



MONROE CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

January 27, 2025

6:00 PM

Monroe Community Center

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Sheets called the City Council meeting to order at 6:02 P.M.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Sheets; Councilors: Cuthbertson, Lindner, Williams, Winther

Absent: None

Staff present: City Administrator Steve Martinenko

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

2.1. None.

3. STAFF REPORTS

3.1. **Sheriff's Report.** Sheriff Van Arsdall reminded the council of upcoming legislative events, including a Legislative Breakfast and a town hall meeting with Senator Merkley and Representative Hoyle. The sheriff then reviewed the patrol log with Council and noted an increase in burglaries but highlighted a recent arrest of an individual involved in multiple burglaries. Councilor Cuthbertson shared a concerning personal experience involving a trespasser in her vehicle, emphasizing the distress caused by slow response times. Sheriff Van Arsdall acknowledged the limitations in law enforcement staffing and reiterated efforts to address concerns despite resource constraints. He assured the council that his department was making every effort to improve response times.

3.2. **City Administrator's Report.** City Administrator Steve Martinenko addressed the council with a comprehensive update on the city's ongoing projects, staffing developments, and strategic initiatives. He began by introducing the city's newest employee, Gabriela Gonzales, who has quickly adapted to her role at City Hall. Martinenko discussed progress in Public Works, highlighting the advancements made by Chuck Cross, the city's recently hired Utility Worker I. Cross has now received the necessary approvals to independently operate the city's water plant, marking a key milestone in staff development. Moving forward, CA Martinenko will transition away from direct public works responsibilities, assuming a purely administrative and oversight role. This shift is intended to empower public works staff, ensuring they develop the necessary competencies to manage operations autonomously. Additionally, Mark Murray, Public Works Lead, is preparing for his final certification test in waste collections, which would qualify him as the Designated Responsible Charge



(DRC) for wastewater operations. Martinenko noted that this certification brings increased responsibility, as the DRC assumes full accountability for wastewater management decisions in the eyes of the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

CA Martinenko discussed economic development & planning updates including a 23-Unit Housing Development between Oak and Mill Streets and ongoing development discussions concerning Kelly Street, Ash Street, and properties owned by North Santiam Paving near Red Hills. Each of these projects presents opportunities for the city's continued residential growth. In addition, the property next to the brewery, previously a gravel lot, is under consideration for a coffee shop and possible short-term rentals. Discussions have resumed regarding the 555 Depot Street property, which has generated interest from a potential investor who envisions a maker space for artists. This concept aligns closely with the city's economic development goals, which prioritize agritourism and small-scale artisan industries.

The city is exploring an expedited UGB expansion of up to 50 acres. Initial discussions are underway to determine whether any amendments to the city's comprehensive plan will be required to facilitate the process. The Brickyard Property: Property owner Kevin O'Meara has reached out to the city, and Martinenko plans to meet with him to discuss future development opportunities.

CA Martinenko reported that the South Benton Community Enhancement Association (SBCEA) has officially voted to proceed with the transfer of the city library. The city had previously agreed to cover utilities and maintenance costs through June 30, 2025, after which the SBCEA will assume full financial responsibility. To ensure smooth operations, the city is finalizing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the SPCA, allowing the organization to contract city staff for maintenance and janitorial services if needed. However, Martinenko emphasized that these arrangements will be on an as-needed basis and will not impose additional obligations on city staff.

In light of recent emergencies and heightened concerns about natural disasters, CA Martinenko has been focusing on strengthening the city's Emergency and Disaster Recovery Plan. His recommendations emphasized the importance of a crisis communications plan, which would outline clear procedures for disseminating information to the public in emergency situations. The city has already taken proactive steps by securing first responder network phones through Verizon, ensuring that key personnel can maintain communication during disasters. These devices are part of a priority network that remains operational even when standard communication services are disrupted. CA Martinenko noted that Monroe is susceptible to natural disasters, including wildfires and seismic events. In a worst-case scenario, he cautioned that the city could experience complete infrastructure failure, including loss of water, electricity,



and sewer services. Therefore, the city is preparing public information campaigns to educate residents on emergency preparedness measures, such as maintaining a three-day supply of water and other essential resources. He also raised concerns about the city's vulnerability to fast-moving fires, similar to the Lahaina, Maui wildfire disaster. A major fire driven by east winds could pose an existential threat to Monroe, reinforcing the need for advanced planning and rapid response protocols.

Last, CA Martinenko stated the city has implemented improved financial tracking in response to auditor recommendations, ensuring that state and federal funds remain fully segregated for transparency and compliance. Staff are finalizing preparations for the annual municipal audit, which is expected to proceed smoothly due to these enhanced financial reporting practices.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

4.1. The council reviewed the consent agenda, which encompassed routine items such as meeting minutes, financial reports, and accounts payable. CA Martinenko mentioned the lien that was approved at the last Council session for 980 Commercial Street was settled for \$7,032.60; \$6,032.60 for attorney fees and staff costs plus \$1,000 for the fine. After a general discussion regarding fines, Councilor Myers moved to accept the consent agenda as presented. Councilor Williams seconded. With no further discussion, Mayor Sheets called for a vote: Councilor Cuthbertson: Yes; Lindner: Yes; Myers: Yes; Williams: Yes; Winther: Yes. Motion carried.

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1. **Ordinance 2024-06 – Implementing a License for Businesses Within the City.** The council conducted the second reading of Ordinance 2024-06, which establishes a business licensing requirement for all businesses operating within the city. City Administrator Martinenko clarified that the ordinance's primary purpose is data collection, allowing the city to maintain an accurate record of business activity. He emphasized that no fee is associated with the license at this time. The information gathered will be used for various city functions, including economic development planning, grant applications, and regulatory compliance with agencies such as the DEQ (Department of Environmental Quality) and EPA (Environmental Protection Agency). Additionally, the ordinance lays the groundwork for potential future incentives or tax adjustments, should a future council choose to implement them. Councilor Cuthbertson enquired about how the permit forms would be submitted. CA Martinenko replied that multiple submission options, including online and paper forms, would be provided to make the process as simple as possible. Following discussion, Councilor Myers moved to adopt Ordinance 2024-06, which was seconded by Councilor



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

- 5.2. **Resolution 2025-01 – Adopting the Updated Personnel Handbook.** The council reviewed Resolution 2025-01, which formally adopts an updated Personnel Handbook for city employees. Councilor Lindner said the Personnel Committee confirmed the changes reflect best practices recommended by the city’s insurance provider (CIS) and align with state labor laws. CA Martinenko reviewed the key updates that include establishment of a Human Resources Representative, updated leave policies that provide for separate vacation and sick leave categories, replacing the previous Paid Time Off (PTO) model. Employees may now accrue up to 80 hours of sick leave, while vacation accrual is capped at 350 hours (approximately two months). Employees may also donate leave time to colleagues in need. In addition, there is a zero-tolerance policy for workplace violence, removing the previous “second chance” provision for employees involved in substantiated workplace violence incidents. Other changes include new guidelines for the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Following brief discussion, Councilor Lindner moved to adopt Resolution 2025-01 and was seconded by Councilor Williams. With no further discussion, Mayor Sheets called for a vote: Councilor Cuthbertson: Yes; Lindner: Yes; Myers: Yes; Williams: Yes; Winther: Yes. Motion carried.
- 5.3. **Resolution 2025-02 – Authorizing Engagement of Auditors for 2023-24 Annual Audit.** The council considered Resolution 2025-02, which formally authorizes the city to engage auditors for the 2023-2024 annual municipal audit. Martinenko explained that the previous audit cycle required substantial updates due to changes in the city’s financial reporting requirements. The State of Oregon now mandates that all municipal funds, including state and federal grants, be completely segregated, requiring a more detailed accounting structure. Following brief discussion, Councilor Winther moved to adopt Resolution 2025-02 and was seconded by Councilor Lindner. With no further discussion, Mayor Sheets called for a vote: Councilor Cuthbertson: Yes; Lindner: Yes; Myers: Yes; Williams: Yes; Winther: Yes. Motion carried.
- 5.4. **Resolution 2025-03: Establishing a Water Intake Maintenance Reserve Fund.** The council next addressed Resolution 2025-03, which establishes a dedicated reserve fund for the maintenance of the city’s water intake infrastructure. The fund is being created in coordination with the Watershed Council, which has committed to providing \$50,000 in three installments to support the future upkeep of the water intake system. Following discussion, Councilor Williams moved to adopt Resolution 2025-03 and was seconded by Councilor Cuthbertson. With no further discussion, Mayor Sheets called for a vote: Councilor Cuthbertson: Yes; Lindner: Yes; Myers: Yes; Williams: Yes; Winther: Yes. Motion carried.



- 5.5. **Resolution 2025-04: Accepting Funds from the Long Tom Watershed Council for the Water Intake Maintenance Reserve Fund.** Mayor Sheets introduced Resolution 2025-04, which formalizes the acceptance of funds from the Watershed Council to support the water intake maintenance reserve fund. Councilor Myers asked whether the city would be able to earn interest on the deposited amount. CA Martinenko said yes, the funds from the Watershed Council would be allocated to the State Local Government Investment Pool to maximize interest earnings. With no further questions, Councilor Lindner moved to adopt Resolution 2025-04 and seconded by Councilor Cuthbertson. With no further discussion, Mayor Sheets called for a vote: Councilor Cuthbertson: Yes; Lindner: Yes; Myers: Yes; Williams: Yes; Winther: Yes. Motion carried.
- 5.6. **Resolution 2025-05: Transfer of System Development Charge (SDC) Funds for Water Reservoir Improvements.** Mayor Sheets introduced Resolution 2025-05, which allocates SDC funds for water reservoir enhancements. City Administrator Martinenko provided an overview of the project, stating that due to Monroe's population growth, the city must store and distribute greater water volumes to meet demand. The water reservoir was previously maintained at levels as low as four to eight feet, equating to 120,000–240,000 gallons. However, recent usage has increased, requiring levels of 28 feet (~900,000 gallons) to sustain fire response capacity and daily demand. Martinenko highlighted that increased storage necessitates higher chlorine levels, which in turn generates trihalomethanes (THMs) and are regulated disinfection byproducts. The city has explored mitigation strategies and obtained three bids for a water mixing and aeration system: \$38,000 bid requiring in-tank installation, \$128,000 bid from a premium contractor specializing in water treatment solutions, and \$60,000 bid from Clearwater, which offers a cost-effective and efficient aeration and mixing system to regulate chlorine levels while improving water quality. After reviewing the bids, Martinenko recommended proceeding with the \$60,000 Clearwater system, which includes installation and SCADA integration to monitor operations. Councilor Cuthbertson raised concerns regarding wildfire preparedness and whether the city had sufficient resources to manage a large-scale fire event. She questioned how the removal of a local dam could impact the city's ability to access emergency water supplies. Martinenko responded by discussing a new proposal from Sierra Pacific, a major timber and lumber company, to fund and construct a fire water intake system along the river. This system would provide high-volume water extraction for fire response efforts. Discussions are ongoing with Jed Kaull of the Watershed Council to facilitate funding and engineering coordination. Following further discussion, Councilor Williams moved to adopt Resolution 2025-05 and seconded by Councilor Meyers. With no further discussion, Mayor Sheets called for a vote: Councilor Cuthbertson: Yes; Lindner: Yes; Myers: Yes; Williams: Yes; Winther: Yes. Motion carried.
- 5.7. **Resolution 2025-06: Transfer SDC Funds for Extending City Infrastructure.** Mayor Sheets introduced Resolution 2025-06, which pertains to extending water and sewer



infrastructure in the Pecorilla property area off Orchard Street. Martinenko explained that while developers are responsible for internal infrastructure, the city must extend municipal services to the property line. This allocation of SDC funds will ensure that new residential and commercial projects have immediate access to water and sewer utilities. The funds will also contribute to a future grid extension between Red Hills and the high school. The council reviewed initial bids and authorized continued evaluation of lower-cost options before finalizing the project. Councilor Williams moved to adopt Resolution 2025-06 and seconded by Councilor Lindner. With no further discussion, Mayor Sheets called for a vote: Councilor Cuthbertson: Yes; Lindner: Yes; Myers: Yes; Williams: Yes; Winther: Yes. Motion carried.

- 5.8. **City Council Vacancy Declaration.** Mayor Sheets formally declared a vacancy on the Monroe City Council following the resignation of Councilor Ritch. The council confirmed that the full remaining term of the position would be filled by an appointed candidate. City Administrator Martinenko announced that applications were available online and at City Hall and would also be included in utility bill inserts. The council will review applications in an upcoming session.
- 5.9. **Appointment to Finance and Personnel Committee.** Mayor Sheets appointed Councilor Williams to the Finance & Personnel Committee.
- 5.10. **Appointment to Human Resources Council Representative.** After unanimous approval by Councilors, Mayor Sheets appointed Councilor Lindner as HR Council Representative.
- 5.11. **Budget Committee Recruitment.** The council discussed the need for additional Budget Committee members, noting that at least four vacancies exist. The city will advertise openings through social media, the website, and community newsletters to increase engagement. Councilors acknowledged that community participation has been historically low, prompting discussions on outreach efforts, including town hall meetings, informal gatherings, and engaging residents at community events.
- 5.12. **Supplemental Budget Planning.** CA Martinenko announced that a supplemental budget hearing would take place in March 2025 to ensure that financial allocations remain aligned with staffing, grants, and infrastructure projects. The public hearing will be advertised in compliance with state requirements.

6. OLD BUSINESS

- 6.1. **Emergency & Disaster Preparedness.** The council revisited emergency response planning, with Martinenko confirming that the city is developing a Crisis Communications Plan to coordinate information dissemination during disasters. Council members emphasized the importance of a



fire safety town hall, to be coordinated with the Monroe Rural Fire Department, before wildfire season.

6.2. City Administrator Position Recruitment. Councilor Lindner provided an update on the City Administrator hiring process, confirming that a finalized position description is ready for posting. Recruitment efforts will proceed through Lane County's recommended hiring agency, avoiding a \$20,000 external recruiter cost. Further council approval may be required for advertising expenses.

7. CITY EVENTS

7.1. Mayor Sheets discussed upcoming events including the LOC Small Cities Meeting (May 9, 2025) where Monroe will host the League of Oregon Cities regional meeting and the Monroe Festival (October 4, 2025) – Themed "Monroe Oktoberfest", the festival will be privately organized.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

8.1. None.

10. ADJOURNMENT. With no further comments, Mayor Sheets adjourned the meeting at 8:06 PM.

Approved by Council Action on February 24, 2025

Mayor Dan Sheets

Date

2/24/25

Attest:

~~Steve Martinenko, City Recorder~~

Council President, Jeannine Cuthbertson

