

**City of Merrill  
Committee of the Whole  
Thursday, July 24, 2014 at 5:30 P.M.  
City Hall Common Council Chambers  
1004 East First Street**

Committee of the Whole members present (8 of 9): Mayor Bill Bialecki, Alderman Chris Malm (First District), Alderman Peter Lokemoen (Second District), Alderman Ryan Schwartzman (Third District), Alderman John Burgener (Fifth District), Alderman Dave Sukow (Sixth District), Alderman Rob Norton (Seventh District) and Alderman Tim Meehean (Eighth District). Alderwoman Kandy Peterson (Fourth District) had an excused absence.

Other attendees included: City Administrator Dave Johnson, Transit Director Rich Grenfell, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Utility Superintendent Kim Kriewald, Street Commissioner Richard Lupton, Airport Manager/FBO John Miller, Police Chief Ken Neff, Fire Chief Dave Savone, Library Director Stacy Stevens, Finance Director Kathy Unertl, City Hall Maintenance Supervisor Ramona Vanderkam, Parks and Recreation Director Dan Wendorf, Duane Pfister, Judy Woller, Collin Lueck 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 5:30 P.M.

**Public Comment**

None.

**Consider 2015 budget request to Lincoln County for T.B. Scott Free Library**

The draft Library budget was in the meeting packet.

Library Director Stevens reviewed the funding sources and budgetary procedures used by the library.

Library Director Stevens reported that the amount being requested from both Lincoln County and the City of Merrill are unchanged from the 2014 budget. Her budget proposal is \$23,764 less than the draft budget provided to her by Finance Director Unertl. Library Director Stevens stated that the budget she prepared has no salary increase because she cannot justify including increases in a "flat" budget.

Finance Director Unertl mentioned that the City will probably be seeking bids for employee health insurance.

Motion (Meehean/Norton) to forward the 2015 T.B. Scott Free Library Budget, as presented, to Lincoln County for their consideration. Carried.

### **Consider 2015 budget request to Lincoln County for Ambulance/EMS**

The draft Ambulance/EMS budget was in the meeting packet.

Finance Director Unertl reported that the Fire Department employees are paying a slightly larger percentage to the Wisconsin Retirement System.

Motion (Norton/Meehean) to forward the 2015 Ambulance/EMS Budget, as presented, to Lincoln County for their consideration. Carried.

### **Consider assessment maintenance and revaluation contract with Bowmar**

A proposed 2015-2017 assessment maintenance and revaluation contract with Bowmar Appraisal Inc. was in the meeting packet, along with related information. The proposed contract includes a revaluation for the year 2016. Finance Director Unertl provided additional verbal details on the proposed contract.

Alderman Lokemoen suggested that it might be advantageous to delay the revaluation until the housing market stabilizes. Alderman Sukow responded that numerous current assessments are unfair and therefore it is critical that a revaluation be done soon.

### **140891**

Motion (Norton/Sukow) to approve, as presented the 2015-2017 assessment maintenance and revaluation contract with Bowmar Appraisal Inc., at a total cost of \$212,400. The annual costs would be as follows: 2015: \$29,500 (for maintenance and electronic updates), 2016: \$158,000 (for maintenance and revaluation of all taxable real property and personal property) and 2017: \$24,900 (for maintenance). Carried.

### **Recess**

At 6:02 P.M., Mayor Bialecki announced a recess so that the special Common Council meeting could be held.

**Call meeting back to order**

At the conclusion of the special Common Council meeting, Mayor Bialecki called the Committee of the Whole meeting back to order at 6:04 P.M.

**Discuss City debt service, including potential restructuring options**

Information was in the meeting packet.

Finance Director Unertl noted that the most current reason for the debt service increase was due to the construction of a new fire station. She then gave a historical review of City debt service.

Alderman Meehean suggested that refinancing the entire debt service could be an option. He acknowledged that it would increase long-term costs, but stated that it would also afford the City the flexibility to consider and approve projects that address pressing short-term needs.

Finance Director Unertl stated that she has some ideas for “tweaking” the current debt service scenario.

Alderman Meehean stated that having a level amount of debt service annually would give the City more leeway when planning future budgets and making budget decisions.

No action was taken at this time.

**2015-2024 Capital Plan**

A draft of a ten-year (2015-2024) Capital Plan was distributed. Finance Director Unertl led discussion on the plan.

No action on the plan or any of its components was taken at this time.

**Adjournment**

Motion (Burgener/Norton) to adjourn. Carried. Adjourned at 6:53 P.M.

Minutes prepared and submitted by:

William N. Heideman, CMC, WCMC  
City Clerk