



CITY OF MERRILL
HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
MINUTES • MONDAY JUNE 22, 2020

Regular Meeting

City Hall Council Chambers

5:15 PM

I. Call to Order

Alderman Russell called the meeting to order at 5:15 P.M.

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Rick Blake	Aldersperson - Third District	Present	
Paul Russell	Aldersperson - First District	Present	
Mark Weix	Aldersperson - Seventh District	Present	

Others in attendance: City Administrator Dave Johnson, Fire Chief Josh Klug, Police Chief Corey Bennett, Deputy Health Officer Norbert Ashbeck, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Alderman Steve Hass, Alderman Steve Sabatke, Thea Witucki, Lincoln County Health Department Director Shelley Hersil (Remote) and City Clerk Bill Heideman.

II. COVID-19 Updates:

1. Lincoln County Health Department Director Shelley Hersil

Lincoln County Health Department Director Hersil reported that Lincoln County has confirmed the eighth case of COVID-19 in Lincoln County.

In surrounding counties lately, there has been an increase of COVID-19 cases in young people, most likely as a result of mass gatherings.

The latest round of testing did not result in any positive cases.

Guidelines have been established for the reopening of schools.

Lincoln County Health Department Director Hersil explained the difference between “cases” and “contacts” as those terms relate to COVID-19. Both are subject to quarantine.

2. Lincoln County Emergency Planning Manager September Murphy

Lincoln County Emergency Planning Manager September Murphy did not call in to the meeting, and attempts to call her resulted in no answer. Therefore, no update report was given.

Alderman Russell assured the committee that, as he receives updates; he will share them with committee members.

III. Nuisance Complaints and Vouchers:

1. Nuisance Complaints

Deputy Health Officer Ashbeck reported that COVID-19 has “slowed things down” and he has nothing new to report.

As a member of the Merrill School Board, Deputy Health Officer Ashbeck reported that, for the 2020-2021 school year, students will be given a choice to attend school in-person or virtually.

2. Vouchers

The vouchers were in the meeting packet.

All committee members signed the voucher sheet. No formal action was taken.

IV. Picnic and/or Liquor License Applications:

- 1. Change of trade name (Holiday #71 to Express Lane #2328) and change of agent (Gail Closser to Michelle Last) for Applegreen Midwest LLC, doing business at 702 N. Center Avenue.

Motion (Blake/Weix) to approve both the change of agent and the trade name change.

RESULT:	APPROVED & SENT TO COUNCIL	Next: 7/14/2020 6:00 PM
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V. Other agenda items to consider:

- 1. Discuss parking issues in 700 block of East Second Street

At the request of Thea Witucki (Wit's End DaySpa), Alderman Hass had requested that this item be placed on the agenda.

Thea Witucki expressed her concerns with inadequate parking in the vicinity of Wit's End DaySpa (718 East Second Street). She explained that, although there is two-hour parking available in that area, the average time her clients are at her facility is closer to three hours.

Police Chief Bennett responded that this is one of several instances in the City where parking is inadequate. At this point, he does not have a lot of suggestions to resolve this issue. He stated that a permit system is a possibility, although there are pitfalls associated with permit-parking.

It was suggested that, when the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) relocates to their new facility, perhaps their former clubhouse area could be used for parking. However, the future use of that site has not been determined.

Discussion on this will continue at the next meeting. No action was taken at this time.

- 2. Request to create Fire Marshal position in the Fire Department

Information was in the meeting packet.

Fire Chief Klug reported on his request. He explained that the creation of a Fire Marshall position could address issues related to fire inspections. Fire Chief Klug then provided historical information on fire inspections. Currently, fire inspections are to be done twice annually for every business.

Fire Chief Klug explained that ideally the position would be full-time. The estimated annual cost for a full-time position is currently \$107,000. Another possibility would be a part-time position. In that case, the cost of the position (approximately \$30,000) could be funded from the 2% Fire Dues.

Alderman Hass recommended that this request be referred to the 2021 budget process.

Alderman Weix stated that creation of this position could increase the efficiency and standardization of fire inspections.

Alderman Russell requested that, at the next meeting, City Administrator Johnson and Fire Chief Klug provide additional and more detailed cost information related to the position. No action was taken at this time.

VI. Minutes & Reports:

1. Minutes of May 18, 2020 meeting

The minutes were in the meeting packet.

Motion (Blake/Weix) to approve.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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2. Monthly Report - Fire Chief Klug

The report was in the meeting packet.

Fire Chief Klug reviewed the report. He noted that the report format has changed slightly, which should make it easier to read.

There has been an increase in requests to fill swimming pools this year. To date, there have been approximately 25 requests.

3. 2019 Annual Report - Police Department (will be distributed at meeting)

The report has been distributed. Police Chief Bennett answered questions related to the report.

4. Monthly Report - Police Chief Bennett

The report was in the meeting packet.

Police Chief Bennett answered questions related to the effect of COVID-19 on the Police Department.

Alderman Russell thanked the Police Department for their dedication during two recent incidents. He then thanked both the Fire Department and Police Department for their continued service.

5. Monthly Reports - Lincoln County Humane Society

Reports for two months were in the meeting packet.

6. Consider placing monthly reports on file

Motion (Blake/Weix) to place on file.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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VII. Establish date, time and location of next regular meeting

Monday, July 27th, 2020 at 5:15 P.M. in the City Hall Common Council Chambers.

VIII. Public Comment Period

Alderman Sabatke reported that he had received several complaints from citizens as a result of the cancellation of Gazebo Nights in 2020. He requested that City officials reconsider that decision.

IX. Adjournment

Motion (Blake/Weix) to adjourn. Carried. Adjourned at 6:29 P.M.