



MONROE CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

July 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. Councilor Winther joined the meeting at 7:27 PM.

Staff present: City Administrator Martinenko

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Ayre Frankfurter, residing at 25147 Coon Road, expressed his support for the library and appreciated the city council's involvement and pertinent questions during a recent work session. Frankfurter emphasized that the community's interest was not adversarial but passionate about the library. He acknowledged the city's concerns regarding equitable maintenance payments.

Evelyn Lee of 25776 Alpine Road, spoke about the library and highlighted the strong community support and willingness to assist with any financial issues, such as janitorial fees. She noted the significant fundraising efforts from county residents and reiterated the community's commitment to supporting the library. Lee echoed Frankfurter's sentiments, praising the council for their engagement and insightful questions.

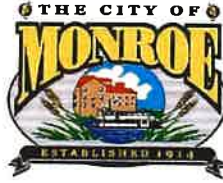
STAFF REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

- 3.1. **Sherriff's Report.** Sheriff Van Arsdall discussed the law enforcement townhall meeting held on July 13 in Monroe, noting that attendance was satisfactory but could have been better. He highlighted discussions on citations versus educational stops and assured that the message had been communicated to Captain Duffy and other ranks. He expressed his preference for educational stops when appropriate but acknowledged the necessity of issuing citations in certain circumstances. The Sheriff also mentioned the deployment of a radar trailer in Monroe and promised to share the collected data once it was processed.

Reviewing the Patrol Log, Councilor Lindner asked about the severity of a "theft three" incident reported on June 19, to which Sheriff Van Arsdall clarified that it was a minor theft, often involving items of little value. The council had no further questions about the report.

Sheriff Van Arsdall mentioned the upcoming Citizens Academy and encouraged council members to recommend potential candidates. Councilor Williams thanked the sheriff for the informative town hall meeting, expressing her appreciation for the support. The sheriff responded by emphasizing the importance of getting subject matter experts out of the office and engaging with the community. Councilor Ritch also thanked the sheriff for the radar trailer, noting its effectiveness in raising awareness about speeding.

- 3.2. **City Administrator Report.** CA Martinenko discussed progress with the tank mixer project, highlighting immediate and ongoing activities. He then addressed the 1135 dam removal project, which he had received the participation agreement from the Corps of Engineers. Martinenko mentioned he has reviewed the agreement and planned to have the city's attorney and project



manager, Elliot Porter, confirm the details, particularly concerning the \$785,500 cost share and the provision to halt the project if costs exceeded the federal allocation.

Councilor Lindner inquired about the source of the \$785,500, to which CA Martinenko clarified that the Long Tom Watershed Council had committed to raising the funds, including the water intake and habitat restoration. He emphasized the importance of having an agreement between the Watershed Council and the City that is vetted by the city attorney and ensuring the availability of funds from the Watershed Council before the September 30, 2024, Corps of Engineer's deadline.

Councilor Ritch raised concerns about potential liabilities once contracts were let, mentioning the practical challenges and potential additional costs that could arise during the construction phase. Martinenko acknowledged the complexities involved, especially regarding the impact of construction activities. The project required detailed planning to address silt behind the dam and the stability of bridge piers, in compliance with ODOT's design criteria.

CA Martinenko shifted the discussion to a new grant opportunity identified by Susan Patterson of the Council of Governments, which could fund the Long Tom pedestrian bridge, emphasizing the project's significance to the city. He also explored the potential of using a sustainable, cost-effective alternative for the regional path project, initially estimated at \$384,000 but now expected to cost between \$500,000 and \$600,000 due to inflation. Martinenko explained the possibility of using quarter minus packed pathways, a method previously implemented successfully in red Hills, which could reduce costs significantly.

CA Martinenko updated the council on the city's hiring process and a new apprenticeship program from the Oregon Association of Water Utilities. This program could provide training for current and future utility workers, enhancing the city's capacity to maintain its water infrastructure. Councilor Lindner asked about the long-term prospects of apprentices staying with the city, to which Martinenko explained that while some might stay, others could move on, allowing the city to bring in new apprentices.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

- 4.1. The Council reviewed the minutes from the previous Council meeting and current financials. Councilor Myers moved to approve the consent calendar as written. Councilor Ritch seconded. With no further discussion or questions, Mayor Sheets called for a vote: Councilor Cuthbertson: Yes; Lindner: Yes; Myers: Yes; Ritch: Yes; Williams: Yes. Motion Carried.

5. PUBLIC HEARING

- 5.1. Mayor Sheets opened public land use hearing at 6:42 PM and after explaining the proceedings, asked city council members to declare any conflicts of interest or ex parte contacts. Councilor Lindner expressed a potential future interest in the matter but clarified she currently had no plans that might constitute a conflict. Mayor Sheets asked if there were ex parte contacts referring to any meetings with individuals who might influence the decision. There were none. Mayor Sheets then invited the public to contest these disclosures, but there were no objections.

Mayor Sheets proceeded to read the land use decision criteria, emphasizing that testimonies should be directed toward relevant criteria from the municipal code or comprehensive plan. He reminded participants that failing to raise pertinent issues could preclude appeals or actions for damages.



CA Martinenko, representing the applicant (the City of Monroe), provided the staff report. He described the process and intent behind the proposed changes, highlighting the increasing interest in short-term rentals and the need for regulatory updates. The proposed code modifications aimed to simplify the approval process for short-term rentals, introducing three classes: Type A1 (under three bedrooms, simple permit process), Type B1 (up to five bedrooms, involving neighborhood notice), and Type B2 (commercial mixed-use areas, also a Type Two land use decision). The overall cap was set at 10 short-term rentals citywide, with specific provisions for different types. Councilor Ritch clarified that the classification of rentals referred to their location and usage, with further distinctions made for commercial or mixed-use zones. CA Martinenko explained the intention was to facilitate downtown development and make Monroe a more attractive destination.

Martinenko then detailed the proposed code changes, referencing a new section 6.105 in the Monroe Land Use Code. He highlighted the planning commission's recommendations: reducing residency requirements, increasing allowable rentable rooms, simplifying review processes, and setting a cap on short-term rentals. These recommendations aimed to balance economic development with manageable impacts on the community.

Councilor Lindner appreciated the forward-thinking approach, noting it was more generous toward property owners than initially proposed. CA Martinenko emphasized the economic benefits, aligning with Monroe's comprehensive plan and Riverside District Master Plan. He assured that the changes were designed to encourage responsible development and community growth, ensuring consistency and fairness.

Mayor Sheets opened the floor for questions to CA Martinenko before transitioning to public testimony. With no further questions, Mayor Sheets moved to public testimony, inviting those in favor of the application to speak. Misti Crowson, owner of Christmas Junction in Monroe, expressed her support. She shared her experience with out-of-state visitors who often complain about the lack of local lodging options. Misti mentioned her preference for Airbnb's over hotels and noted that well-maintained short-term rentals are in high demand, citing examples from various locations. She emphasized the benefits of short-term rentals, such as providing local lodging, boosting tourism, supporting local businesses, and maintaining neighborhood aesthetics. Misti also addressed concerns about traffic and neighborhood wear and tear, arguing that short-term rentals often have fewer residents than long-term homes and are subject to more stringent maintenance expectations. She concluded by acknowledging the importance of restrictions on the number of cars and guests to preserve neighborhood integrity.

Mayor Sheets thanked Misti Crowson and asked if there were any other testimonies in favor, followed by calls for opposition or neutral testimonies. With no further public input, Councilor Ritch sought clarification from CA Martinenko on updating the land use policy and the next steps. Martinenko explained that the changes would include adding new sections to the land use code, updating zoning to allow short-term rentals, and removing restrictions on owner-occupied ADUs. He outlined the process of submitting the updates to DLCD for review, developing permit forms, and ensuring compliance with life and safety standards in collaboration with Benton County.

Mayor Sheets confirmed there were no requests for a continuance or to hold the record open. He asked if the applicant waived the seven-day period to submit additional written arguments, to which CA Martinenko on behalf of the City affirmed. Mayor Sheets then closed the public hearing at 7:13 PM.



Mayor Sheets initiated the deliberation on the motion, asking for the council's thoughts and support. A motion was made by Councilor Myers to adopt the findings outlined in the decision criteria, as presented in the staff report, and to amend the Monroe land use code to allow accessory short-term rentals with the prescribed provisions and conditions. The motion was seconded by Councilor Williams.

With no additional discussion, Mayor Sheets called for a vote: Councilor Cuthbertson: Yes; Lindner: Yes; Myers: Yes; Ritch: Yes; Williams: Yes. Motion Carried.

After the vote, Mayor Sheets read a statement regarding the right of any participant unsatisfied with the decision to have it reviewed by the Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA) under ORS 197.828 to 197.845. A notice of intent to appeal must be filed with LUBA no later than 21 days after the decision becomes official.

6. EXECUTIVE SESSION

6.1. Mayor Sheets moved the Council into executive session pursuant to ORS 190.660(2)(f), which allows the council to meet an executive session to review written advice from the city attorney regarding documents for the Monroe Community Library.

After returning from the Executive Session, Mayor Sheets stated in open session that the Council will continue exploring options with Library Director Chavez at the Council work session on the 12th of August. The City will continue to work with Benton County, the City of Corvallis, and the Library System on those options, including the six options Director Chavez already presented to the Council.

7. NEW BUSINESS

7.1. **Resolution 2024-12:** A resolution to transfer funds for the beginning fund balances for the Biennial fiscal period 2024–26.

CA Martinenko explained that the budget process this year required separating funds for streets, stormwater, and public works, which had previously been combined. The resolution aims to transfer the beginning fund balances to the newly separated funds. A motion was made by Councilor Myers to accept resolution 2024-12, which involves transferring funds within the Public Works fund to both street and stormwater funds. The motion was seconded by Councilor Ritch.

Mayor Sheets then asked if there were any additional comments or questions regarding the resolution before proceeding to the vote. Councilor Ritch inquired about how the amounts were determined. CA Martinenko clarified that the amounts were carried forward from the previous year, rounded up to maintain consistent beginning fund balances, and adjusted based on actual spending and additional funds to ensure accuracy. 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.

8. OLD BUSINESS:

8.1. **Speed limit signage update.** Mayor Sheets noted that this issue had also been discussed during the recent law enforcement Town Hall. CA Martinenko provided an update, explaining that Benton County's sign shop is currently manufacturing the 20 mile-per-hour signs. He mentioned that Public Works would soon determine the specific locations for these signs and begin installing the bases. These bases are designed for breakable signs, which have a base installed in the ground with a signpost that can be easily inserted and bolted into place.



Mayor Sheets inquired about the expected completion time for the signs. CA Martinenko responded that Benton County typically takes about three weeks to complete such tasks, depending on their workload. He anticipated that the signs would be installed by the first or second week of August.

7. CITY EVENTS

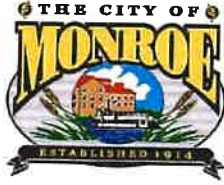
7.1 Mayor Sheets began by discussing the city events calendar and upcoming city events. He mentioned that the Farmers Market takes place every Thursday from now until October 3, behind Silos Coffee from 4 to 7 PM. Councilor Cuthbertson highlighted that the market has only a few vendors and emphasized the need for community support to prevent vendors from leaving. She noted that pop-up opportunities are available for a fee of \$10 per week and that vendors do not need to be growers; makers are welcome too. There is also a co-op booth that allows vendors to try the market up to three times before paying a reduced yearly fee. If someone wants a permanent space, it costs \$75 for the entire season. She stressed that community support is crucial to keep the market going. Councilor Lindner asked if the fee is prorated for those who join mid-season, such as strawberry growers or croissant bakers. Councilor Cuthbertson responded that the organizing team is flexible and open to accommodating new vendors to keep the market vibrant.

Mayor Sheets announced several upcoming events: On September 14, the city will host the Fourth Annual First Responder's Appreciation Event at the city park, with Senator Dick Anderson in attendance. The event will feature music and at least one food truck serving ice cream, and she is working to secure additional food vendors. For Halloween, the city will host the Halloween Spectacular at City Hall. In November and December, the Monroe Community Food Drive will take place. The Alpine Holiday Festival is tentatively scheduled for November 9 at the grade school. The Community Toy Drive, which was very successful last year, will return in December. Last, the Monroe Light Parade is tentatively set for December 14, although this date may change if necessary.

8. OTHER BUSINESS:

8.1. **Committee Reports.** Mayor Sheets stated that the Budget Committee is essentially on hold for now, unless something arises near the year mark that requires further budgeting. The next Economic Development meeting is scheduled for August 15. In terms of Finance and Personnel, a meeting needs to be scheduled to discuss the employee handbook. He also noted that CA Martinenko had already discussed hiring for the Utility Worker I position and mentioned a hold on hiring a Facilities and Grounds Worker until the situation with the library is clearer.

Mayor Sheets then moved to the Ordinance Committee, noting that they recently completed work on short-term rentals but acknowledged that there are always updates needed for ordinances. He mentioned that the next Parks Committee meeting is scheduled for August 7, and sought clarification on timing for the Public Works Committee meeting. Councilor Cuthbertson expressed a preference for scheduling the Public Works meeting sooner rather than later, mentioning that they need to categorize the roads for upcoming work. She noted the Committee discussed the city parking field trip, which involves checking out various parking spaces, including the recently addressed parking situation on Dragon Drive due to new sidewalks. Mayor Sheets concluded by reminding everyone of the upcoming work session on August 12 at 6 PM.



8.1. **Councilor Comments.** Mayor Sheets opened the floor for counselor comments. Councilor Ritch expressed satisfaction with the progress on the short-term rental issue. Councilor Lindner inquired about who was planning to rerun in the upcoming November election. CA Martinenko clarified that this election cycle includes Councilor Winther, Councilor Lindner, Councilor Ritch, and Mayor Sheets as candidates up for re-election.

Councilor Ritch asked if any forms had been received yet. CA Martinenko confirmed only the Mayor's form had been received so far. Councilor Lindner mentioned she had completed her application and just needs to print and sign it.

9. **ADJOURN:** With no further comments or discussion, Mayor Sheets adjourned the meeting at 8:03 PM.

Approved by Council Action on August 26, 2024

Mayor Dan Sheets  Date: 8/26/2024

Attest: 
Steve Martinenko, City Recorder