

1409140

**City of Merrill
Personnel and Finance Committee
Tuesday, September 2, 2014 at 5:00 P.M.
Basement Conference Room at City Hall, 1004 East First Street**

Voting Members Present (3 of 3): Alderman Ryan Schwartzman (Chairperson), Alderman John Burgener and Alderman Tim Meehean.

Others Present Included: Mayor Bill Bialecki, City Administrator Dave Johnson, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Finance Director Kathy Unertl, Police Chief Ken Neff, Fire Chief Dave Savone, Library Director Stacy Stevens, Utility Superintendent Kim Kriewald, Police Captain Corey Bennett, Joint Municipal Judge Ned Seubert, Alderwoman Kandy Peterson, Jeremy Ratliff (arr. 5:03), Kortney Pike, Robert Caylor and City Clerk Bill Heideman. A student was in attendance to videotape the meeting for the Cable Access Channel.

Call to order

Alderman Schwartzman called the meeting to order at 5:00 P.M.

Vouchers

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

Motion (Burgener/Meehean) to approve the vouchers. Carried.

Consider Robert Caylor request to discuss residency requirements

Police Officer Robert Caylor had requested that this item be placed on the agenda.

City Administrator Johnson began the discussion by stating that the committee can discuss residency requirements in general, but, if the discussion relates to a certain union employee, then it is a contractual issue and it would not be appropriate for the committee to discuss it.

Robert Caylor stated that, in 2010, the Personnel and Finance Committee considered a waiver to the residency requirement for a Police Officer, which led to the Common Council considering the waiver. City Administrator Johnson responded that a waiver should not have been considered then and should not be considered now.

Alderman Meehean commented that he was not comfortable considering anything contrary to a union contract currently in effect.

Alderman Burgener suggested that the employee file a grievance to begin the process. Alderman Meehean responded that he did not think that filing a grievance would be appropriate, since there is no evidence that the union contract is being violated.

No action taken.

Utility Superintendent Kriewald request to dispose of old generator and truck

No information was in the meeting packet. Utility Superintendent Kriewald is requesting that he is seeking authorization to dispose of, by sale, the “old” Wastewater Treatment Plant emergency generator and the “old” Building Inspection truck.

City Administrator Johnson suggested that, if the City is purchasing another “pool” vehicle, it might be fiscally advantageous to trade-in the vehicle rather than selling it outright.

Mayor Bialecki suggested that the truck could possibly be used by the Parks and Recreation Department for watering flowers.

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Motion (Meehean/Burgener) to authorize the disposition, by sale “as is”, of the “old” Wastewater Treatment Plant emergency generator and the “old” Building Inspection truck. The sale of the truck is contingent upon verification that no City department is interested in potential use of the vehicle. Carried.

Review and discuss potential group health insurance options

Information was in the meeting packet. This agenda item was requested by Finance Director Unertl.

Alderman Meehean had raised the possibility of the City and Lincoln County forming a health benefits purchasing cooperative, as an attempt to reduce employee health insurance costs for both government entities.

Based on that suggestion, Vicki Thoreson, a representative of M-3 (the company that oversees the City’s employee health insurance program with Security Health), has submitted a response, which indicates that such a cooperative would probably not be approved by the State of Wisconsin, and, even if it was approved, would most likely not be a practical or prudent option.

No action was taken.

Resolution deferring repayment to Landfill Remediation Fund

This agenda item was requested by Finance Director Unertl.

A proposed resolution was in the meeting packet. The resolution would defer the remaining repayment (\$269,449.65) of a 2004 advance from the Landfill Remediation Fund.

The proposed resolution would result in \$32,650 lower 2015 through 2020 tax-levy debt service.

Motion (Meehean/Burgener) to recommend adopting the resolution.
Carried.

The resolution will be on the September 9th, 2014 Common Council meeting agenda.

Review City's equalized value and implications for borrowing capacity

Information was in the meeting packet. This agenda item was requested by Finance Director Unertl.

The State of Wisconsin establishes the City's General Obligation debt limit as 5% of the City's total equalized valuation. The City's total equalized value is \$360,801,800, resulting in a General Obligation debt limit of \$18,040,090. However, on August 13th, 2002, the Common Council adopted Charter Ordinance 2002-C1. This Charter Ordinance limits the City's General Obligation Debt to 70% of the state limit, which results in a current General Obligation debt limit of \$12,628,063. As of January 1st, 2015, the General Obligation debt outstanding will be \$11,049,229.

Ehlers and Associates recommend that the City consider eliminating any self-supporting debt from the 70% calculation. This would allow for more use of the City's lowest cost borrowing option while still maintaining a debt limit that is more stringent than the State law. It would raise the debt limit to \$13,736,983, an increase of \$1,108,920.

Alderman Meehean suggested eliminating the "70% of state limit" language entirely and instead using the state limit only as the debt limit. In his opinion, this would give the City greater leeway and flexibility when making future borrowing decisions.

Motion (Meehean/Burgener) to recommend approving a charter ordinance which would eliminate clause (i) from Charter Ordinance 2002-C1. The language to be eliminated would be as follows: "The city shall maintain a level of General Obligation not more than 70% of its legal debt limit".
Carried.

Changing a charter ordinance requires another charter ordinance, which will be on the September 9th, 2014 Common Council meeting agenda.

Monthly Report – Municipal Court

The report was in the meeting packet. Municipal Judge Seubert verbally corrected one typographical error in the report. He also reported that one of the court clerks, Nancy Baake, has submitted her resignation. The search for a replacement will begin.

Monthly Report – Finance Director Unertl

The report was in the meeting packet. Finance Director Unertl reported that, for budgeting purposes, a 6.5% increase in health insurance costs is anticipated in 2015. It appears in 2015 there will be no “seed” money to give to employees to help pay health care costs.

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.

Place monthly reports on file

Motion (Burgener/Meehean) to place the monthly reports on file. Carried.

Next meeting

Tuesday, September 30th, 2014 at 5:00 P.M.

Public Comment

Kortney Pike commented that he wished City staff had given more consideration to providing seed money to employees in 2015 to help pay health care costs, as was done in 2014. He also raised the possibility of getting health insurance quotes from multiple providers as soon as possible, rather than waiting until the last minute.

Adjournment

Motion (Burgener/Meehean) to adjourn. Carried. Adjourned at 5:31 P.M.

Minutes prepared and submitted by:

William N. Heideman, CMC, WCMC
City Clerk