



CITY OF MERRILL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MINUTES • WEDNESDAY AUGUST 10, 2016

Regular Meeting

City Hall Council Chambers

6:00 PM

I. Call to Order

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Paul Russell	Aldersperson - First District	Present	
Pete Lokemoen	Aldersperson - Second District	Present	
Ryan Schwartzman	Aldersperson - Third District	Present	
Kandy Peterson	Aldersperson - Fourth District	Present	
John Burgener	Aldersperson - Fifth District & President	Present	
Mary Ball	Aldersperson - Sixth District	Present	
Rob Norton	Aldersperson - Seventh District	Present	
Tim Meehean	Aldersperson - Eighth District	Present	
Bill Bialecki	Mayor	Present	

Also in attendance: City Administrator Dave Johnson, Transit Director Rich Grenfell (arr. 6:30), City Attorney Tom Hayden, Police Chief Ken Neff, Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator Darin Pagel, Fire Chief Dave Savone, Library Director Stacy Stevens, Finance Director Kathy Unertl, Park and Recreation Director Dan Wendorf and City Clerk Bill Heideman.

II. Agenda items:

1. Request from Stephanie Springborn (Winds and Paradox, Inc.) for 90-day time extension for window replacement at 419 W. Main St.

Stephanie Springborn addressed the committee. She has requested a 90-day extension, to January 1st, 2017, from her deadline of October 1st, 2016, to complete the installation of all windows and doors at her property at 419 West Main Street (former Merrill Vocational School). She has ordered the windows and has contractors lined up to complete the work.

Motion (Lokemoen/Norton) to approve the request for a 90-day extension.

RESULT: APPROVED

2. Presentation by and discussion with Brian Reilly from Ehlers on debt service refinancing and new borrowing (related resolutions are on the August 10, 2016 Common Council meeting agenda).

Representing Ehlers, Brian Reilly gave a presentation on debt service refinancing and new borrowing.

Motion (Meehean/Norton) to approve the debt restructuring proposal as presented.

RESULT: APPROVED

3. Overview of costs for environmental and demo costs related to "blighted" buildings to facilitate redevelopment projects.

Information was in the meeting packet. Finance Director added verbal details. No action was necessary, requested or taken.

4. Mayor request for Personnel and Finance Committee at the August 23rd meeting to include report from the City Clerk on options and costs to facilitate live streaming of back-to-back City meetings.

This issue will be considered at the August 23rd, 2016 Personnel and Finance Committee meeting. No Committee of the Whole action was necessary, requested or taken.

5. Report on disposition of property at Merrill Festival Grounds - Schultz Building.

Mayor Bialecki cited an e-mail from City Administrator Johnson, a copy of which was included in the meeting packet. Mayor Bialecki added that he had delayed consideration of this matter until both City Administrator Johnson and Fire Chief Savone were in town.

Mayor Bialecki stated that the property in question belongs to Lincoln County, and the disposition of the property was the result of a misunderstanding. He added that Lincoln County Administrative Coordinator Randy Scholz also believes it was a misunderstanding.

Alderman Meehean stated that he is in favor of an investigation into the matter, so that it can be resolved without lingering questions or issues.

Motion (Meehean/Russell) to retain Dean Dietrich, Ruder Ware Law Firm, to conduct a formal, independent investigation into the property disposition, including policies and procedures. If Mr. Dietrich declines, he will be asked to provide a recommendation on another individual and/or another firm to conduct the investigation. At the conclusion of the investigation, the investigating entity is to provide results and recommendation(s) to the Common Council.

Alderman Russell requested that any information gathered as a result of interviews with City staff on this matter be included as part of the investigation. He was told that the presumption is that information gathered by such interviews would be included in the investigation.

RESULT:	APPROVED BY ROLL CALL VOTE [6 TO 2]
MOVER:	Tim Meehean, Alderperson - Eighth District
SECONDER:	Paul Russell, Alderperson - First District
AYES:	Russell, Lokemoen, Schwartzman, Ball, Norton, Meehean
NAYS:	Peterson, Burgener

III. Public Comment

Brian Severt spoke on the disposition of the property from the Schultz building. He provided information on what transpired and what he observed related to the property disposition.

Steve Hass thanked the Common Council for their decision earlier in the meeting to authorize an investigation. Mr. Hass then cited a portion of an e-mail from City Administrator Johnson (included in the meeting packet), in which City Administrator Johnson referred to those who questioned the Schultz Building property disposition procedures as “naysayers”. Mr. Hass added that his voting record during his ten years of Common Council service demonstrates that he always practiced fiscal responsibility.

Kortney Pike questioned whether Dean Dietrich could conduct an impartial investigation, given the fact that Mr. Dietrich and his firm have been retained to do work for the City several times in the past.

Derek Woellner noted that City Administrator Johnson’s wife is a City employee. Mr. Woeller then cited a section of City of Merrill Code of Ordinances related to the hiring of relatives. Mr. Woellner was directed by Mayor Bialecki to discuss this issue further with his alderperson.

IV. Adjournment

Motion (Burgener/Norton) to adjourn. Carried. Adjourned at 7:07 P.M.