



## MONROE CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

**April 22, 2024**

**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, Myers, Ritch, Williams, Winther.  
Staff present: City Administrator Martinenko

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None

### 3. **STAFF REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS:**

3.1. **Sherriff's Report.** Sheriff Van Arsdall asked if there were questions about the monthly patrol log. CA Martinenko mentioned the traffic speed on 5th Street was just lowered to 25 MPH. Councilor Ritch commented on the need for good speed patrol to ensure the downtown is more walkable and safer for children and people visiting downtown businesses. Mayor Sheets asked about a recent incident at the Library with a person camping at the front entry. The Sheriff reported the individual was arrested because they got into a physical altercation with the deputy. In discussion, the Council and Sheriff noted there are few resources in Monroe for support of transient individuals.

3.2. **Library Presentation.** Ashlee Chavez, Corvallis Library System Director, began her presentation by expressing gratitude for the invitation and noting it had been a while since her last update on the library. She recalled the last report was before the pandemic, which disrupted normal operations. Chavez mentioned she is approaching her eighth year in this role and expressed her passion for the job and its community impact.

She briefly explained the library system's structure, which operates under an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) between the City of Corvallis and Benton County, established in 1994. The agreement mandates Benton County to transfer funds from the service district to the City of Corvallis, which then manages the library system serving the entire district. The advisory board, created by this agreement, includes ten members: five appointed by the Corvallis City Council, five by Benton County Commissioners, and one student representative. The board meets quarterly to provide input on policies, budgets, and strategic planning.

Chavez discussed the branch libraries located in Monroe, Alsea, and Philomath, highlighting the delivery system launched in 2020 that replaced the bookmobile. She introduced key staff members, including Andrew Cherbas, the Deputy Library Director, and Thea Hart, the new Library Extension / Branch Supervisor. She also mentioned Laurie Pelkey, the Community Library Specialist in Monroe, and other staff involved in deliveries and marketing.

Chavez highlighted several system-wide achievements. The library returned to pre-pandemic programming levels in 2023, offering nearly 1,300 programs attended by around 40,000 people in person and an additional 3,500 virtually. The library also migrated to a new computer management system, an open-source software that saved



\$30,000 annually, allowing for customization to better fit their needs. Additionally, the Corvallis library's main meeting room was converted into a Zoom Room to facilitate high-quality hybrid events, benefiting the entire county.

Chavez provided current fiscal year statistics for the entire library system up to March, showing positive trends in physical circulation, door counts, and program attendance. She projected downloadable circulations to match or exceed last year's figures and reported around 41,000 active library cards after a data cleanup, with 500-700 new registrations monthly.

Focusing on the Monroe Community Library, Chavez noted the Library recently celebrated its 10th anniversary and shared statistics from the last fiscal year, noting nearly 13,000 visitors and 17,000 items circulated. She anticipated increased community engagement with the new Extension Supervisor's initiatives.

She emphasized the success of the delivery service, which made over 20,000 deliveries in nine months, averaging 547 per week, significantly enhancing access to library materials. Chavez concluded by expressing excitement about the library being fully staffed for the first time in five or six years, which she believes will drive further growth and improved services.

Chavez concluded her presentation with the Library legacy fund for Monroe established in 2019. She reported the fund has over \$230,000, invested under the care of the Corvallis Benton County Public Library Foundation that helps supplement capital improvement needs at the Monroe Community Library.

Councilor Cuthbertson then asked Chavez about the number of borrowers, particularly focusing on Monroe, suggesting that previous numbers mentioned might not reflect actual figures. Chavez explained that while they can generate some data based on where library cards were issued or current addresses, it is challenging to ensure accuracy due to people moving without updating their addresses and this makes it difficult to provide precise numbers. Councilor Ritch asked to reconfirm that visitor numbers to the Monroe library were 13,000 annually with 17,000 items circulated. Chavez reiterated that while she could provide some numbers on Monroe cardholders, they might not be entirely accurate due to infrequent address updates.

Councilor Myers questioned the demographics behind these numbers, doubting that all 13,000 visitors were rural residents. Councilor Ritch pointed out that individual usage could skew these numbers. Councilor Myers highlighted a potential issue with tracking, suggesting the library's process might have gaps if people move without updating their addresses. Chavez responded that the policy requires address updates every two years upon card renewal, where proof of address is mandatory.

Councilor Cuthbertson suggested that even an approximate number of Monroe Citizen's would be helpful to identify trends in Monroe's library usage. Councilor Myers further questioned the library's policy on address updates, implying there might be a flaw if books are checked out without accurate addresses. Chavez clarified that the library does request address updates during card renewals every two years and can



accept utility bills as proof of address if the driver's license does not reflect the current address.

The conversation then shifted to the library's marketing efforts. Councilor Myers asked if the marketing director focuses on research or advertisement. Chavez explained that the director handles both marketing and advertising tasks, such as creating flyers, social media posts, and newsletters, but not market research. Councilor Myers suggested more proactive research on traffic patterns and user preferences to optimize library services.

Discussing the library's delivery service, Chavez mentioned they handle about 550 deliveries weekly, which has stabilized post-pandemic. Councilor Myers inquired if the service was available to people close to the library, to which Chavez confirmed it is available to anyone in the service district, including those who find it challenging to visit the library due to various reasons like mobility issues or busy schedules.

Chavez elaborated on specialized programs for the homebound, including personalized book selections based on individual preferences, highlighting the library's commitment to accessibility. She noted the upcoming feature of same-day delivery notifications, which had been a challenge but is now resolved and will soon be available to patrons.

Councilor Ritch expressed concerns about the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) regarding library funding and operations. He noted that the city's taxpayers are essentially paying twice for library services—once through county property taxes and again through city funds to cover operational costs. This situation is compounded by the fact that the Monroe Library serves not only the city residents but also the surrounding areas in South Benton County, prompting the need for a more equitable funding arrangement.

Councilor Cuthbertson highlighted the difficulty in making budgetary decisions due to a lack of detailed usage reports. She emphasized the need for specific information on library use, including who is using the facility and for what purposes, to better understand the costs and responsibilities involved. She also raised concerns about the wear and tear on the facility and the associated costs, such as custodial services and supplies.

Ashlee Chavez provided some data, stating that 80% of the Monroe Library's users are from Monroe, based on address information. However, she acknowledged the limitations of the available data and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on usage patterns. Chavez committed to providing more historical data and detailed reports in the future to help inform budget decisions and the IGA negotiations.

Both Councilor Cuthbertson and Myers stressed the need for consistent and comprehensive annual reports to better track library usage and costs over time. They pointed out that the lack of such reports in the past ten years has made it challenging to assess and plan for the library's needs.

Mayor Sheets emphasized the financial strain the city faces in maintaining the library and requested more support from the county and the city of Corvallis. The Mayor



also expressed concern about reports of unprofessional behavior related to custodial services at the library, urging for more professionalism and better communication to avoid unnecessary conflicts.

Councilor Williams reiterated the request for comprehensive data on all library branches, including door counts, circulation, and program attendance, to understand the broader usage patterns and make more informed decisions. Ashlee Chavez said she would revisit the numbers.

Mayor Sheets concluded by thanking Library Director Chavez for addressing Council's concerns and expressed appreciation for being engaged in library usage.

*(Mayor Sheets moved Old Business items earlier in the agenda so Sheriff Van Arsdall would not have to stay through the meeting)*

**6.1 Law Enforcement Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA).** Sheriff Van Arsdall assured Council that the current arrangement would remain unchanged through the next fiscal year. Councilor Ritch raised the possibility of dedicating more hours to traffic patrol, highlighting its importance in the community. Sheriff Van Arsdall suggested utilizing existing resources to manage traffic effectively without increasing costs. However, he cautioned against relying solely on ticket revenues to fund additional services, citing potential pitfalls observed in previous experiences. Councilor Ritch and Sheriff Van Arsdall agreed to explore feasible solutions to address traffic concerns.

**6.2 Law Enforcement Town Hall.** Sheriff Van Arsdall expressed the need for some lead time to arrange for division commanders to attend, offering their expertise to address inquiries effectively. Sheriff Van Arsdale proposed several dates, leaving the decision to the council's preference. Councilor Myers suggested coordinating with existing council sessions for convenience, while Councilor Cuthbertson proposed considering a Saturday session to encourage greater community participation. As the discussion concluded, Sheriff Van Arsdall said he would work with CA Martinenko to narrow down some dates that would work. The Council thanked Sheriff Van Arsdall for his work in Monroe.

**3.3. City Administrator Report.** CA Martinenko provided an update on his recent activities, which included the library IGA, maintaining public spaces, addressing potholes, and ensuring the smooth operation of the water plant. He highlighted the successful functioning of the water plant and mentioned an upcoming joint planning session involving the city and county planning commissions to discuss the UGB land swap. This session is scheduled for next Tuesday at 6 PM and will be held publicly with Zoom access.

Martinenko also detailed the ongoing budget discussions, which will include wastewater studies. He mentioned a resolution regarding city fees and the need for public feedback during the budget process. Additionally, he described efforts to establish work schedules for public works, such as mowing, and to notify landowners about



maintenance responsibilities. Martinenko reported that utility billing arrears had significantly decreased, with only one person remaining in arrears, thanks to staff efforts in implementing policies and engaging with the community. Councilor Lindner commended City Staff for their hard work. Martinenko acknowledged the collective effort of the staff in achieving this outcome.

Mayor Sheets inquired about the status of Mr. Douglas Terrell's case. Martinenko explained that the matter is with their attorney, who is preparing a summary judgment for a court hearing on May 22. He clarified the city's statutory right to foreclose on property to recover debts and discussed the financial details and potential outcomes related to Terrell's property.

Councilor Ritch asked about the water plant's funding and engineering report. Martinenko confirmed that funds were secure and he was in discussions with Civil West regarding a mixer that could improve the plant's operations. He emphasized the importance of reducing the sediment to enhance the system's efficiency. The conversation concluded with Martinenko addressing the Oregon Health Authorities' new mandates for membrane systems and the increased reporting requirements.

#### **4. CONSENT AGENDA**

4.1. CA Martinenko noted an additional accounts payable item for Stericycle's shredding services that was budgeted but the invoice arrived after the payables report. Councilor Myers inquired about the shredding schedule, to which Martinenko confirmed that shredding is budgeted yearly. He added that they recently organized their archives, labeling items for future destruction per the State's record retention schedule. Councilor Myers then asked about handling electronic records, and Martinenko clarified that they are still sorting through these. Valuable historical documents are preserved, while items like payables follow a three-year destruction cycle. He noted that the recent shredding was extensive, but essential for clearing out old documents without losing valuable historical information.

Councilor Ritch moved to pass the consent agenda and the minutes. Councilor Lindner seconded. Mayor Sheets called for comments or questions, noting the largest payment was a quarterly one. 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. **Resolution 2024-03: A Resolution Adopting the Multi-jurisdictional Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan.** CA Martinenko explained that the plan is based on a template that includes various standard sections like demographics and maps. He provided the Council with a matrix specific to Monroe and noted the Council had reviewed it multiple times in previous meetings. He explained the matrix outlines the city's disaster risks and includes a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and





Threats). The plan also involved collaboration with multiple cities with the County including the Monroe Rural Fire District. Councilor Ritch then moved to adopt Resolution 2024-03. Councilor Winther seconded. With no further discussion, Mayor Sheets called for a vote: Cuthbertson: Yes; Lindner: Yes; Myers: Yes; Ritch: Yes; Williams: Yes; Winther: Yes. Motion Passed.

- 5.2. **Resolution 2024-04: A Resolution Adopting a Public Street Vehicle Storage Policy.** CA Martinenko detailed the policy, emphasizing the need to establish storage fees based on what local commercial storage facilities charge. He surveyed various storage facilities in the area and proposed a fee structure where permits would need to be renewed every six months, with options for prepayment. Martinenko explained that the policy aimed to balance the city's need to generate reasonable revenue while avoiding unfair competition with commercial businesses.

Councilor Myers expressed concern about ensuring the city does not undercut local businesses. Martinenko reassured that the proposed fees were competitive but fair. The policy includes restrictions such as the prohibition of non-moving vehicles and the requirement for regular inspections. Myers cited an example from the past where state-run businesses undercut private enterprises, stressing the importance of fair pricing.

After further discussion, Councilor Myers moved to adopt Resolution 2024-04 with the caveat that the resolution can be reviewed and adjusted periodically by Council. Councilor Williams seconded. With no further discussion, Mayor Sheets called for a vote: Cuthbertson: Yes; Lindner: Yes; Myers: Yes; Ritch: Yes; Williams: Yes; Winther: Abstain. Motion Passed.

- 5.3. **Water Bill Adjustment Policy.** CA Martinenko explained that the original guidelines had been in place since 2019 but were more advisory than prescriptive. Martinenko emphasized that the proposed changes were based on practical observations and practices from eight other cities. Notably, cities like Corvallis only allow abatements for underground leaks, while others, particularly in Southern and Eastern Oregon, prohibit them altogether. The new policy suggests adjustments be permitted once every 24 months, verified by a plumber to ensure the leak is substantial and not due to negligence, such as a failure to prepare for weather events. The policy would only cover two months of water consumption, calculated at half the usual water distribution rate, with a maximum credit of \$500.

Councilor Myers inquired about the specifics of the adjustment calculation, which Martinenko clarified by explaining they would compare current and past consumption, adjusting the difference by 50%. Councilor Myers agreed, noting that the codification of these procedures would standardize treatment for all residents. Discussion followed about the policy's fairness, especially regarding irrigation leaks. Martinenko observed that surface irrigation leaks are typically obvious and more



preventable. Martinenko also mentioned that water production costs are significant, and subsidizing such leaks would be an unfair use of taxpayer money.

Councilor Cuthbertson raised concerns about deeply buried irrigation systems, to which Martinenko responded that proper installation should prevent most issues. He added that the city's responsibility is to ensure efficient water use and mitigate unnecessary waste.

After discussion, Martinenko proposed bringing the revised policy back as an ordinance, which would formally integrate the abatement policy into the city's existing code. The council acknowledged the need for a standardized, fair policy and reached consensus to move forward with the proposed changes. Martinenko assured that the ordinance would allow for amendments by resolution as needed, ensuring flexibility in addressing future situations.

5.4. **Changing the May Council Meeting Date.** Mayor Sheets commented the May Council meeting falls on Memorial Day. After discussion, the Council reached consensus to change the date to Tuesday, May 28<sup>th</sup>

5.5. **Festival Budget.** Mayor Sheets provided an overview of the festival budget and arrangements. He began by detailing the revenue collected so far, including booth fees from artist and crafter spaces, totaling \$1,090, and payments from food trucks and alcohol vendors. Mayor Sheets mentioned negotiations with various vendors, including breweries and distilleries, for participation in the event. Discussion ensued about venue arrangements, including securing the bus barn for a barbecue competition, which involved coordinating with Brady Crowson for permission.

The mayor continued by listing festival sponsorships from local businesses and individuals, including donations for prizes and activities like a model railroad layout at the library. He also mentioned expenses incurred, such as dumpster fees, porta-potties, DJ services, and insurance requirements. A notable exclusion was the bounce house due to liability concerns raised by the city's insurance company, prompting consideration of private alternatives. Mayor Sheets emphasized efforts to keep expenses minimal, including borrowing equipment like canopies and tables from local sources.

Mayor Sheets then addressed the projected festival budget, which currently showed a surplus of \$1,530, with total income at \$5,690 and expenses at \$4,160. He expressed confidence in breaking even with additional expenses expected. The discussion concluded with plans for addressing remaining tasks, including finalizing arrangements with vendors, securing permits, and recruiting volunteers. Mayor Sheets indicated his intention to engage council members in various roles, including serving as guides during the festival.

6. **OLD BUSINESS:** (Moved to earlier in the Agenda)



**7. CITY EVENTS**

8.1. Mayor Sheets provided an overview of upcoming events and committee reports. He highlighted several events scheduled for the rest of the year, including the festival, Christmas in July, a first responders appreciation event, Halloween Spooktacular, and the Monroe Community Food Drive in November and December. Mayor Sheets mentioned tentative dates for the Alpine holiday festival, the Monroe Community toy drive, and holiday happenings with the Mineral Light Parade in December.

**8. OTHER BUSINESS:**

8.1. Mayor Sheets outlined upcoming meetings for the budget committee, economic development, financial personnel, parks, and public works. Mayor Sheets also reminded the council of the next work session scheduled for May 13, acknowledging potential scheduling conflicts for some council members due to personal commitments.

9. **ADJOURN:** With no further comments, Mayor Sheets adjourned the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

**Approved by Council Action on May 28, 2024**

Mayor Dan Sheets  Date: 5/28/24

Attest:   
Steve Martinenko, City Recorder