



MONROE CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

December 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

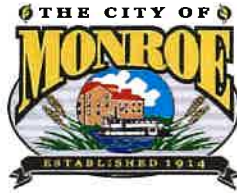
3. **STAFF REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS:**

- 3.1. Sheriff Van Arsdale reported on recent burglaries and mail theft in and around Monroe. The Sheriff indicated he has 8 cases and two detectives assigned. With the post office incidents, the department must work with and cooperate with the federal government, especially for additional security such as cameras. The Sheriff emphasized the importance of cameras in assisting with arrests along with citizens posting what they have seen or heard on social media. The Sheriff went on to discuss metal thefts in the region and said that neighboring counties have large thefts of copper and to make folks aware of that. The Sheriff concluded his report with his staffing update. There was general discussion about cameras and the Council thanked the Sheriff for his report and efforts in Monroe
- 3.2. **City Administrator Report.** City Administrator Martinenko reported on activities in the City he and staff are working on:

In administration, CA Martinenko explained the utility billing process is being reviewed and a checklist prepared for delinquent accounts. The process starts with a letter when the billing has not been paid by the date on the utility bill and the customer then has 10 days to pay or make arrangements with City Hall. After that, there is a 5-day administrative window before the water is disconnected. The process is to ensure consistency for all customers. CA Martinenko described a parallel activity reviewing water and sewer ordinances, especially with reconciling differences between the sections. CA Martinenko mentioned the annual audit has been extended in order to provide the auditors more information about our public works fund and also due to the auditing firm merging with a new concern.

In Public Works, CA Martinenko said that he and staff have started valve replacement in the water plant. Each of the 16 valves and actuators on each filter are being replaced or overhauled with new components. On the waste water side, the ponds are almost discharged to their low level.

Community and Economic development activities include writing a staff report for multi-family housing on Kelly Street. In addition, City Hall has been notified of pending



development of one and possibly two homes on 8th and Main. CA Martinenko updated Council on the Belchamber property and working with Benton County Planning to resolve the Exclusive Farm Use (EFU) designation. CA Cuthbertson asked about removing the structure because it is a nuisance and might invite activities such as camping. Councilor Myers suggested the Fire Department could use the structure as a burn exercise. CA Martinenko said he would contact the Fire District and see if that is possible.

The City is going out for an RFP for the community path and is waiting on final numbers from City West for the water plant. The current activity is determining if a conventional water filtration system can work without structural modifications to the existing plant.

There is no new ordinance enforcement activity. The Land Use action for 980 Commercial Street is pending from the City Attorney. Councilor Lindner commented she saw a person walking down Commercial Street and stopping at City Hall looking in windows. There was general discussion on more awareness of out-of-place activity around town and the cost of extended law enforcement.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

- 4.1. Councilor Ritch moved to pass the consent agenda. Councilor Myers seconded. Councilor Lindner asked about an expenditure for the Computershare Trust Company. CA Martinenko said that is the clearing house for our bond payment. 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 of an ordinance to amend Title VII of the Monroe Municipal Code for parking regulations. CA Martinenko mentioned that this ordinance was tabled from the previous meeting so it could go to committee for additional discussion. CA Martinenko provided an overview of the ordinance and a summary of discussions from the Ordinance Committee and the December Council work session. CA Martinenko said the City already adopted the State's statutes on traffic, including the parking chapter so the current ordinance includes what is different or is in addition to the ORS. CA Martinenko also mentioned that in consultation with the attorney, it is advisable to make the ordinance more robust than state statute rather than less but those are still options open to the Council. Councilor Winther commented on the section about curbing wheels when on any grade and that he felt this may be too strict to enforce, especially when cities such as San Francisco have an explicit 3% grade limit set before wheels have to be curbed. Councilor Myers commented that at the Work Session in December, there was discussion about limiting the ordinance to west of 7th street. CA Martinenko added that there seemed to be general consensus that by changing the statute, the City might be liable if less stringent language was adopted.



Councilor Winther and Councilor Myers discussed their points of views regarding keeping the state ORS or making it less stringent. CA Martinenko commented that what is being discussed is in essence, what level of risk is the City comfortable with in adopting a less stringent ordinance. Councilor Winther the commented that someone could be looking at our ordinances specifically to enforce it. CA Martinenko replied the City already adopted the parking chapter in the ORS by reference many years ago. Councilor Myers reiterated he was working on the side of the City to reduce liability. Councilor Linder added that an accident with a rolling vehicle only has to happen once even if it only occurs every 10 years. Councilor Cuthbertson commented she felt the City should be reducing liability and it would be detrimental to the City if an accident were to occur. After general discussion, Councilor Ritch moved to pass ordinance 2023-04 as written to a second reading. Councilor Lindner seconded. After discussion about what a yes vote meant, Mayor Sheets called for a vote: Councilor Cuthbertson, Yes; Lindner, Yes; Myers, Yes; Ritch, Yes; Williams, No; Winther, No. Motion carried.

5.2. **Resolution 2023-28:** A resolution in support of establishing a continuum of care for the Linn, Benton, and Lincoln Counties Region and Registering with the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development in 2024. CA Martinenko explained this is the ask from the Community Services Consortium director, Peggy McGuire, back in the October 2023 Council meeting. In essence, the resolution is supporting federal dollars to go directly to the consortium rather than to the group of 26 counties. The resolution is non-binding on the City and would give more control over how the funding is spent in our region. After general discussion, Councilor Ritch moved to pass resolution 2023-28. Councilor Myers seconded. Mayor Sheets called for a vote: Councilor Cuthbertson, Yes; Lindner, Yes; Myers, Yes; Ritch, Yes; Williams, Yes; Winther, Yes. Motion carried.

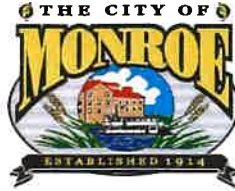
5.3. **Motion to Accept Increase for City Waste Services.** CA Martinenko commented that Mr. Larson of Republic Services presented to Council and a motion is required since we collect Franchise Fees. In general discussion, it was noted the price increase was minimal, amounting to less than 50 cents per month. Councilor Ritch motioned to pass the increase of .09% and Councilor Winther seconded. In discussion, Mayor Sheets said that Mr. Larson would come back in February 2024 to discuss recycling. Mayor Sheets called for a vote: Councilor Cuthbertson, Yes; Lindner, Yes; Myers, Yes; Ritch, Yes; Williams, Yes; Winther, Yes. Motion carried.

5.4. **Establishing a Revenue and Finance Title in the Municipal Code.** CA Martinenko explained that to better provide a placeholder for finance and revenue related code and to better facilitate fee schedules that can be passed by resolution, a new title should be established. Some of the chapters might include fees for services such as planning and utilities, lodging taxes, and additional fees for law enforcement or parks. There was general discussion surrounding the utility billing process, the current delinquent accounts, and what steps staff are taking to collect. CA Martinenko said that



our ordinances require a meaningful opportunity for customers to discuss their bill and arrange payment. In the past, due to COVID, the City was lenient due to state non-shutoff mandates. This led to many accounts with high balances. The City is now trying to keep the accounts as current as possible so customers do not dig themselves into a hole they cannot easily get out of. Councilor Lindner expressed that she wants opportunity for customers not to have their water shut off but also understands the City cannot give the impression they will always be bailed out. Councilor Cuthbertson offered an idea for the City to set up a fund that could help people in need for their utility bills. There was continuing discussion on water shut offs and liens. CA Martinenko noted that the infrastructure still costs the City even the water plant is not producing water and this cost is included in the base rates.

- 5.5. **Direction to Staff regarding the City Hall Building.** CA Martinenko said this is an extension of conversation regarding the construction of City Hall, which is terracotta brick, and not seismically reinforced. CA Martinenko said this came to attention of staff when the ground shifted a few years ago that caused the building to sink on the west end and cracked the brick. Ram Jack was called in to secure the foundation but also discovered there was no internal reinforcement of the roof structure. Further investigation by staff discovered the roof was replaced in 2003 by placing a new roof structure directly on top of the old roof structure with no additional support. In discussion, it was noted it might be possible to retrofit the building to standards and other options might include a new City Hall altogether. Mayor Sheets noted an option might be moving City Hall to the Library while options are looked at to provide better safety to staff. Councilor Cuthbertson noted there might state or federal assistance to acquire a modular building. Councilor Ritch commented the library is already in place and is built to seismic standards. After general discussion, there was general consensus the library should be looked into for City Hall possibly by the start of the next fiscal year in July.
- 5.6. **Direction to Staff Regarding the Library IGA.** CA Martinenko said the IGA with the City of Corvallis for library operations can be amended by mutual consent or cancelled with at least 6 months notices prior to the beginning of the fiscal year. CA Martinenko said he was not suggesting cancelling the IGA but the IGA does need to be amended to reflect the shared costs of the building, especially janitorial services. CA Martinenko noted that if the City needed additional funding for building maintenance, the parts of the building under direct library control should be separated from the rest of the building so a fee could be established and Monroe citizens would not be charged both a tax and an additional fee for library services. Councilor Ritch commented that library operations should include janitorial costs. After general discussion, Councilor Myers moved to direct staff to start negotiations with the City of Corvallis and Benton County and to indicate the IGA may be cancelled if agreeable amendments to the IGA cannot be reached. Councilor Lindner seconded. Mayor Sheets called for a vote: Councilor



Cuthbertson, Yes; Lindner, Yes; Myers, Yes; Ritch, Yes; Williams, Yes; Winther, Yes.
Motion carried.

5.7. **Request to install Prism Art in the Library.** CA Martinenko showed Council examples of Prism Art the Corvallis Library Director asked could be installed in the Monroe Community Library at no cost to the City. Councilor Winther moved to allow the artwork and Councilor Lindner seconded. Councilor Myers asked if the artwork was permanent and CA Martinenko said no. 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.

5.8. **Review of new Committee Members.** Mayor Sheets approved new committee members for the Public Works Committee, Brian Ray and Johnny Acres. Councilor Cuthbertson set February 17, 2024 as the next Public Works Committee date.

7. OLD BUSINESS:

7.1. CA Martinenko updated Council on the UGB Land swap and the upcoming supplemental budget in early 2024. The UGB land swap is in discussion with parties.

8. CITY EVENTS

8.1. Mayor Sheets updated Council on upcoming events, specifically the Monroe BBQ and Logging Festival on May 18, 2024.

9. OTHER BUSINESS:

9.1. Councilor Lindner asked about a Personnel and Finance Committee Meeting and Early February was agreed to as the next meeting, specifically to discuss potential COLA increases.

9.2. Councilor Cuthbertson reminded Council about memorial plaques that were discussed earlier in the year and wants to keep those in front of Council.

10. **ADJOURN:** Mayor Sheets adjourned the meeting at 8:47 p.m.

Approved by Council Action on January 22, 2024

Mayor Dan Sheets  Date: 1/22/2024

Attest: 
Steve Martinenko, City Recorder