



MONROE CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

September 23, 2024

6:00 PM

Monroe Community Center

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Sheets called the City Council meeting to order at 6:02 P.M.

2. **ROLL CALL**

Present: Mayor Sheets; Councilors: Cuthbertson, Lindner, Myers, Ritch, Williams

Councilor Winther arrived at 7:57 PM

Staff present: City Administrator Steve Martinenko

3. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mr. Tim Eastridge addressed concerns about the drop structure project. Eastridge questioned the project's completion and funding, expressing worries about the potential financial burden on taxpayers if the project is left unfinished. He also raised environmental concerns, particularly the impact on wildlife and the water levels, suggesting that removing the structure could affect local ecosystems and recreational activities like boating and canoeing. Eastridge reflected on his long-term involvement with the project, noting that while he didn't oppose it, many questions remained unanswered regarding its necessity and environmental impact.

Mr. Aryeh Frankfurter acknowledged the emotional toll the library situation had taken on both the community and city council members. While attributing much of the discord to social media interactions, Frankfurter defended his use of social media and apologized for any unintended consequences but maintained that his actions were justified given the perceived risks to the library's future. Frankfurter expressed regret over the situation and offered constructive criticism for better communication going forward.

4. **STAFF REPORTS**

4.1. **Sheriff's Report.** Sheriff Van Arsdall provided an update on recent law enforcement activities and welcomed any questions from the council. Councilor Lindner inquired about an unusually high number of traffic stops on September 15, asking if there had been a specific event causing the spike. The sheriff attributed the increase to Deputy Sinclair's proactive efforts and the fact that the day coincided with the aftermath of a Beaver football game, which likely contributed to heavier traffic.

Councilor Cuthbertson raised concerns about speeding in certain areas of the city, referencing the deployment of a traffic trailer on the south end of town that revealed vehicles were not adhering to speed limits. The sheriff explained that efforts were being made, noting how vehicles tended to slow down significantly upon seeing a patrol officer. He emphasized that speeding is a widespread problem, both locally and beyond, acknowledging the public's general haste and carelessness on the roads. When asked if these enforcement efforts had reduced speeding, Councilor Cuthbertson expressed skepticism, noting she hadn't seen much improvement.



Sheriff Van Arsdall further discussed the department's proactive measures, including the issuance of more traffic citations, which had significantly increased. He assured the council that more steps would be taken to address speeding, particularly in areas with high pedestrian traffic, like Councilor Cuthbertson's neighborhood, where there are many walkers, children, and animals. Councilor Myers also shared his experience with dangerous driving on 99 South, underscoring the urgency of tackling speeding. Councilor Ritch suggested exploring speed cameras as a potential solution, given changes in laws that may allow for their use. Sheriff Van Arsdall agreed, noting that a speed camera was being implemented near North Albany Middle School, and he would provide updates once it was operational. The sheriff mentioned that the municipal codes had been codified, allowing the department to enforce them more effectively, and he expected this to lead to an increase in citations being handled through the Municipal Court.

The council thanked the sheriff for his efforts and looked forward to seeing him at an upcoming community event.

- 4.2. **Presentation.** Mayor Sheets introduced Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments' Executive Director, Ryan Vogt. Vogt began by acknowledging his last visit as interim Community and Economic Development Director, noting that the position had since been filled by Jacqueline Disney, who was unable to attend due to illness. Vogt mentioned that the annual report for 2023 was included in the council's packet but emphasized that the report's purpose was more about showcasing the organization's work in various areas, including senior services and community programs, rather than focusing solely on data.

Executive Director Vogt highlighted the growth of the Meals on Wheels program in the city, which had increased from zero to 11 consumers the previous year and was now serving 15 people. He expressed a desire to further expand the program through partnership and marketing efforts with City Administrator Steve Martinenko to ensure that all eligible residents are aware of the service. He also mentioned Mark Lapinskas, a veterans' service officer, who has been assisting local veterans with benefits claims. Vogt shared a particularly impactful story where Lapinskas helped a widow secure financial and medical assistance related to her late husband's military service.

Executive Director Vogt then discussed the Council's efforts to support small communities with grant writing, introducing Susan, a new grant writer who had already made significant progress, including submitting applications for transportation and pedestrian projects in the area. He also provided an update on potential administrative alignment between the Council of Governments and the Community Services Consortium, which serves low-income individuals. This collaboration includes shared services, such as human resources and technology, and the recent decision to merge leadership under a single executive director, a role yet to be finalized.

After his presentation, Councilor Lindner thanked Executive Director Vogt for his update, particularly expressing admiration for the expanding Meals on Wheels program and the veterans' support work. Vogt concluded by expressing his ongoing commitment to the city and his enthusiasm for future visits.



- 4.3. **City Administrator's Report.** CA Martinenko updated the council on the progress of the pedestrian bridge grant. The preliminary grant has been submitted and accepted by ODOT, with the official grant application due by February, aiming for a result in June or July. This \$3.2 million project will require the city to contribute \$320,000, which Martinenko suggested could be covered by SDC (System Development Charges) fees, as the project aligns with the city's sewer and water master plans.

Councilor Lindner inquired about the current balance in the SDC bank, to which CA Martinenko responded that it holds \$1 million, and each new development contributes \$20,038 per unit for water and sewer improvements. Martinenko explained that the SDC fees had increased based on updated master plans, noting that construction costs have risen 20-30% over the past few years, which may necessitate a review of the fees.

CA Martinenko then discussed his recent participation in a meeting with the League of Oregon Cities (LOC) regarding the implementation of speed cameras. While these cameras do issue citations effectively, Steve reported that the financial cost for cities can be significant, as seen in Tigard, where the city spent \$600,000 on cameras but netted only \$75,000 after expenses. This raised questions about the cost-effectiveness of such measures.

Councilor Myers asked about simpler speed-monitoring devices, such as flashing speed signs, which Steve acknowledged as a cheaper alternative but noted the complexity and cost involved in more comprehensive systems like speed cameras.

CA Martinenko also updated the council on an ongoing issue with the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) concerning the city's overdue TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) submission. He expressed frustration with the lack of clear communication from the DEQ but emphasized that he intends to resolve the matter in an upcoming meeting with DEQ officials.

In closing his report, CA Martinenko made a personal announcement about his intention to transition into retirement after 47 years of public service. He emphasized that there is no specific timeline for his departure, as he wishes to ensure that ongoing projects, like the water plant and city infrastructure, are in good hands before he leaves. He expressed gratitude for the opportunity to serve Monroe and praised the council for their support and efforts in moving the city forward. The council members, including Councilor Lindner and Councilor Williams, thanked CA Martinenko for his dedication and service, and he assured them that he will continue to work with the city during the transition period to ensure a smooth handover of responsibilities.

5. **CONSENT AGENDA**

- 5.1. CA Martinenko mentioned that an invoice for \$72, a routine quarterly payment for professional security services, had been added to the agenda. This adjustment was made to ensure payment without reprocessing accounts payable.

Councilor Myers made a motion to accept the consent agenda, including the minutes and the bills. Councilor Lindner seconded the motion. With no further questions, Mayor Sheets proceeded to a vote. Councilors Myers, Cuthbertson, Williams, Lindner, and Rich all voted "yes," and the consent agenda was approved.



6. NEW BUSINESS

- 6.1. **Resolution 2024-16:** A Resolution Authorizing an Agreement Between the US Army Corps of Engineers and the City of Monroe for Drop Structure Removal and Ecosystem Restoration Along the Long Tom River in Monroe. **Resolution 2024-17:** A Resolution Authorizing a Memorandum of Understanding Between the Long Tom Watershed Council and the City of Monroe For Drop Structure Removal and Ecosystem Restoration Along The Long Tom River In Monroe.

Mayor Sheets introduced Resolution 2024-16 first. City Administrator (CA) Martinenko provided background on the project, confirming that the document was reviewed by the city attorney. He explained that although the agreement does not fully shield the City of Monroe from potential cost overruns, the Long Tom Watershed Council has agreed to cover these overruns and to handle indemnification and water intake costs. He noted that with this arrangement, the city faces minimized, though not eliminated, risk for this project. CA Martinenko commented that this was likely the most secure agreement possible for a project of this scope.

Councilor Lindner commented that she appreciated the legal review and CA Martinenko confirmed that he was comfortable with the attorney's assessment. He clarified that this approval would advance the project to the design phase. In the upcoming design year, tasks such as bridge scour engineering and habitat restoration would be carried out to meet state requirements, followed by a review phase to evaluate the project's feasibility before construction begins. He highlighted that should funding become uncertain, adjustments could be made to prioritize critical components, such as the removal of the drop structure.

Councilor Lindner made a motion to adopt Resolution 2024-16, with Councilor Rich proposing to review the associated MOU (Resolution 2024-17) with the Long Tom Watershed Council, which secures funding. After a brief procedural discussion, Councilor Lindner rescinded the motion on Resolution 2024-16 to allow for simultaneous consideration of both resolutions.

Mayor Sheets then introduced Resolution 2024-17 after discussion suggesting the council review it prior to final approval. Councilor Lindner expressed support for the resolution's general concept but wanted to verify the language. City Administrator (CA) Martinenko explained that a revision on the resolution's back page had been shared with the Long Tom Watershed Council, who indicated no issues but would need until the following day to sign. Mayor Sheets asked Jed Kaul to confirm that the Watershed Council was agreeable to the new wording, which Kaul affirmed.

Councilor Lindner then asked if it would be necessary to specify the updated language in the vote, to which CA Martinenko clarified the resolution would be adopted with the amended Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Lindner made a motion to adopt Resolution 2024-16 first, with Martinenko confirming the council would return to discuss 2024-16 due to procedural sequencing.



Councilor Cuthbertson raised a concern regarding financial liabilities associated with potential project withdrawal, noting that costs might increase over time, particularly if the city backed out after the design phase, potentially triggering repayment obligations to the Long Tom Watershed Council or funders. Lindner asked if further clarification from the Watershed Council could be sought.

Jed Kaul reviewed MOU specifics, explaining that the city would need to repay \$50,000 provided for water intake issues if it exited the agreement. He clarified that if funds from grant disbursements were already spent by the Army Corps on behalf of the city, the city would be responsible for reimbursement should the project end prematurely. Martinenko further elaborated, noting that repayment would hinge on design phase costs, where exceeding government contributions might obligate the city to cover additional expenses, subject to the funder's requirements.

Jed Kaul then outlined the funding for the project, noting that the primary grant support comes from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, with approximately \$710,000 already secured for the water intake and \$740,000 for the Army Corps project cost share. Kaul reassured the council that if the design phase reveals major issues or cost spikes, LTWC would advocate for additional funds and engage grantors in mitigating any unforeseen project setbacks. Kaul further emphasized LTWC's limited resources, explaining that the cost-share portion for design and construction is a significant financial commitment, and the organization has already committed operations and maintenance funds, which is unprecedented for them.

Councilor Lindner agreed with the language in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), stating that the terms ensure LTWC is not unfairly burdened if the project is unexpectedly halted. Councilor Myers voiced concerns over potential turnover in council members leading to project discontinuation and emphasized that the \$50,000 investment, while substantial, is not excessive for such a critical project. Councilor Cuthbertson expressed unease about the project's financial risk and its potential impact on the town's water supply and financial stability, given that LTWC's own admission of being a small organization seeking significant grant support introduced inherent uncertainties.

Councilor Williams noted the need to mitigate risks to an acceptable level, acknowledging that while the project involves risks, and proper oversight, project checkpoints would help in monitoring progress. John Greydanus, addressed the project's six-year timeline, asserting that ample time had been devoted to ensuring compliance and examining similar projects, particularly those in Iowa, which demonstrated successful outcomes following dam removals. He emphasized the positive economic and environmental impacts observed in other towns that had undertaken comparable projects.

CA Martinenko, clarified that the MOU and Army Corps of Engineers agreements contain provisions allowing project postponement if costs exceed original estimates. He reiterated that LTWC would cover cost overruns, provided they are not due to city actions, thereby further protecting the city's financial commitment. Martinenko concluded by stating that although inherent risks exist, the agreements mitigate those risks to the maximum extent possible, according to the city's attorney.



Mayor Sheets and Councilor Lindner expressed general support, concurring that while absolute elimination of risk is impossible, the comprehensive terms outlined in the MOU and city agreements offer solid risk management for the project's progression.

Mayor Sheets then revisited Resolution 2024-16, confirming that Councilor Lindner had made the initial motion and calling for a second, which was promptly provided. Before proceeding to the vote, Councilor Lindner expressed gratitude to Councilor Ritch for emphasizing the importance of reviewing both the MOU and the resolution together, as they are closely connected. Councilor Ritch affirmed this, noting that the MOU is essential for moving forward and provides necessary recourse.

As the vote commenced, Mayor Sheets called on each councilor in turn: Councilor Ritch, Councilor Myers, Councilor Cuthbertson, Councilor Williams, and Councilor Lindner each voted in favor, allowing the motion to pass unanimously.

Moving on to Resolution 2024-17, Mayor Sheets asked for any additional comments or questions before opening the floor for a motion. Councilor Lindner made a motion to adopt the resolution with an amendment specifically noted in Section 8.2, as clarified by Steve Martinenko. Councilor Myers seconded the motion. With no further discussion, a vote was taken, with Councilors Lindner, Williams, Cuthbertson, Myers, and Ritch all voting in favor, thus adopting the amended resolution.

- 6.2. **Ordinance 2024-04:** An Ordinance establishing an 8% lodging tax. CA Martinenko explained the ordinance's purpose, noting that it would require a public hearing as is mandatory for any tax increase. The proposed lodging tax of 8% would apply to all short-term rentals, hotels, and motels operating in Monroe, with a second reading and additional public announcements forthcoming.

Martinenko provided details from the ordinance, highlighting that it is based on a model code from the League of Oregon Cities and adheres to current Oregon statutes. He pointed out that Monroe's proposed tax rate of 8% aligns with similar rates in nearby cities, ensuring regional consistency. Additionally, he clarified that 70% of the collected funds would legally be allocated to tourism-related activities and facilities, while the remaining 30% could be used for the city's general needs. Councilor Cuthbertson confirmed that funds allocated to tourism would be placed in a dedicated fund for transparency, with Martinenko affirming this measure's importance.

In response to questions about the tax's scope, Martinenko clarified that the 8% applies only to the rental rate, excluding additional charges like cleaning or pet fees. He further noted that operators could deduct 5% of the tax collected for administrative costs, as permitted by state law. With no final decision required at this stage, Councilor Myers moved to advance Ordinance 2024-04 to a second reading, which was seconded. The council then conducted a roll-call vote, with Councilors Ritch, Myers, Cuthbertson, Williams, and Lindner all voting in favor, moving the ordinance forward to the next stage of review.

- 6.3. **Ad Hoc Library Negotiations Advisory Committee.** Mayor Sheets announced the establishment of the ad hoc Library Negotiations Advisory Committee, to which he appointed Councilors



Cuthbertson and Lindner, both of whom have accepted their appointments. Additionally, Mayor Sheets invited Roger Irvin, representing the South Benton Community Enhancement Association, to participate. He also extended an invitation to the Benton County Commissioners, who are set to meet and discuss the appointment on Wednesday, with plans to confirm if a commissioner will be joining the committee.

- 6.4. **Proclamations.** Mayor Sheets presented two proclamations to honor and recognize First Responders and the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). The first proclamation declared October 2024 as First Responders Appreciation Month in Monroe, which includes National First Responders Day on October 28. In this proclamation, Mayor Sheets acknowledged the dedication and sacrifice of first responders—911 dispatchers, law enforcement, firefighters, emergency medical personnel, military service members, and other emergency professionals—who protect the community at great personal risk. The proclamation highlighted the rigorous training and commitment first responders undergo to be prepared for emergencies 24/7, and encouraged residents to show appreciation for these essential workers throughout October.

The second proclamation designated September 29, 2024, as VFW Day in Monroe, in recognition of the VFW's 125th anniversary. Founded in 1899, the VFW was established to advocate for veterans returning from overseas campaigns and has since played a crucial role in securing veterans' benefits, establishing the Veterans Administration, and supporting national veterans' memorials. Mayor Sheets praised the VFW's ongoing efforts to support veterans and advocate for veterans' legislation, with special acknowledgment for VFW Post 3957 in Monroe. The proclamation called on Monroe residents to recognize the valuable contributions of veterans within the community and honor their service in observance of VFW Day.

10. OLD BUSINESS

10.1. Planning Updates

Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) update. CA Martinenko provided an update, explaining that the UGB process remains lengthy but is progressing. He shared that Monroe may qualify for an expedited review option under Oregon state guidelines, which applies to cities with populations under 5,000. He has consulted with the Council of Governments and is evaluating how well the city's current comprehensive plan aligns with the proposed changes, as some updates to the plan are anticipated in 2025. These updates will address Monroe's recent population growth, which has exceeded previous projections, potentially impacting the land inventory needed to support an additional 100 homes within five years. He is working on aligning the UGB proposal with this expedited process and expects to have further clarification following a forthcoming meeting with Council of Governments representatives. Councilor Williams asked if the land exchange referred to was the area west of Red Hills. Steve confirmed this, clarifying that it includes a land area previously proposed for development but not the land farther south. He noted that any new development must address stormwater and drainage concerns, especially to prevent water flow into the Red Hills neighborhood. Steve outlined that current standards require effective water collection and diversion infrastructure, as discussed in a recent Planning Commission meeting.

Zoning. CA Martinenko informed the council of an upcoming November Planning Commission meeting where zoning recommendations will be finalized. This includes proposals to rezone



several parcels in Monroe to better align with development goals. For example, the area east of Red Hills would be zoned GRB (General Residential B) to allow more flexible development that considers existing wetlands, and the downtown commercial area would be adjusted to replace GRB zones with commercial zones. Additionally, a parcel currently classified as light industrial north of the library, where a park is planned, would be rezoned as public land to allow recreational uses such as a farmer's market, playgrounds, or additional park facilities.

Development. CA Martinenko described progress in discussions with developers interested in the property between Mill and Oak Streets, known as the Loving property. Developers are beginning to conduct feasibility studies and explore utilities, indicating a serious interest in the land. The area closest to the road is expected to remain commercial, while the light industrial zone behind it may be subject to rezoning requests from developers. He noted that discussions with Randy Myers of Brownstone Development and Pacific Northwest Development are ongoing, as they assess the costs and requirements for the area.

11. CITY EVENTS

- 11.1. Mayor Sheets outlined upcoming city events, confirming the farmers market would run until October 3. He announced a Halloween Spooktacular scheduled for October 31 at City Hall, along with a Monroe Community Food Drive from November 1 through December 31. Additionally, he mentioned the Alpine Holiday Festival on November 9 at the grade school and the Monroe Community Toy Drive from December 2 to December 16, with further details forthcoming. The light parade was set for December 14, and he invited any additional event information to be sent to him for posting on social media.

12. OTHER BUSINESS

- 12.1. **Committee Reports.** Councilor Myers inquired about updating the finance and personnel meeting schedule, which Mayor Sheets confirmed, noting that the budget discussions are currently on hold. He listed upcoming committee meetings: The Economic Development meeting on October 10, Finance and Personnel on the following night at six o'clock, and the rescheduled Public Works meeting on October 2. Jeannie Cuthbertson added that Parks has been on hold due to ongoing collaborations with the library and other necessary preparations.
- 12.2. **Councilor Comments.** Councilor Lindner responded to earlier comments by Aryeh Frankfurter regarding community relations. She acknowledged the importance of improving public relations and noted the increase in social media posts, particularly on Facebook, which seems to resonate with the community. Although Mr. Frankfurter had already left the meeting, she expressed her willingness to communicate her thoughts to him later. Lindner shared her perception that Aryeh's apology felt somewhat insincere, indicating that while he recognized the consequences of his earlier social media posts regarding the library, she felt he did not fully own the impact of his comments.

Councilor Cuthbertson supported Lindner's perspective, explaining the complexities of being a council member. She emphasized that councilors must operate as a unified body and avoid acting individually or participating in one-on-one discussions that could lead to



misunderstandings. Cuthbertson likened the situation to personal conflicts, where involving third parties can complicate resolutions.

Councilor Lindner agreed, stating that while it is appropriate to meet with constituents, it is also easy for councilors to overstep their roles. She expressed regret for having expressed her personal opinions, which may have misrepresented the council's collective stance. She described feeling uncomfortable in such situations, citing social media's evolution as a platform that has become less enjoyable for her, particularly in light of local dynamics.

Councilor Cuthbertson reiterated that there was never an intention to exclude anyone from the community, highlighting the challenges of being a Councilor in a small town where personal relationships complicate governance. CA Martinenko commented that council rules dictate a unified voice, with the mayor serving as the spokesperson. He reiterated the importance of communicating as a cohesive unit, even when opinions differ.

Councilor Myers added to the discussion by acknowledging that councilors sometimes face the dilemma of conveying majority opinions even when they disagree personally. Mayor Sheets emphasized the need for collaboration during press inquiries, ensuring a consistent message is delivered. Lindner confirmed her practice of clarifying her personal views during individual meetings, recognizing the potential for misinterpretation.

13. **ADJOURNMENT.** With no further comments, Mayor Sheets adjourned the meeting at 8:15 PM.

Approved by Council Action on October 28, 2024

Mayor Dan Sheets  Date: 10/28/2024

Attest: 
Steve Martinenko, City Recorder