



MONROE CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

August 28, 2023

6:00 PM

Monroe Community Center

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Sheets called the City Council meeting to order at 6:01 P.M.

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

2. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Public Comments: Citizen Troy Duncan, 870 Aldrich Way, asked the Council what it is doing to enforce RV's that are being parked for long periods of time on City streets. Mr. Duncan specifically cited a large recreational trailer parked on an adjacent street from his residence and stated it is a safety concern because of its size and location next to an intersection. Mr. Duncan continued that he brought this issue to the City's attention a year ago and nothing has been done about it. City staff replied this issue was discussed at the previous Council work session and that a letter would be sent in the monthly utility billing regarding not just the storage of vehicles but also obstructions on city streets and cutting tall grass. Enforcement would be applied equally to all violators after the initial letter was sent.

3. **STAFF REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS:**

- 3.1. **Sheriff's Report.** Council reviewed the monthly patrol log and commented that school is starting and speeding issues are concern around town not just at the high school but on Territorial and Orchard
- 3.2. **City Administrator Report.** CA Martinenko described work at the water plant to resolve electrical issues with one of the filtration units. Mayor Sheets asked if the level 2 two water conservation alert could be lifted and CA Martinenko replied that he felt with the progress resolving plant issues and cooler weather, the alert could be lifted but recommended the level 1 voluntary conservation alert stay in place. CA Martinenko continued with loan and funding updates for the water system and hiring for a grade one water operator to ensure backup for water operations. CA Martinenko then discussed an abandoned house at 180 N 8th Street. This property is still listed with a resident that passed away in 1982, who left the property intestate. City staff have noted that the property is sometimes occupied and the City Attorney advises the situation is a liability to the City. Council asked what could be done about it and CA Martinenko replied that the Council has the authority to abate any nuisance it determines to be a health or safety issue. Councilor Meyers asked who would pay for any abatement. CA Martinenko said it would be the City's responsibility and the City would place a lien on the property to recover any cost upon sale of the property, likely at a future foreclosure proceeding by the County. Councilor Ritch had a follow-up question about water plant funding. CA Martinenko said in addition to the \$1.3 million in state funds, the City was following up with a revolving loan fund request and also



with the Congressional Direct Spending ask with Senator Merkley's office. This funding would not be available until after October 1st or when Congress approves the federal budget.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

- 4.1. Councilor Ritch asked about the payment to Springbrook Software. CA Martinenko replied this is the annual maintenance and support fee. Councilor Ritch moved to approve the consent Calendar. Councilor Myers seconded and pointed out his name was misspelled on the minutes in the roll call section. With no further discussion, Mayor Sheets called for a vote: Councilor Cuthbertson: Yes; Lindner: Yes; Myers: Yes; Ritch: Yes; Williams: Yes; Winther: Yes. Motion Carried.

5. NEW BUSINESS

- 5.1. **Second Reading: Ordinance 2023-02 Amending Title IX Chapter 94 Weeds in the Monroe Municipal Code.** CA Martinenko reviewed the ordinance with Council and said the amendment removes the automatic waiver to cut grass over ten inches in height for properties greater than one-half acre. The effect of passing the ordinance is that all property owners must maintain their property to the same standard regardless of acreage. There is still an opportunity for a property owner to petition Council for unusual situations. Councilor Ritch moved to adopt Ordinance 2023-02, Amending Title IX Chapter 94 Weeds in the Monroe Municipal Code. Councilor Myers seconded. With no further discussion, Mayor Sheets called for a vote: Councilor Cuthbertson: Yes; Lindner: Yes; Myers: Yes; Ritch: Yes; Williams: Yes; Winther: Yes. Motion Carried.
- 5.2. **Resolution 2023-21 Authorizing a professional services agreement with Sean Tate Public Affairs.** CA Martinenko commented this is for lobbying assistance as part of the Small Municipality Action Coalition, or SMAC and has been discussed and approved at previous Council meetings. CA Martinenko said this is a twelve-month agreement and could be renewed as Council determines. Councilor Ritch asked about when training would start. CA Martinenko said the training sessions are starting now and would forward the information to Council. Councilor Lindner asked if the cost of services is retroactive. CA Martinenko said he believed that is the case but would check. Councilor Lindner moved to approve Resolution 2023-21 authorizing a professional services agreement with Sean Tate Public Affairs. Councilor Ritch seconded. With no further discussion, Mayor Sheets called for a vote: Councilor Cuthbertson: Yes; Lindner: Yes; Myers: Yes; Ritch: Yes; Williams: Yes; Winther: Yes. Motion Carried.
- 5.3. **Resolution 2023-22 Accepting a grant from Benton County to further economic development within the Monroe City Limits.** CA Martinenko explained this is a two-year \$10,000 grant, so \$5,000 per year during the term of the grant. Councilor Ritch asked if the budget had a place for the grant funds. CA Martinenko replied that it did but will check to see if a supplemental budget might be required. Councilor Ritch



moved to approve Resolution 2023-22 accepting a grant from Benton County to further economic development within the Monroe City Limits. Councilor Myers seconded. With no further discussion, Mayor Sheets called for a vote: Councilor Cuthbertson: Yes; Lindner: Yes; Myers: Yes; Ritch: Yes; Williams: Yes; Winther: Yes. Motion Carried.

- 5.4. **Resolution 2023-23 Accepting a Grant Young Memorial grant from the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development for Planning Assistance.** CA Martinenko explained this is a \$2,000 grant from the Department of Land Conservation and Development to assist with City planning needs and could be used for any planning needs such as code updates or professional planning services. Councilor Ritch moved to approve Resolution 2023-23 Accepting a Grant Young Memorial grant from the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development for Planning Assistance. Councilor Williams seconded. With no further discussion, Mayor Sheets called for a vote: Councilor Cuthbertson: Yes; Lindner: Yes; Myers: Yes; Ritch: Yes; Williams: Yes; Winther: Yes. Motion Carried
- 5.5. **First Responders Proclamation.** Mayor Sheets read a proclamation honoring first responders and noted the First Responders event at the park on September 9. The Council voted unanimously to accept the proclamation on behalf of the Council and City.

7. OLD BUSINESS:

- 7.1. **Stage 2 water Alert.** Mayor Sheets noted during the City Administrator report that the stage 2 alert could be lifted. Councilor Ritch asked if the media is required to be notified. CA Martinenko replied no; however, it would be good to have it on social media and a press release to the media, should they choose to publish it. Councilor Lindner asked if citizens were still complying with the alert order. CA Martinenko said there was an increase with the cooler weather but still noted there is still a 10% reduction overall. Councilor Ritch asked about the maintenance issues that prompted the alert. CA Martinenko said that repairs were made that helped the plant stay operating during the hot weather. The issue is that it appears there is an issue in the computer system that is triggering the system to stop and is not related to the motor control, as originally thought and that troubleshooting continues. Councilor Ritch followed up with a question on preventative maintenance. CA Martinenko said that there are schedules for electro-mechanical devices such as pumps and pump motors but other devices such as computers components are replaced upon failure, meaning there is a need for spare parts to be on hand and the expertise to make the repairs. CA Martinenko explained this is problematic because while the computer components are high grade, they are not as common in the United States and expertise is hard to come by. Automating the plant with different components that have wider acceptance will help solve that issue and is part of the recommendations to upgrade the water system.



7.2. **Pending Grants.** CA Martinenko updated Council on the USACE 1135 grant and that it is being sent to Congress for appropriation for the construction phase of the study. The City does not know the priority USACE will apply to the project but it is subject to Congress approval once they pass the budget. CA Martinenko also updated on the construction grant for the path from Kelly and 6th Street to Alpine Cutoff. That will be coming to Council for approval in the October timeframe.

7.3. **September Events.** Mayor Sheets described the upcoming First Responders event on September 9th and mention that Representative Gomberg will be in attendance along with at least one County Commissioner. Mayor Sheets continued that the BBQ and Logging Festival event has been rescheduled to May 18, 2024 due to two large sponsors falling out. As Mayor Sheets explained, the sponsors are enthusiastic but need more lead time to budget for the events.

7.4. **Monroe Day Care Discussion Update.** CA Martinenko updated Council with ongoing discussions on expanded day care opportunities in Monroe. CA Martinenko iterated this is a huge economic issue for many families and even in City Hall, our two employees who each have children, depend on consistent day care to be in Monroe at their jobs.

7.5. **Ordinance for Graffiti, Vandalism, and Fireworks Update.** CA Martinenko said he is still researching other ordinances and will bring them to a future meeting. Discussion continued on enforcing ordinances and CA Martinenko said that is difficult due to bandwidth with only three staff. Council Myers asked about the Benton County Sheriff. CA Martinenko replied that some of our ordinances can be cited by Law Enforcement and others, such as weeds, are handled by the City Recorder. In those instances, if the City had to abate a violation, the City would have to get a warrant and the Sherriff would serve it to the citizen. CA Martinenko further explained that many of the ordinances are not complete and enforceable because they do not have enough definition or additional clarification that allow a law enforcement officer to properly cite an offender or the municipal court judge to render a verdict. CA Martinenko said that most ordinance enforcement requires some type of City staff involvement, such as taking pictures and gathering other documentation before it can go to Law Enforcement for action.

8. CITY EVENTS

8.1. Mayor Sheets described upcoming City events not already discussed such as the Halloween Spooktacular.

9. OTHER BUSINESS:

9.1. Councilor Myers commented that he witnessed the result of an animal killed by dogs. He speculated it may have been a result of children pounding on doors as a prank that



made the dogs react in an aggressive manner. Council discussed animal control and noted the Benton County Animal Control officer is more present at the City Park.

9.2. Mayor Sheets reminded the Council and those in attendance that the next Council Meetings are the Work Session on September 11 and the Council Meeting on September 25th.

10. **ADJOURN:** Mayor Sheets adjourned the meeting at 7:51 p.m.

Approved by Council Action on September 25, 2023

Mayor Dan Sheets  Date: 9/25/23

Attest: 
Steve Martinenko, City Recorder