



MONROE CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

October 28, 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, Ritch, Myers, Williams

Absent: Councilor Winther

Staff present: City Administrator Steve Martinenko

3. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

4. **STAFF REPORTS**

4.1. **Sheriff's Report.** Mayor Sheets welcomed Deputy Greg Savage. Councilor Ritch expressed concern about a reported incident of a driver being caught speeding at 74 mph in a 45-mph zone. Deputy Savage acknowledged the concern and noted that the sheriff's office was actively addressing speed-related issues. He mentioned specific complaints about speeding over the bridge into town and in neighborhoods such as Fifth Street and Orchard. Savage confirmed that patrol deputies had been informed to focus on these areas.

The discussion turned to community Halloween events, with Deputy Savage confirming that a sheriff's presence was planned for activities such as the "Trunk or Treat" event. He added that reserves might also participate, offering increased visibility and engagement during the festivities.

Councilors raised questions about traffic calming measures, noting the effectiveness of the temporary speed trailer that had been used in town. Deputy Savage explained that the trailer was in high demand countywide and suggested that permanent speed-monitoring signs could be a potential solution. He offered to follow up with the city and the Department of Transportation to explore options for installing such devices. Councilor Myers referenced an existing speed sign on South Third Street in Corvallis as an example and expressed support for a permanent solution to encourage safer driving.

Deputy Savage shared his observations from patrolling Monroe, mentioning that his visible presence often prompted drivers to slow down. He emphasized the importance of continued collaboration between the city and county to address traffic concerns effectively. Savage concluded by reiterating that the sheriff's office would have a presence at local events and expressed his intention to attend the next council meeting to provide updates.

Mayor Sheets thanked Deputy Savage for attending and the sheriff's office's ongoing efforts to support the city's safety and community needs.



4.2. Republic Services Presentation. Mr. Ken Larson of Republic Services provided a comprehensive update to the City Council regarding upcoming rate adjustments and recycling developments. Larson explained that the annual rate adjustment, set at 3.2%, reflects changes in CPI and disposal costs. This increase translates to a monthly rise of \$0.75 to \$1.16 depending on cart size, effective January 1. Notices regarding this adjustment will be included in customers' billing statements, either electronically or by mail. In response to Councilor Lisa Lindner's inquiry, Larson confirmed that while notices are part of the billing process, account information may also reflect the updated rates for online users.

Mr. Larson also reviewed the transition to weekly recycling and yard debris collection. He noted that the process has been smooth, with expected community utilization. Councilor Lindner asked if customers had begun downsizing trash services due to increased recycling frequency. Larson explained that such changes typically take a year or two to materialize as customers adjust to their new waste habits, but he agreed to provide follow-up data on this trend.

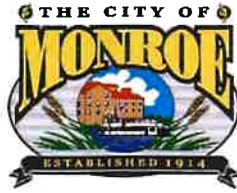
The discussion transitioned to the Recycling Modernization Act, set to be implemented in July 2025. Mr. Larson outlined its goals, including creating a unified recycling list statewide, introducing shared responsibility for packaging manufacturers, and ensuring transparent recycling practices to prevent waste from ending up in irresponsible markets. He emphasized Republic Services' commitment to proper recycling, mentioning their investment in a plastics recycling facility in Las Vegas and partnerships with companies like Coca-Cola.

Regarding glass recycling, Mr. Larson noted that while glass is highly recyclable, including it in curbside recycling is inefficient due to breakage during transportation. He highlighted the importance of glass drop-off depots and mentioned ongoing efforts to expand depot access, including potential sites in southern Benton County. Council members suggested possible partnerships with local businesses or cooperatives to facilitate glass collection. Mr. Larson encouraged continued dialogue with Benton County officials, particularly regarding sustainability efforts and depot placements.

Councilor Lindner raised concerns about recycling holiday materials such as gift wrap and foil-coated bags, which Mr. Larson confirmed are often non-recyclable. He assured the Council that educational materials, including winter newsletters and recycling guides, will address proper disposal methods and be distributed to customers via mail and email.

Mr. Larson concluded by acknowledging the educational value of past community events on recycling and expressed his commitment to continued outreach as the Recycling Modernization Act approaches implementation. Council members thanked Mr. Larson for his updates and ongoing efforts to improve recycling services.

4.3. City Administrator's Report. City Administrator Martinenko updated the council on new hires and various city matters. He announced the hiring of Misty Bisby as an Administrative Assistant and Charles "Chuck" Cross as a Utility I worker. CA Martinenko detailed the interview process, which included initial rounds led by Mayor Sheets and councilors, followed by technical interviews that led



to the final selections. Misty, with 18 years of teaching experience and strong organizational skills, will first focus on front desk clerk duties, learning tasks such as processing invoices and utility bills. Over time, she will take on more analytical and finance-related responsibilities, providing flexibility and redundancy in administrative functions. Chuck, meanwhile, will work closely with the Public Works team under Mark's guidance, focusing on water distribution tasks such as reading meters, operating the water plant, and performing maintenance requiring two-person safety protocols. Martinenko emphasized the importance of public works as the city's backbone and expressed confidence in both hires, noting they reside locally and are enthusiastic about contributing to the city. Both will start immediately.

Councilor Lindner commended the successful recruitment process, praising the quality of candidates. Martinenko acknowledged that while some applicants dropped out, the overall pool was strong, making the final selections challenging but rewarding. Councilor Myers remarked on the value of having such high-quality candidates.

CA Martinenko transitioned to discussing ongoing matters, including a request from the Sheriff's Department regarding penalty enforcement, which ties into the city's fee schedule. He proposed convening the Ordinance Committee to finalize penalty structures, potentially amending the master fee schedule in an upcoming work session. Councilor Myers suggested scheduling the session soon, given the upcoming holiday conflicts.

Next, CA Martinenko addressed an incident involving the park host's car, which was damaged by a falling tree limb for the second time. While insurance covered the damage, Martinenko proposed relocating the parking area away from tree canopies to prevent future issues. He reassured the council that the trees had been inspected and deemed sound but acknowledged that falling branches are a natural occurrence with oak trees.

CA Martinenko also outlined upcoming projects, including fire hydrant flushing. He noted that Chuck Scholz, the Public Works Director for Harrisburg, would lend staff to assist and explained the process of isolating water grids to efficiently clean the system while conserving water. Notices about the flushing had already been distributed.

Lastly, CA Martinenko briefed the council on a recent communication from the Corvallis Gazette-Times regarding a potential DEQ penalty related to compliance issues. He explained the timeline of events, including the city's efforts to request assistance from DEQ and submit required documents. Martinenko expressed frustration at the irregularities, such as the lack of response to the city's certified letter and the misdirection of official correspondence to a councilor instead of the mayor. He assured the council that the city's submissions were complete and that he would continue to monitor and address the situation if further action from the state arises.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

- 5.1. City Administrator Martinenko commented on the complexity of finalizing the minutes from the previous meeting, particularly regarding two resolutions that were discussed together. Councilor Lindner and Councilor Myers expressed their appreciation for the detailed and clear



documentation. Councilor Lindner expressed appreciation that her sentiments were accurately reflected in the minutes.

Councilor Ritch then motioned to approve the consent agenda. Councilor Myers seconded. With no further comments or questions, Mayor Sheets called for a vote. Councilor Lindner: Yes; Williams: Yes; Cuthbertson: Yes; Ritch: Yes; Myers: Yes. Motion carried.

6. NEW BUSINESS

6.1. **Resolution 2024-18:** A resolution supporting a state of Oregon seismic rehabilitation grant for the Monroe Rural Fire Protection District

City Administrator Martinenko explained that the resolution was requested by Fire Chief Barnes to support a state grant application for the seismic retrofitting of the Monroe Rural Fire Station. Martinenko clarified that the resolution would not impose any financial obligations on the City, serving solely as a statement of support.

Mayor Sheets emphasized the importance of supporting the local fire department, while Councilor Myers noted it was unfortunate the City Hall wasn't eligible for the same type of grant. CA Martinenko explained that the grant was specific to first responder facilities.

Councilor Ritch then moved to approve Resolution 2024-18, formally supporting the grant application. Councilor Lindner seconded the motion. CA Martinenko shared that he had mentioned City Hall's seismic vulnerabilities in the letter supporting the fire department's application, ensuring the City's needs were also noted.

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

6.2. **Ordinance 2024-04:** An ordinance establishing an 8% transient lodging tax. City Administrator Martinenko noted that the ordinance remained unchanged from its initial reading in the previous month. Councilor Lindner sought clarification on the ordinance's location in the meeting packet, with Councilor Myers pointing out it was positioned before the resolution just discussed.

Martinenko confirmed that the ordinance was ready for approval following this second reading. He clarified that the council also had the option to table the ordinance for further review if desired. Councilor Lindner asked whether the proposed 8% tax aligned with regional standards, to which Steve responded affirmatively, explaining that 8% is the common rate among cities in the area, such as Junction City and Harrisburg. He also noted that larger cities like Corvallis may charge slightly higher rates, such as 9%, but regional consistency helps cities remain competitive and marketable.

Councilor Myers moved to approve Ordinance 2024-04, formally implementing the 8% lodging tax. Councilor Lindner seconded. Councilor Rich raised a question regarding associated licensing fees for short-term rentals, such as Airbnb's, which had been discussed previously. Martinenko clarified that while the ordinance establishes the tax, the specific dollar amount for licensing fees was not included in the ordinance text and would need to be added to the Master Fee Schedule at the next



council meeting. This was noted as the last remaining detail for implementation, allowing individuals to proceed with obtaining necessary permits.

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

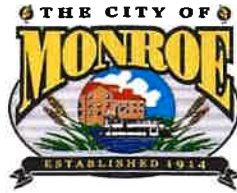
6.3. Ad Hoc Library Negotiations Advisory Committee. Councilor Lindner expressed enthusiasm about the progress made, noting that the city has partnered with the South Benton Community Alliance (SBCA) and held two productive meetings so far. She explained that the current Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between the City of Monroe and the City of Corvallis is planned to expire on December 31 of this year. Effective January 1, a new IGA will be drafted by the SBCA to establish a partnership directly between the SBCA and Corvallis. The existing agreement between Monroe and Corvallis will no longer be in effect, and the library building will be transferred to the SBCA.

Councilor Lindner shared that during the transition period, Monroe will continue to provide custodial services for the library, likely until the end of June, aligning with the fiscal year. Councilor Lindner also noted that legal counsel advised the city that the library building cannot be used, even temporarily, for non-library purposes, such as housing city hall operations during the transition.

6.4. Budget Review of Library & City Hall Funding Options. City Administrator Martinenko reported on costs associated with a new city hall building and balancing that with the city's support of the library through mid-2025. Martinenko explained that he had contacted a modular building company based in Eugene, which specializes in temporary and permanent modular structures, including city halls. The company has inventory in Northern California and Portland, which can be customized to suit the city's needs. Martinenko outlined potential financing options, including leasing through government-approved contracts (GSA) and exploring other rural government loan programs. He emphasized that using modular buildings could provide a cost-effective solution while maintaining high construction standards.

Councilor Lindner inquired about government discounts for modular structures, to which Steve clarified that pricing is regulated by the state's approved purchasing schedules. Councilor Myers confirmed that negotiating discounts is not feasible under GSA contracts. Councilor Lindner asked about the aesthetic quality of the modular buildings, and CA Martinenko assured her that they could be customized to look modern and professional, even incorporating design elements that reflect the city's timber heritage.

CA Martinenko outlined the logistical considerations for site preparation, noting the importance of deciding whether the modular structure would serve as a temporary or permanent solution. He also highlighted the potential use of existing building reserves, approximately \$32,000, to help cover preparation costs. The council discussed the possibility of seeking voter approval for a bond to finance a permanent city hall in the future. Martinenko provided a timeline for obtaining modular buildings, ranging from three days for existing units to three months for custom-built structures.



The conversation shifted to library janitorial costs during the transition period. CA Martinenko estimated that providing custodial services from January 1 to June 30 would cost approximately \$20,000. The council discussed funding options, including temporarily increasing utility fees, though Martinenko cautioned that such measures must comply with tax regulations to avoid inadvertently creating a property tax.

CA Martinenko stated he was actively working with the modular building company and anticipated having detailed pricing and financing options ready for review at the next work session. Councilor Lindner noted the next Library Ad Hoc Committee meeting was scheduled for November 18, and Martinenko confirmed that the modular building information would be prepared by then to inform further discussions.

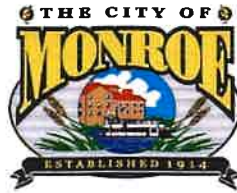
6.5. Monroe Toddler Park Signage & Security. CA Martinenko explained that the park is heavily utilized by children of all ages, including teenagers and preteens, which raises concerns about potential misuse and damage to equipment not designed for older users. He proposed measures such as implementing age limits (e.g., under 12 with a parent) or installing a magnetic gate lock, though he acknowledged prior resistance to such measures, particularly from the Hispanic community, due to concerns about accessibility and fear of interacting with government offices. He emphasized that the misuse mostly involves a small group of local teenagers.

Councilor Cuthbertson suggested that if the individuals causing damage are identifiable, penalties or consequences could deter further incidents. Councilor Myers agreed, emphasizing the importance of accountability and proposed adding signage to outline weight limits for park equipment. He noted that misuse, such as twisting swings or using equipment in unintended ways, could lead to damage. Councilor Lindner inquired if existing signage addresses responsible usage and damage liability, while also considering language barriers.

The conversation turned toward surveillance, with Martinenko and Councilor Myers discussing the limitations of current cameras, which lack sufficient resolution to clearly identify individuals. The idea of upgrading to higher-resolution cameras and improving angles was raised, though it was noted that enforcement and monitoring would still be challenging.

In addition to security concerns, Martinenko and Councilor Myers discussed ordinances and park rules. CA Martinenko clarified that current ordinances only cover city park hours, which are from 10 PM to 6 AM, but they could consider extending rules specifically for the toddler park, such as timed locks or motion-triggered alarms. He also acknowledged prior discussions about updating these measures and committed to reviewing past proposals to bring them back for further consideration. Cuthbertson and others highlighted the need for accountability mechanisms, such as citations or community service, to help teach young individuals the consequences of their actions without resorting to harsh penalties.

Addressing vandalism and graffiti, it was confirmed that existing ordinances can handle such issues as criminal investigations, though actions taken depend on the individuals involved (e.g., juveniles versus adults). CA Martinenko noted past incidents, including graffiti and vandalism, and plans to resurface park benches as part of ongoing maintenance.



The discussion concluded with agreement to revisit these issues in a future work session to explore practical solutions, including updated signage, security upgrades, and enforcement strategies, before the park's busy season returns in spring.

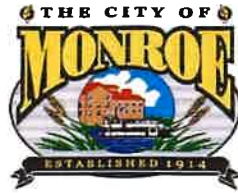
6.6. Proclamation – Veteran’s Day. Mayor Sheets highlighted the significance of Veterans Day, observed annually on November 11, as a day to honor those who have served in the United States military. The proclamation also acknowledged the challenges many veterans face, including unemployment, poverty, disabilities, and homelessness. Mayor Sheets emphasized the vital role of the Benton County Veterans Service Office (VSO) in assisting veterans and their families with claims for Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits, health care, and survivor benefits. Staffed by the Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments and accredited by the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs, the VSO provides critical support to the veteran community. Additionally, resources such as the Veterans Crisis Center are available 24/7 for veterans and their families, offering services via phone, text, or online. In conclusion, Mayor Sheets expressed profound respect and gratitude for the sacrifices made by veterans to defend the freedoms of Americans, Oregonians, Benton County residents, and citizens of Monroe. On behalf of the City Council, he formally proclaimed November 11, 2024, as Veterans Day in the City of Monroe, Oregon, and called on all residents to honor and support those who have served in the military.

6.7. Proclamation – Monroe Community Food Drive. Mayor Sheets highlighted the mission of the South Benton Food Pantry, a local nonprofit focused on reducing food insecurity and hunger for individuals in the Monroe 1J School District and South Benton County. Mayor Sheets shared positive news about the Monroe School District for the 2024-2025 school year, noting that all 360 students in the district are eligible for free breakfast and lunch each school day, providing financial relief for families with tight food budgets. In response to these challenges, the City of Monroe has partnered with the South Benton Food Pantry to collect non-perishable food and toiletries. Donations can be made at City Hall or any local business with a food drive flyer and designated drop-off container. Finally, Mayor Sheets proclaimed November and December 2024 as the Monroe Community Food Drive months, encouraging residents of South Benton County to contribute in order to combat hunger and food insecurity in the community.

7. OLD BUSINESS

7.1. Pedestrian River Bridge Update. CA Martinenko reported that he is currently working on the application for the project, awaiting final cost estimates from Dowel Engineering, who conducted the initial report. He shared that the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) had shown significant interest in the project, raising questions about the high costs associated with bridge construction compared to other projects. Martinenko indicated that the application is due in January.

7.2. 1135 Project/Dam Removal Grant Update. CA Martinenko explained that three certificates need to be signed. He has already signed two, but the third requires an attorney’s signature, pending a minor correction—a comma insertion. The attorney’s document certifies that the city has completed necessary steps for the project.



7.3. Property Development & Planning Updates. CA Martinenko shared that he is working with Mr. Brian Oakes on a five-lot partition that will need to be presented to the council for approval. He also reported progress on the Pacific National Development project, which involves the construction of 26 homes between 8th and Ash. He is ensuring that all utility arrangements are in place and that there are no implicit agreements outside of the original plans. Martinenko also mentioned that he has received permission to proceed with applying for an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) exception for a new 15-acre area, although further land use hearings are required.

Councilor Cuthbertson raised concerns from residents about surveying on the northeast side of the highway. Martinenko clarified that the surveying is related to ODOT work, including repairing sunken sewer holes and widening the shoulders to address safety issues after a car went off the road earlier in the summer. He explained that contractors typically avoid engaging with the public directly, which may have caused confusion. Cuthbertson expressed gratitude for the clarification.

Further planning updates included discussions about a potential gas station being developed between 6th Street and another location. The council members expressed interest in seeing more retail options in town, including ice cream shops, and Martinenko mentioned that there had been public requests for such businesses.

Finally, Councilor Myers asked about the progress on Depot Street becoming a public road, which has been maintained privately and recently made an access easement.

CITY EVENTS

8.1. Mayor Sheets began by highlighting upcoming city events, such as the Halloween spectacular on Thursday, inviting everyone to attend and enjoy candy at City Hall from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. He also noted an event on November 2, a grief and holiday seminar hosted by Stan and Lori Thomas at the Monroe Christian Church, which he encouraged the community to attend. Additionally, the Mayor mentioned the Monroe Community Food Drive, set for November and December, as well as the Alpine Holiday Festival on November 9 and the toy drive in early December, with partnerships from local businesses like Dollar General. Finally, the Mayor reminded the Council about the upcoming light parade on December 14.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

9.1. **Committee Reports.** Mayor Sheets indicated that the budget committee was on hold until the new year, with future discussions expected after decisions are made regarding the library. CA Martinenko mentioned that the finance and personnel committee was also awaiting final decisions on the employee handbook and staff job descriptions. Parks and public works committees were postponed due to staff availability.

9.2. **Councilors' Comments.** Councilor Lindner shared her experience visiting an open house of a historic craftsman home in town, advocating for its preservation. She noted that it was built for a former Monroe mayor and had only had three owners. CA Martinenko elaborated on the woodwork



inside, which was done by the same carpenter who worked on the Wilhelm house. The possibility of getting the house onto a historic register was discussed, though it was unlikely.

10. **ADJOURNMENT.** With no further comments, Mayor Sheets adjourned the meeting at 7:55 PM.

Approved by Council Action on November 25, 2024

Mayor Dan Sheets *Daniel Sheets* Date: 11/25/24

Attest: *SM*
Steve Martinenko, City Recorder