined total of four cats and dogs without the prior approval of the Common Council except that a litter of pups and/or kittens or a portion of a litter may be kept for not more than five months from birth. In nonresidential zoning districts, persons may keep more cats/dogs than the number permitted under this section if allowed within the respective properties' zoning district and upon receipt of a kennel license from the La Crosse County Health Department.

City of Onalaska  
415 Main Street  
Onalaska, WI 54650

January 16, 2023

To Whom This May Concern,

We are writing to you in regard to the pet limitations for the City of Onalaska. This letter is to serve as a request for a special exemption for our household as we moved to Onalaska from Colorado with our six pets on October 17, 2022 and were unaware of the pet limit ordinance at that time.

We are hoping to make Onalaska our forever home. Whitney medically retired from the Air Force on October 14, 2022; after several years of moving around we are excited to call this home to be closer to our family in Minnesota and to be able to have access to the great health care organizations in the area. When moving from Colorado we decided to have Whitney's mother, Sharon, live with us as she has mental and physical disabilities that cause limitations and healthcare needs. Her being housed with us has made taking care of her much more accommodating. Sharon has two cats of her own that are emotional support animals.

We have six pets total in our household. Kira is a 14 year old female/spayed Siberian Husky. Audrey is a 5 year old female/spayed Bernese Mountain Dog and Kuma is a 1 yr old male/neutered Akita. Dumpling is a 2 yr old female/spayed Domestic Shorthair (DSH). Lexi is a 16 year old female/spayed DSH. Abby is a 14 year old female/spayed DSH. Lexi and Abby are Sharon's emotional support cats.

Our dogs are fully vaccinated against Rabies, Distemper and Bordetella. They are all Heartworm negative and on Heartworm prevention (Heartgard) and Flea/Tick prevention (Nexgard). They are indoor dogs but have access to a temporary fence in the backyard until our larger fence is installed in the spring by Phillips Outdoor Services. Our cats are fully vaccinated with the core vaccines; Distemper and Rabies. They are indoor cats. Our pets health is very important to us as Whitney went to school and worked as a Veterinary Technician for several years before her time in service. All pets we have owned since they were puppies/kittens and have been vaccinated on schedule throughout the course of their lives.

It is important to note that our home is currently owned by Todd's parents, Kirk and Teresa Douglas, until we can assume the mortgage as we are still undergoing closure of our home in Colorado. They are aware of our pet situation and can provide written consent or appear at the council should you need them to do so.

We kindly ask for your consideration for a special exemption to allow for us to license and house our six pets. Our pets are family and we would like to do anything we can to keep our family together. If you have any questions or follow up information regarding the appearance at the council meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February please contact Whitney Douglas at 952-288-7385.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Todd and Whitney Douglas  
1558 West Young Drive  
Onalaska, WI 54650

**Marcon, JoAnn**

---

**From:** Dan Kahler <heavytool@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 25, 2023 10:38 AM  
**To:** Aspenson, Katie  
**Subject:** [External] Animals at 1558 West Young Drive

My property adjoins said property. I am writing to encourage the approval of the 6 animal exception for these people. I have never seen the cats and the owners have contracted for a fenced enclosure for the dogs which rarely bark. If you review your own letter you will note that 3 of the 6 animals are already quite elderly in terms of animals.

Respectfully,

Daniel C. Kahler

1560 West Young Drive

Onalaska, WI

From the desk of DK Tool