



## MONROE CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

**March 27, 2023**

**6:00 PM**

**Monroe Community Center**

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Sheets called the City Council meeting to order at 6:05 P.M.

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Councilor Meyers led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Roll Call:** Present: Mayor Sheets; Councilors: Cuthbertson, Meyers, Ritch

Absent: Councilors Lindner, Winther (1 Vacancy)

Staff present: City Administrator Martinenko.

Mayor Sheets declared there is no quorum to conduct business so the meeting would be informational only.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

- 2.1. Mr. Bill Kughn addressed the Council regarding Benton County Measure 2-140 and urged the Council to reconsider their support for the measure, providing rebuttal to the presentation at the last Council session, and describing it as misinformation to the voters.

3. **STAFF REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS:**

- 3.1. **Sheriff's Report.** Deputy Lochner reported that the Benton County Sheriff's Office spent nearly 50 hours of patrol time in Monroe with 15 contacts, 8 traffic warnings, 5 traffic citations, and 4 arrests that were from citations including legal custody and one physical custody. There were no questions or discussion and the Council thanked the Department for its work in Monroe.

- 3.2. **Rural Lobbyist Coalition.** Michele Eldridge, Harrisburg City Administrator, presented on behalf of a group of small cities that is organizing a small municipality action coalition otherwise known as SMAC. The reason for the coalition is to better represent small towns that are being overlooked in favor the of the larger cities in the region, pointing out that the League of Oregon Cities is not advocating for priorities that affect the smaller communities. Currently, the coalition includes Brownsville, Halsey, Harrisburg, and Scio but also wants to have all the smaller cities join to make the collective voice larger. The coalition has selected Sean Tate of Tate Public Affairs in Lebanon, who currently represents Linn County and is part of the Albany Millersburg Economic Committee and the Lebanon Chamber of Commerce. The proposal is for Mr. Taylor to provide education and training for Council members in addition to listening to what Monroe requires of the State, then building the coalition to bring the collective voice to the Legislature with the idea that if more band together, the greater the impact could be. The funding required would be about \$100 per month for Monroe.



During discussion, Councilor Ritch asked about the criteria for success with the coalition. Eldridge said that is hard to quantify but the work is essentially building relationships with the Legislators and keeping the needs of coalition members before them. Councilor Meyers commented that the education component is starting in April, which is coming up quickly. Eldridge said that is the date for now but also depends on how the Councils' want to proceed. Discussion continued with topics that might be brought to the coalition. Mayor Sheets commented the resolution could not be voted on this evening but would be scheduled for a special session at a later date.

- 3.3. **City Administrator Report.** CA Martinenko reported that the City's Administration Specialist gave two weeks-notice, with her last day on April 21<sup>st</sup>. She will be moving on to the Benton County DA's office. Due to budget, the position will not be filled until after the start of the fiscal year. CA Martinenko went on to mention that inflation and cost increases, especially with fuel, electricity, chemicals, and lab testing all took their toll on the budget. In addition, the City's State Unemployment tax went from a fraction of a percent to 5% due to unemployment claims prior to 2021, which is a significant hit that was not anticipated. CA Martinenko then briefed the Council on the water plant membrane calculations that are required by OHA to ensure the integrity of the membrane cartridges. DuPont is scheduled to send a technician to Monroe for programming this into the system. CA Martinenko went on to talk about the new DEQ TMDL requirements for the City to monitor and ensure compliance by contractors or property owners when disturbing soil. The new requirements go into effect with as little as ½ acre and place additional requirements on the City and staff.

Councilor Ritch asked about replacing the Administrative Specialist position. CA Martinenko said that it would be advertised in the June timeframe for 30 hours, depending on budget.

Mayor Sheets then asked about the bridge in Springfield for sale that the City inquired about as a possible pedestrian bridge to the City park. CA Martinenko said the Hayden bridge was offered to Monroe for a relatively small fee but then other entities made larger offers. In a recent conversation, the bridge owners, "Workn' Bridges" of Iowa, came back and said nothing was forthcoming and wanted Monroe to reconsider. As CA Martinenko described, the bridge was originally part of the trans-continental railway, could be designated as a historic bridge, is the right span for the Long Tom, and is in good shape. The caveat is that it has to be moved from its current location over the McKenzie River in Springfield, about 26 miles away. There are also vocal groups in Springfield that do not want the bridge moved. Mayor Sheets noted the City's commitment at this point is simply that we will look into it.



#### 4. CONSENT AGENDA:

- 4.1. No deliberation due to lack of quorum

#### 5. NEW BUSINESS

- 5.1. **Resolution 2023-06.** No deliberation due to lack of quorum
- 5.2. **Resolution 2023-07.** No deliberation due to lack of quorum
- 5.3. **Resolution 2023-08.** No deliberation due to lack of quorum
- 5.4. **Nuisances Ordinance.** Mayor Sheets asked for discussion about the nuisance ordinance. CA Martinenko said this came about when a home occupant on 8<sup>th</sup> street passed away last November with no apparent owner. Several individuals have since come forward to claim ownership or squat on the property and one was towed to the South Benton Food Pantry by unknown parties without permission of the Food Pantry. In addition, the home is not in any condition to be occupied. On advice of the City Attorney, the City has locked out the water meter and should act to remove anyone that attempts to live on the property unless they can show the City legal ownership. CA Martinenko went on to say the current nuisance ordinance that would govern such action states in the first sentence that the City Council can declare anything it wants as a nuisance and abate it as it sees fit. The suggestion is this is too broad to have a legally binding effect, let alone enforceable, so the discussion is about changing the ordinance and making it more specific. Mayor Sheets commented this will continue at the next Council meeting and possibly move to the Ordinance Committee for review.
- 5.5. Councilor Cuthbertson discussed an opening for a representative to the Cascades West Area Commission on Transportation's Technical Advisory Committee.
- 5.6. Mayor Sheets deferred creating an ad-hoc committee for small city coalition issues until the next regular Council meeting, after the resolution for joining the coalition is deliberated.
- 5.7. **Budget Committee Recruitment.** Mayor Sheets discussed recruiting Budget Committee members and that he would start advertising on social media. CA Martinenko said the Committee and first meeting should be set at the April 24 Council Meeting. CA Martinenko also mentioned that the City must make a good faith effort to advertise for an equal number of citizens to Council members but is not a requirement to continue with the budget hearings.
- 5.8. **Council Vacancy.** Mayor Sheets declared a Council vacancy left by Councilor Knott's resignation. Mayor Sheets said that would be advertised as well.

#### 6. OLD BUSINESS:

- 6.1. CA Martinenko discussed the next steps that include starting a continuity of operations plan and mentioned the State has resources to assist with that process.

#### 7. CITY EVENTS

- 7.1. Mayor Sheets described upcoming events that include two Townhalls for economic development and Parks being led by RARE student Chris Rivera.



8. **OTHER BUSINESS:**

- 8.1. **Councilor Comments:** Councilor Cuthbertson mentioned the Farmer's Market that will be held at the High School throughout the summer.
- 8.2. **Mayor's Comments:** Mayor Sheets commented the next regular City Council meeting is April 24, 2023 at the Monroe Community Center.

9. **ADJOURN:** Mayor Sheets adjourned the meeting at 7:21 p.m.

**Approved by Council Action on April 24, 2023**

Mayor Dan Sheets  Date: 4/24/23

Attest:   
Steve Martinenko, City Recorder