

1403140

**City of Merrill
Personnel and Finance Committee
Tuesday, February 25, 2014 at 5:15 P.M.
Basement Conference Room at City Hall, 1004 East First Street**

Voting Members Present (2 of 3): Alderman Steve Hass (Chairperson) and Alderman Ryan Schwartzman. Alderwoman Anne Caylor had an excused absence.

Others Present Included: Mayor Bill Bialecki, City Administrator Dave Johnson, City Attorney Tom Hayden (arr. 5:18), Finance Director Kathy Unertl, Alderwoman Kandy Peterson, Alderman Dave Sukow, Alderman Chris Malm, Street Commissioner Richard Lupton, Police Chief Ken Neff, Fire Chief Dave Savone, Library Director Stacy Stevens, Frank Saal Jr., Kortney Pike, Michael Caylor Jr. and City Clerk Bill Heideman. A student was in attendance to videotape the meeting for the Cable Access Channel.

Call to order

Alderman Hass called the meeting to order at 5:15 P.M.

Vouchers

The vouchers had been e-mailed to the three committee members and are available to the public on the City webpage.

Alderman Hass raised a question on a purchase of televisions and related equipment from Merrill House of Music. Fire Chief Savone responded that the union would be reimbursing the City for this purchase.

Fire Chief Savone also provided verbal information related to the purchase of a snow blower from Trantow Do-It Center, using funds from the Bierman Family Foundation.

Motion (Schwartzman/Hass) to approve the vouchers. Carried.

Review City purchasing policies

Alderman Hass had requested that this item be placed on the agenda.

Alderman Hass noted that there is currently no City oversight committee to authorize purchases made with funds from grants or donations. He suggested that there should be a committee to administrate and monitor this type of spending. Alderman Hass is not against pursuing and receiving grants and donations, but he suggested that such a committee would not only provide oversight, it would help promote communication related to spending.

Alderman Hass also raised a question related to bidding policies for these types of purchases.

Frank Saal Jr. mentioned that a situation related to the use of grant money occurred in Manitowish Waters recently. He suggested that the committee members research the archives of the Lakeland Times to educate themselves on this case.

Alderman Schwartzman suggested that keeping the Common Council members informed on these types of purchases would be beneficial.

Michael Caylor Jr. suggested that, when possible, the use of grant money and/or donated funds should be prioritized.

Alderman Hass stated that, as a result of this discussion, City Administrator Johnson and City Attorney Hayden have sufficient direction to proceed. Alderman Hass repeated that he would like to see a formal policy drafted and considered.

No formal action was taken at this time. This item will be placed on the March meeting agenda.

Request from Fire Chief Savone to sell excess equipment @ auction

Fire Chief Savone had requested that this item be placed on the agenda. He is requesting that an auction be held to dispose of excess fire department equipment currently being stored at the former fire station. He is also requested that any funds from such an auction be placed into a non-lapsing account for fire apparatus replacement. Fire Chief Savone distributed photographs of some of the equipment.

Alderman Hass stated that he would prefer that, if the auction is authorized, the revenue from the auction be placed in the City General Fund. Alderman Schwartzman stated that he has no problem with the revenue being placed in the General Fund.

City Administrator Johnson raised the possibility that there may not be sufficient fire department excess equipment to warrant an auction. It was then noted that other City department heads have requested that their excess equipment be included if an auction is authorized.

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Motion (Schwartzman/Hass) to approve an auction/sale of excess fire department equipment, including excess equipment from other City departments as requested for disposition by other City department heads. Revenue from the auction would be placed in the City General Fund.
Carried.

2015 budget planning, including creating timetable for budget process

At the request of Alderman Hass, this was part of an amended agenda.

Alderman Hass explained that, in October of 2013, it was made clear that the Common Council wanted the 2015 budget process to begin in January of 2014. He suggested that it is not necessary to delay any budget discussion until the conclusion of the strategic planning process. He proposed that, if a budget overview could be prepared and distributed soon, the strategic planning process and the 2015 budget process could be done in tandem. Alderman Hass concluded by noting that, at one time, the budget process including presentations to the Common Council by all department heads. He noted that this has been discontinued.

Frank Saal Jr., a member of the Lincoln County Board, requested the opportunity to speak, and his request was granted by Alderman Hass. Mr. Saal provided verbal information on the budget process in place for Lincoln County. In his opinion, the City of Merrill could take steps to improve the budget process. He also suggested that everyone must be “on board” in order to ensure a successful budget process.

Finance Director Unertl stated that a presentation on the 2013 audit will be a part of a Committee of the Whole meeting in May. A debt service report will also be presented at that meeting.

Alderman Malm stated that he was awaiting a proposal and additional 2015 budget process information from City Administrator Johnson and Finance Director Unertl. In his opinion, we do not have the luxury of postponing 2015 budget discussions until after strategic planning. He suggested that Art Lersch could help in planning the budget process. Alderman Hass will discuss this with Mr. Lersch.

No action was taken at this time.

Monthly Report – Municipal Court

The report was in the meeting packet.

Monthly Report – Finance Director Unertl

The report was in the meeting packet. Alderman Hass suggested that an insurance team, comprised of an employee from each department, be created.

Monthly Report – City Attorney Hayden

The report was in the meeting packet.

Monthly Report – City Clerk Heideman

The report was in the meeting packet.

Monthly Report – City Administrator Johnson

The report was in the meeting packet. City Administrator Johnson reported that fire protection contract negotiations with neighboring townships are ongoing.

Monthly Report – Building/Zoning Permits

The report was in the meeting packet. City Administrator Johnson reported that Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator Pagel will be reclassified as a full-time City employee effective April 1st, 2014.

Place monthly reports on file

Motion (Schwartzman/Hass) to place the monthly reports on file. Carried.

Next meeting

Tuesday, March 25th, 2014 at 5:15 P.M. City Attorney Hayden was directed to mail evaluation forms to all alderpersons, so that the City Administrator evaluation forms can be completed, returned and reviewed prior to the March 25th meeting.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

Motion (Schwartzman/Hass) to adjourn. Carried. Adjourned at 6:00 P.M.

Minutes prepared and submitted by:

William N. Heideman, CMC, WCMC
City Clerk