



MONROE CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

November 27, 2023

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: None.

STAFF REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

- 3.1. **Sheriff's Report.** The Sheriff's department was not available for a report due to law enforcement activity in Corvallis.
 - 3.2. **Presentation:** Lori O'Hare updated Council on the Halloween event held on her property and utilizing a City easement. It was reported the event went well with no complaints from neighbors. Lori explained there was little advertising but had about 150 people that were guided through the event. She intends on holding the occasion next Halloween with more publicity.
 - 3.3. **Presentation:** Mr. Ken Larson of Republic Services explained rate increases for Monroe waste services in 2024. Mr. Larsen reported the rate increase for Monroe will be 0.9% in the coming year. Councilor Lindner asked about different services including recycling. Mr. Larson explained that Oregon is changing its recycling laws in 2025 and would be happy to come back to Council and provide more information along with numbers for expanded services. Councilor Ritch asked about the Franchise agreement that is quite old, going back to Corvallis Disposal. Mr. Larson said that is something we could look at to update the agreement.
 - 3.4. **City Administrator Report.** CA Martinenko CA Martinenko reported that the City did not have to produce water over the four-day holiday. CA Martinenko mentioned that he and Chuck Scholz from Harrisburg met with the State regulators at the water plant just before Thanksgiving. That discussion was about additional reporting requirements for membrane testing and also progress on the water plant upgrades were coming along. CA Martinenko then mentioned the Auditing firm is merging with another company. Councilor Ritch asked about the disclosure forms because he had not received his. CA Martinenko said that he would check.
4. **CONSENT AGENDA**
 - 4.1. Council CA Martinenko mentioned that the City purchased a 2023 Ford F250 super duty service truck. The approved budget was \$48,000 and the truck came in at \$42,198, with



the remaining to be used racks and tool storage. After general discussion, Councilor Ritch moved to approve the consent agenda and 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. NEW BUSINESS

5.1. **Ordinance 2023-04 – First Reading: Amending Title VII Chapter 72 Parking Regulations in the Monroe Municipal Code.**

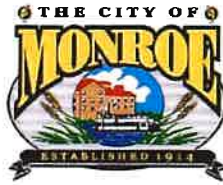
CA Martinenko explained that because parking regulations are already codified, any changes would have to be by ordinance, rather than by resolution as discussed in the previous work session. CA Martinenko went on to read the key elements of the proposed ordinance such as parallel parking unless otherwise marked on the pavement or with signage. CA Martinenko also said that the City adopted the State traffic codes, including parking, so much of the ordinance deals with changes to the State code that is more specific to Monroe. The proposed ordinance also consolidates other sections of Title VII such as storage. CA Martinenko concluded that because an ordinance was not discussed as being brought to Council as a first reading, the Council might consider tabling the discussion so it could be further deliberated at a work session or in committee. After general discussion, Councilor Winther suggested the ordinance should go to the ordinance committee for further review. The Council was in general consensus and Councilor Winther then moved to table the discussion and move it to the Ordinance Committee. Councilor Ritch seconded. Mayor Sheets called for a vote: Councilor Cuthbertson: Yes; Lindner: Yes; Myers: Yes; Ritch: Yes; Williams: Yes; Winther: Yes. Motion carried.

5.2. **Council Direction to Staff regarding Water Plan Upgrades.** CA Martinenko reviewed the revised scope of Work produced by Civil West for the water plant revisions. Specifically, Civil West presented a second option for replacing the membrane system with a conventional system since the cost would be almost the same as the upgrades to the existing plant already discussed. CA Martinenko said that a conventional system takes a lower grade water operator to run and would be more sustainable for Monroe in the long term. CA Martinenko reiterated past discussions that mentioned our water plant is complex and expensive to maintain. As an example, the system is computer driven and if the computers fail, it would not be possible to produce water manually. In addition, a conventional system still uses computers but they are more for managing processes rather than integral to running the plant. CA Martinenko said that in theory, the existing plant should not require a lot of staff to run but the staff need to be at a higher level of expertise to manage the technology. And that expertise is in demand at larger cities that can pay more than Monroe, which might mean an operator that gets trained Monroe, moves on to a better paying job elsewhere. Last CA Martinenko commented that Conventional Water Systems are the most prevalent and it would be



easier for Monroe to get help if needed. After brief discussion, Councilor Ritch asked about removal of the drop structure on the quality of water. CA Martinenko said that water quality at Monroe is really determined by Fern Ridge Dam and while the aesthetics of the river will improve, most other water parameters will stay the same. Councilor Ritch then asked if the proposed system would be able to scale with population growth. CA Martinenko said population would be part of the design criteria but in any event, the plant could be added onto if that were needed in the future. The City has enough land at the park area to accommodate more filter units and clear well capacity. Councilor Myers then asked about the wells. CA Martinenko said that each well has minerals including iron and manganese along with compounds such as chlorides that would require additional treatment to remove and would be expensive to treat. Councilor Ritch asked about the water intake and how this might be coordinated with the Corp of Engineers dam removal project. CA Martinenko said that the existing water intake could be used but a design such as that proposed for the new water intake should the dam be removed is the best solution. CA Martinenko said he would talk to the Long Tom watershed Council on how this might be implemented sooner. After general discussion, Mayor Sheets asked for a motion. Councilor Ritch made a motion to move in the direction of a conventional water system Councilor Lindner seconded. Mayor sheets asked if there were further questions before voting. Councilor Winther said he did not know enough about this to make an informed decision and Councilor Williams commented she would like to know more about what a membrane system entails, specifically the longevity of the system. CA Martinenko said the membranes last 5-7 years and cost \$40,000 per unit to replace, or \$80,000 for the system. Councilor Myers added that sand filters are used in a lot of places for both cities and industry. Councilor Cuthbertson asked about the timeframe to move forward. CA Martinenko said that it was urgent to decide so the project could move forward within the time limits set for the money we received from the State, which is June 30, 2025. Councilor Cuthbertson then asked if a side-by-side comparison could be made. CA Martinenko said that either system is comparable from an engineering viewpoint but mostly the conventional system is easier and less costly to staff, and more sustainable for a small town like Monroe. Mayor Sheets reminded the Council there was a motion and a second on the table. Councilor Winther ask CA Martinenko about his opinion of either system. CA Martinenko said they each have pluses and minuses but a conventional system is the most sustainable for Monroe given that it will be difficult to find qualified people to run a complex system without outsourcing. With no additional discussion, Mayor Sheets called for a vote: Councilor Cuthbertson: Yes; Lindner: Yes; Myers: Yes; Ritch: Yes; Williams: Yes; Winther: Yes. Motion carried.

5.3. Council Direction to Staff regarding sale of Belchamber property to Habitat for Humanity. CA Martinenko said he was approached by Habitat for Humanity in regard to



purchasing the Belchamber property, specifically the 1-acre parcel with the structure on it, for housing. CA Martinenko said the ordinance states that if the property is substandard or undeveloped, the Council could direct staff to negotiate the sale of the property without having to go through a bidding process. CA Martinenko then explained the land itself is outside the City Urban Growth Boundary and is zoned Exclusive Farm Use (EFU), which would be the County provides a variance or allow it to be rezoned. Councilor Lindner asked if the price was still \$80,000 and CA Martinenko said yes and they would be willing to consider \$90,000 since that is the current assessed value. CA Martinenko said he was not asking the Council for a decision only direction at this point to continue negotiating. Any decision would have to be by resolution to amend the previous Council resolution.

- 5.4. Council Direction to Staff regarding starting an Urban Growth Boundary Exchange Process.** CA Martinenko reviewed previous discussion regarding exchanging land in the NE part of Monroe, known as the “brickyard” with an equal amount of land in the SW part of Monroe, currently in Benton County. CA Martinenko said this is a complex process involving county planning, the County Commissioners, and public hearings. In the end, the result would be changing the City’s Urban Growth Boundary, losing land in the NE that has proven expensive to develop and gaining land in the SW that is more developable, has access to City infrastructure, and would help mitigate potential issues with ground water. Councilor Ritch asked if discussions have been made with both land owners. CA Martinenko said discussion would begin once a formal land action was made with all parties, including the County, and commented that one party was currently online listening to the Council session. CA Martinenko then said that Council was not deciding the issue of a land exchange other than to allow staff to proceed with the process. After general discussion, Mayor Sheets called for a vote to allow staff to start the Land exchange process: Councilor Cuthbertson: Yes; Lindner: Yes; Myers: Yes; Ritch: Yes; Williams: Yes; Winther: Yes.
- 5.5. Staff request to approve use of a third-party service for City liens.** CA Martinenko discussed entering into an agreement with a third-party lien service called “Conduits” that lists and tracks city liens. This service would allow title companies and others to search for liens without staff having to spend their time gathering the information. It also would allow better tracking of other debts to the City such as ordinance abatement. The service allows the City to set the fee and the service charges a flat fee for each search. The difference is sent back to the City. CA Martinenko said many cities use this service, including Harrisburg and Junction City. After brief discussion, Councilor Myers moved to use a third-party service to track liens and Councilor Ritch seconded. Mayor Sheets called for a vote: Councilor Cuthbertson: Yes; Lindner: Yes; Myers: Yes; Ritch: Yes; Williams: Yes; Winther: Yes. Motion carried.



5.6. **Updated Salary Scales and COLA increases.** CA Martinenko and Councilor Lindner presented a request to provide a 5% COLA increase for staff retroactive to July 1, 2023. Councilor Lindner suggested that this is a minimum amount and might be revisited when inflation numbers come out early in 2024. CA Martinenko continued that while Councilor Lindner provided salary studies for staff including the City Administrator, the City is in flux while the water plant is being reengineered, so it might be advantageous to delay evaluating the positions and salary scales until early 2024. After general discussion, Mayor Sheets called for a motion to recommend a 5% COLA increase. Councilor Lindner moved to grant staff a 5% COLA increase retroactive to July 1, 2023, and also reevaluate all staff salaries including the City Administrator, along with any additional COLA, early in the next year. Councilor Ritch seconded. Mayor Sheets called for a vote: Councilor Cuthbertson: Yes; Lindner: Yes; Myers: Yes; Ritch: Yes; Williams: Yes; Winther: Yes. Motion carried.

5.7. **Review of Committee Members and Committee dates.** CA Martinenko reviewed with Council the dates established by resolution for the Economic Development, Public Works, and Parks & Recreation advisory committees. CA Martinenko said the meetings are quarterly and do not have to be in the same month. Also, each committee can agree to meet more often or have sub-committees for special projects if needed. There was general discussion regarding staff attendance and CA Martinenko said that he would provide comp time for meeting that staff attend.

5.8. **December Council Meetings.** After discussion, Mayor Sheets set December 11th for the Work Session and December 27th for the December Council meeting.

7. **OLD BUSINESS:**

7.1. **Supplemental Budget.** CA Martinenko updated Council on a supplemental budget to create two new funds that separate streets and storm water from public works. CA Martinenko expects the Supplemental budget in the January 2024 timeframe.

7.2. **Updates:**

7.2.1. **Planning Activities.** CA Martinenko reported that a conditional use permit will be going to the Planning Commission on December 4th to allow retail/commercial activity at 555 depot Street where the old fertilizer building is located. In addition, planning review is in the works for a multi-family unit on Kelly Street.

8. **CITY EVENTS**

8.1. Mayor Sheets briefly discussed December events that include a townhall visit by State Senator Dick Anderson, the Toy Drive, the Monroe Light Parade, and the Monroe Holiday Lights contest.



9. OTHER BUSINESS: None.

10. ADJOURN: Mayor Sheets adjourned the meeting at 8:24 p.m.

Approved by Council Action on December 27, 2023

Mayor Dan Sheets  Date: 12/27/23

Attest: 
Steve Martinenko, City Recorder