

**City of Merrill
Committee of the Whole
Tuesday, February 5, 2013 at 6:30 P.M.
City Hall Common Council Chambers
1004 East First Street**

Committee of the Whole members present (9 of 9): Mayor Bill Bialecki, Alderman Chris Malm (First District), Alderman Steve Hass (Second District), Alderman Ryan Schwartzman (Third District), Alderwoman Kandy Peterson (Fourth District), Alderman John Burgener (Fifth District), Alderman Dave Sukow (Sixth District), Alderman Rob Norton (Seventh District) and Alderwoman Anne Caylor (Eighth District).

Other attendees: City Administrator Dave Johnson, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Utility Superintendent Kim Kriewald, Street Commissioner Richard Lupton, Library Director Stacy Stevens, Finance/Technology Director Kathy Unertl, Lincoln County Economic Development Director Jack Sroka, Judy Woller, Tom Wistein, Kortney Pike, Ed Isaacson, Lynn Isaacson, Brian Arndorfer and City Clerk Bill Heideman. A student was in attendance to videotape the meeting for the Cable Access Channel.

Call to order

Mayor Bialecki called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

Resolution – Development Agreement with Fillmore Metal Crafts

Information was in the meeting packet. The proposed resolution would authorize a Development Agreement between the City and Fillmore Metal Crafts (William and Sunee Fillmore).

Finance/Technology Director Unertl reported that the Redevelopment Authority is recommending approval of the agreement. Under the terms of the agreement, the City would pay a total incentive development amount of \$17,000, over a six-year period. Finance/Technology Director Unertl answered questions related to the standards used for determining City involvement in development projects.

Motion (Hass/Caylor) to approve the resolution. Carried.

The resolution will be on the February 12th, 2013 Common Council meeting agenda.

Resolution – Development Agreement with Mark Raymer

Information was in the meeting packet. The proposed resolution would authorize a Development Agreement between the City and Mark Raymer.

Finance/Technology Director Unertl reported that the Redevelopment Authority is recommending approval of the agreement, the City would pay a total incentive development amount of \$25,000, over a five-year period.

Motion (Schwartzman/Norton) to approve the resolution. Carried.

The resolution will be on the February 12th, 2013 Common Council meeting agenda.

Policy for potential development assistance for tax delinquent properties

Information was in the meeting packet. At a meeting on January 29th, 2013, the Redevelopment Authority recommended adoption of the policy. The policy being proposed has three main points, as follows:

- City staff/contractor resources would be minimized in facilitating potential redevelopment or new development by current or prospective owners of tax delinquent properties
- City/RDA will not apply for Brownfield grants/loans on behalf of owners of tax delinquent properties
- City/RDA will not consider TIF development incentives for current owners of tax delinquent properties.

The policy also requires that, in order to apply for Central Wisconsin Economic Development (CWED) regional economic loans, the property taxes must be paid. City Attorney Hayden remarked that adopting the policy would be helpful to City staff.

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Motion (Hass/Sukow) to approve, as presented, the Economic Development Program Policy for Tax Delinquent Properties. Carried.

Continue review of sick leave policy related to employee death

Information was in the meeting packet, including information on polices that other municipalities have regarding sick leave payout when an employee death occurs.

The meeting packet also included a draft of additional language that would amend Section 12-3-9 of the City of Merrill Personnel Policies, to allow for a sick leave payout when an employee dies. That additional language is as follows:

“Sick leave accumulation upon employee death before retirement is set at a maximum of the employee’s total accumulated sick leave hours or 1,300 hours, whichever is less. Accumulated sick leave may be converted to a sick leave cash equivalent based on the employee’s hourly rate at the time of death times the sick leave accumulation. The sick leave cash equivalent may only be paid as a cash payout to the estate of the deceased employee.”

Motion (Hass/Norton) to approve, as presented, the policy modification of sick leave payout in the event of employee death. If approved, the modification would take effect April 1st, 2013. Carried.

A resolution on the policy modification will be on the February 12th, 2013 Common Council meeting agenda.

Consider offering option of e-commerce (payment of bills, fees, etc. on-line)

Information was in the meeting packet. It is being proposed that the City offer the option for online payment of debts, bills, etc. (e-commerce).

City Administrator Johnson stated that in the past he has not approved of the e-commerce option, but he has changed his opinion. He would now be in favor of the e-commerce option if the imposition of a convenience fee was included.

Alderman Malm asked whether offering the e-commerce option could save money on costs related to staff. Finance/Technology Director responded that the result would probably be the opposite in that it could actually place a heavier burden on staff resources and time.

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Motion (Hass/Norton) to offer customers an e-commerce (online bill/debt payment) option and authorize City staff to select a provider for e-commerce services. Customers using a credit card or debit card for online payments would be assessed a convenience fee to be paid to the e-commerce service provider. Carried.

City Attorney briefing/overview of annexation process under Wis. State Statutes

Alderman Schwartzman had requested that this item be placed on the meeting agenda. City Attorney Hayden provided verbal information on the procedures followed when an annexation is being considered, including details on the preparation of a cost benefit analysis.

No action taken.

Public Comment

None.

Motion to convene in closed session

Motion (Hass/Schwartzman) to convene in closed session pursuant to Wisconsin State Statutes 19.85(1)(e) for the purpose of deliberating or negotiating the purchasing of public properties, the investing of public funds, or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session, to consider policy direction for negotiation of the following: Potential continued participation in and fiscal commitments to Lincoln County Economic Development Corporation (LCEDC) and potential development incentive(s) for proposed new development in Tax Increment District No. 3 (East Side). Carried 7-1 on roll call vote. Voting No – Alderman Norton.

Convened in closed session at 7:08 P.M. Attending: Malm, Hass, Schwartzman, Peterson, Burgener, Sukow, Norton, Caylor, Bialecki, Johnson, Hayden, Unertl, Sroka, Arndorfer and Heideman.

Closed session #1 – Participation in Lincoln County Development Corporation

The minutes of this closed session will be filed separately and confidentially.

Closed session #2 – Potential Development Incentive in TID District #3

The minutes of this closed session will be filed separately and confidentially.

Adjournment

Motion (Hass/Caylor) to adjourn. Carried. Adjourned (from closed session) at 8:03 P.M.

Minutes prepared and submitted by:

William N. Heideman, WCMC
City Clerk