

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

Tuesday, October 30, 2018

1

1 The Meeting of the Finance & Personnel II Committee of the City of Onalaska was called to
2 order at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 30, 2018. 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: Mayor Joe Chilsen, Ald. Jim Binash,
6 Ald. Jim Olson, Ald. Jerry Every, Ald. Ron Gjertsen, Ald. Diane Wulf, Ald. Kim Smith. Ald.
7 Smith, Ald. Olson, and Ald. Every are the only voting members for this meeting, although the
8 entire Common Council participates in the discussion.

9
10 Also Present: City Administrator Eric Rindfleisch, City Clerk Cari Burmaster, Financial
11 Services Director/Treasurer Fred Buehler, Deputy Financial Services Director Kim Isensee,
12 Human Resource Director Hope Burchell, City Engineer Jarrod Holter, Police Chief Troy Miller,
13 Fire Chief Billy Hayes, Planner/Zoning Inspector Katie Aspenson, Parks and Recreation Director
14 Dan Wick, Assistant Fire Chief Troy Gudie, Assistant Police Chief Jeff Cavender

15
16 **Item 2 – Approval of minutes from the previous meeting**

17
18 Motion by Ald. Olson, second by Ald. Every, to approve the minutes from the previous meeting
19 as printed and on file in the City Clerk’s Office.

20
21 On voice vote, motion carried.

22
23 **Item 3 – Public Input (limited to 3 minutes/individual)**

24
25 Ald. Smith called for anyone wishing to provide public input.

26
27 **Troy Miller, City of Onalaska Chief of Police**

28
29 “All of you have been presented with a letter from me, and some supporting documents,
30 regarding the proposed cut to personnel in the Police Department. ... I want you to know that I
31 am available throughout this process if you have any questions or concerns. ... I want to take a
32 minute and reiterate my opposition to the change in personnel in the Onalaska Police
33 Department. This was my first year preparing the budget as chief, and I was tasked to come in at
34 a zero-percent increase from 2018’s true budget, like departments have been asked to do many
35 years in the past. My submitted budget met this requirement. I spent a lot of time on our budget,
36 and I feel I submitted a true budget based on our needs and not our wants. To create a truer
37 budget over the years past, several line items had been adjusted to account for increases and
38 other areas you will see had to be cut. I never would have imagined I would find personnel
39 being cut from my budget at the executive level so other departments could gain personnel. Our
40 staff is already stretched very thin, as I’m sure all of you know. We’ve discussed this many
41 times in the past. In fact, this year I actually prepared the budget requesting more hours for my
42 part-time personnel. While I’ve only been chief of the department for approximately six months,
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43 I've been with the department for over 22 years. During that time, I've the privilege of working
44 many different positions. It hasn't always been easy, and it's come with setbacks and heartache,
45 but the one constant I could always count on for my department was my staff. They've always
46 been there, and they've always come through in a time of need. We've had our ups and downs
47 as a department, but we have also persevered. Unfortunately, while some of the faces have
48 changed, the number of personnel in our department has not. It's been almost 20 years since
49 we've had an increase in personnel, and we simply cannot keep maintaining our department
50 without an increase in personnel, especially with the reduction in staff that is being proposed.
51 I'm asking you as your chief to reconsider this cut and help me maintain my current staffing
52 levels and help my department maintain the quality service that we give to the citizens of
53 Onalaska. It's not just the officers out on the road that make this happen. It's the department as
54 a whole, and that includes our non-sworn staff. We cannot be successful without them. ... I'm
55 asking you to give this your consideration. Don't let this cut happen. Let me maintain my staff,
56 and let me keep giving you that quality service that you expect. Thank you."

57

58 **Susan Martin**

59 **Address inaudible on the recording**

60

61 "I'm currently a full-time employee of the Onalaska Police Department as a Records Specialist.
62 I've been employed here for almost seven years. I've also worked in the Holmen Police
63 Department for 11 years. I've recently been informed that my position has been cut to a part-
64 time position with a substantial pay decrease in the 2019 budget. I am the person who will be
65 affected by this change. When I was hired full-time in Onalaska, I had the knowledge and the
66 abilities to step into this position with minimal training due to my previous police experience.
67 So much of the ability to effectively perform the duties of this position are obtained from
68 experience and not training. As part of my daily duties, I have administered the parking citation
69 program for the past two years. During this time, the city saw a substantial increase in parking
70 revenue. Due to past circumstances, [the] Finance [Department] was required to make changes
71 to this process. This process has shifted some of the responsibility to other departments. The
72 perception that parking previously took most of my time is misconstrued. My task of processing
73 parking citations has changed, but has not been eliminated. Parking citations are now put into
74 the [La Crosse] County Records Management System, which I now need to ensure are reviewed
75 and accurate. Parking, while an important part of my daily workload, has been and still remains
76 only one of a long list of tasks and duties I complete each day. There is too much work for 1½
77 Records Specialist positions. Both of us have areas of expertise in processing police records that
78 we are both cross-trained in all record specialist duties. The problem arises with not enough time
79 in the day to complete all the duties as the task list is long. I understand this change is based on
80 finances and changes of responsibilities, but I will personally be affected. I have a family to
81 support. I will lose my benefit package, insurance for my family, retirement plans, and
82 vacation/sick time. My hourly wage will also be reduced significantly, though my knowledge
83 and abilities have only increased. I would be earning less for being a better employee. This will
84 be financially difficult for my family.

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85
86 A couple of months ago, I was asked to be part of a meeting to finalize new parking procedures.
87 City attorneys, city administration, Finance [Department] employees, the Chief of Police, and
88 both of the records specialists attended this meeting. At one point in the meeting, the City
89 Attorney made a comment about how we had to get this new procedure in place so a Finance
90 [Department] employee would not lose his job. I was part of the group that worked to save his
91 job as he was being held responsible for a situation that was caused by a previous employee.
92 Some of the same people who created the 2019 budget were in the room that day, and are now
93 recommending that my position be cut. Now I ask, what can be done to help me keep my full-
94 time position, and to continue to be an asset to the Onalaska Police Department? Please consider
95 keeping both full-time positions for the Records Specialists at the Onalaska Police Department.
96 Thank you for your time and consideration.”

97
98 **Leanne Stokes**
99 **324 14th Avenue North**
100 **Onalaska**

101
102 “I’m here tonight to ask a few questions which deal with the Fire Department and its proposed
103 2019 budget. As I’m sure everyone here in this room knows, on October 20 there were two
104 homes on my street, five houses away from where I live, that caught on fire early in the evening
105 hours. I did check with my insurance company, and I found out that Onalaska has an ISO rating
106 of ‘3’ on a scale of 1 to 10, with ‘1’ being the best. That speaks well of the Fire Department
107 doing a good job with the resources they’ve been given. For those in the room who do not know
108 what an ISO is, it’s an independent organization that serves insurance companies, fire
109 departments, and insurance regulators by providing information about risk. My questions deal
110 with whether the current number of Fire [Department] personnel who are available to fight fires
111 in our city are sufficient in the eyes of the Fire Department administration. According to the City
112 of Onalaska’s website, we have 14 career personnel – one [Fire] Chief, one Assistant [Fire]
113 Chief, three lieutenants, and nine slots for firefighters, of which right now only seven are filled
114 and two are vacant. We also have 10 paid, on-call personnel – one lieutenant, four firefighters,
115 and five people on probation. I have learned that since the fires, in order for a fire truck to leave
116 the fire station, go fight a fire and save somebody’s house, there needs to be four personnel on
117 that truck or it can’t leave. They are also only allowed by Onalaska law to go 10 miles over the
118 speed limit when driving to the fire.

119
120 My questions are: How many times a week is the Fire Department able to have the required four
121 personnel on site at the fire station? Do the on-call personnel have to live within a certain
122 mileage of the fire station in order to get them to the station within a very short period of
123 minutes? Do the people on probation actually respond to fires, or because they’re on probation
124 they’re not allowed to? I do have one question on the increase that is shown on the General
125 Fund; [specifically], an \$80,000 increase to the 2019 proposed for the Fire Department. I was
126 wondering if it will be used for personnel, equipment, or such. Finally, what is the cost to the
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127 city to hire new firefighters? I understand that all of these questions probably cannot be
128 answered tonight, but I would hope that at some time before the budget is finalized that these are
129 brought to a public forum for people to hear. Thank you.”

130

131 **Shawn Colgan, third shift Patrol Officer, City of Onalaska Police Department**

132

133 “I’m sure that you are all aware that one of our Records Specialist positions is being cut at the
134 Police Department from full-time to half-time. I’m here to speak out against this move to
135 decrease such a valued position in our department. A Records Specialist position at the Police
136 Department is unlike any other secretary-type position that you can think of. This position is
137 responsible for a variety of things, and I’m going to name a few. How many secretaries are
138 responsible for processing the officers’ paperwork and sending to various different entities that
139 we work with like the District Attorney’s office, Human Services, Juvenile Justice Services, New
140 Horizons, [and] Crisis Services. This position that the City of Onalaska wants to cut is
141 responsible for coordinating arrest reports with the District Attorney’s office, as well as
142 municipal reports. This position is responsible for tracking FBI crime statistics that are required
143 to track our crime issues in Onalaska compared to the nation. This person is responsible for
144 answering the phone, which, if you have ever been in our office, goes off all day long. This
145 position is responsible for answering any walk-in complaints and fielding what type of service
146 that person needs. If you have ever been to our office, you know how much this occurs, as well.
147 This person is partly responsible for dictating reports from officers to allow them to get back to
148 patrols much faster. This position that the City of Onalaska wants to cut is the heart and the
149 backbone of our department. You are not only cutting this position, but we also likely will lose a
150 valued member of our department. Sue Martin, along with Deb Muleski and Kim Wagner, make
151 this department run smooth and efficient. Sue has a can-do attitude and does not complain. You
152 are making a mistake cutting this position only to add a full-time position somewhere else in the
153 City of Onalaska. The police officers’ workload in the City of Onalaska continues to grow and
154 in turn, the need for this position to be full-time will always be necessary. Thank you very
155 much.”

156

157 Ald. Smith called three times for anyone else wishing to provide public input and closed that
158 portion of the meeting.

159

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

161

162 **FINANCE**

163

164 **Item 4 – 2019 Proposed Executive Budget, including Budgets for General Fund, Special**
165 **Revenue Funds, Debt Service Funds, Enterprise Funds, Capital Project Funds, and**
166 **Community Development Authority Funds**

167

168 Ald. Smith noted some of the first pages had been missing from some of the alderpersons’
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169 budget books, and she asked Fred to recap these pages during his introductory remarks. Ald.
170 Smith said the alderpersons then will go section by section in the budget books, and they will
171 have the opportunity to ask questions, make comments and/or motions. Ald. Smith also
172 suggested that the alderpersons take a break every hour so that they may stay refreshed.

173
174 Fred referred the alderpersons to a document titled “Mill Rate Changes,” and he said the
175 document that is before them this evening has been edited since they first received their budget
176 books earlier in October. Fred said the document had shown an increased mill rate of 4.19
177 percent, noting it would be an increase of \$24.82 for a \$100,000 home. Fred said the document
178 before the alderpersons this evening shows a mill rate of 0.00613376, or a 3.46 percent increase
179 rather than a 4.19 percent increase. This means there would be an increase of \$20.54 on a
180 \$100,000 home. Fred referred to page 2 of the “Mill Rate Changes” document and said the city
181 had received the equalized value. Fred noted the statement of assessments has been locked in
182 and said he initially had estimated an assessment ratio of 0.92. The assessment ratio had come in
183 at 0.918. Fred told the alderpersons there was an amended statement of taxes to a piece of
184 property earlier in October, noting \$173,800 in valuation was pulled off the assessment roll
185 because it was originally taxed. This property was switched to being tax-exempt due to the
186 timeline of when the assessor received the material. Fred said he believes the material was to be
187 received by March 15, noting it was postmarked March 15 even though the material arrived later
188 than the due date. Fred said, “It was figured you were going to spend more costs to try to settle
189 that issue, so the property was moved to tax-exempt, pulling \$173,800 of valuation off the roll.
190 We sent an amended statement of taxes, and the figures you see here contain the equalized value,
191 which is locked in at 91.8 percent rather versus 92 [percent], and this assessed value is taken into
192 account of the \$173,800 dropped off.”

193
194 Fred next addressed page 3, telling the alderpersons he had waited more than two weeks to
195 receive a response from the State of Wisconsin Department of Revenue regarding the fact the
196 state was going to compensate towns, cities, and villages for the personal property category that
197 was removed from the roll. Fred said a Department of Revenue representative told him the City
198 of Onalaska will receive \$54,537. This amount was not anticipated revenue. Fred said the next
199 item was state aid for police department services, or “Law Enforcement Training Aid.” Fred
200 said the city receives \$4,000 for recertifications, and he noted it was not recorded as anticipated
201 revenue for 2019. Fred said Police Chief Miller feels comfortable inserting \$4,000 into the 2019
202 budget, noting the total unanticipated revenue for 2019 is \$58,537. Fred referred to the first
203 footnote on page 3, which shows the property tax contribution to the General Fund for 2019 is
204 \$6,033,397. Fred referred to documents showing “Cap No. 1” and “Cap No. 2,” and he told the
205 alderpersons that when they received the proposed 2019 budget the city was anticipating a Cost
206 of Living Adjustment (COLA) of 2.5 percent, and growth of 0.5 percent. Fred said the
207 Wisconsin League of Municipalities had informed him that a 2.5 percent increase was too high.
208 Fred referred to page 4 and noted the Consumer Price Index (CPI) is 2.4 percent. Fred said he
209 had anticipated the city could go 3 percent on the expenditures on Cap No. 1. However, the city
210 may not exceed 2.9 percent. Fred noted this cap pertains solely to expenditures, and he said the

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211 operating budget percent change is being presented as a 2.800 percent change. Fred said State of
212 Wisconsin law states a municipality may not exceed 2.9 percent if the cap is 2.9 percent. Fred
213 addressed Cap No. 1 and he noted that Cap No. 1, under the State of Wisconsin, consists of the
214 General Fund expenditures. Fred referred to the General Fund Budget Summary and said the
215 General Fund expenditures total \$9,312,994. Fred said Cap No. 1 consists of the General Fund
216 expenditures plus the levies from refuse and recycling, Joint Municipal Court, and the
217 Equipment Replacement Fund. All of these levies, plus the General Fund expenditures, equal
218 \$10,628,780. Fred noted the city may not exceed that cap and said, "Cap No. 1 is right on top.
219 Anything that's added, something is going to come off because we can't exceed what we talked
220 about here."

221
222 Fred reiterated the city cannot exceed the cap of \$10,628,780, and he told the alderpersons the
223 city is utilizing \$164,908 of the Equipment Replacement Fund reserves. Fred said, "If you were
224 to look at the paperwork that was sent to you in the Executive Budget process, this figure is
225 \$18,678 more using the reserves simply because of the difference between the 2.9 [percent] and
226 the 3.0 [percent]. ... When the expenditure restraint had to be lowered, that means we either had
227 to find more deductions within the budget, or we use more of our reserve."

228
229 Ald. Binash asked Fred, "Are you saying that with the cap that we have, this expenditure cap,
230 nothing additional can be added to the budget as we now see it?"

231
232 Fred told Ald. Binash there are two caps and said the discussion relates to the General Fund.
233 Fred said the General Fund consists of the expenditures from the General Fund and the levies
234 from the aforementioned Special Revenue Funds. Fred told Ald. Binash the only way to add an
235 item to the budget and still remain at that cap is to utilize more of the Equipment Replacement
236 Fund reserve. Fred said the budget City Administrator Rindfleisch had submitted, "he ... didn't
237 feel comfortable taking anything out. But he was comfortable using \$18,678 more of the
238 Equipment Replacement reserve to stay under the cap. If you decide to add something back in
239 the budget tonight within the General Fund, either something else has to go out, or you use more
240 of your reserve." Fred explained that if the General Fund has a positive balance at the end of the
241 year, his practice has been to transfer, through Common Council approval, funds from the
242 General Fund into the Equipment Replacement Fund. Fred said the city has continued to put
243 funds in its Undesignated Fund reserves within the Equipment Replacement Fund to remain
244 under the caps – especially Cap No. 1 – and still meet Moody's standards.

245
246 Ald. Every asked, "The Equipment Replacement Fund is part of the unassigned reserve?"

247
248 Fred said yes and explained that all the Special Revenue Funds fall in with Cap No. 1.

249
250 Ald. Every asked if it is possible to utilize more of the unassigned reserve.

251
252 Fred said the city has a finite amount of funds to go in there, and he told Ald. Every he believes
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253 the city transferred more than \$300,000 from the General Fund to the Equipment Replacement
254 Fund one year ago. Fred said, “The budget in front of you, we’re using \$164,908. ... We’re
255 using that much of the dollars that we did to transfer last year, and then the rest is through the
256 levy and still staying under the Cap No. 1. We have to stay under the Cap No. 1. You cannot
257 add one more dollar to it because if you start adding dollars you’re going to go above that 2.8
258 [percent], and that is where you’re going to get in trouble and could be disqualified for
259 expenditure restraint funds.” Fred reminded the alderpersons the City of Onalaska had received
260 \$50,000 less in expenditure restraint funding, and he said the reason this had occurred is because
261 the last two years the city has had a reduction in the levy, thus putting the city into a different
262 tier.

263
264 City Administrator Rindfleisch explained that the Equipment Replacement Fund is a separate
265 fund, and he said utilizing up to \$164,908 would be for equipment replacement throughout the
266 budgeted year. City Administrator Rindfleisch said that in theory, there would come a point in
267 time where the city is not budgeting for equipment replacement, telling the alderpersons the city
268 could not budget \$180,000 if there truly is not equipment somewhere in the budget. City
269 Administrator Rindfleisch said, “We have more than that, so we’re fine with that. If we use the
270 undesignated funds that are outside the Equipment Replacement Fund, it would still be an
271 expense in the General Fund we’d have to be concerned about at that point in time.” City
272 Administrator Rindfleisch addressed the fact the city is receiving only \$83,167 in expenditure
273 restraint funding, compared to \$137,195 a year ago, and reiterated Fred’s point that the city is at
274 a different tier now due to the fact it has had a reduction in its tax levy. City Administrator
275 Rindfleisch said the city will not qualify for expenditure restraint funding if it goes below a 5
276 percent mill rate. City Administrator Rindfleisch said, “That’s not because of anything negative
277 the city has done. It’s actually because of the positive things the city has done by reducing the
278 mill rate. Unfortunately, there’s a hammer that comes with that from the state that offsets the
279 benefit we’re trying to provide our taxpayers.”

280
281 Ald. Every said it is his understanding the city’s net position has declined the last two years, and
282 he asked if this is a reason why there has been a reduction in expenditure restraint funding.

283
284 Fred told Ald. Every the city’s mill rate is the sole reason for the decrease.

285
286 Ald. Binash asked if something still could be added to the budget via the Equipment
287 Replacement Fund.

288
289 Fred said this could happen if the city utilizes more of its reserves.

290
291 Ald. Gjertsen asked if the city has more options if it utilizes its reserves or reduces what it has in
292 there.

293
294 Fred said, “You can’t go up, so either something has to be taken out of the existing budget that
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295 was given you to offset what you want to add, or use Equipment Replacement [funds]. Those
296 are really the two options within the General Fund.”

297

298 Fred next addressed page 6, the proposed 2019 budget for the Gundersen Health System parking
299 ramp, and said the parking ramp is automatically modified any time the city modifies any levies.
300 Fred noted there is a \$2,237 decrease on the Gundersen parking ramp. Fred said there is a
301 difference of \$79,452 from the budget he originally gave the alderpersons on October 9
302 (\$11,274,308) compared to what is shown on the handout he has provided them this evening
303 (\$11,194,856).

304

305 Fred next addressed a handout titled “Reorganization Cost Analysis,” which shows two options
306 (“A” and “B”) regarding the Records Specialist position in the Police Department. Fred noted
307 the salary for the Records Specialist position, which includes wages and benefits, totals \$65,737.
308 Fred addressed Option “B” and said if the position is added back into the budget, the part-time
309 wages of the new position are removed, and the part-time wages of the existing position are
310 lowered to their 2018 level, then \$38,382 either must be removed from the budget elsewhere, or
311 that total is taken from the Equipment Replacement Fund. Fred stressed that the city is at the cap
312 on Cap No. 1 and cannot add anything.

313

314 Ald. Every inquired about the number of positions.

315

316 Fred said, “The other position we’re talking about is the full-time [City] Attorney.” Fred
317 referred to the budget and said the difference between the adopted budget in 2018 was \$138,000.
318 Fred said the proposed budget in front of the alderpersons, with a City Attorney starting on June
319 1, 2019 and reducing the contractual, is \$138,792. Fred said, “If you decided to go the way you
320 had before, it’s really pretty much a wash.” Fred also addressed a Finance Department position
321 that would see an increase in hours from 1,560 to 2,080. Fred noted the General Fund share
322 would have been approximately \$12,000.

323

324 City Administrator Rindfleisch said the expectation is much of the work associated with the new
325 Finance Department position, as proposed, is applied to Utilities. City Administrator Rindfleisch
326 said the net General Fund impact is not dollar-for-dollar of the two part-time positions.

327

328 For clarification, Ald. Binash asked if those who are not on the Finance and Personnel
329 Committee may make motions this evening.

330

331 Ald. Smith said only those who are on the Finance and Personnel Committee (herself, Ald.
332 Olson, Ald. Every) may make and vote on motions. However, Ald. Smith told Ald. Binash if he
333 would like to ask the members of the Finance and Personnel Committee to make a motion, she is
334 certain they would consider making it. Ald. Smith said, “It really is in all of our best interest to
335 get a budget we can all agree on. This is our place where it’s easiest for us to flesh it out. That
336 gives Fred time to get it posted. It gives the community time to know what things we’re thinking

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337 about changing or not changing so that when we go to public hearing [November 12] we have a
338 solid budget that we can stand behind in our community.”

339

340 Ald. Every said, “On the other hand, this is a lot to absorb in one night, and we’ve been chewing
341 on this for about three weeks to a month. It takes time to look this [information] over and really
342 think you know what you’re talking about.”

343

344 Ald. Smith referred to Fred’s point that “one small change has a domino effect.”

345

346 Ald. Every said, “I would not like to go real fast and think we’re going to adopt this budget
347 tonight, because that was not the intent I thought we had.”

348

349 Ald. Smith assured Ald. Every that the budget will not be adopted this evening and told him she
350 shares his concern.

351

352 City Administrator Rindfleisch said he has not been able to obtain concrete data regarding the
353 average home price in the City of Onalaska. City Administrator Rindfleisch said he believes it is
354 more logical to utilize the median home price as the average can be skewed by some of the
355 multimillion-dollar homes in the city. City Administrator Rindfleisch referred to Housing and
356 Urban Development (HUD) statistics that state the median home value in the city is \$189,074.
357 City Administrator Rindfleisch also said that according to certain real estate sites, including
358 Zillow, the median would be \$199,400. Meanwhile, the median listing price for data through
359 September 30, 2018 is \$239,000 for the median current listing price of homes in the city. City
360 Administrator Rindfleisch said he feels comfortable in stating the median home value in the city
361 is approximately \$200,000.

362

363 Fred next addressed Section “A” on the document titled “Cap No. 2;” specifically, Line 8, which
364 is the 2018 levy limit before adjustments, less 2019 personal property aid (\$54,537.01). Fred
365 said he had told a State of Wisconsin Department of Revenue official the department had shown
366 a deduction, but he could not locate it on the document. Fred reiterated the city will be receiving
367 a check for \$54,537, and he referred to addition tape included on the document that shows the
368 city is \$281,297 under Cap No. 2. Fred said Debt Service is the only method by which the city
369 can get closer to Cap No. 2. Fred noted all the rest of the levies are in Cap No. 1, with Debt
370 Service being the exception, and he said the only way the city may utilize more of this cap is
371 either to go deeper in debt or borrow more funds and have higher principal and interest
372 payments. Fred referred to Line 3 of Section “B” and said if a municipality is under its Cap No.
373 2, the Wisconsin State Legislature allows a percentage to come back into the future year. Fred
374 noted the previous year’s unused levy was \$256,465 and said, “It’s almost a wash of the dollars
375 carried over compared to the cap we are under.”

376

377 City Administrator Rindfleisch addressed the previous year’s unused levy of \$256,465 and said it
378 highlights the fact the city does not levy the maximum on a yearly basis. City Administrator

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379 Rindfleisch said the \$281,297 potentially could have been levied, and he also said that at no time
380 may the city get back the \$256,465. The city must utilize the lesser of the two calculations, and
381 City Administrator Rindfleisch noted the city was allowed to increase its budget only by
382 \$162,517.

383
384 Ald. Smith opened the budget discussion.

385
386 **Wage**

387
388 City Administrator Rindfleisch addressed the pay steps shown in the budget book and said the
389 diagram shows a 2-percent cost of living increase. City Administrator Rindfleisch noted the
390 current cost of living is approximately 2.9 percent, and he said, "There would be a net loss
391 position for employees under this budget. But as we pointed out, any increase in what we
392 currently have from this proposed budget up to 2.5 percent or something, would mean either
393 additional spending of reserves or a cut somewhere else for those wages."

394
395 Fred noted the General Fund had an 8.6-percent increase on Gundersen Health System's health
396 insurance plans. This constitutes an \$115,317 on the General Fund. Fred said between the 2-
397 percent COLA and a health insurance increase for city staff, "that is where your \$80,000 is."
398 Fred also said, "If you look at health insurance in all the departments within the General Fund,
399 there is a \$115,317 increase due to the 8.6-percent increase in health insurance.

400
401 Ald. Every noted the section being discussed is 80 percent of the city's budget.

402
403 Fred said 75 percent of the General Fund Budget is wage and benefits. By comparison, 25
404 percent is strictly expenditures.

405
406 Hope noted two employees switched their health plans from Gundersen to Mayo Health System.

407
408 Ald. Every asked, "How do we split that?"

409
410 Fred said it is a true 80/20 split on health insurance plans if the employees are non-union.

411
412 Hope said she believes one individual is split between Water and Sewer, which will not affect
413 the General Fund. However, another individual is split between Street and Storm Water, which
414 will affect the General Fund.

415
416 City Administrator Rindfleisch said the city currently is with the ETF insurance plan and noted
417 the city is getting the state bid prices compared to if it attempted to self-insure or do a bid for 150
418 FTEs. City Administrator Rindfleisch said the city is "very competitive" in the marketplace,
419 noting the total cost of the Gundersen Family Plan is approximately \$19,000 per year. City
420 Administrator Rindfleisch also referred to a question that was raised in 2017 regarding the cost

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11

421 to the General Fund of a 1-percent cost of living increase and said the amount calculated was
422 approximately \$36,000 for each 1 percent.

423

424 Fred referred to a document included in the budget titled “Non-Union Full-Time Staff” and said
425 in the non-union compensation plan a 2-percent wage and benefits increase in the General Fund
426 comes to \$41,218.73.

427

428 Ald. Smith asked if the alderpersons wish to discuss City Administrator Rindfleisch’s proposed
429 budget changes at this time, or if they wish to discuss them in their place where they occur later
430 in the tabs of the budget.

431

432 For clarification, City Administrator Rindfleisch said the budget changes here are between the
433 department head proposed budgets and the City Administrator proposed budget.

434

435 Fred said he is looking for the Finance and Personnel Committee to make modifications in
436 Account No. 100-43521 (“Law Enforcement Training Aid”/\$4,000), and Account No. 100-
437 43625 (“State Aid Personal Property”/\$54,537), for a total additional anticipated revenue of
438 \$58,537.

439

440 Motion by Ald. Every, second by Ald. Olson, to add Account No. 100-43521 (“Law
441 Enforcement Training Aid”/\$4,000) and Account No. 100-43625 (“State Aid Personal
442 Property”/\$54,537) for a total of \$58,537 in additional revenue to the 2019 budget.

443

444 On voice vote, motion carried.

445

446 **Revenue**

447

448 No questions were asked.

449

450 **Expense Summary**

451

452 Fred said the expense summary is a summary of all of the rest of the data within the General
453 Fund.

454

455 **Common Council**

456

457 Fred said \$3,250 in maintenance fees was added for the Common Council Chambers’
458 audio/video system. Fred noted the city did not have a maintenance contract for the A/V system,
459 reminding the alderperson the system had experienced several technical difficulties. Fred said
460 the individual who installed the system has been contracted to perform system maintenance for
461 the aforementioned amount.

462

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463 Ald. Wulf said it is her understanding the maintenance contract runs from May to May.

464

465 Fred told Ald. Wulf the \$3,250 is an annual figure and said the amount being spent this year is in
466 the 2018 budget. Fred also told Ald. Wulf, "It will cover January through December."

467

468 Ald. Wulf inquired about the origin of a maintenance contract for the A/V system.

469

470 Fred told Ald. Wulf he had spoken with City Administrator Rindfleisch, and he said both believe
471 this is the most logical place to put it.

472

473 **Police & Fire Commission**

474

475 No questions were asked regarding proposed expenditures.

476

477 **Municipal Court**

478

479 No questions were asked regarding proposed expenditures.

480

481 **City Attorney**

482

483 Ald. Binash said, "I believe this shows not a contractual, but a City Attorney for the City of
484 Onalaska. Is that what we're approving with this budget, come June?"

485

486 City Administrator Rindfleisch said, "The proposal has a City Attorney beginning July 1 ... And
487 it does have, under 'Contractual Services,' an amount there for two purposes. One, for the first
488 half of the year, to continue the contracted services with the existing City Attorney, and two,
489 allow the staff City Attorney to be able to supervise and contract out services, if necessary,
490 depending on the workload or history or areas of expertise."

491

492 Ald. Wulf noted the budget also proposes office clerical support at 1,200 hours, and she said she
493 assumes that position either will start on or around July 1.

494

495 City Administrator Rindfleisch told Ald. Wulf she is correct.

496

497 Fred told the alderpersons current City Attorney Sean O'Flaherty is willing to do the 2019
498 contract at the same hourly rate. Fred also noted Sean's contract with the city will expire
499 December 31, 2018.

500

501 Ald. Wulf said this is an item with which she has yet to reach a comfort level, adding she
502 believes it would be prudent for City Administrator Rindfleisch to explain the rationale behind
503 this decision.

504

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13

505 City Administrator Rindfleisch said, “The position was added based on some requests from
506 Councilmembers to look at ways of being more efficient when it comes to legal services. In
507 conversations and polling with the department heads – and I think they can probably speak
508 themselves to this – I think the biggest opportunity for efficiencies is having someone on site to
509 be able to get a near _____ or an immediate response for various questions. Working with an
510 outside contractual service for all work – not just perhaps high level, but for anything – does
511 involve emails and phone calls, keeping in mind that we’re not the only business of the current
512 City Attorney. [This is not being critical of] the efficiency of that said attorney, but because
513 they’re not on staff and [they are] busy managing and building their own practice, we’re not the
514 only client that they have. I think in terms of efficiency, the opportunity to be able to get an
515 immediate response to questions posed, and to be able to do so more freely and not try to hold
516 back and say, ‘Does this rise to a level that we want to reach out with a phone call or not and be
517 billed for those hours?’ I think that’s where the most efficiency comes from, and where the most
518 comfort level is to have staff have that person on premise and be responsive in an immediate
519 fashion to any of our needs. ... The population growth and the size of our organization and the
520 size of our needs have grown that we really can support a full-time attorney to be responsive at
521 all times.”

522
523 Ald. Binash said there have been discussions over the years about how the city can reduce its
524 legal fees, “and we’ve been doing that for budget purposes the last several years. In the
525 discussions, it was, ‘Would it be beneficial to have an attorney on site?’ The figures, as I’ve
526 seen them, point out that that would be an efficient move for the city. I think that’s why we went
527 in that direction, and I think it is a very positive step that helps control our legal costs.”

528
529 Ald. Gjertsen said he agrees with Ald. Binash’s statement, stating it is a logical move for the city
530 from a financial standpoint. Ald. Gjertsen also said the efficiencies of having an attorney on
531 premise are apparent, noting there have been a couple of instances when, while having
532 conversations with department heads, it would have been convenient for them to have their
533 questions answered by an attorney who was on site.

534
535 Ald. Every said he does not know why this topic is being discussed this evening as he believed it
536 would have been a topic to discuss at another meeting. Ald. Every said, “We have decided we
537 wanted to do that, and we’re going to do it.” Ald. Every said there might be some items in the
538 2019 budget he would like to delete and provide the rationale as to why he wants them removed,
539 adding, “I think the proper time to do that is when we get through all of this, digest it all, and
540 then come back and make some motions and ...”

541
542 Ald. Smith said, “I think if it has to do with the City Attorney, this is the time to talk about it.
543 It’s related to this specific budget. I think right here, right now is the time for the Common
544 Council – specifically, the Finance and Personnel Committee – to take a position on this staffing
545 change, or any other thing you see here that you see fit. This is our work time.”

546

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14

547 Ald. Every said, "I thought this was not to make the decision, but to gather information, digest it,
548 come back and make decisions at the next meeting. I misunderstood what the plan is. I would
549 make some motions to cut some complete departments if that would be ..."

550

551 Ald. Smith said, "When we get to that department."

552

553 Ald. Every said, "We've already gone by one."

554

555 Ald. Smith told Ald. Every the committee may go back to the department he wishes to discuss.

556

557 Ald. Every said he would like to return to the Joint Municipal Court, which he described as "a
558 losing proposition."

559

560 Ald. Smith said the committee will return to Joint Municipal Court.

561

562 **Municipal Court**

563

564 Ald. Every said, "I know this is something that we talked about a little bit. But if we're going to
565 do that tonight, I guess I want to get my two cents worth in. We're losing money on this thing.
566 We're pouring more and more money into it with IT support and everything else. We have
567 \$814,000 worth of uncollected fines and forfeitures sitting out there. We're not able to collect
568 the things we have without adding more infrastructure to our IT Department, adding more
569 personnel, and retaining personnel that we had intended to let go. I think that's one thing that in
570 the future – not tonight, but in the future – I would like to see us consider getting out of this
571 Municipal Court. We taxed the taxpayers \$186,000 last year. This year it's going to be
572 \$188,000 a year, and we're losing money."

573

574 Ald. Smith addressed Fred and said, "In the operating budget, the Municipal Court has a
575 proposed 2019 Administrative Budget of \$312. What account or fund does the Municipal Court
576 cost that Jerry is referring to, where is that in our budget?"

577

578 Fred said there are certain things the Joint Municipal Court will not pay for, including the City of
579 Onalaska's attorney who represents city cases in the JMC. Each town, city, and village that
580 participates in the JMC is responsible for its own legal counsel and its own costs. Fred said that
581 is a separate issue that has nothing to do with the JMC because each municipality is independent.
582 Fred referred to the \$312 item and said it would be utilized if an interpreter is required for a case
583 that is going before the JMC. Fred said the court cannot be expected to pay for the interpreter.
584 Fred said the item to which City Administrator Rindfleisch had referred in the Administrative
585 Budget is on the Special Revenue Fund. Fred referred back to Cap No. 1, which consists of the
586 General Fund, Refuse and Recycling, Shared Ride, Equipment Replacement, and Joint
587 Municipal Court. Fred noted the JMC has a line item of \$71,850 in the levy that is responsible
588 for the city's 50-percent cost to operate the program. Fred said the Police Department will issue

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15

589 citations, and he told the alderpersons the city will require the JMC in some form to address the
590 citations. Fred said the JMC was created to remove some of the burden on the City of Onalaska,
591 and he noted that approximately 51 percent of the cost is the city's General Fund, with the
592 remaining 49 percent coming from the other towns and villages that participate in the JMC. Fred
593 said, "That is the reason why we created this." Fred explained there are many pieces to a
594 citation, including the forfeiture, the penalty assessment, court costs, and jail fees. Fred said that
595 for every court cost there is a \$38 fee – \$33 of which remains with the city, and \$5 that is sent to
596 the State of Wisconsin. Fred said that since the JMC program began, the City of Onalaska holds
597 back the months of January and December. From February through November, the other
598 municipalities that participate in the JMC receive their portion of the citations issued. Fred told
599 the alderpersons there is a significant amount of income via citations, and that income subsidizes
600 the program.

601
602 Ald. Every reiterated he believes "a bigger decision" regarding the JMC will need to be made in
603 the future, adding that decision likely will not be made by this council.

604
605 **City Attorney**

606
607 Ald. Smith asked if any of the proposed in-house City Attorney's wages attributed to the
608 Municipal Court.

609
610 Fred said 79 percent is the General Fund, with the balance being allocated to the JMC, and Water
611 and Sewer.

612
613 Ald. Smith noted that if no motion is made and the committee proceeds to the next item, it means
614 the Finance and Personnel II Committee is supporting the change to the City Attorney position as
615 proposed in the 2019 budget.

616
617 Ald. Every said he does not believe it means the committee is supporting anything, stating,
618 "We're gathering information and we're trying to make a decision so when we get here in
619 November [November 12] we have a better idea of where we're going. I didn't think we were
620 making any motions to do anything. The only motion can be made by us." Ald. Every noted the
621 Finance and Personnel Committee receives monthly year-to-date status reports from the Joint
622 Municipal Court, and the reports list year-to-date expenses and revenue.

623
624 Ald. Binash said, "Just to make clear – and I thought it was perfectly clear – that the intent of this
625 meeting was so that we don't have another several-hour meeting come November and December.
626 That was the idea behind this. That's why I wanted to get this out here, so we would sit here
627 tonight and work out any differences that may be coming forth so we would not be, again, sitting
628 here talking about this. There was ample opportunity to go over everything we have here in this
629 budget. Hopefully we can resolve most everything this evening so we don't have to go through
630 this again."

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16

631
632 Ald. Gjertsen addressed Ald. Binash's comments and said, "It's not realistic what you're
633 pointing out. We're going to do the best we can. This is a lot of information to go through. In
634 my experience, we're going to wind up going over some of this down the line in November. It's
635 way too much to digest in one meeting. Referring to myself, I don't have all day and all night to
636 go through this. I'm using this as an opportunity to narrow down some topic that is specifically
637 for me. I can guarantee I'm going to have questions that aren't going to get answered tonight."

638
639 Ald. Wulf asked Fred to discuss what typically has been protocol in past years, what the typical
640 expectations have been for the Finance and Personnel II Committee, and also the timeline
641 regarding the upcoming public hearing November 12.

642
643 Fred told Ald. Wulf he has seen many different management styles, citing the example of former
644 Mayor and Second District Alderperson Jim Bialecki. Fred said he has seen motions come out
645 of the Finance and Personnel II Committee, and he told the alderpersons it was Jim Bialecki's
646 opinion "this is the time and place to do it." Fred said the public hearing scheduled for
647 November 12 should be for the general public "because any questions and concerns will get
648 ironed out here. Then when it comes to the public hearing, you open up the public meeting ...
649 [and] the public weighs in on what it's seen in the official newspaper [Coulee Courier]. After
650 that, what has happened in the past is any motions coming out of the committee level are
651 reviewed and acted upon. Either you accept them all or portions of them. Once that is worked
652 out, you turn the meeting back to the general public, and you say, 'These are the changes that
653 were made at the Finance and Personnel meeting in reference to the budget. Does the general
654 public have any comments to make on that?' Then you go back and hopefully eventually have
655 an approved budget."

656
657 Ald. Wulf addressed the proposed changes to the City Attorney position, stating she will take the
658 information she has received this evening, likely speak with some of the department heads,
659 follow up with City Administrator Rindfleisch, and reach a final decision by the November 12
660 public hearing.

661
662 Ald. Every said, "That's the way it worked last year," noting he has the minutes from the 2017
663 meeting.

664
665 Ald. Smith said, "That's fine if it's just a few issues that are contentious or maybe difficult. But
666 we want to get our work done here today. That's what I'm trying to lead us to do: complete the
667 task of getting through this. If we have a few leftover topics to hash out, fine. But let's just only
668 be on a few."

669
670 Ald. Every said, "It wasn't me who got off the track."

671
672 City Administrator Rindfleisch noted that city staff is present at this evening's meeting, and he
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17

673 said the expectation he had laid out for staff was that tonight's meeting is the time to answer
674 questions and defend any changes to the budget. City Administrator Rindfleisch said city staff
675 expects to attend tonight's meeting as long as necessary "and not necessarily come back and do
676 this again. Please take the opportunity, as minute as the question may be or as broad as the
677 question may be, to use the staff that is here."

678
679 Ald. Smith asked if any Councilmembers would like to ask city staff questions regarding the City
680 Attorney.

681
682 Ald. Wulf addressed the City Attorney position, stating she is concerned about adding more
683 staff. Ald. Wulf said she would like to look into adding more staff both to the Police Department
684 and Fire Department if the city were to add more staff. Ald. Wulf said she can appreciate the
685 reasoning behind adding an on-staff City Attorney, adding, "It's just a matter of priority and if
686 we're going to add staff, where we're going to add that." Ald. Wulf asked Fred how much the
687 city has spent on legal fees thus far in 2018 and said, "I know if we were to have in-house, we
688 would have a solid figure. We would always know what the budget was. We wouldn't be going
689 over budget on bad years because we never know what the future brings."

690
691 Fred told Ald. Wulf the city had budgeted \$138,000 for legal fees and said the city has spent
692 \$84,689 thus far in 2018.

693
694 Ald. Smith told Ald. Wulf she has similar concerns regarding an in-house City Attorney, one
695 reason being both have become accustomed to the city's current system. Ald. Smith said, "This
696 is one of the main issues with the budget that I've been laboring over – one of a few. I think that
697 it's not really adding staff. It's just changing the dynamic of what staff we have. We currently
698 have a contractual person filling this role, and we're changing instead to an in-house person.
699 We're looking at the finances of it. To me, it's close to a wash. It's not a big financial impact,
700 but I am hearing from city staff that it would create efficiencies for them. That makes me kind of
701 want to agree to it. But then I also am concerned because it isn't just a City Attorney; it's also
702 some clerical support for that City Attorney. We're looking at the budget impact of half a year,
703 and these are theoretical numbers. I wasn't here at the time you hired the City Administrator and
704 some other positions, but it's hard to get. You have a number in your head that you think you
705 can hire a person for, and the reality is it sometimes doesn't work out that way. I just don't know
706 if the reality of the cost of this position reflects what is on the paper. Also, we're making a half a
707 year commitment in 2019, which in 2020 will be a full-year commitment. Whatever that budget
708 change is, is going to be in full effect for the following year. Hopefully it's budget-neutral, or
709 close to it. But it's something in the future that we can't see."

710
711 Ald. Wulf asked City Administrator Rindfleisch if an on-staff City Attorney would become a
712 full-time position in 2020.

713
714 City Administrator Rindfleisch told Ald. Wulf she is correct, adding it would be a full-time

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18

715 position for half of 2019.

716

717 Ald. Wulf inquired about the office clerical position.

718

719 City Administrator Rindfleisch said the office clerical position would be part-time for the full
720 year.

721

722 Ald. Wulf noted that 1,200 hours is budgeted for the position.

723

724 City Administrator Rindfleisch told Ald. Wulf the city will not budget for 1,200 hours; rather,
725 600 hours. City Administrator Rindfleisch said the status is a 1,200-hour position, but only 600
726 hours is being budgeted for 2019.

727

728 **City Administrator**

729

730 Ald. Wulf noted \$1,100 has been budgeted under “Phone, Internet & Cable,” and she inquired
731 about the cost to support a telephone line for a position such as City Clerk. Ald. Wulf said
732 \$1,100 seems excessive to her.

733

734 Fred said it is a combination of cellphone costs and the land line. Fred said it is the land line
735 charges are monthly, as are the cellphone and cable television charges.

736

737 **Mayor**

738

739 No questions were asked regarding proposed expenditures.

740

741 **Finance Department**

742

743 Ald. Wulf inquired about a position going from part-time to full-time.

744

745 City Administrator Rindfleisch noted the part-time position is currently vacant and said the
746 position will be reclassified. City Administrator Rindfleisch told Ald. Wulf that parking
747 citations is one of the duties for which the person who fills the position will be responsible, and
748 he said a significant portion of those duties becomes Utilities. City Administrator Rindfleisch
749 said one of his primary arguments regarding efficiency is ensuring that tasks are performed by
750 the appropriate wage levels. City Administrator Rindfleisch noted this currently is not occurring
751 in the Finance Department, and he said having a full-time position would allow for those tasks
752 (e.g. parking citations, JMC) to be performed more efficiently for Finance and Utilities.

753

754 Ald. Every asked City Administrator Rindfleisch if he and Fred meet to discuss which coalition
755 is utilized, and the current trend in employment relations.

756

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19

757 City Administrator Rindfleisch told Ald. Every he and Fred had met and discussed COLA, and
758 also examined the Consumer Price Index (CPI). City Administrator Rindfleisch said while he
759 believes the CPI is significantly higher than the 2 percent that is being proposed, it was logical to
760 utilize 2 percent in the proposed 2019 budget. City Administrator Rindfleisch also said Hope has
761 been involved in conversations regarding employment practices.

762
763 Ald. Every asked if there is a point in time when the Common Council has input regarding the
764 decisions being made.

765
766 City Administrator Rindfleisch said he presents the budget and this meeting is the alderpersons'
767 opportunity to provide input, noting he had never seen budget goals and telling Ald. Every he
768 would like to have such goals.

769
770 **City Clerk**

771
772 No questions were asked regarding proposed expenditures.

773
774 **Elections**

775
776 City Administrator Rindfleisch said the overall election budget decreased for 2019, but is
777 expected to increase for 2020 as it is an even year as well as a presidential election year.

778
779 **Auditors**

780
781 City Administrator Rindfleisch noted the next audit is the final one under the current contract,
782 and he asked Fred if the city will be going out for Requests for Proposals (RFPs).

783
784 Fred said that when a municipality receives federal funding, it is required by federal law registry
785 that the municipality must go out for bids every five years for the audit. Fred said vendors
786 submit five-year pricing in their bids. Fred said the city will solicit for an audit for the next five
787 years either in May or June of 2019.

788
789 Ald. Every asked if the city is required to advertise publicly or submit its audit to the public.

790
791 Fred referred to the EMMA Report, noting anyone has the capability to see the City of
792 Onalaska's entire audited financial. Fred said the report must be disclosed on the registry either
793 on or before September 20. Fred also said he includes the city's bond paperwork with the
794 audited financials every year.

795
796 Ald. Every noted it is not on cityofonalaska.com.

797
798 Fred told Ald. Every it is a simple process to put it on the city's website and said he could do it

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20

799 Wednesday morning if it already is not on cityofonalaska.com. Fred added he believes the report
800 can be found on the city's website.

801

802 **Human Resources**

803

804 No questions were asked regarding proposed expenditures.

805

806 **Assessor**

807

808 Fred noted he oversees this department, and he reminded the alderpersons the city will be going
809 through its revaluation next year. This is a \$40,000 line item on this budget.

810

811 **Information Technology**

812

813 No questions were asked regarding proposed expenditures.

814

815 **City Hall**

816

817 No questions were asked regarding proposed expenditures.

818

819 **Insurance and Workers Compensation**

820

821 Fred referred to a page titled "General Government Line Item Justification" in the budget books
822 and first addressed "Weights and Measures." Fred noted that "Weights and Measures" had been
823 under the Inspection Department, and he said it was a transfer from the Inspection Department
824 and reclassified at the same dollar amount, slightly increased over the years, to Insurance and
825 Workers Compensation. The \$8,800 cost is to have the state ensure that the weights and
826 measures utilized throughout the different vendors in the City of Onalaska are properly
827 calibrated. Fred next addressed Workers Compensation, noting the city has a 64-percent MOD.
828 Fred noted the MOD used to exceed 100 percent, which means the city was paying more than
829 100 percent of the premium. Fred noted 100 percent of the premium is \$203,000 and said the
830 city is paying \$119,000. Fred next addressed the CVMIC Insurance Summary, noting that with
831 the exception of its fire insurance (Municipal Property Insurance) the city has all of its insurance
832 coverage through Cities and Villages Mutual Insurance Company. Fred said CVMIC gives him
833 what it anticipates for the premium, and that is how rates are established.

834

835 **Police Department**

836

837 Ald. Every asked if the Common Council may have an option at the November 12 public hearing
838 where to restore the position (full-time Office Clerical Support) Police Chief Miller is talking
839 about, as well as the funding source.

840

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21

841 Fred referred to a document he had distributed earlier this evening and said the option is Option
842 “B.” Fred said, “If you decide to put that position back, \$38,382 would come out of the
843 Equipment Replacement Fund.”

844
845 Ald. Smith told Ald. Every he may make a motion to that effect now if he so chooses.

846
847 Ald. Every said he does not want to do so at the present time and stated he believes the proper
848 place to do so would be at the November 12 public hearing. Ald. Every said, “I can if you would
849 like, because I would like to do that.”

850
851 Ald. Smith said the public will have the opportunity to comment on the change November 12 if
852 the committee votes to restore the full-time Office Clerical Support position this evening.

853
854 Ald. Wulf asked that one of the three members of the committee (Ald. Smith, Ald. Olson, Ald.
855 Every) make a motion this evening to restore the position.

856
857 City Administrator Rindfleisch said that if the consensus is to add back the full-time Office
858 Clerical Support position, he is requesting that it be done this evening so that the information city
859 staff will have published and prepared for the November 12 public hearing will show the likely
860 consensus of both the Finance and Personnel Committee and the Common Council.

861
862 Motion by Ald. Olson, second by Ald. Every, to have the Office Clerical Support position for the
863 Police Department remain full-time in the 2019 Executive Budget, with a budgetary impact of
864 \$38,382. This funding will be provided through the Equipment Replacement Fund.

865
866 On voice vote, motion carried.

867
868 **Fire Department**

869
870 Ald. Every asked if the three new positions Fire Chief Hayes had told him about are included in
871 the budget.

872
873 Fire Chief Hayes said no.

874
875 City Administrator Rindfleisch told the alderpersons the conversation had arisen and said, “Once
876 my budget is proposed to the Council, that would be amended by the staff here. We did talk
877 about it and again, if that’s an amendment that needs to be made here, this is the time to do it.”

878
879 Fred addressed the “Personnel Justification” under the Fire Department and noted there is a
880 footnote in the comments section.

881
882 Ald. Smith pointed out the section Fred had mentioned and said the footnote states that three
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22

883 firefighters would cost \$216,513.

884

885 Fire Chief Hayes noted that Assistant Fire Chief Gudie, who was serving as Interim Fire Chief
886 following the retirement of former Fire Chief Don Dominick, had submitted the budget, which
887 stated the Fire Department would require three additional firefighters. Fire Chief Hayes referred
888 to Leanne Stokes' comments during the public input portion of the meeting and said there
889 currently are four full-time firefighters on shift. Fire Chief Hayes also referred to Leanne's
890 comments pertaining to two vacancies in the Fire Department and noted that not only have both
891 vacancies been filled, but all the vacancies in the department have been filled. Fire Chief Hayes
892 pointed out that staffing is reduced to three full-time firefighters per shift once vacations and sick
893 leave are factored in. Fire Chief Hayes said, "If we did add three additional firefighters, that
894 would take us to five per shift, with a minimum staffing of four ... unless we have continuous
895 EMS calls." Fire Chief Hayes noted EMS calls split the Fire Department's time as well as its
896 response capability, and he said the staffing increase will support a four-person engine company
897 based on minimum staffing, which is required not only by the Fire Department, but also the
898 National Fire Protection Association. Fire Chief Hayes said he supports the request Assistant
899 Fire Chief Gudie made prior to his arrival, but he also admitted there is a budgetary impact that
900 will need to be discussed.

901

902 Ald. Smith asked Fire Chief Hayes if he has any strategies to overcome the budgetary impact.

903

904 Fire Chief Hayes noted the budget impact would be somewhere between \$217,000 and \$221,000,
905 and he also acknowledged the Police Department's staffing needs.

906

907 Ald. Every asked if Fred could bring forth an option at the November 12 budget hearing showing
908 the Common Council a complete phase-in or a phase-in over time, as well as the funding source
909 for the three additional Fire Department positions.

910

911 Fred said he is uncertain of the funding source as the General Fund is at its cap. Fred said the
912 Equipment Replacement Fund is the only funding source that can be a "one-time fix." Fred also
913 said, "Even if you phase this in in 2020, it is annualized, just as we stated on the City Attorney's
914 position."

915

916 Ald. Binash noted he has discussed this matter with both Fire Chief Hayes and Police Chief
917 Miller, and he said, "If we really are looking and we're serious about this, we're going to have to
918 do a Public Safety Referendum so we can adequately staff both our Fire and Police departments.
919 We'll have to look at that in 2019. That is the option we can do. We are not at our tax levy yet,
920 but I know people are not fond of tax increases. But if you really are serious about supporting
921 our Police and Fire departments, this is going to be an option that we're going to have to look
922 at."

923

924 Fire Chief Hayes said he had discussed with City Administrator Rindfleisch the option Ald.

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925 Binash had just mentioned. Fire Chief Hayes referred to a recent house fire on 14th Avenue
926 North and said, "Because of perceived perceptions about responses, that will continue." Fire
927 Chief Hayes referred to a staffing report written in 2006 by former City of Onalaska Fire Chief
928 Paul Menches and noted the Fire Department had 24 part-time firefighters 12 years ago.
929 However, the Fire Department currently only has 11 part-time firefighters. Fire Chief Hayes
930 said, "Our dependency upon our part-timers, because they've either moved on or have not met
931 certification standards, decreases our capability." Fire Chief Hayes said the Fire Department has
932 been relying upon mutual aid and other agencies, "but that's not to support your staffing levels.
933 That is for incidents you need support outside your current resources."

934
935 City Administrator Rindfleisch said, "The ability to increase the cap, ____ Cap 2 with the levy
936 limit, does exist. But the challenge that we face is we can't expend it. We could levy more, but
937 we can't actually expend ____ at this point in time." City Administrator Rindfleisch said it is
938 possible to utilize funds from the Equipment Replacement Fund, "but then you're looking at that
939 every year going forward. You're not doing a General Fund expense; you're doing an
940 Equipment Replacement expense, or \$200,000 in cuts somewhere else. ... If the Public Safety
941 Referendum were to go public, [you] make the department as lean as possible so that if you're
942 standing in front of the public [you] say we've done everything we possibly can to be as cost-
943 efficient and as lean as possible in all positions. Then the public may decide that for a five-year
944 term we'll exceed the levy limits. The challenge right now is if we expend it we lose the
945 \$83,000 we're getting from the state in expenditure restraint payments down the road. To add
946 the \$216,000, you almost have to add the \$85,000 in lost revenue as well to offset that because
947 you won't have those funds to pay for that. There are no easy solutions, and as we discussed, it
948 gets us to fully staffed under current standards, but it doesn't actually reduce our response times.
949 Based on where the station is currently located and where the growth patterns have been in the
950 city, I think the broader question needs to be beyond just increasing current staff, the capital
951 expense and increasing overhead costs that way at an eastside station or north or some other
952 place we could relocate." City Administrator Rindfleisch said that while he would like to
953 include the three full-time positions for the Fire Department, the only way they could be included
954 in the 2019 budget is if there are cuts elsewhere.

955
956 Fred noted the Equipment Replacement Fund had a levy, also noting that if the city strictly
957 utilized the expenditures it has \$287,000. Of that \$287,000 levy, if the city had not utilized its
958 reserves, that total would have been \$287,000. Fred reminded the alderpersons the city is
959 utilizing \$164,908 and said it is not possible to utilize more than the levy. Fred said subtracting
960 \$164,908 from \$287,000 means there is only a little more than \$122,000 remaining, noting it is
961 not possible to take out more of the reserve than the city has as a levy.

962
963 Ald. Smith said the city could, in theory, add one firefighter utilizing that method. However,
964 Ald. Smith also acknowledged the city would face financial difficulties the following year.

965
966 Ald. Every said he believes the conversation regarding increasing Fire Department staffing

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967 should begin now, and also that he wishes to see some of the options (exceeding the levy limit,
968 not exceeding the levy limit) that are being discussed. Ald. Every noted reducing the budget was
969 an option that had not been mentioned, and he reiterated he would like to see the options and
970 begin a conversation. Ald. Every also suggested starting with one firefighter “and adding as we
971 go on.” Ald. Every said, “I think this is critical, our safety people.” Ald. Every noted he had
972 seen the house fire that occurred on 14th Avenue North as well as the Fire Department’s
973 response, which he described as “excellent.” However, Ald. Every also pointed out the Fire
974 Department had been understaffed and stated, “They need help. When they get there, they get
975 the job done. There was every person there, and there was a crowd there. To a person, they said
976 [the Fire Department] did an excellent job once they got there, and it was nothing to do with the
977 response time, either. That was right on what it is supposed to be. I think it is critical to start the
978 conversation, and I think it ought to be started now. I would like to see some of those options on
979 paper, or I would be willing to sit down with you separately and look at them. I would like
980 everybody to see them.”

981
982 Ald. Smith stated she believes all city staff is working hard, and she said, “The same thing
983 happens to the Police Department. They have back-to-back calls. They need one person to come
984 back up the other person, and they’re left short. This is a reoccurring problem in our community,
985 and probably in all communities, that we need to try to strategize together to overcome.”

986
987 City Administrator Rindfleisch said both city staff and elected officials have stated they would
988 like to have the public decide what level of staffing they would like to see as well as the costs
989 associated with it. City Administrator Rindfleisch noted the city receives expenditure restraint
990 cap funding from the state, and he also noted the city will not receive state aid the following year
991 if it exceeds its expenditure. City Administrator Rindfleisch noted the city would lose \$90,000
992 as a result, and he said the levy limit penalty is dollar-for-dollar in state aid cuts. City
993 Administrator Rindfleisch said if the city exceeds its actual tax levy, the state subtracts dollar-
994 for-dollar off state aids it gives the city in revenue – including transit aids, if necessary. City
995 Administrator Rindfleisch said, “We would not be able to levy more than what is allowable there
996 for that position, which is on the expense side. If you exceed your expenditure restraint, you
997 have to levy an additional \$85,000 to replace that lost revenue. So out of the \$280,000 you have
998 available you’re down to \$200,000. We’ve already increased it by some \$39,000, so quite
999 frankly I don’t see a way we can exceed that without losing state transit aids, dollars for roads,
1000 for resurfacing. ... I think the option is, if you’re looking for something in this particular 2019
1001 budget is General Fund cutbacks somewhere else.”

1002
1003 Ald. Smith said the only way she can see adding a position in the 2019 budget is to cut
1004 something of equal value. Ald. Smith said, “Looking ahead, if we were seriously thinking of a
1005 referendum or seriously considering it for next year, we should consider allocating money
1006 because having a referendum is a big deal. You need to practically hire a consultant to have the
1007 wording of it correct, and to advertise. Look at what the [Onalaska] School District is going
1008 through right now for their referendum. That costs money that we don’t have set aside for that to

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25

1009 happen for the future, either.”

1010

1011 Cari said a referendum would need to be completed by January, otherwise it would be necessary
1012 to hold a special election that would be an additional cost to the city.

1013

1014 Mayor Chilsen noted the Onalaska School District has a referendum on the November ballot and
1015 said he believes the chances of two referendums passing are “slim to none.”

1016

1017 Fire Chief Hayes said not only is it the firefighters’ job to protect the citizens of Onalaska, but he
1018 also must protect them. Fire Chief Hayes said, “If they’re not protecting themselves, there is no
1019 way they’re going to be able to protect you. This is a serious issue. I knew about it when I
1020 accepted the position, and I was willing to take this on because I think we can do something
1021 about it.”

1022

1023 Ald. Wulf said she echoes the sentiments expressed this evening about seriously examining what
1024 the city can do both for the Police and Fire departments. Ald. Wulf said, “I’ve heard the same
1025 story for all the years I’ve been here that we are not sufficiently staffed. We’re going into 2019,
1026 and we are still hearing the same story that we are not sufficiently staffed. I have grave concerns
1027 about that, and it’s time that we do something about it. It’s time. I look forward to the
1028 discussion we’ll have in the near future.”

1029

1030 **Hydrant Fees**

1031

1032 No questions were asked regarding proposed expenditures.

1033

1034 **Inspections**

1035

1036 Ald. Wulf asked City Administrator Rindfleisch if the Planning Technician position is a 1,200-
1037 hour, part-time position.

1038

1039 City Administrator Rindfleisch said yes.

1040

1041 Ald. Wulf said she supports having this position to assist Katie.

1042

1043 **Emergency Government**

1044

1045 City Administrator Rindfleisch noted no changes were made in this particular budget year.

1046 However, City Administrator Rindfleisch also said this item likely will need to grow over time,
1047 especially given the fact Fire Chief Hayes is the sole Emergency Manager, with Police Chief
1048 Miller serving as Deputy Emergency Manager. This item does not include capital expenses, but
1049 City Administrator Rindfleisch said he expects training to become a larger budget item as the
1050 city moves forward.

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26

1051

1052 **Jail**

1053

1054 No questions were asked regarding proposed expenditures.

1055

1056 **Engineering**

1057

1058 No questions were asked regarding proposed expenditures.

1059

1060 **Board of Public Works**

1061

1062 No questions were asked regarding proposed expenditures.

1063

1064 **Streets**

1065

1066 Ald. Wulf asked Jarrod if every light the city installs costs \$173.

1067

1068 Jarrod told Ald. Wulf she is correct, noting both Xcel Energy and Riverland Energy Co-op
1069 charge the city for every streetlight it installs. The city is charged based on the wattage of the
1070 light; if it is a decorative light; and whether it is a wood, steel, or fiberglass pole. Jarrod said the
1071 cost can range from \$10.50 to \$15 per month. Jarrod also noted the streetlight budget exceeds
1072 \$200,000.

1073

1074 **Street Signs**

1075

1076 Ald. Wulf said she believes it is easy to take a budget item such as street signs for granted
1077 because “nothing ever seems like it’s worn or things need to be replaced. I for one appreciate the
1078 fact we stay on top of that – not necessarily go overboard and replace something before it needs
1079 to be done, but I think we’re on a good replacement schedule to satisfy our citizens for what I
1080 think they can appreciate.”

1081

1082 **Streetlights**

1083

1084 Ald. Smith asked Fred if there is a reason why the city only has expended half of the streetlight
1085 budget.

1086

1087 Fred said there is a delay in billing.

1088

1089 Jarrod said the billing is typically 1½ months behind. Jarrod also noted costs have not increased
1090 due to the city utilizing LED lighting.

1091

1092 **Animal Control**

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1093

1094 Ald. Binash noted there had been past discussions about the Police Department handling animal
1095 control. However, Ald. Binash also said, “We quickly realized that was not a good option. The
1096 contractual obligation, even though it goes up – it looks like it’s gone up \$4,000 – it’s still a
1097 necessity.”

1098

1099 **Library**

1100

1101 Ald. Wulf addressed Line Item No. 100-55110-291 (“Transcription Contractual”) and said she
1102 assumes the \$75 budgeted for this line item is for transcribing the Library Commission meeting
1103 minutes.

1104

1105 Ald. Wulf was told that is correct.

1106

1107 Ald. Wulf said she, Mayor Chilsen, and Dan had discussed whether there was a need to continue
1108 the Library Commission. Ald. Wulf, who serves as the Library Commission Chair, noted that
1109 the Parks and Recreation Board has adequately addressed any issues that have arisen pertaining
1110 to the library, and she said she had given Mayor Chilsen her blessing to decommission the
1111 Library Commission. Doing so would remove \$75 from the Transcription Contractual line item.

1112

1113 Fred said that because every city department must have a zero-percent increase to its budget, Dan
1114 had had to sacrifice items within the library budget to remain within the cap. Fred said Dan
1115 likely cut more than \$75 to stay within the zero-percent increase.

1116

1117 Ald. Wulf asked Fred if the \$75 may be transferred to Parks and Recreation.

1118

1119 Fred said he is certain the \$75 can be applied to one of Dan’s other accounts.

1120

1121 Ald. Wulf asked that a member of the Finance and Personnel Committee make a motion asking
1122 Mayor Chilsen to decommission the Library Commission and transfer the \$75 line item to the
1123 Parks and Recreation Board.

1124

1125 Ald. Smith said she does not think it would be appropriate to make that change this evening due
1126 to tonight’s meeting agenda. However, Ald. Smith also said it would be appropriate to make a
1127 motion to transfer the \$75 line item.

1128

1129 **Parks**

1130

1131 No questions were asked regarding proposed expenditures.

1132

1133 **Recreation**

1134

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28

1135 No questions were asked regarding proposed expenditures.

1136

1137 **Aquatic Center**

1138

1139 No questions were asked regarding proposed expenditures.

1140

1141 **Urban, City & Economic**

1142

1143 Fred noted the City of Onalaska belongs to the La Crosse Area Planning Committee (LAPC),
1144 and that Mayor Chilsen serves as the Chair. Fred noted the city's share is \$13,467, and he asked
1145 Jarrod if the city has opportunities to obtain STP Urban Funding.

1146

1147 Jarrod said it opens up a variety of funding sources that are administered, grant-wise.

1148

1149 Ald. Smith said the committee will now take a five-minute break.

1150

1151 City Administrator Rindfleisch suggested taking a formal, five-minute recess.

1152

1153 Motion by Ald. Every, second by Ald. Olson, for the Finance and Personnel II Committee to take
1154 a five-minute recess.

1155

1156 On voice vote, motion carried.

1157

1158 Ald. Smith reconvened the meeting at 7:29 p.m.

1159

1160 Fred noted he had distributed three items, including a document showing the assessment ratio for
1161 all of La Crosse County, broken down by each town, city, and village. Fred noted the other two
1162 documents pertain to Equipment Replacement and the Sewer Utility.

1163

1164 Ald. Smith asked Fred to explain why the aggregate ratio is important.

1165

1166 Fred said, "The closer you are to 100 percent, the less grief you will hear from the taxpayer."
1167 Fred said that in his 37 years as a City of Onalaska employee there was one instance where the
1168 Board of Review lasted 30 days because the aggregate ratio was so low that when the city
1169 attempted to reach 100 percent the city's citizens protested. Fred said there is a revaluation
1170 every four years, and he also said the only reason it is longer this time is because it was illogical
1171 to have a revaluation due to an economic downturn. Fred said the city was allowed to do a
1172 percentage increase when it went below a certain percentage, and he noted this occurred either in
1173 2016 or 2017.

1174

1175 Ald. Smith asked, "Isn't there a legal limit to the state mandates?"

1176

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1177 Fred said it is in the 80-percent range.

1178

1179 City Administrator Rindfleisch said a mandatory reevaluation occurs when a municipality is
1180 below that number. City Administrator Rindfleisch said, “You’ll see your assessed value, and
1181 the state does their equalized value. Those numbers are vastly different. ... The closer you are
1182 on this aggregate ratio to 1 means you’re going to be closer to ... Your assessed value will be the
1183 same as the equalized value on the state.”

1184

1185 Ald. Wulf said it was her understanding the city had to be within 10 percent.

1186

1187 Fred said a municipality may go “all the way down to 80-some percent.” Fred said there had
1188 been instances when the city had exceeded 100 percent, noting that citizens are paying higher
1189 than what the market value is if, for example, the tax bill shows the city is at 104 percent.

1190

1191 Ald. Every said it was his understanding the City of Onalaska’s sewer rate would remain the
1192 same with the City of La Crosse, and he asked Jarrod to explain the document showing an
1193 increase to the sewer rate. Ald. Every referred to a letter stating the terms will be the same
1194 through December 31, 2019.

1195

1196 Ald. Smith asked Ald. Every if that topic can be addressed when the committee discusses the
1197 Sewer Utility in a few minutes.

1198

1199 **Planning & Zoning**

1200

1201 No questions were asked regarding proposed expenditures.

1202

1203 **Water**

1204

1205 No questions were asked regarding proposed expenditures.

1206

1207 **Sewer**

1208

1209 Fred addressed the document titled “City of Onalaska, Wisconsin Estimated Sewer Rate” and
1210 said the Finance and Personnel Committee had discussed the different scenarios. Fred said that
1211 when the city goes out for Mortgage Revenue Bond Issues, a requirement is that the city must
1212 have sufficient revenues to provide 125 percent of responsibility to the enterprise. Fred noted the
1213 city had been at 1.09 percent, which is not 125 percent of the city’s revenues. Fred said if the
1214 city does not have a method to remedy this situation, buyers will not view this favorably when
1215 the city goes out for a Mortgage Revenue Bond. Fred said the 1.09 percent represented a 3-
1216 percent, across-the-board increase on the Water Utility. Fred said Monica Hauser of Hawkins
1217 Ash CPAs created a document on October 20 that shows the results of the City of Onalaska
1218 levying a 3-percent, across-the-board rate increase for the Sewer Utility that will “soften the

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1219 blow” for 2020. Fred referred to page 2 of the document and pointed out that the coverage ratio
1220 in 2020 would be 2.66 percent. Fred said, “What I have given you tonight is an option to
1221 consider increasing the Sewer Utility 3 percent to soften the future impact to the utility payer.”
1222

1223 Ald. Smith asked, “Would this be the correct place to do that?”
1224

1225 Fred told Ald. Smith it would not be wise to do it after the budget is passed.
1226

1227 Ald. Smith said, “I was thinking at the Board of Public Works.”
1228

1229 Fred said it would be possible to amend the November 6 Board of Public Works meeting agenda
1230 and told Ald. Smith the most appropriate place to hold a discussion is at the Utilities Committee.

1231 Fred said he wanted to put this item in front of the Finance and Personnel II Committee this
1232 evening.
1233

1234 Ald. Binash said this is “multifunctional” and stated, “If this is not approved, we’re also doing
1235 the Capital Improvements Budget, we have some projects that need to be done, and we’re going
1236 to be annexing some property. Whether we do that with these projects or not, this still needs to
1237 be accomplished. I believe the next increase in 2020 might be what, 20 percent or something
1238 like that?”
1239

1240 Fred told Ald. Binash yes and said, “This would soften the blow.”
1241

1242 Ald. Binash said, “If you want to limit the amount that is suddenly thrust upon somebody, now is
1243 the opportunity to do it. Plus, we’re also considering annexing some property and doing some
1244 Capital Improvement Projects. Our debt service, along with this 3-percent increase, puts us in a
1245 good position to be able to accomplish what the city needs to do to increase our tax base. You
1246 don’t want to hit somebody with 23 or maybe even 24 or 25 percent in another year. This would
1247 be a good time to consider doing it for a lot of different reasons.”
1248

1249 Ald. Smith stated she “wholeheartedly” supports the 3-percent rate increase as it would be a
1250 simple rate increase and the city would not need to go before the Public Service Commission.
1251

1252 Fred noted the PSC only regulates the Water Utility and said the Sewer and Storm Water
1253 Utilities are represented by a City of Onalaska Resolution.
1254

1255 Ald. Smith noted the committee is discussing potentially making a motion to approve a 3-percent
1256 rate increase to the Sewer Utility.
1257

1258 Ald. Every said he will not vote for any rate increases in the Water, Sewer, or Storm Water
1259 utilities. Ald. Every said Monica Hauser had given a satisfactory presentation and stated, “It
1260 makes sense. The problem is it’s all based on hypothetical stuff, the projects you want to do.

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1261 God gives you what you need; he doesn't give you what you want. He'll always give you what
1262 you need, and there is a big difference there. You might think it's a good thing, but I took a
1263 \$150,000 home in Onalaska ... and you add up all of the different things that we are proposing in
1264 our budget. Most of this is coming out of Sewer, Water, Storm Water, and of course the tax
1265 increase. If you add up everything that we're proposing, what you're proposing on these sheets
1266 that you gave us in both the Utilities Committee and Finance and Personnel, you don't have an
1267 average increase of \$37.23 on your taxes. You have an increase of \$111 on a \$150,000 home. I
1268 think when you're looking at utilities that are all carrying big year-end balances, I don't think it's
1269 necessary until we get a little farther down the line. Just because you can tax, I don't think you
1270 should. As I've stated at that meeting, I will vote against any budget that has those increases in
1271 it." Ald. Every added he had discussed the various projects and the need for them with Jarrod.

1272
1273 Ald. Binash quoted the following from the September 5, 2018 Utilities Committee meeting
1274 minutes: "*Fred told committee members, 'Estimated for 2020 does not really ... This is capital*
1275 *improvements we have thus far, but it does not include any potential ... We are looking in the*
1276 *months to come through the Board of Public Works at doing a potential Water, Sewer and Storm*
1277 *Water Mortgage Revenue Bonds. This is looking out two years for projects. Those projects are*
1278 *then looked at as to what potential modification we may have to the rate.'* Ald. Every praised the
1279 *plan and said he believes it needs to be implemented when the time comes.*" Ald. Binash said, "I
1280 don't think any other time is better than right now."

1281
1282 Ald. Every said, "Right now you are proposing a 4½-percent tax levy increase – right now. Just
1283 the tax levy. If you added up everything that you are proposing to tack on to people's tax bill,
1284 you haven't. There is no need for it now. These utilities, you check them out. Here are the
1285 papers. They're all carrying great big year-end balances. Some of that may be projects that
1286 aren't done. They shouldn't be. If that's in there, it should be in some kind of a carryover. It
1287 should not even be in there. They all have healthy cash balances. Use up what you've got and
1288 then try to figure out where we're going to go. What we talked about in Capital Improvements
1289 was what the priorities are. What are the things we want to do? There are a lot of things that
1290 need to be done. Abbey Road needs to be done right away. We just got done annexing that.
1291 That needs to be done. We need to provide the infrastructure now; you have to plan for it. There
1292 are other things out in other coulees that we want to do. Those are things you have to plan for.
1293 You can't just do them all at once. You have to phase these things in. If you're going to get into
1294 this business where you want to annex things ... We're out there issuing permits and things and
1295 talking to people about projects on land that we don't even own – homes in the Town of Medary,
1296 for God's sakes. We haven't even talked about annexation. To me, those are issues that should
1297 come first. That's just plain common sense and being a good neighbor. I'm just telling you I'm
1298 not going to vote for any budget that has any increase in these utilities."

1299
1300 Fred said, "If you were to take a look at the last four years within the Sewer Utility and the
1301 audited financials, we actually have a simplified audited financials that has strictly graphs. I'd
1302 be more than happy to put a copy of that for the last four years into your budgets. The Sewer
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32

1303 Utility has been operating as a deficit. And when Monica was here at the Finance and Personnel
1304 level and the Utilities level, she had stated we need to turn that around. This is a gradual
1305 turnaround.”

1306

1307 Ald. Gjertsen asked Jarrod when city staff had last looked at the Water and Sewer hookup fees
1308 both for residential and commercial properties.

1309

1310 Jarrod told Ald. Gjertsen the city currently has “a very small charge” at the time of inspection
1311 and said there are no hookup fees, per se. Jarrod also said the city has never had hookup fees,
1312 noting developers typically install the infrastructures “so it’s been in for them.” Jarrod said there
1313 are some hookup fees for larger projects such as interceptor sewers. Jarrod said there also is the
1314 Green Coulee High Pressure Zone fee and the East Avenue Sanitary Sewer fee – larger projects
1315 that serve larger areas that will be built out over time. Jarrod added this has been utilized in a
1316 limited sense.

1317

1318 City Administrator Rindfleisch said he believes valid points had been raised regarding the
1319 utilization of cash debts, stating everyone understands “there’s only one pocket that everything
1320 comes out of.” City Administrator Rindfleisch said, “Conceptually, though, the projects we have
1321 proposed here do allow for future growth.” These projects are in the proposed 2019 Capital
1322 Improvements Budget, which still must be approved both by the Board of Public Works and the
1323 Common Council. City Administrator Rindfleisch said, “Not necessarily within the next year,
1324 but it sets up the future for where that next growth can be.” City Administrator Rindfleisch
1325 addressed the proposed annexation of Crestwood, noting the city is considering installing a
1326 booster station that would service 304 acres of developable property it currently does not have.
1327 In addition, City Administrator Rindfleisch said the area north on Abbey Road could be annexed
1328 in for redevelopment purposes 20 to 30 years from now, noting there is water and sewer service
1329 located near Kwik Trip. City Administrator Rindfleisch said, “What are we doing now to grow?
1330 The only way we can really relieve the burden on the existing taxpayer is through growth.
1331 Without growth, things get more expensive. It’s more and more cost that would be applied on
1332 the same number of households or same number of businesses. I think it is an investment we
1333 have to look at. It’s an investment that I think the residents need to view as a way to relieve their
1334 own burden by allowing for growth.”

1335

1336 City Administrator Rindfleisch noted Ald. Every had brought up “an excellent point” in 2017
1337 regarding the negative cash flow in the city’s utilities. City Administrator Rindfleisch
1338 acknowledged that Ald. Every is correct, and he noted that two-thirds of the rate increase in the
1339 Sewer Utility is to assist in getting that utility “back on a positive cash flow basis.” Only one-
1340 third is the investment in growth. City Administrator Rindfleisch said, “Again, there are impacts
1341 on the individual homeowner and businessowner. Any way you look at it, again, there’s only
1342 that one wallet – is it a tax or a fee or what have you? There’s no doubt about that. I’m very
1343 cognizant when we put together the budgets, but I think we also have to look at the ability to
1344 grow.”

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33

1345
1346 City Administrator Rindfleisch next addressed the use of reserves, noting that the Moody's rating
1347 is "very important" and that Moody's examines the city's reserves. City Administrator
1348 Rindfleisch said that while he would look at utilizing the city's reserves, it puts the city against
1349 the Moody's rating. City Administrator Rindfleisch explained that a decreased Moody's rating
1350 would mean any time the city goes out for servicing, the taxpayers would be charged more for
1351 borrowing the same dollar amount. City Administrator Rindfleisch said one use for the reserves
1352 is to limit the amount of increases for the future, adding, "It's a plan I wholeheartedly still stand
1353 behind. Of course, the budget is decided by the Council here, but I think there are other ways of
1354 looking at that same question. ... Let's limit the cost of that one wallet as much as possible. I
1355 think it's also important to be in a very healthy financial position to look for future growth
1356 opportunities to relieve the burden on individuals, and to avoid the higher debt costs we currently
1357 pay."

1358
1359 Motion by Ald. Smith to approve increasing the Sewer Utility rate by 3 percent from the 2018
1360 rate for 2019.

1361
1362 As a point of order, Ald. Every said he does not believe the chairperson of a committee is
1363 allowed to make a motion, if Robert's Rules of Order are being followed.

1364
1365 City Administrator Rindfleisch said his interpretation of Robert's Rules of Order is that the
1366 committee chair is allowed to make a motion and vote on it. City Administrator Rindfleisch also
1367 said the point of order needs to be decided.

1368
1369 Ald. Every said he will withdraw his point of order.

1370
1371 Mayor Chilsen said his interpretation of Robert's Rules of Order is that if the chair may make a
1372 motion if he or she is a voting member of a committee.

1373
1374 Ald. Wulf said she would refer the committee to Cari for that ruling as she typically makes those
1375 determinations.

1376
1377 Cari said the chair may make a motion if he or she is a voting member of a committee. By
1378 comparison, Mayor Chilsen, who chairs the Common Council, is not a voting member and may
1379 not make motions.

1380
1381 Ald. Every said, "The point being, when you have three people sitting on a committee, just as
1382 we've talked about since I've come on this Council, if you have a person who makes a motion to
1383 approve and a person who seconds it, where does that leave your third person? I just didn't bring
1384 it tonight, but it is Robert's Rules of Order. The chairman cannot ... They may bring it up for
1385 discussion, but they may not bring it up for approval. But I will withdraw that. You go ahead
1386 and vote on that and make your motion."

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1387

1388 Ald. Smith noted that there had not been a second.

1389

1390 Fred asked if the committee is requesting that he do an amended Utilities Committee meeting
1391 agenda for November 7.

1392

1393 Ald. Smith said she recommends including this item on the November 7 meeting agenda, adding,
1394 “But I’m not the chair [of the Utilities Committee].”

1395

Cemetery

1397

1398 No questions were asked regarding proposed expenditures.

1399

Omni Center

1401

1402 No questions were asked regarding proposed expenditures.

1403

Tourism

1405

1406 Fred said he feels “very comfortable” with the \$10,550,000 that was discussed at the August 29
1407 Room Tax Commission meeting. Fred also said the city would have been “dead-on target” for
1408 the \$10,550,000 if there had not been a fire in late April at the Stoney Creek Hotel & Conference
1409 Center. Fred added, “This is why we’re using the same figures for 2019.” Fred said the Room
1410 Tax Commission had discussed the potential of receiving funds due to Stoney Creek Hotel &
1411 Conference Center’s unavailability. However, this did not come to fruition.

1412

Storm Water Utility

1414

1415 No questions were asked regarding proposed expenditures.

1416

Gundersen Lutheran Parking Ramp

1418

1419 Fred noted the city’s mill rate was 7.27 in 2003 when it entered into an agreement with
1420 Gundersen Health System. Fred noted the city’s current mill rate is 0.00613376.

1421

1422 City Administrator Rindfleisch asked Fred to explain the impact.

1423

1424 Fred said the city had never reached the 7.27, and when state mandates came through with Cap
1425 No. 1 and Cap No. 2, the city was placed in an unusual position. Fred said 2019 is the first year
1426 Gundersen will pick up any shortfall the city has in reference to the levy it collects through taxes.

1427

Park Fund

1428 Reviewed 11/5/18

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1429

1430 No questions were asked regarding proposed expenditures.

1431

1432 **Special Projects & Donations**

1433

1434 No questions were asked regarding proposed expenditures.

1435

1436 **Refuse & Recycling**

1437

1438 Fred noted that either in 2013 or 2014 the Common Council had been instrumental in creating a
1439 fee for yard waste. Fred said that fee has been beneficial for the city.

1440

1441 **Shared Ride**

1442

1443 No questions were asked regarding proposed expenditures.

1444

1445 **Equipment Replacement Fund**

1446

1447 Jarrod referred to a memo that had been distributed regarding the city's postage machine, which
1448 was purchased in 2006. Jarrod noted Clerical Support employee Vicky Bosworth, along with
1449 other staff, process the mail daily. The mail machine was repaired after it malfunctioned in
1450 2017. However, Jarrod said a representative from Advanced Business Systems cautioned that
1451 the machine would not be serviced. Jarrod said the inking unit ceased functioning earlier in
1452 October, and staff was able to obtain a new inking unit. Staff has obtained a quote for a new
1453 machine similar to the current model, but Jarrod said it will take at least one week to arrive if one
1454 is purchased. Jarrod said, "It is a needed expense," and he told the alderpersons staff had looked
1455 into processing mail with an organization such as La Crosse Mail & Print. However, Jarrod also
1456 said, "I think having our own control is good. We've gotten a good life out of the old machine."
1457 Jarrod said staff recommends attempting to budget for a new mail machine, adding, "At the time
1458 we prepared the budget six months ago, it was still working to the point that [we said], why
1459 replace it if it is still [functioning]?"

1460

1461 Ald. Smith asked Jarrod how he foresees this item impacting the budget, noting the memo states
1462 the funds would be withdrawn from the 2018 Equipment Replacement Budget.

1463

1464 Fred said if this item is added to the 2019 budget, the committee would make a motion to
1465 increase it and utilize that much of the reserves "because you are tight against the cap." Fred
1466 said another option is to include an item on the December 5 Finance and Personnel Committee
1467 meeting agenda to purchase the new mail machine as a non-budgeted item at a cost of \$4,442. A
1468 transfer then would occur before the end of 2018 to cover that expense utilizing fund balance.

1469

1470 Ald. Smith asked Fred if he anticipates a fund balance that could be transferred to cover the cost.

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- 1471
1472 Fred said the Equipment Replacement Fund would be the source, adding, "That is where this
1473 would have been charged either way."
1474
1475 Ald. Smith said the Finance and Personnel Committee should address this item at its December 5
1476 meeting if it chooses to go with the 2018 option. However, the committee will act upon this item
1477 tonight if it chooses to go with the 2019 option.
1478
1479 Ald. Binash asked if the Special Projects Fund may be utilized for an item such as this.
1480
1481 Fred explained to Ald. Binash the intent of the special project is incoming money to pay for an
1482 expenditure such as the K-9 unit.
1483
1484 City Administrator Rindfleisch said that while the mail machine likely will cease to function
1485 soon, placing it in the 2019 budget means it is a budgeted item versus attempting to purchase a
1486 non-budgeted item at the end of 2018.
1487
1488 Ald. Every said it is his understanding that even if the committee approves budgeting the mail
1489 machine for 2019 and it becomes necessary to purchase one tomorrow if the current machine
1490 ceases functioning, the funds will come out of the Equipment Replacement Fund.
1491
1492 Ald. Smith said she is of the opinion to let it come out of the 2018 budget if staff believes there is
1493 sufficient funding.
1494
1495 Ald. Wulf asked why this item cannot be placed on the November 7 Finance and Personnel
1496 Committee meeting agenda.
1497
1498 Fred noted that agenda has been completed and said staff likely can amend it.
1499
1500 Ald. Every asked that this item be included on the November 7 Finance and Personnel
1501 Committee meeting agenda.
1502
1503 Fred said an item that is on the November 7 Finance and Personnel Committee meeting agenda is
1504 authorization to approve a non-budgeted Fire Department expenditure in the Equipment
1505 Replacement Fund utilizing fund balance for tire replacement on a rescue vehicle at a cost not to
1506 exceed \$1,700.

1507
1508 **Joint Municipal Court**
1509

- 1510 City Administrator Rindfleisch noted the first page of the JMC highlights the general property
1511 taxes that go for the court. City Administrator Rindfleisch also noted \$71,850 is budgeted for
1512 2019, adding it is a tax levy.

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37

1513
1514 Fred referred to a page addressing the percentage of cases not dismissed and said that is how the
1515 percentage of this Special Revenue Fund is allocated. Fred noted the City of Onalaska covers 53
1516 percent of the budget, and the other participating towns and villages pay 46 percent.

1517
1518 **Capital Projects**

1519
1520 Fred said these are bond issues that have been opened up, and also that this is what staff is
1521 anticipating being left that will be expended in the upcoming year. Fred said, "This is an
1522 overview of what we think may happen over the Capital Project issues." Fred noted there were
1523 nine or 10 capital projects open one year ago, and seven this year. Fred said the funds that were
1524 reserved in 1998 have been restricted for the construction of City Hall. These funds are to be
1525 utilized either for PMI payments or replacing the roof. Fred noted Dan's five-year list of Capital
1526 Projects includes repairing the City Hall roof in 2020, and he said he hopes the remaining funds
1527 may be utilized for the repairs. Fred said he believes the remaining funds from 2008 are
1528 restricted for the library.

1529
1530 Jarrod said staff attempts to run two years back, citing the example of attempting to leave funds
1531 from 2017 and 2018 alone while working on 2019 as there still are ongoing projects, design
1532 projects, and also projects that take two years to be constructed that were financed. Jarrod said
1533 he is looking at utilizing some 2016 funds in the 2019 budget, adding, "We always will have
1534 some funds open. It's just a matter of how many. Fred has done a good job of consolidating
1535 them now."

1536
1537 Ald. Every noted there are some that could be retired and said the funds could be utilized for
1538 something else. Ald. Every also said that normally when a bond is retired the funds are to be
1539 returned to the taxpayers, and he asked if that is the correct terminology.

1540
1541 Fred said he disagrees with Ald. Every, stating that according to Quarles and Brady, the
1542 remaining funds may be utilized for a like project. Fred also said Quarles and Brady's bond
1543 covenants state the only way unspent funds may be utilized is to apply them to the principal and
1544 interest payments, or to call in a bond issue if there is a call-in feature.

1545
1546 Ald. Every asked Fred how many are restricted.

1547
1548 Fred said the 1998 and 2008 funds are restricted.

1549
1550 Jarrod said it typically takes the city 18 months to process all the bills from the State of
1551 Wisconsin projects in which it participates. Jarrod said, "I always try to use two years because I
1552 know there aren't items that are still being done. That's the reason we try to go back to that third
1553 year and see what we have left over and see what we can move forward." Jarrod said there are
1554 instances when there is a three-year-old project that is still underway.

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1555
1556 Fred told Ald. Every that in a way funds are being returned to the taxpayer when they are applied
1557 to the principal and interest payment of a bond issue.

1558
1559 Ald. Every said there should not be any interest if the bond is paid off.

1560
1561 Fred noted the bonds are 20-year bonds.

1562
1563 Ald. Every said it is possible to pay off the principal and interest and retire the bond.

1564
1565 Fred said it would be possible to utilize some of the funds and levy less.

1566
1567 Ald. Wulf asked Fred if the \$58,000-plus is what remains from the original Building Fund.

1568
1569 Fred told Ald. Wulf that interest rates were favorable in 1998 and he said that when the city
1570 borrowed the money for two years it had earned more than \$1 million in interest income. Fred
1571 said the \$58,000 is interest income.

1572
1573 Ald. Every noted there is an item called “Temporary Investments” and there is \$13 million in it.

1574
1575 Fred explained that the city has the General Fund, the Special Revenue Funds, and Capital
1576 Projects Funds. Each one has its own investment accounts. Fred said, “We don’t co-mingle
1577 Capital Projects with the General Fund that you see that balance in, or the Tax Agency Fund
1578 when we do the levy itself. Those are not as one happy family.”

1579
1580 Ald. Every noted they are in one category on the sheet Fred gives to the alderpersons.

1581
1582 Fred told Ald. Every the city has close to 2,000 GL accounts, and he noted the audited financial
1583 lists all the city’s funds. Fred said the Finance and Personnel Committee mainly focuses on the
1584 Enterprise Funds and the General Fund. Fred also noted there are several funds on the audited
1585 financials – broken down, cash separately.

1586
1587 **Community Development Authority Management**

1588
1589 Fred referred to a page outlining the CDA’s expenditures, and he noted there is a line item for
1590 Hoisington Koeigler Group, Inc. Fred said the CDA will cover the \$20,000 of the funds it has,
1591 and the city will cover the balance of transfer. Fred referred to a page showing a transfer in of
1592 Special Projects totaling \$20,165. Fred also explained that when Tourism funds are paid, a
1593 certain amount is directed toward the Special Projects Fund, a certain amount is directed toward
1594 the General Fund, and some is routed at a later date to the Omni Center. Fred said the dollars
1595 being utilized in this instance are the city’s portion of the percentage of the Room Tax funds.

1596
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39

1597 **Debt Services**

1598

1599 Fred said the only way to utilize more of the second cap is to go deeper in debt. Fred also said
1600 the interest rate to borrowing remains low because the city continues to receive attractive
1601 bidders.

1602

1603 Ald. Smith noted the next step is to take the 2019 budget to the Common Council for a public
1604 hearing November 12.

1605

1606 Jarrod noted the 2019 Capital Improvements Budget will be separate from the Operating Budget.
1607 Jarrod also noted the 2019 CIB currently going through the Board of Public Works will affect
1608 future Operating Budgets for the Debt Service.

1609

1610 Fred noted the 2019 CIB is completed in December.

1611

1612 Jarrod said the Board of Public Works will be setting a date and time for a public hearing for the
1613 2019 CIB at its November 6 meeting.

1614

1615 **Adjournment**

1616

1617 Motion by Ald. Every, second by Ald. Olson, to adjourn at 8:22 p.m.

1618

1619 On voice vote, motion carried.

1620

1621

1622 Recorded by:

1623

1624 Kirk Bey