



MONROE CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

January 22, 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.

Councilor Winther joined the meeting at 6:27 PM via Zoom.

Staff present: City Administrator Martinenko

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

3. **STAFF REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS:**

3.1. **Sherriff's Report.** The Deputy present answered questions regarding the December-January Patrol Log. Councilor Lindner inquired about suspicious activity that was reported at the previous Council meeting. The Deputy replied there are stepped up patrols and on-going investigations. Mayor Sheets asked about a broken door frame at the Sheriff's sub-station. The Deputy replied that was probably a deputy trying to get access to the sub-station during the ice storm. With no further questions, the Council thanked the deputy for his work.

3.2. **City Administrator Report.** City Administrator Martinenko provided a report on activities, specifically the recent cold weather and ice event:

Martinenko discussed response efforts to the recent severe winter storm, including a tree fall ant the City Park and park bleachers that were crumpled beyond repair due to a fallen limb. Infrastructure issues from freezing conditions included a frozen pipe at the water treatment plant. In addition, high river levels were impacting the city's ability to draw water. He also noted unusual overnight water usage that may indicate a leak. He will analyze meter data further to attempt to identify the source. Councilor Cuthbertson suggested timer issues on private irrigation systems could be the cause.

Power outages in the area also raised safety concerns and the City computer system was damaged. A county warming center designation at the library presented staffing challenges and the Monroe Community Center was opened and warmed in case it was needed by the Fire District. Martinenko will address this at an upcoming debriefing with the county Emergency Manager.

Martinenko commented the City was very fortunate that power stayed on throughout most of the cold weather event otherwise the damage and the impact on human safety would have been more severe.

4. **CONSENT AGENDA**

4.1. Councilor Lindner commented that Sheriff Van Arsdall's name is misspelled in the minutes of December 27, 2023, and asked that it be corrected. Councilor Lindner then



asked about an expenditure for Springbrook. Councilor Ritch replied that was the Accounting software. CA Martinenko explained that he is looking at the stopped check and subsequent expense. Mayor Sheets call for a motion to approve the consent calendar. Council Ritch so moved and Councilor Myers seconded with the provision for the stopped check. During discussion, Councilor Lindner asked about Xpress Bill Pay. CA Martinenko explained this is from utility customers who pay via credit card. CA Martinenko went on to talk about current past due amounts and how that is being handled and caught up. Councilor Cuthbertson suggested a fund established through donations to help customers having problems staying current with their payments. Councilor Ritch commented that the Community Services Consortium in Corvallis has a program for that. With no further discussion, Mayor Sheets called for a vote: Councilor Cuthbertson, Yes; Lindner, Yes; Myers, Yes; Ritch, Yes; Williams, Yes; Winther, Abstain. Motion carried.

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1. **Ordinance 2023-04: Second Reading** of an ordinance to amend Title VII of the Monroe Municipal Code for parking regulations. CA Martinenko explained this is basically the same as the first reading language, less the edits. Martinenko went on to say that the City already adopted the State traffic code in chapter 70, so this ordinance is basically the things that are somewhat different in language from the Oregon statutes and are more specific to Monroe. Councilor Winther asked about the storage of vehicles and receiving permission from the City. CA Martinenko replied that the terms of the application for storage are yet to be developed and would have to be approved by Council. Councilor Lindner asked if people would be in violation without an application. CA Martinenko replied no. The City would notify people that storage of personal property is not allowed past 72 hours but would not fine anyone until the application and conditions were approved by Council. Councilor Myers asked about enforcement. CA Martinenko said that enforcement is both complaints driven and by City Staff who regularly drive around town each day. In either case, pictures are taken and that starts the 72-hour clock. Councilor Lindner asked if this is an ordinance the Sheriff's department can enforce. CA Martinenko replied that like tall grass, this is something the City is responsible for unless we have continued difficulty with compliance and then ask the Sheriff's department for assistance with a citation. Councilor Myers asked how would we prove the person did not move their property a few feet or elsewhere. CA Martinenko replied that the ordinance only allows 72 hours anywhere in the City. It does not matter if it is moved from the original location to another City property. Council continued with general discussion on where storage may be allowed and if allowing storage in some areas would be fair to other residents where it was not allowed. CA Martinenko commented that folks are generally accepting if the rules are fair and make sense, such as not allowing storage of property that blocks vision or



impedes traffic. CA Martinenko concluded with pointing out an addition that exempted checking vehicle fluids as a “repair.” Councilor Winther asked about penalties.

Councilor Ritch replied that is the ordinance the Council will be looking at next. CA Martinenko commented that parking violations at the State level are maximum \$165 most cities set \$50 to \$150. The penalties would be set by Council resolution as part of the pending fee schedule and reviewed annually. Councilor Ritch then moved to pass Ordinance 2023-04 as written. 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. **Ordinance 2024-01: First reading** of an ordinance establishing a revenue and finance title in the Monroe Municipal Code. CA Martinenko explained this title creates the framework for fee schedules, lodging taxes, additional fees for services such as expanded law enforcement or building operations, and consolidates other ordinance such as special assessments into one title rather than spread throughout the code as it is now. Councilor Myers asked if this can be amended at a later date to include or remove chapters. CA Martinenko said yes, that would be an ordinance to amend the title. After general discussion, Councilor Ritch commented that this ordinance is only to add the title to the code and what is added would be by future Council action. With no further discussion, Mayor Sheets asked for a motion. Councilor Myers moved that the ordinance be passed onto a second reading as written. 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. **Motion to Approve Adjusted Salary Scales for Utility Worker I, II and Accounting Specialist.** CA Martinenko reviewed the compensation study compiled by Councilor Lindner and reviewed by the Human Resources and Finance Committee. CA Martinenko explained that he looked at a 3.2% COLA and the recommended salary range adjustments. The recommendation is to accept the compensation study and adjust the salary ranges since they are slightly higher than a proposed COLA and COLA will not need to be reviewed again until the next fiscal cycle. Councilor Lindner led a general discussion of the compensation study and what she used as comparable. Councilor Myers asked if a person was promoted to the next classification, what step would they start at. CA Martinenko replied it would be at the next step higher than the current wage. There was more discussion of the classifications. CA Martinenko explained that in the past, as an example, there was only one job description for public works even though there were different salaries for each worker. The current classification system was developed in late 2020 when our current PW employee was hired. A classification system allows for advancement with a clear understanding of the responsibilities and expectations for each salary range. Councilor Ritch then moved to approved the proposed salary scales. Councilor Lindner seconded. With no further discussion, Mayor



Sheets asked for a vote: Councilor Cuthbertson, Yes; Lindner, Yes; Myers, Yes; Ritch, Yes; Williams, Yes; Winther, Yes. Motion carried.

- 5.4. **Approving new Four-year Planning Commission Terms.** CA Martinenko presented to the Council Planning Commissioners Cuthbertson, Eastridge, Fredericks, and Mills who expressed interest in continuing with the Planning Commission. Mayor Sheets asked if each submitted a request and CA Martinenko replied yes, via email. Councilor Lindner then moved to approve Planning Commissioners Cuthbertson, Eastridge, Fredericks, and Mills for another four-year term. Councilor Ritch seconded. With no further discussion, Mayor Sheets asked for a vote: Councilor Cuthbertson, Yes; Lindner, Yes; Myers, Yes; Ritch, Yes; Williams, Yes; Winther, Yes. Motion carried.
- 5.5. **Establishing a Short-Term Rentals Ordinance Ad-Hoc Committee.** Mayor Sheets called for a new ad-hoc committee for short term rentals. Councilor Ritch asked since there is currently an ad-hoc ordinance committee, if the issue of short-term rentals could become a priority of that committee rather than form a new committee. There was general consensus among Council members that taking this issue to the ad-hoc Ordinance Committee as a priority is more expedient. Mayor Sheets called for a motion and Councilor Ritch so moved. Councilor Winther seconded. With no further discussion, Mayor Sheets asked for a vote: Councilor Cuthbertson, Yes; Lindner, Yes; Myers, Yes; Ritch, Yes; Williams, Yes; Winther, Yes. Motion carried.

7. OLD BUSINESS:

7.1. CA Martinenko updated Council on negotiations with the Corvallis Library Director on updating the existing IGA for library operations in Monroe. He said there is general understanding of library operational costs such as janitorial, utility, and maintenance and the City will be forced to add a fee to City utility customers to cover the costs unless Corvallis assumes their portion of operations. Martinenko noted that this is unfair to Monroe taxpayers since they are already paying their share of library costs through property taxes and building operational costs are not being shared by taxpayers outside of the City. Councilor Lindner asked how this is handled by other branch libraries. CA Martinenko replied that the other two branches are Philomath and Alsea and he knows Philomath is in the same situation as Monroe in regard to operational costs. Councilor Ritch added this has been the situation for the last ten years but COVID delayed a response. CA Martinenko added that the IGA with Corvallis calls for a report and the City has not seen any report showing activity at the Library. Councilor Myers commented that moving City Hall to the Library as discussed would increase the visibility of the library and might be a very symbiotic relationship.

7.2. Emergency and Disaster Recovery Planning. The Council discussed emergency planning in context of the recent ice storm event. In particular, the request of the Fire District for the City to open a warming center implied the City had the resources to do so. CA Martinenko said part of this is a Benton County Emergency Management



Discussion and Councilor Myers commented that going forward, there needs to be a better line of communication between the City, County, and Fire District. He also commented on the need for emergency generators at our buildings and water plant. After discussion, CA Martinenko said that would be included in the budget for next fiscal year. Mayor Sheets asked if staff could reach out to the Fire District for resources to staff a warming center. CA Martinenko replied it would be best if that recommendation came as part of the City's emergency planning and coordinated with Benton County Emergency Management.

7.3. Law Enforcement Town Hall. Mayor Sheets briefly discussed asking the Sheriff's Office to lead a Town Hall meeting on law enforcement and community policing in Monroe. CA Martinenko said he would reach out to the Sheriff.

7.4. Budget Committee for Fiscal year 2024-25. Mayor Sheets mentioned that he is advertising on social media for committee members. CA Martinenko said that the first meeting would be in the late March, early April timeframe. CA Martinenko also mentioned that he is going to recommend to the Committee a biennial budget going forward. Councilor Ritch asked if an annual budget was mandated in the Charter and CA Martinenko replied it is not and the Council can elect to do so on recommendation of the Budget Committee.

7.5. Belchambers Property and UGB Land swap. CA Martinenko said both items are being discussed with the County who would need to be involved to bring the Belchambers property within the Monroe UGB and help with the land exchange. CA Martinenko also noted there are developers interested in both the Brick Yard and Stone properties for single-family residences.

7.6. CA Martinenko reported that ODOT has made the recommendation to approve our request to lower the speed limits inside Monroe from 30 MPH to 25 MPH. An ODOT engineer will be meeting with City Staff within the next two months to review signage. There is no additional transition zone changes but CA Martinenko hopes to have a speed zone transition sign placed by the park.

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. Mayor Sheets set January 31st for ordinance.

9.2. Councilor Lindner mentioned a Personnel and Finance Committee Meeting for Early February.


9.3. Councilor Cuthbertson asked to set the Public Works Advisory Committee meeting for February 20th and noted there are several issues including parking and the Parks Master Plan that are on the table to work through.



9.4. Councilor Lindner reminded Council that a visit from Republic Services was noted for the February Council meeting.

10. **ADJOURN:** Mayor Sheets adjourned the meeting at 8:19 p.m.

Approved by Council Action on February 26, 2024

Mayor Dan Sheets  Date: 2/26/24

Attest: 
Steve Martinenko, City Recorder