



**CITY OF MERRILL**  
**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**  
**MINUTES • TUESDAY OCTOBER 29, 2019**

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**Budget Session** **City Hall Council Chambers** **5:30 PM**

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I. Call to Order

Mayor Woellner called the meeting to order at 5:34 P.M.

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Paul Russell	Aldersperson - First District	Present	
Steve Hass	Aldersperson - Second District	Present	
Rick Blake	Aldersperson - Third District	Present	
Steve Osness	Aldersperson - Fourth District	Present	
John M. Van Lieshout	Aldersperson - Fifth District	Present	
Mike Rick	Aldersperson - Sixth District	Present	
Rob Norton	Aldersperson - Seventh District	Present	
Steve Sabatke	Alderman - Eighth District	Present	
Derek Woellner	Mayor	Present	

City Department Heads in attendance: Public Works Director/City Engineer Rod Akey, Police Chief Corey Bennett, Street Superintendent Dustin Bonack, Transit Director Brad Brummond, City Attorney Tom Hayden, City Administrator Dave Johnson, Fire Chief Josh Klug, Enrichment Center Director Tammie Mrachek, Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator Darin Pagel, Utility Operations Manager Gabe Steinagel, Library Director Stacy Stevens, Finance Director Kathy Unertl, Parks & Recreation Director Dan Wendorf, Facilities Maintenance Manager Nick Wszalek and City Clerk Bill Heideman.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Agenda Items for Consideration

1. Follow-up to Mayor Woellner's e-mail questions

Information was in the meeting packet.

Finance Director Unertl reported that a Standard & Poor's credit rating is an informed opinion.

Mayor Woellner suggested that, based on the ratings report, it is critical to establish a plan to pay back the General Fund from the Tax Increment District (TID) funds.

2. Review, discussion, and decisions on tax Increment District (TID) 2020 Budget Requests

Information was in the meeting packet.

Finance Director Unertl suggested that an additional Committee of the Whole Budget meeting be scheduled to consider 2020 Tax Increment District request. She suggested that this meeting could be held on Wednesday, November 6<sup>th</sup>, before the Committee of the Whole Strategic Planning meeting.

3. Follow-up to Committee of Whole requests for research information and Mayor's Potential Budget Reductions

Information was in the meeting packet.

Finance Director Unertl led discussion on wages and step increases. Alderman Hass remarked that, if he had to choose, he would prefer to freeze wages rather than cut positions.

City Administrator Johnson will prepare, for consideration, a 15-step salary grid, with an increased time frame between steps.

Alderman Sabatke asked whether proposed budget adjustments would be considered "line by line".

Mayor Woellner stated that he is not in favor of proposing and voting on budget adjustments at the same meeting. He would prefer allowing time for public input on all budget adjustments.

Finance Director Unertl explained why it was not possible for the Fire Department, Police Department and Street Department to submit zero-increase budgets.

#### 4. Continued review, discussion, and decisions on 2020 Budget Requests

Information was in the meeting packet.

A proposed T-Hangar Cash Flow Concept report was distributed at the meeting. Finance Director Unertl and Airport Commission Chairperson Gary Schwarz provided verbal information on the proposed new T-Hangar Capital Project (\$300,000). Gary Schwarz stated that he was not seeking approval at this meeting, but he would like an opportunity to conduct more research and then submit cost estimates for consideration at a future meeting. Finance Director Unertl suggested that this project remain in the 2020 Capital Budget, pending further research.

Motion (Sabatke/Hass) to refer the new T-Hanger project back to the Airport Commission. Without objection, Ryan Schwartzman was granted floor privileges. He noted that projects such as the T-Hangar project frequently require pre-approval before grant applications will be considered.

Motion to refer the T-Hangar project back to the Airport Commission carried 5-4 on roll call vote. Voting No - Alderman Blake, Alderman Van Lieshout, Alderman Norton and Mayor Woellner.

Motion (Sabatke/Hass) to remove the Festival Grounds Cattle Barn - Rehab (\$40,000) from the 2020 Capital Budget. Motion failed 3-6 on roll call vote. Voting Yes - Alderman Hass, Alderman Osness and Alderman Sabatke.

Motion (Woellner/Norton) to add the Solar Panels - Smith Center (\$172,000) back into the 2020 Capital Budget. Motion failed 4-5 on roll call vote. Voting Yes - Alderman Blake, Alderman Van Lieshout, Alderman Norton and Mayor Woellner.

#### IV. Public Comment

LaDonna Fermanich remarked that personnel costs continue to rise, and she suggested that a plan should be formulated and implemented to address those rising costs.

- V. The Committee of Whole may convene in closed session per Wis. Stats. Sec. 19.85(1)(e) - 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 potential City purchase of properties to facilitate redevelopment adjacent to Tax Increment District No. 12 (Weinbrenner Factory area)

Motion (Hass/Osness) to convene in closed session. Motion carried 8-1 on roll call vote. Voting No - Alderman Norton.

Convened in closed session at 7:09 P.M.

The minutes of the closed session portion of the meeting will be filed separately.

VI. **Adjournment**

Motion (Russell/Norton) to adjourn. Carried. Adjourned at 7:43 P.M.