



**CITY OF MERRILL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

MINUTES • WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 6, 2019

Strategic Planning Meeting

City Hall Council Chambers

6:00 PM

I. Call to Order

In the absence of Mayor Woellner, Common Council President Norton called the meeting to order at 6:18 P.M. The meeting started late due to the length of another Committee of the Whole meeting held earlier.

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	Excused	

Other meeting attendees included: 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, Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator Darin Pagel, Utility Operations Manager Gabe Steinagel, Library Director Stacy Stevens, Finance Director Kathy Unertl, Park and Recreation Director Dan Wendorf, Facilities Maintenance Manager Nick Wszalek, John Greenwood, Al Wix, Kent Johnson, Lee Opsahl, Chris Malm, Lori Anderson-Malm, Diane Goetsch, LaDonna Fermanich, Sharon Anderson, Gene Bebel, Debbie Kinsey, Bill Bialecki, Mke Ravn (Meeting Facilitator), John Schewe, Ryan Schwartzman and City Clerk Bill Heideman. Hunter Lane was present to videotape the meeting for Merrill Productions.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

III. Agenda Items for Consideration:

1. Review and discuss the status of Merrill's present Strategic Plan

Alderman Norton turned the meeting over to Mike Ravn, who then made introductory remarks. He stated that the first step would be to review the current (2014-2019) City Strategic Plan. Copies of the plan were distributed.

The review of the current plan centered on the four main strategic issues (Page 17-31 of the current plan).

Strategic Issue #1 was discussed. It reads as follows: *“How can Merrill city government help grow the city’s tax base?”*

It was suggested that improvements in this area have been made, but the question was raised on how we can do even better.

Gene Bebel asked if the plan was for only the City government only or is it for the community in general. City Administrator Johnson replied that it is a City government document, but that the plan should be created by input from both government and citizens.

Housing and dilapidated buildings were then discussed. City Administrator Johnson stated that progress has been made in addressing these issues.

“Quality of life” amenities were then discussed. City Administrator Johnson reported that numerous amenities have been added over the last few years.

The two suggested metrics related to Strategic Issue #1 (Page 19 of the current plan) were then reviewed.

Next, Strategic Issue #2 of the current plan was discussed. It reads as follows: *“Are there any services Merrill City Government needs to provide that it currently is not? Are there any services that city government may not be able to provide any longer or should not be offering?”*

City Administrator Johnson remarked that the City currently provides numerous services.

Strategic Issue #3 of the current plan was then discussed. It reads as follows: *“What is Merrill City Government’s budget philosophy?”*

Strategic Issue #4 of the current plan was then discussed. It reads as follows: *“How does Merrill city government create and implement strategic economic development and redevelopment?”*

2. Establish Mission Statement for future Strategic Plan

Mike Ravn noted that Mayor Wollner had asked that a reference to growth be included in the new Mission Statement.

The Mission Statement in the current Strategic Plan (Page 7) was reviewed. It reads as follows: *“The mission of the City of Merrill government is to provide high quality services in an innovative, consistent, and efficient manner”.*

After discussion, the new Mission Statement was established as follows: *“The mission of the City of Merrill government is to provide high quality services in an innovative, consistent, and efficient manner, while continuing to promote growth”.*

3. Establish Vision Statement for future Strategic Plan

The Vision Statement in the current Strategic Plan (Page 7) was reviewed. It reads as follows: *“We, the employees and officials of the City of Merrill, envision superior services while being open, responsible and transparent to the public”.*

After discussion, the new Vision Statement was established as follows: *“The City of Merrill envisions superior services while being open, responsible and transparent to the public”.*

Mike Ravn mentioned two other documents that may prove beneficial throughout the strategic planning process. One document is from the Aware and Active Citizens (AAC) and the other is an Economic Development Strategy created by Merrill business representatives and Merrill's Chamber of Commerce. Copies of both documents were available at the meeting.

4. Review remainder of Strategic Plan meetings schedule

Mike Ravn reviewed the Strategic Plan meeting schedule and topics. The next Strategic Planning meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 13th at 6:00 P.M. It will be held in the City Hall Common Council Chambers.

IV. Public Comment Period

Alderman Norton thanked Mike Ravn for his work as Meeting Facilitator. Alderman Norton then asked all veterans in attendance to stand up and be recognized.

A Committee of the Whole 2020 budget meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, November 12th at 5:15 P.M.

V. Adjournment

Motion (Norton/Sabatke) to adjourn. Carried. Adjourned at 8:02 P.M.