

**Finance & Personnel Committee
of the City of Onalaska**

Wednesday, August 5, 2020

1

1 The Meeting of the Finance & Personnel Committee of the City of Onalaska was called to order
2 on Wednesday, August 5, 2020. It was noted that the meeting had been announced and a notice
3 posted at City Hall.

4
5 Roll call was taken, with the following members present: Ald. Dan Stevens, Ald. Diane Wulf,
6 Ald. Jim Olson

7
8 Also Present: City Administrator Eric Rindfleisch, Mayor Kim Smith, City Clerk JoAnn
9 Marcon, City Attorney Amanda Jackson, Financial Services Director/Treasurer Fred Buehler,
10 Human Resource Director Hope Burchell, City Engineer Jarrod Holter, Planning Manager Katie
11 Aspenson, Parks and Recreation Director Dan Wick, Police Chief Charles Ashbeck, Fire Chief
12 Troy Gudie, Ald. Tom Smith

13
14 **Item 2 – Approval of minutes from the previous meeting**

15
16 Motion by Ald. Olson, 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. Stevens called three times for anyone wishing to provide public input and closed that
24 portion of the meeting.

25
26 **Consideration and possible action on the following items:**

27
28 **FINANCE**

29
30 **Item 4 – 2020 Omni Center Financials**

31
32 Fred noted there is a deficit of \$136,348.08 (\$185,963.52 in revenue, \$322,311.60 in
33 expenditures). That deficit will be lowered to \$132,315.45 with the addition of \$4,032.63
34 (\$1,683.67 for April, \$2,348.96 for May). Fred said the city typically averages \$12,000 to
35 \$13,000 per month for the Omni Center during the summer months.

36
37 Motion by Ald. Wulf, second by Ald. Olson, to accept the 2020 Omni Center Financials.

38
39 Fred said Dan is making every effort to generate income for the Omni Center.

40
41 On voice vote, motion carried.

42
Reviewed 08/10/2020 by Hope Burchell & Fred Buehler

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Wednesday, August 5, 2020

2

43 **Item 5 – 2020 General Fund Financials**

44

45 Fred noted interest income is experiencing the most significant negative impact, as the city
46 budgeted \$250,000 and had received \$109,791.81 through July for a \$140,208.19 deficit. Fred
47 said he had estimated the city would finish 2020 with a deficit of approximately \$75,000 in
48 interest income.

49

50 Ald. Stevens asked Fred if there is any speculation as to whether rates will improve, worsen, or
51 remain the same.

52

53 Fred told Ald. Stevens he had spoken to individuals who are employed by financial institutions
54 that manage the city's funds and said they are not expecting any improvements. Fred also noted
55 the current rates are 0.15 percent.

56

57 Motion by Ald. Olson, second by Ald. Wulf, to approve the 2020 General Fund Financials.

58

59 On voice vote, motion carried.

60

61 **Item 6 – Review and consideration of partially non-budgeted telephone system replacement**
62 **at City Hall, Omni Center and Public Works Facility with potential partial reimbursement**
63 **through the CARES grant for COVID related expense**

64

65 Fred told committee members he had sent five emails to the department that addresses questions
66 and concerns, but he had not received a single reply. Fred said he had spoken to a Department of
67 Revenue employee told him a Department of Administration was overseeing the program;
68 however, the Department of Revenue employee also was unsuccessful in obtaining answers.
69 Fred said this item, which first appeared on the July 8 Finance and Personnel Committee agenda,
70 is back on this evening's meeting agenda so that the committee may decide whether or not to
71 proceed on the non-budgeted portion.

72

73 Motion by Ald. Stevens, second by Ald. Wulf, to approve partially non-budgeted telephone
74 system replacement at City Hall, Omni Center and Public Works Facility with potential partial
75 reimbursement through the CARES grant for COVID related expense.

76

77 Jarrod told committee members that even though this item is non-budgeted, he believes it must
78 be purchased as he has recently seen several IT tickets related to technical difficulties with the
79 current telephone system. Jarrod said if the city is potentially receiving partial reimbursement
80 through the CARES Grant for COVID-related expenses, a new telephone system is essential for
81 employees who are working from home, and also for city staff members to facilitate their work if
82 they are not at their desks. Jarrod said, "I think it's going to help all around. Even if for
83 whatever reason it would not get reimbursed, I still think it would help staff immensely to get
84 this sooner than later. We can't delay any longer because if we delay it any longer we will miss

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**Finance & Personnel Committee
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Wednesday, August 5, 2020

3

85 the window to get it installed to meet the reimbursement. I would like to get the project moving
86 as quickly as we can.”

87

88 Ald. Stevens asked if there is the belief the city will be reimbursed, but perhaps the State of
89 Wisconsin is currently overwhelmed and that is why state officials are not responding in a timely
90 manner.

91

92 Fred told Ald. Stevens that is a pretty good assumption.

93

94 Ald. Wulf asked Ald. Stevens if his motion was to approve the non-budgeted portion of
95 replacing the current telephone system, which totals \$39,877.05. Both Ald. Wulf and Ald.
96 Stevens also asked Fred what the funding source would be for the non-budgeted portion if the
97 city is not reimbursed via the CARES Grant.

98

99 Fred said \$37,075 would come from Fund 207 of the Equipment Replacement Budget
100 (undesignated fund balance), and \$2,802 would come from the 2020 IT General Operating
101 Budget (software maintenance contractual).

102

103 City Administrator Rindfleisch explained that the reimbursement program requires that the funds
104 be expended one way or another, and he said the funds must come from somewhere to be
105 expended in the first place before the city may submit for reimbursement. City Administrator
106 Rindfleisch told committee members he is seeking their support to proceed with this unbudgeted
107 item so that the new telephone system may be ordered and installed while city staff determines
108 whether or not it is reimbursable. City Administrator Rindfleisch said that while there is a risk
109 that the city will not be reimbursed, “we need to move forward with the phone one way or
110 another.”

111

112 Ald. Wulf noted she had served on the Technology Advisory Committee and said replacing the
113 telephone system was a topic that sparked debate for several years. Ald. Wulf said she is very
114 surprised the current telephone system is still operational, and she stated she will vote to support
115 installing a new telephone system whether or not the city is reimbursed via the CARES Grant.
116 Ald. Wulf said, “It is a necessary expense.”

117

118 Fred said the motion should be to proceed with purchasing a telephone system for City Hall,
119 Omni Center, and Public Works Facility.

120

121 Jarrod noted the total cost of the project is \$97,125.05.

122

123 Original motion restated:

124

125 Motion by Ald. Stevens, second by Ald. Wulf, to approve partially non-budgeted telephone
126 system replacement at City Hall, Omni Center and Public Works Facility, with potential partial

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Wednesday, August 5, 2020

4

127 reimbursement through the CARES grant for COVID related expense, from MCS Networks at a
128 total cost not to exceed \$97,125.05.

129

130 On voice vote, motion carried.

131

132 **Item 7 – Review and consideration of non-budgeted automatic flush valves and faucets at**
133 **City owned facilities with potential reimbursement through the CARES grant for COVID**
134 **related expense**

135

136 Fred noted the cost would be \$48,952.46, with the Equipment Replacement Fund serving as a
137 funding source. If the city is not reimbursed via the CARES Grant, Fred said, “It would be
138 dispersed amongst a couple different locations, of which we will get authorization for that
139 disbursement at a later date.” Fred stated he feels very comfortable this item has as strong a
140 chance as the prior item for reimbursement.

141

142 Motion by Ald. Wulf, second by Ald. Olson, to approve non-budgeted automatic flush valves
143 and faucets at City-owned facilities, with potential reimbursement through the CARES grant for
144 COVID related expense, at a cost of \$48,952.46.

145

146 On voice vote, motion carried.

147

148 **Item 8 – Authorization to transfer contracted legal services when needed from O’Flaherty,**
149 **Heim, Birnbaum, Kirchner & Curtis, Ltd to O’Flaherty Law, LLC**

150

151 Amanda told committee members the city had received formal notice that O’Flaherty, Heim,
152 Birnbaum, Kirchner & Curtis, Ltd. is dissolving, and she said the city must decide where it wants
153 its files transferred. The files may remain with the existing firm, or they may be transferred to a
154 new law firm. Amanda said former City Attorney Sean O’Flaherty’s new LLC is O’Flaherty
155 Law, and he will be a solo practitioner.

156

157 Ald. Stevens asked if the city has a retainer in place that will automatically transfer.

158

159 Amanda said this essentially is a carte blanche authorization that the city’s files will be
160 transferred to the new LLC. Amanda said there is no formal contract in place, noting the city
161 was given pricing in 2019 under which it is being billed on an as-needed basis.

162

163 Ald. Stevens asked if the rate is unchanged.

164

165 Fred told committee members that when the city was discussing utilizing the services of a full-
166 time City Attorney, the rate was \$125 per hour on any existing issues prior to July 2019 issues.
167 The rate for any new issues will be \$175 per hour. Fred said if the Common Council continues
168 to proceed with any issues it believes requires an outside source for legal advice, the city would

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of the City of Onalaska**

Wednesday, August 5, 2020

5

169 ensure it also possesses the necessary insurance liability.

170

171 Ald. Olson asked Amanda if Sean is the only attorney at the new LLC.

172

173 Amanda said yes.

174

175 Motion by Ald. Stevens, second by Ald. Wulf, to approve authorization to transfer contracted
176 legal services when needed from O’Flaherty, Heim, Birnbaum, Kirchner & Curtis, Ltd to
177 O’Flaherty Law, LLC.

178

179 On voice vote, motion carried.

180

181 **Item 9 – Authorization to approve the existing changes in Part 1 & 2 of the fee structure**

182

183 Amanda first addressed Part 1, noting that a few years ago the city had decided to remove fees
184 from the ordinances and keep them in a fee schedule. Amanda said a few fees have been found
185 as part of the ordinance recodification, and she told committee members, “Some of these are just
186 putting them in a better format. Some of these are new fees.” Amanda noted a majority of the
187 fees fall under the Fire Department, with the exception being the permit for private alarm
188 systems, which was an existing permit that no one knew what the fee was. It has been
189 established as a one-time fee of \$25. Amanda told committee members the Fire Department
190 conducts performs a significant amount of new construction inspections, and she noted the city
191 was not capturing any fees for that. Amanda said she and Fire Chief Gudie had determined a
192 rate for those services after seeing what other municipalities charge.

193

194 Fire Chief Gudie reiterated Amanda’s point that the Fire Department spends a significant amount
195 of time performing site inspections on new construction, and he said what is being presented is in
196 line with what other fire departments are doing. Fire Chief Gudie also said the Fire Department
197 will be able to ensure that systems are being installed properly and tested by having the ability to
198 issue permits in its department.

199

200 Amanda next addressed Part 2, noting this reflects the city’s shift from utilizing in-house
201 inspectors to GEC’s contracted services. GEC has different costs, and they capture different
202 fees.

203

204 Katie noted the base inspection fee was previously \$50, and it has been increased to \$85. Katie
205 said GEC charges the city \$85 per hour when it performs inspections, and she explained that the
206 intent of the fee increase is to cover that service. Katie noted the city’s fees are the same across
207 the board as the electrical base inspection fee also is \$85 per hour. Katie also noted the city had
208 been charging on the overall cost for plumbing and HVAC of the project, and she pointed out the
209 city is now charging the same rate for each one of its fees. Katie said, “Essentially for all of our
210 utilities, we’re treating everyone the same. ... That’s for ease of use as we go forward.”

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**Finance & Personnel Committee
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Wednesday, August 5, 2020

6

211
212 Motion by Ald. Wulf, second by Ald. Olson, to approve the existing changes in Part 1 & 2 of the
213 fee structure.

214
215 Ald. Stevens asked if there is an estimate regarding what the potential difference to revenue
216 would be.

217
218 Katie said not at this time. However, Katie also noted it should generate more revenue than what
219 it used to, in particular to HVAC and plumbing. Katie noted GEC is performing all of these
220 inspections, both on a residential and a commercial basis.

221
222 Ald. Stevens asked if the city currently is losing \$35 every time there was a base inspection fee.

223
224 Katie said the city is gaining \$35, noting there previously was a flat fee of \$50. Katie also noted
225 there was the cost of the valuation of a project, and she pointed out the HVAC and plumbing fees
226 are very similar to what GEC charges the other municipalities with which it works. Katie said,
227 “We’re actually under some of their fees.”

228
229 On voice vote, motion carried.

230
231 **Item 10 – Options regarding the City of Onalaska Financial Advisor or Underwriter RW**
232 **Baird**

233
234 Fred noted the city has entered into the 2021 budget process and told committee members this is
235 time to make any changes if they wish to make any.

236
237 City Administrator Rindfleisch told committee members city staff has been examining all of the
238 city’s contracted partners or service providers to ensure that the city has estimates and quotes.
239 City Administrator Rindfleisch said the city may do a Request for Proposals (RFP) and obtain
240 various amounts of rates into which they would roll. City Administrator Rindfleisch referred to
241 the email sent by Brad Viegut of RW Baird, as well as the services RW Baird had performed for
242 the city over the two-year process of the debt issuances, and he said RW Baird had performed
243 essential services on the city’s behalf for which RW Baird is paid when debt is issued. The work
244 RW Baird had is based on the insight it had of the city’s organization. City Administrator
245 Rindfleisch said RW Baird had presented a stellar plan for the city’s debt issuance, and he told
246 committee members that while it is possible to do a full RFP for a service provider, “you’re ...
247 looking at that long-term expertise that a firm would have when it comes to issuing your debt.
248 Baird and Brad Viegut certainly has that.” City Administrator Rindfleisch told committee
249 members it would be time to do a full RFP if Brad were to retire or change firms because that
250 expertise would be lost. However, City Administrator Rindfleisch also said it is his
251 understanding Brad intends to remain at RW Baird.

252
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**Finance & Personnel Committee
of the City of Onalaska**

Wednesday, August 5, 2020

7

253 Ald. Wulf asked Fred when the city had last gone out for a full RFP.

254

255 Fred told Ald. Wulf this is different than an RFP, and he noted the City of Onalaska had
256 previously utilized the services of Springstead from 1981, when he began his employment with
257 the city, to approximately 1986. Fred pointed out the City of Onalaska had gone down one or
258 two bond ratings because the financial advisor had set up the city's debt to having a "balloon" at
259 the end of 20 years. Fred explained that Springstead was putting the city in a position where
260 refinancing was expected, and he said RW Baird has always expected completion at the end of
261 20 years.

262

263 Ald. Wulf said she agrees with City Administrator Rindfleisch in that she believes she would be
264 open to a full RFP if Brad were to retire, or at least begin to compare apples to apples. Ald. Wulf
265 said depending on the industry she believes it is good to explore other options approximately
266 every five years. However, Ald. Wulf also said she is comfortable moving forward at this time
267 with RW Baird.

268

269 Ald. Stevens asked where RW Baird's fees rank in the industry, stating he believes it is good to
270 occasionally see where vendors stand. Ald. Stevens said it is very possible RW Baird is the best
271 fit for the city.

272

273 Ald. Olson stated he believes Brad had done a quality job for the city and said he believes Brad
274 has been very competitive on the rates he has obtained for the city over the years. Ald. Olson
275 also said Brad's expertise has been valuable to the city for quite some time.

276

277 Motion by Ald. Wulf, second by Ald. Olson, to approve RW Baird continuing to serve as the
278 City of Onalaska's Financial Advisor and Underwriter.

279

280 On voice vote, motion carried, 2-0, with one abstention (Ald. Stevens).

281

282 **Item 11 – Gundersen Health System Parking Ramp Financials for 2020 2nd Quarter**

283

284 Fred noted the car counts for April, May, and June were 110, 63, and 68, respectively, compared
285 to 330, 302, and 305 for April, May, and June 2019. Fred also noted the city pays \$5,000
286 annually to the Gundersen Health System Parking Ramp. Gundersen Health System is
287 responsible for maintaining the facility to the city's expectations.

288

289 Motion by Ald. Wulf, second by Ald. Olson, to approve Gundersen Health System Parking
290 Ramp Financials for 2020 2nd Quarter.

291

292 On voice vote, motion carried.

293

294

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Wednesday, August 5, 2020

8

295 **PERSONNEL**

296

297 **Item 12 – Update from Human Resources on staff vacancies**

298

299 Hope reported the following:

300

301 • **Assistant Fire Chief:** The Police and Fire Commission will meet Monday to discuss the
302 timeline for the position as well as review the job description.

303 • **Police Department Openings:** Currently a contingent offer has been made to a recruit
304 police candidate pending passing the psychological exam. The goal is for the officer to
305 begin employment this month. It has become necessary to start another eligibility list to
306 fill the additional vacancy after another officer left. The Police Department is now down
307 two officers. This does not include the three additional positions that were approved to
308 fill in 2020.

309 • **Fire Department Openings:** Currently the Fire Department is down one firefighter.
310 Peter Coppola started August 3 to fill one of the two remaining vacancies. A conditional
311 offer has been made to the next applicant, and staff is waiting for the completion of the
312 background investigation. This does not include the three additional positions that were
313 approved to fill in 2020.

314 • **Administrative Assistant/Paralegal:** This position has been held until budgets can be
315 reviewed.

316 • **Office Clerical Support-Finance:** This position has been approved to be filled part-
317 time. Staff is contacting applicants that previously applied to see if they are interested in
318 part-time rather than full-time. If not, it will become necessary to post and advertise for
319 the position again.

320 • **Computer Support Specialist:** MCS will be handling the additional workload until the
321 budgets can be reviewed.

322 • **Recreation Coordinator:** Tyler Ketterhagen has given his notice and his last day with
323 the City of Onalaska will be Thursday. At this time the position will be held until
324 budgets can be reviewed.

325

326 Ald. Stevens asked Hope to address the candidate pools for both the Police Department and the
327 Fire Department.

328

329 Hope said the Fire Department has an eligibility list, and a new recruitment is being started for
330 the Police Department. A written exam will be held August 14 in Sparta. A physical agility test
331 will be conducted, and another eligibility list will be established.

332

333 Ald. Wulf asked if the Common Council had voted at its July 14 meeting to approve hiring one
334 police officer and one firefighter after October 1.

335

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**Finance & Personnel Committee
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Wednesday, August 5, 2020

9

336 Hope said yes.

337

338 Ald. Wulf asked Hope if she anticipates hiring individuals for both positions October 1, or if she
339 will begin the hiring process October 1.

340

341 Hope said the anticipation would be to fill the positions October 1, and the process likely would
342 begin in September. Hope noted there will be an eligibility list for the Fire Department, and
343 individuals will be contacted in late August or early September. Hope also noted it is necessary
344 to start another eligibility list for the Police Department.

345

346 Ald. Wulf addressed Item 14, asking if any changes the committee makes to the Assistant Fire
347 Chief job description this evening will go before the Police and Fire Commission on Monday.

348

349 Hope said any changes the Finance and Personnel Committee makes this evening will go before
350 the Police and Fire Commission on Monday.

351

352 **Item 13 – Review and consideration of Human Resources 2019 Annual Report**

353

354 Hope's report included the following information:

355

356 • Staff spent a significant amount of time determining a time clock system and which
357 system would be chosen, uploading information into the system, and working on
358 implementing the system. Most of the city has gone live on the system. Only the Police
359 Department and the Fire Department need to go live.

360 • Amanda was hired as the city's in-house attorney. Charles Ashbeck was hired as Police
361 Chief. The Fire Department was brought up to full staff.

362 • Staffing at the Omni Center was reorganized, leading to the Building Coordinator
363 position being split into the Sales Manager and the Event Coordinator positions.

364 • Five individuals have been employed by the City of Onalaska for more than 30 years.
365 Six have been employed by the city between 25 and 29 years, and 16 have been
366 employed by the city 20 to 24 years.

367 • Human Resources reviewed 514 employment applications in 2019. Thirty-one
368 employment positions were posted, and 115 candidates were hired (14 full-time, 5
369 permanent part-time, 11 part-time firefighters/EMTs, 3 new Councilmembers, and 82
370 seasonal hires). The average cost of recruitment for a permanent employee search was
371 \$1,125.08.

372 • Thirty-eight workers' compensation claims were filed in 2019. Fifteen injuries were
373 compensable, and two were lost-time injuries. Regarding the Experience Modification
374 Review, the City of Onalaska's average in 2020 is .65. CVMIC's average is .98. Hope
375 said this shows the department heads and employees are striving to work safely. The
376 MSDS online system produced 68 auto updated documents in 2019.

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Wednesday, August 5, 2020

10

- 377 • Thirty-one job descriptions were reviewed and modified in 2019. Seven policies either
378 were reviewed, updated or created. Regarding the Employee Assistance Program, two
379 individuals made initial contact and made five contacts for a total of .35 hours. There
380 were seven in-person EAP cases. There were 26 contacts made for a total of 96.97 hours.
381

382 Fred addressed the Experience Modification Review, noting the city’s premium would have been
383 \$203,275. However, the city paid \$119,000 with the modification rate.
384

385 **Item 14 – Review and consideration of changes to the Assistant Fire Chief job description**
386

387 Hope told committee members both she and Fire Chief Gudie had made several changes, noting
388 she had examined the Assistant Police Chief job description as well as some of the changes that
389 were made to the Fire Chief’s job description so that were similarities to what already was in
390 place. Hope addressed the essential job functions of the Assistant Fire Chief job description,
391 noting she had pulled items from both the Fire Chief and the Assistant Police Chief job
392 descriptions so that they were similar in the structure of the Fire Chief’s position. Hope said she
393 had attempted to combine duties in other sections or place tasks in other areas. Regarding
394 “Knowledge, Skills and Abilities,” Hope said she believes that section was missing several
395 functions of what both the Fire Chief and the Assistant Fire Chief need. Also, Hope said she
396 believes “Preference for the successful completion of the Executive Fire Program” was not a fair
397 requirement as it has been difficult the last few years to send individuals, particularly the
398 lieutenants, to the academy to complete this. Updates also were made to include requiring a
399 valid driver’s license, residency within 15 miles of the city’s jurisdictional limits, and to the
400 physical requirements.

401
402 Motion by Ald. Wulf, second by Ald. Olson, to approve changes to the Assistant Fire Chief job
403 description.
404

405 On voice vote, motion carried.
406

407 **Adjournment**
408

409 Motion by Ald. Wulf, second by Ald. Olson, to adjourn at 9:16 p.m.
410

411 On voice vote, motion carried.
412
413

414 Recorded by:

415
416 Kirk Bey