



MONROE CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

May 28, 2024

6:00 PM

Monroe Community Center

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Sheets called the City Council meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

Roll Call: Present: Mayor Sheets; Councilors: Cuthbertson, Lindner, Myers, Ritch, Williams, Winther.
Staff present: City Administrator Martinenko

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mayor Sheets opened the floor for public comments:

Ayre Frankfurter, 25147 Coon Rd, began by expressing his support for the local library, emphasizing its value to the community and urging against its sale or closure. He highlighted the potential for community members to fund necessary maintenance, referencing the visible support for the library around town.

Beverly Smith, 25174 Smittys Pl, then recounted her involvement in the library's fundraising efforts. She detailed the five-year process of securing the \$2.7 million needed for construction through grants, private donations, and volunteer work. Beverly underscored the library's significance to the community and urged the council to consider the dedication of South Benton County residents when making decisions about the library's future.

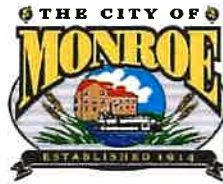
Sandy Halonen, 25880 Coon Rd, a library user and member of the Monroe Community Library Legacy Fund, echoed the previous sentiments. She stressed the importance of prioritizing community needs, including access to good libraries, alongside other essential services. Sandy expressed concern about the potential termination of the intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with the Corvallis library, which would impact library services. She suggested holding a work session to discuss the IGA directly with library administration to ensure informed decision-making.

Michelle Bouvia, 26649 Bennett Blvd, presented her property tax statement, emphasizing that taxpayers fund the library. She highlighted the library's role in promoting community health by offering a safe and nurturing space for all ages. Michelle argued that the library is cost-effective compared to other activities for youth and stressed its broader educational and social benefits, urging the council to view the library as integral to community well-being.

Jean Yates, 25595 Green Peak Rd, a resident of Alpine and frequent library user, spoke next. She praised the library's community rooms and their unsuitability for office space, emphasizing their value for meetings. Jean also noted the library's positive impact on real estate interest, citing realtor friends who identified the library and arts center as key assets attracting potential homeowners to the area.

STAFF REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

- 3.1. **Sherriff's Report.** Sheriff Van Arsdale began by saying that he could not find the current month's report and asked if the Council had received one. He explained that he had been away at the State Sheriffs' conference, leading to the possibility that he had misplaced the report. He assured the council he would speak to staff the following morning to ensure the report was sent out and apologized for the oversight.



Sheriff Van Arsdale shared his positive experience participating in the Monroe festival, where he and his marine deputies were present. He noted the presence of county commissioners and praised the mayor for giving trolley tours of the town.

Councilor Ritch then asked about the speed limit changes in town. Sheriff Van Arsdale responded that he had not received any updates on that matter but assured the council that Sergeant Bressler would be aware of any changes and would inform his team accordingly.

- 3.2. **City Administrator Report.** CA Martinenko provided a comprehensive report on various ongoing projects and activities. He highlighted several planning projects, including the Pacific National Development between 8th and 10th Street, which involves wetlands delineation and a permit processes with the Corps of Engineers. This development is expected to add about 26 more units. He also addressed issues with Mr. Conn's property on Fir Street, particularly a sewer pipe break. The plan involves starting the city sewer on the far east side of the property, making it the property owner's responsibility rather than the City's.

Martinenko said he is finalizing the mixer process for the water tank and working with Civil West Engineering on water plant upgrades. He aims to start this process soon and include it in the budget. He mentioned the goal of adopting a biennial budget and noted that the Monroe Festival's conclusion has allowed him to focus on other tasks.

Councilor Ritch inquired about the timeline for putting more water in the tank. Martinenko responded that they are currently putting in 17 feet (1/2 full, or .5 MG), and will increase it to .7 MG for the summer months. Martinenko concluded his report with no further questions.

4. **CONSENT AGENDA**

- 4.1. Councilor Ritch inquired about the funds available for the water payment. CA Martinenko clarified that the \$145,000 is for the general bond and an additional \$30,193 was being calculated for the annual September payment. He noted there is more collected than required and almost enough for a second payment, significantly reducing the loan payoff. He offered to produce an amortization schedule showing the effect of an additional payment per year at the upcoming work session.

Councilor Cuthbertson asked for clarification on the payments made to the City of Harrisburg, realizing that the city pays Harrisburg separately for DRC services. CA Martinenko explained that the City of Harrisburg had allowed them to pay \$500 a month for DRC services for a limited time, which their Public Works Director currently handles for several other systems including Monroe.

Councilor Ritch moved to accept the consent agenda, including the minutes and bills. Councilor Myers seconded. Mayor Sheets then asked if there were any comments or questions before proceeding. The motion to adopt the consent agenda was passed unanimously with no further comments.

5. **NEW BUSINESS**

- 5.1. **Resolution 2024-07: A resolution Transferring Funds Within the General Fund.** CA Martinenko provided an overview of the resolution. He explained that the resolution addresses the payment of invoices that were initially incurred in the previous business cycle but carried over and paid in the current fiscal year. The aim is to ensure that these payments do not yet again carry forward,



thereby preventing discrepancies in the current fiscal cycle. He emphasized the importance of not carrying over these costs to the next fiscal cycle to maintain accurate cash flow records.

Martinenko also mentioned the delay in receiving the Benton County planning contract, which affected the current fiscal year's budget. To address these issues, funds initially allocated for an administrative assistant (who was not hired this year) and wages for a utility worker (who was employed for only six weeks) will be reallocated. These funds will be transferred into the general administration to balance the books, while still maintaining sufficient funds for other construction needs, such as pump maintenance.

Councilor Ritch moved to pass Resolution 2024-07, which involves transferring funds within the general fund for the fiscal year 2023. Councilor Williams seconded the motion. The motion to adopt Resolution 2024-07 was passed unanimously with no further comments.

- 5.2. **Pedestrian Signs on Commercial, Main, and Kelly Streets.** Mayor Sheets introduced a recommendation from the Public Works Advisory Committee regarding the installation of pedestrian signs on commercial main streets.

CA Martinenko explained that there had been several complaints from residents about vehicles speeding on the main street, particularly where there are no sidewalks, posing a risk to children and other pedestrians. The Public Works Advisory Committee suggested installing signs to remind drivers to slow down. The committee voted in favor of this recommendation.

Councilor Ritch noted the lack of posted speed limits and asked if additional speed limit signs might be necessary. CA Martinenko acknowledged this as a viable option and mentioned that enforcing speed limits could be another measure. Councilor Cuthbertson expressed agreement with the need for cautionary signage but raised concerns about the effectiveness and clarity of the signs. Councilor Lindner inquired about the feasibility of modifying existing signs or combining cautionary messages with speed limit advisories.

CA Martinenko suggested two types of signs: cautionary signs indicating the presence of children and pedestrians, and advisory speed limit signs. He emphasized the importance of clear signage to reduce city liability and enhance public safety. Councilor Myers proposed combining cautionary signs with speed limit signs to cover multiple safety aspects effectively. Councilor Lindner then highlighted the need for consistent speed limit signage throughout the city, suggesting a unified approach for better compliance. Councilor Williams expressed support for maintaining the 25-mph speed limit for consistency but was open to adding advisory signs.

After further discussion, the council deliberated whether to lower the speed limit in residential areas from 25 to 20 miles per hour. CA Martinenko pointed out that most drivers already adhere to the 25-mph limit, but some do exceed it, particularly contractors or non-residents unfamiliar with local regulations.

Councilor Ritch then proposed moving the discussion to a work session for a more detailed review and consideration of various options, including cost assessments for new signs and possible stop sign installations at strategic locations. Mayor Sheets concurred to move the agenda item to the next work session.

- 5.3. **Parallel Parking Signs on Dragon Drive.** Councilor Cuthbertson highlighted the current parking situation on Dragon Drive, particularly near the school, where there is a mix of head-in and back-in parking. She emphasized the safety concerns due to congestion caused by buses and the new sidewalk, which becomes unusable when cars back up too far, obstructing pedestrian



access. Additionally, the fire department needs clear access, and the current parking setup hampers traffic flow to the church.

Councilor Ritch acknowledged the issues with the new sidewalk and how it has been impacted by the current parking setup. Councilor Cuthbertson suggested that transitioning to parallel parking would enhance safety and usability, despite anticipated resistance from those accustomed to the current parking method. She noted the importance of addressing this area first due to its significant safety concerns and mentioned the need to reserve space around fire hydrants and the church entrance.

CA Martinenko provided specific numbers, stating that while approximately 14 cars currently park head-in, switching to parallel parking would reduce this number by three, which includes maintaining clear zones around fire hydrants and the church entrance.

Councilor Lindner inquired about the practical implications of the change and noted the potential benefits of making the sidewalk more accessible. Councilor Cuthbertson shared an example from Junction City, where a switch from head-in to parallel parking did not significantly impact business traffic. She mentioned that the church congregation, which funded the sidewalk installation, supports the change to prevent damage to the sidewalk.

Mayor Sheets mentioned the need to coordinate such changes and noted the school's interest in resolving this issue before the next academic year. Councilor Lindner then moved to install parallel parking signs on Dragon Drive, which Councilor Myers seconded. The motion was passed unanimously with no further comments.

5.4. Movie Night at the City Park. Mayor Sheets introduced the next agenda item involving a Community Movie Night. He noted that a few years ago, a movie night was held at the community center, and there has been interest on social media about hosting another event. He sought the council's thoughts and concerns about holding another movie night at the City Park, particularly noting the potential for noise late into the evening. Councilor Myers responded that while he did not anticipate sound being a significant issue, he acknowledged the possibility of some minor disturbances.

Mayor Sheets then suggested conducting a survey to gather community feedback on the proposed movie night. Councilor Myers mentioned the possibility of inviting food trucks to the event, which Mayor Sheets agreed was a good idea. CA Martinenko provided input on the timing of the event, suggesting that the best period for holding the movie night would be from mid-July to mid-August, avoiding the later part of August and early September due to potential north winds and the sewage lagoons. Mayor Sheets thanked everyone for their input and confirmed he would proceed with the planning and survey process for the community movie night.

6. OLD BUSINESS:

6.1. Library IGA update. CA Martinenko provided an overview, noting that the presentation by Library Director Chavez at the last Council meeting, along with council members' questions and answers, had been included in the minutes. Martinenko highlighted that taxpayer dollars fund the Corvallis library system rather than individual branches and there are different IGAs for each branch. He emphasized the need for wider conversations on potentially changing the tax structure and engaging in immediate budget discussions. He mentioned that the library director had discussed options such as making cuts or increasing fundraising to manage costs. CA



Martinenko clarified that relinquishing the building was not an option, as the council was committed to maintaining the library.

Councilor Ritch pointed out that while there was no need for a full-time City staff person for janitorial duties, a certain level of service was still necessary. Martinenko added that the city was responsible for deeper cleaning and maintenance, which requires budget considerations.

Councilor Cuthbertson raised concerns about event-related maintenance and the need for a dedicated facility and grounds person. CA Martinenko suggested that a dedicated, half-time person could be more beneficial than a contracted service, and a potential shared service agreement with Benton County could help manage daily activities and events. He acknowledged the need for clear communication and scheduling for maintenance tasks. Martinenko emphasized the importance of addressing the equitable distribution of janitorial costs, noting that library activities directly impacted these expenses. He suggested exploring additional fundraising and resource-sharing options to alleviate budget pressures.

Councilor Williams inquired about the next steps and timeline for further discussions. CA Martinenko proposed talking to relevant parties to determine costs and explore additional funding options. He reiterated that all groups were willing to work together towards a solution. Councilor Ritch then asked for clarification on the IGA termination process. Martinenko explained that terminating the IGA required a formal notification before the end of the year, a standard procedure for most IGAs. In this instance, the IGA called for notification 6 months before the end of the fiscal year.

Councilor Lindner expressed her support for the library and its importance of being a representation of health and community. She highlighted the staffing and financial challenges faced by Monroe and that the City does not have staff or money to maintain a building that is used by a population greater than the city of Monroe, and indicated that is why the City requested to negotiate and reach a more equitable solution to funding.

The discussion concluded with a consensus on the need for a more equitable mechanism to handle library maintenance and funding, ensuring the continued existence and functionality of the library for Monroe and the broader community.

6.2. **Short Term Rentals.** Moved to Ordinance Committee.

6.3. **City Hall Seismic Report.** CA Martinenko suggested that they should probably have a work session to discuss options for addressing the issues with City Hall. Councilor Ritch mentioned that there are various options and ideas available, noting that they have building reserves.

Mayor Sheets then asked CA Martinenko to restate the report. Martinenko explained that a seismic engineer had evaluated the building and found significant issues due to its terracotta brick construction. In 2003, a heavy roof was added without proper reinforcement, compromising the building's stability. The assessment revealed that the building cannot be feasibly upgraded to meet current seismic standards. Although the building is insured, it has already shown cracks and settling, particularly on the northeast side where bricks have separated due to ground settling. Martinenko further noted that the slab foundation is still in good shape, but the overall structure is not. The engineer recommended demolishing the existing building and constructing a new, lighter stick-frame structure or modular building, which would be more cost-effective and seismically sound. This recommendation was based on the need for a safer and more sustainable solution for the City.



- 6.4. **1135 Project Contract Language.** CA Martinenko reported that Elliot Porter, the Army Corps of Engineers project manager, is preparing the contract for dam removal and habitat restoration to go through their internal legal process and then sent to the City for review. Martinenko mentioned his communication with ODOT, which verbally indicated they will provide long-term maintenance of the bridge scour protection provided they approve the final detailed plans from the Army Corps.

CA Martinenko emphasized the city's concern about long-term liability and raised questions regarding potential overruns during the construction phase. He noted that this project will extend into the next fiscal year, involving detail plans for habitat restoration and engineering documents. Public comments will be considered during the project's public meetings, where construction details will be finalized.

Regarding cost management, CA Martinenko explained that while contingencies are built into the budget to address any unforeseen expenses, he is awaiting further information from Porter about the specific contract language to ensure that construction commitments are upheld. Martinenko stressed that contractors are bound to complete the work as specified once the contract is let and the City is ultimately responsible for any cost overruns.

Last, CA Martinenko mentioned that Dana Dedrick, the Long Tom Watershed Council lead for this project, said she has resigned and Jed Kaul of the same organization will be taking her place.

- 6.5. **Law Enforcement Town Hall.** Mayor Sheets asked Sheriff Van Arsdale to discuss setting a date for the law enforcement town hall meeting. The Sheriff mentioned that he had discussed the town hall idea with his command staff, who were receptive and supportive. Mayor Sheets proposed holding the town hall on a Saturday, preferably sooner rather than later, ideally in July to avoid conflicts with the school schedule.

Sheriff Van Arsdale agreed to this timeframe but noted potential conflicts with staff vacations. He offered to coordinate with CA Martinenko to finalize a date and ensure staff availability, including division commanders if possible. The Mayor and Council expressed their gratitude to Sheriff Van Arsdale for his willingness to participate.

- 6.6. **Festival Update.** Mayor Sheets provided an update on the festival, acknowledging the presence of attendees, including the sheriff, and noted the significant strain it places on city staff hours. He mentioned that a private property owner in town has offered their property for future festivals, marking a change in venue for the next event. Discussions with the festival Planning Committee have highlighted feedback from residents preferring dates for future events in late September or October.

Mayor Sheets suggested that the Festival Committee conduct more research on potential dates that does not conflict with other significant regional events such as the Rhododendron Festival in Florence. The barbecue competition also needs further planning and plan to engage local participants more thoroughly and address issues such as the cost of insurance to the City and setup on private property with the festival moving away from direct City involvement.

Mayor Sheets emphasized the importance of effective promotion, mentioning past support from KRKT Radio for radio spots and the need for new banners. He also discussed the potential use of a digital leaderboard for announcements.

Councilor Cuthbertson inquired about the proximity of the new festival location to downtown and suggested involving other downtown businesses. She recalled past events, like



the Monroe talent show and museum activities, that could complement the festival. Councilor Williams pointed out the cost prohibitive nature of the barbecue for some attendees and suggested offering diverse food options to accommodate dietary restrictions. Councilor Meyers added that alternative food competitions, like chili cook-offs, could be considered.

The council discussed various aspects of the festival, including potential partnerships with the Art Association for classes and other local organizations to host events. Councilor Ritch emphasized involving the entire town, from the library to local businesses, to create a comprehensive community event. Mayor Sheets concluded by encouraging further feedback and collaboration to ensure the success of future festivals. The council expressed appreciation for the community's positive response and commitment to enhancing the festival experience.

7. CITY EVENTS

7.1. Mayor Sheets provided an update on upcoming city events and invited feedback on any additional events that need to be included on social media platforms. The scheduled events include:

- Christmas in July on July 20.
- Fourth Annual First Responders Appreciation Event on September 14, which will be attended by Senator David Anderson.
- Halloween Spooktacular at City Hall on Halloween.
- Community Food Drive in November and December, allowing residents to bring canned food to City Hall.
- Election Day on November 5.
- Alpine Holiday Festival, tentatively set for the second weekend of December.
- Toy Drive at Dollar General, following last year's successful event.

Councilor Cuthbertson also mentioned the weekly Farmers Market, held every Thursday, noting that it started last week and will continue until the first Thursday of October.

8. OTHER BUSINESS:

8.1. **Committee Reports.** Mayor Sheets announced the upcoming budget meeting scheduled for June 11 at 6 PM and the economic development committee will be meeting on June 20 at 6 PM. He also reminded Council of the Work Session on June 10.

Councilor Lindner reported that she and CA Martinenko will meet next Thursday to review the city administrator contract, to make edits and tweaks to make it more aligned with the city's goals. She clarified that they will be discussing job descriptions and employment agreements, with templates from the International City/County Management Association (ICMA).

7.2. **Councilor Comments.** Councilor Lindner thanked the community for their great turnout and support at recent events.



9. **ADJOURN:** With no further comments, Mayor Sheets adjourned the meeting at 7:44 PM.

Approved by Council Action on June 24, 2024

Mayor Dan Sheets  Date: 6/24/24

Attest: 
Steve Martinenko, City Recorder