

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

Wednesday, September 2, 2020

1

1 The Meeting of the Finance & Personnel Committee of the City of Onalaska was called to order
2 at 7:59 p.m. on Wednesday, September 2, 2020. It was noted that the meeting had been
3 announced and a notice posted at City Hall.

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

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

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 for anyone wishing to provide public input.

24
25 **Dan Ferries**
26 **402 9th Avenue North**
27 **Onalaska**

28
29 “I’m a [La Crosse] County Board Supervisor, District 16. Thank you for the opportunity to
30 speak this evening. I wanted to talk to you about Item 8, [which is] ‘Consideration and possible
31 action regarding the purchase of Police body camera equipment.’ In speaking with [Police]
32 Chief [Ashbeck] on a couple different occasions, I was a little surprised that we didn’t have
33 these. An article in the paper the other day addressed body cameras, and a lot of smaller
34 communities around us have them. Jean Lunde and myself and probably a good 30 people
35 we’ve talked to within the last half a week are all in favor of this. I’ve reached out to the
36 alderpersons and the Mayor, and it seems like there’s support. How you want to finance it, well,
37 that’s up to you folks. But I’m advocating for it. I think we need to give our officers all the tools
38 that we can just so the truth can come out in an incident just in case we do have one. Speaking
39 with Jeff Wolf of the La Crosse County Sheriff’s Department, he’s applied for body cameras for
40 next year’s budget at about the same figure: about \$85,000. He applied for a grant and they’re
41 waiting to hear back on that, but it is currently in the budget for La Crosse County. It’s possible;
42 I don’t know. Fred, I’m glad you’re weighing in here. Possibly CVMIC – they have a little skin
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43 in the game on this thing ... I wonder if there are some resources from them that they would
44 possibly weigh in on it. Like I said, everybody I have spoken to – and I mean everybody in the
45 Onalaska area – is in favor of this. Like I said, I'll let you folks figure out how you want to fund
46 it. But I think it's something we need to move forward on. Thank God we haven't had an
47 incident in Onalaska where we needed it, but anyway, my three minutes are probably up.
48 Alderman Stevens, looking at policies and things like that, in talking with Jeff, [there's
49 something] called a _____. It's a commonly used thing for municipalities that they do policies
50 and there are universal policies throughout the communities so that everybody is on the same
51 page on this. With that in closing, I want to thank you for giving me some time. Thank you for
52 your service, and I'll definitely support funding for this project. You folks figure it out. Thank
53 you.”

54
55 Ald. Stevens called three times for anyone else wishing to provide public input and closed that
56 portion of the meeting.

57

58

Consideration and possible action on the following items:

59

FINANCE

60

Item 4 – 2020 Omni Center Financials

61

62 Fred referred to the financial report dated August 19, 2020 and reported revenues totaled
63 \$234,668.10, and expenditures totaled \$367,538.60 for a deficit of \$132,870.50.

64

65 Motion by Ald. Wulf, second by Ald. Olson, to approve the 2020 Omni Center Financials.

66

67 On voice vote, motion carried.

68

Item 5 – 2020 General Fund Financials

69

70 Fred reported revenues totaled \$8,425,508.78, and expenses totaled \$5,680,615.46 for a surplus
71 of \$2,744,893.32.

72

73 Jarrod addressed the Salt and Sand account under the Street Department and told committee
74 members there should be sufficient funding in that account (\$23,957.74) for the remainder of the
75 year. Jarrod said the salt sheds currently are full, but he cautioned that the amount of snow and
76 ice the city receives in November and December will determine whether or not the remainder of
77 those funds will be utilized to refill the sheds. Jarrod also said the city also benefits from having
78 the ability to create its own salt brine, adding, “I feel comfortable we'll fall within that budget.”

79

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

81

82 On voice vote, motion carried.

83

84 Reviewed 09/04/2020 by Hope Burchell & Fred Buehler

85

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86

87 **Item 6 – Resolution 37-2020 – to Eliminate Fixed Expenses for Common Council and**
88 **Mayor**

89

90 Amanda told committee members city staff believed it was important to capture in an official
91 record the changes as they relate to expenses for the Common Council and the Mayor so that the
92 reasoning and intentions behind the changes may be seen in the future.

93

94 Motion by Ald. Wulf to approve Resolution 37-2020 – to Eliminate Fixed Expenses for
95 Common Council and Mayor with the following change: *“Whereas, the remaining three (3)*
96 *Council Members will continue to receive expenses until election in April of 2022, at which time*
97 *no Council Members shall receive fixed expenses.”* The resolution currently reads April of 2021.

98

99 Fred told Ald. Wulf he is not certain of that, noting that three Council Members will lose their
100 expenses and then be on a fixed salary in April 2021.

101

102 Ald. Wulf referred to the fourth “whereas,” which currently reads *“Whereas, under the new*
103 *ordinance, the three (3) Council Members elected or re-elected in April of 2021 will no longer*
104 *receive expenses,”* and noted it addresses the three individuals who either will be elected or re-
105 elected in the spring of 2021. Ald. Wulf said, “They’re the ones who are going to lose it. But
106 the next set of three ...”

107

108 Amanda said Ald. Wulf is correct that the year needs to be changed to 2022 for the three
109 remaining Council Members. Amanda also promised to give City Clerk JoAnn Marcon an
110 updated copy of the ordinance prior to the September 8 Common Council meeting.

111

112 Motion by Ald. Wulf, second by Ald. Olson, to approve Resolution 37-2020 – to Eliminate
113 Fixed Expenses for Common Council and Mayor with the following change: *“Whereas, the*
114 *remaining three (3) Council Members will continue to receive expenses until election in April of*
115 *2022, at which time no Council Members shall receive fixed expenses.”*

116

117 On voice vote, motion carried.

118

119 **Item 7 – Payment/usage of City services for political events**

120

121 City Administrator Rindfleisch told committee members this goes back to an earlier conversation
122 the Common Council had had regarding the use of City of Onalaska facilities, the Omni Center
123 in particular. City Administrator Rindfleisch noted there had been at least two political rallies –
124 one of which had paid for services, and one of which had not paid for services. City
125 Administrator Rindfleisch said, “For the most part, if it’s a political campaign or otherwise, for
126 the Omni Center we have the documents in place that people will pay for. Quite frankly, we can
127 require the full credit card payment before they even set foot in the facility. We don’t have a lot

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128 of people using credit cards, but I think this is a good example where we could require that.”

129

130 City Administrator Rindfleisch told committee members the Omni Center likely is the only city
131 facility that will come into play, but other city facilities such as City Hall, the Public Works
132 Facility or a city park also could be included. City Administrator Rindfleisch said he believes
133 the big question the city is facing is what happens when political activities occur not necessarily
134 on City of Onalaska property, but there are expenses that fall within public safety expenses. City
135 Administrator Rindfleisch noted the city does not have a written policy or an ordinance that
136 dictates who is responsible for paying for what, and he also noted the City of La Crosse issues an
137 invoice to cover part of the public safety services. City Administrator Rindfleisch said, “In
138 reality, those groups aren’t going to pay, so we could end up with outstanding invoices on the
139 books that we really have very little to no chance of receiving those funds. But I thought it
140 would be worth having the conversation here in a public forum so the public understands there
141 are very important public safety services the city provides these campaigns, and we would like
142 to receive the same value monetarily that we place on those services. We can create the policy if
143 the Council so desires, but we do need to be honest that the likelihood of collecting that is very
144 slim.”

145

146 Amanda told committee members this topic comes up amongst attorneys every election cycle
147 and said no one has come up with a good solution. Amanda admitted this is a frustrating
148 problem for municipalities, and she said the best the city can do is attempt to recoup the costs.
149 Amanda told committee members Assistant Police Chief Troy Miller had contacted the City of
150 La Crosse and inquired about its policy, and she said, “They haven’t found a really good
151 opportunity. You can invoice all you want, but if they won’t pay it doesn’t really solve the
152 problem.”

153

154 Ald. Stevens utilized a hypothetical situation in which a political candidate wanted to campaign
155 in the City of Onalaska and asked if that candidate would be required to obtain a permit to hold a
156 rally, or if it is spontaneous and the city provides protection. Ald. Stevens asked, “How does the
157 city get involved to the point where we get to bill them?”

158

159 Amanda said the city would not have a permit a candidate would necessarily need if he/she holds
160 an event on private property, does not leave that property, and does not necessarily need a
161 Special Event Permit. Amanda said the city often has requests for police or security assistance
162 for a candidate, but it would not necessarily have a permit tied to an event.

163

164 City Administrator Rindfleisch noted Mike Pence, Vice President of the United States, had been
165 in the area within the last month, and he will return to the area Labor Day. City Administrator
166 Rindfleisch said that while Vice President Pence was not in the City of Onalaska on his last visit,
167 nor will he be in the city on Labor Day, he might require police services for security depending
168 on where he goes.

169

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170 Ald. Stevens asked if the individual campaigns are requesting security from the city, or if
171 security from the city is “just showing up.”

172
173 Police Chief Ashbeck told committee members the Secret Service typically reaches out to the
174 agencies, and briefings are held regarding what is occurring. Police Chief Ashbeck told
175 committee members the city may not send an invoice to the Secret Service, and oftentimes there
176 is no individual or address to which to attach an invoice.

177
178 City Administrator Rindfleisch said the Secret Service is requesting security and not the
179 campaigns, the political parties, or the candidates themselves when presidential candidates
180 campaign in the area. City Administrator Rindfleisch said there are other political events that
181 might not be campaigns, and he told committee members that perhaps there is a name attached to
182 such an event the city possibly could look at.

183
184 Ald. Stevens noted there typically will be overtime expenses for police officers, and the city has
185 not budgeted for those expenses. Ald. Stevens also noted City of Onalaska taxpayers will have
186 to essentially subsidize to those campaigns, and he asked if the recommendation at this time is to
187 keep sending invoices and hope the city receives payment, or perhaps the city possibly could be
188 examining another strategy.

189
190 City Administrator Rindfleisch told Ald. Stevens the city currently does not send an invoice to a
191 candidate when he/she is not on City of Onalaska property. City Administrator Rindfleisch said
192 the request to committee members is to determine if they would like for the city to begin sending
193 invoices, in which case a policy or a resolution will need to be created. City Administrator
194 Rindfleisch said, “We’re not currently because we’re not likely to collect.”

195
196 Ald. Stevens suggested perhaps making the fee more nominal, in which case a candidate is more
197 likely to make payment.

198
199 Motion by Ald. Stevens, second by Ald. Wulf, to create a policy for the City of Onalaska
200 regarding city services for political events, and to create a fee structure and start sending invoices
201 to political candidates.

202
203 Amanda asked Fred if the City of Onalaska has ever sent invoices to political candidates who
204 hold events on private property.

205
206 Fred said no and referred to an event that was held during the 2016 U.S. Presidential election
207 cycle at the Omni Center in which Bernie Sanders, a U.S. Senator from Vermont and a Democrat
208 candidate for President, paid the invoice in full for use of the facility as well as all labor costs, no
209 matter if the assistance was coming from the City of La Crosse, La Crosse County, or the City of
210 Onalaska. Fred noted Senator Sanders was the only individual to have done so in his nearly 40
211 years as a City of Onalaska employee.

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212
213 Mayor K. Smith told committee members she recently had participated in a telephone call with
214 the League of Municipalities and approximately 70 mayors from across the State of Wisconsin.
215 Mayor K. Smith noted this topic had been discussed in a roundtable situation, and she told
216 committee members, “I would say universally it was stated that any type of reimbursement for
217 emergency services, especially police assistance, was not going to happen no matter what policy
218 that you had in place. And if there were any events that were held on city property, you should
219 make sure to secure payment of those in advance of the event, because the candidates are here
220 one day and gone the next.”

221
222 Ald. Stevens noted this topic currently is very relevant, and he stated he believes the State of
223 Wisconsin – including the Third Congressional District – is politically in play. Ald. Stevens said
224 he believes the City of Onalaska probably will incur overtime expenses as a result of that, and he
225 asked Mayor K. Smith if he is correct in saying she is suggesting not sending invoices to
226 candidates for private events, but the city should institute a policy of either paying in advance or
227 securing a site with a credit card if an event is held on public property.

228
229 Mayor K. Smith said, “For the use of the facilities, but not for the police or potentially the fire
230 [department] or other departmental support.”

231
232 Ald. Wulf asked Ald. Stevens to restate his motion.

233
234 Ald. Stevens said, “My initial motion was to essentially bill for public events to offset the
235 overtime expenses. Or essentially I think it was to bill for the political events ...”

236
237 Ald. Wulf said, “That are non-city property.”

238
239 Ald. Stevens said he does not believe the original was like that.

240
241 Motion and second withdrawn.

242
243 Ald. Wulf said she had listened intently to Mayor K. Smith’s input, and she stated she does not
244 believe that the City of Onalaska “should be spinning [its] wheels” and creating policies she does
245 not believe it will be able to collect any fees. Ald. Wulf said, “One way one might also look at it
246 is if we do have people who do come to the community for events ... I’m talking about public
247 events and not use of our facilities because I think we have something in place for the Omni
248 Center, for City Hall, [and] for parks and shelters [where] we get payment in advance. If there
249 are going to be public areas that we’re going to have to provide things for, maybe we make it
250 back in people just being in the area. They’re shopping. They’re eating. They’re doing business
251 in our area. Maybe we get some back that way. They’re in our community.”

252
253 **Item 8 – Consideration and possible action regarding the purchase of Police body camera**

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254 **equipment (non-budgeted item)**

255

256 Ald. Stevens noted he had asked that this item be added to this evening's agenda due to recent
257 events in the nation. Ald. Stevens said he knows body cameras are included in the 2021 Capital
258 Improvements Budget, and he noted other communities included body cameras in their
259 respective CIBs. Ald. Stevens said it seems as though body cameras are an item that are easily
260 set aside yearly, and he told committee members he believes many individuals support the idea.
261 However, Ald. Stevens also said body cameras sometimes are not included in the final CIB due
262 to limited resources, and he stated, "For events that happened in Kenosha, I think their city
263 officials might have been ruing supporting body cameras, but not actually making it happen. I
264 think that's given us some exposure that we have that I think we should fill. I'm looking to
265 expedite the process on this and not wait for it to go through Capital Improvements as it may
266 push us, at the earliest, to potentially the middle of next year."

267

268 Motion by Ald. Stevens to proceed with the purchase of body camera equipment for the City of
269 Onalaska Police Department in an amount not to exceed \$84,165, utilizing the Equipment
270 Replacement Fund, and to direct City Administrator Eric Rindfleisch, Police Chief Charles
271 Ashbeck, and any other pertinent City of Onalaska staff members to research, create policies and
272 procedures regarding the implementation, the use of, and the data collected from body cameras,
273 with recommendations to be presented to the Common Council no later than December 31, 2020.

274

275 Motion dies for lack of a second.

276

277 Fred asked Ald. Stevens if he wishes to have either Item 7 or Item 8 appear on the September 8
278 Common Council meeting agenda.

279

280 Ald. Stevens said yes, stating he believes both items are pertinent and perhaps the other
281 alderpersons might wish to provide input.

282

283 City Administrator Rindfleisch noted no action was taken here, and therefore there really is
284 nothing to refer to the Common Council for action. City Administrator Rindfleisch said he
285 believes this is an item that would require two alderpersons requesting to include it on the
286 September 8 meeting agenda.

287

288 Fred told City Administrator Rindfleisch he is correct.

289

290 Ald. Stevens said, "If we don't hear anything, then I would assume that would not be the case."

291

292 **PERSONNEL**

293

294 **Item 9 – Update from Human Resources on staff vacancies**

295

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296 Hope reported the following:

297

298 • **Assistant Fire Chief:** The Police and Fire Commission had met August 10 to discuss the
299 timeline. Applications will be reviewed in mid-September. Approximately 12
300 applications have been received thus far.

301 • **Police Department openings:** Currently a contingent offer has been made to a recruit
302 police candidate, pending passing the physical exam (Hope still has not heard back from
303 Gundersen Health System). There will be interviews for the second list Thursday with
304 the Police and Fire Commission for the city's additional police officer candidates. The
305 candidates were screened down to four, and one removed his/her name from
306 consideration as he/she received another offer. Hope said she hopes one of the three
307 remaining candidates will be hired as then the Police Department will be fully staffed for
308 2020. That would not include the three additional positions that were approved to fill in
309 2020.

310 • **Fire Department openings:** The psychological exam for the final open position has
311 been completed. The physical examination will be scheduled shortly, and then the Fire
312 Department will be fully staffed. Staff then will begin working on filling the position that
313 was authorized for October.

314 • **Office Clerical Support – Finance:** The position was approved to be filled part-time as
315 there were no interested candidates that had applied that were full-time. The position was
316 reposted as part-time. Applications will be reviewed after Labor Day.

317

318 **Item 10 – Review and consideration of changes to the following job descriptions:**

319

320 a. Building Inspector III

321 b. Lead Inspector

322

323 Hope said she wishes to make the following change: Item D under “Training, Experience &
324 Other Requirements” for both the Building Inspector III and Lead Inspector positions would
325 read: *“State of Wisconsin commercial certifications in building and electrical required; ability to
326 obtain commercial plumbing certification within six (6) months of start date.”*

327

328 Hope said the reason for this is because when staff initially had put these job postings together,
329 three employees had expressed an interest in obtaining the certifications for these positions.

330 However, two of those employees have since retired, and only one employee has the
331 certifications. Hope noted the employee already has the electrical certification, and he currently
332 is working to obtain the plumbing certification. The employee has obtained his commercial

333 certification, and Hope said staff wants to reward him by having him serve as the Lead Inspector.

334 This cannot occur due to the way the current job description is worded. Hope said staff wants to

335 switch this over because the Lead Inspector is a salaried position, and she told committee

336 members this benefits both Katie and the department to be able to supervise both the contracted

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337 service, and also to assist Katie with supervising staff. This does not preclude the individual
338 from obtaining the plumbing certification; he still is attempting to obtain the certification. The
339 individual will be an Inspector III if he does not obtain the certification within six months. He
340 would need to obtain it to be a Lead Inspector.

341
342 Ald. Wulf inquired about the inspector's position title at this time.

343
344 Hope said the individual currently is a Building Inspector II, and she told Ald. Wulf the job
345 description has to be changed so that the individual may become a Building Inspector III, and
346 then potentially the Lead Inspector.

347
348 Motion by Ald. Wulf, second by Ald. Olson, to approve the changes to the Building Inspector III
349 and Lead Inspector job descriptions.

350
351 On voice vote, motion carried.

352
353 **Adjournment**

354
355 Motion by Ald. Wulf, second by Ald. Olson, to adjourn at 8:38 p.m.

356
357 On voice vote, motion carried.

358
359
360 Recorded by:

361
362 Kirk Bey