



MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2024 AT 6:30 PM

[BIT.LY/RCCOUNCIL11-12-2024](https://bit.ly/RCCOUNCIL11-12-2024)

COUNCIL ROOM, MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 450 S. MAIN ST., RICHLAND CENTER, WI 53581 & VIRTUALLY

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting was called to order by Mayor Coppernoll at 6:31 PM. Members present were Ron Fruit, Karin Tepley, Tom McCarthy, Mark Chambers, Kevin Melby, Melany Walters, Steve Downs, and Ryan Cairns.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Alderperson Tepley to waive the reading and approve the minutes of the October 1, 2024 meeting as presented. Seconded by McCarthy. Motion carried 8-0.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Motion by Alderperson Downs to approve the Council agenda. Seconded by Melby. Motion carried 8-0.

CITY AND UTILITY DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS AND CONCERNS

Utility Manager Scott Gald advised the Utility Commission will be meeting to discuss the budget. Upcoming plans include installing Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) meters and water meters in the spring. The Utility is exploring various ways to control costs and improve collaboration across departments. Utility Manager Gald and City Administrator Oliphant will be meeting with WPPI to identify ways to improve IT security and functionality.

Zoning Administrator Matt Williams noted a slight rise in permit requests and inquiries despite the change in seasons. Williams is actively collaborating with the County on various initiatives.

Library Director Stacy Pilla reported preparing the 2025 budget for the Library Board meeting on the 18th. The Library recently celebrated its 55th anniversary with a well-attended Open House on November 2nd, attracting over 200 participants.

Director Jasen Glasbrenner reported that the Economic Development department is primarily focusing on the redevelopment of the Orange Street corridor and housing. To achieve these goals, the department is implementing several strategies, including activating the Redevelopment Authority, modifying a \$2.5 million Congressional grant due to hospital plan changes, advancing housing subdivisions, and exploring new Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) districts. Additionally, the department is collaborating with the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation on Community Development Investment Grants for the Rockbridge Child Care Facility, Los Amigos, and an upcoming project that will be presented to the Common Council.

Director Glasbrenner also shared that Frontier Communications has been working with the Public Works department to receive the necessary approvals to install a citywide fiber optic overlay. The Public Works department is also engaged in winterization efforts and preparing for snow removal duties. Additionally, the department is working to improve standard operating procedures and inventory management practices. With the assistance of Darcy Perkins, the new Municipal Services Specialist, the department is working to enhance operational efficiency. This includes revising standard operating procedures and improving resource and inventory management practices, enabling a more proactive approach.

Clerk Amanda Keller reported a successful General Election with 747 absentee ballots received and a total voter turnout of 2,449, achieving a 90% voting rate. The election day ran smoothly thanks to the assistance of a remarkable team.

City Administrator Ashley Oliphant noted that the election necessitated considerable preparation and created a significant demand on the Clerk/Treasurer's office. With the election completed, focus shifted to finalizing the 2025 budget, processing open enrollment, and executing an agreement with represented personnel.

Police Chief Billy Jones reported that the Police Department is close to full staffing. Recently, one officer began working independently after completing field training, while another is nearing the end of phase one of training. The department is also seeking to fill a sergeant vacancy due to a recent departure, with several internal candidates under consideration. Call volumes remain high, averaging 170 to 190 calls per month. The Halloween festivities were well-received, with positive feedback from the community and high participation.

Parks & Recreation Director Jodi Meiden reported that the department is preparing to winterize the Aquatic Center and begin planning for next year. Halloween festivities in the park were successful, with nearly 600 kids joining the Trick or Treat Trail, and participating businesses decorated beautifully. The event continues to grow each year.

MAYOR AND ALDERPERSONS:

Aldersperson Ron Fruit expressed gratitude for the smooth operations on election day, noting the busyness but overall success. Fruit announced that the Tourism Commission will meet next week to review and finalize the 2025 budget. The meeting will include a new board member, allowing for a full commission to participate in the budget approval process.

Aldersperson Karin Tepley reiterated the Library Director's report and expressed a desire for an appointment to the vacant seat of the Library Board. She also shared that the Historic Preservation Commission received state feedback on the Vernon Thomson memorial sign, with changes needed. A meeting will be arranged to finalize the details.

Aldersperson Mark Chambers echoed Director Meiden's comments on a successful trick-or-treating event and noted the installation of lights for the Rotary Lights event. He reported the Park Board approving various sanctioned groups using park facilities and grounds for basketball, football, and church league volleyball. The Park Board will continue discussions on replacement or refurbishment of dugouts.

Aldersperson Melony Walters stated the Natatorium Board met recently. Director Mike Hardy is applying for a grant to refurbish the basketball courts, with plans to present to the Common Council after further development. They are also reviewing the 1987 City-County agreement in collaboration with Attorney Windle. Findings will be presented to the Common Council and County Board.

Aldersperson Steve Downs shared that the ADA Committee held an extended meeting to discuss its role and avenues to improve accessibility within the city. He highlighted the need for wheelchair ramps improvements at many intersections. The Committee is also working on prioritizing initiatives and accompanying grant opportunities.

Aldersperson Ryan Cairns reported that the Finance Committee is actively engaged in developing the 2025 budget.

Mayor Todd Coppernoll announced the approval of the Fire District's 2025 budget. The Joint Ambulance Committee is advocating for its reclassification from an advisory to a standing committee. Attorney Windle advised they are pursuing this change through a formal resolution. The outcome of this proposal will be determined at the next meeting.

TREASURERS REPORT: The Utility Treasurers Report was presented with the City's report unavailable.

PAYMENT OF BILLS: Motion by Aldersperson Melby to pay the November 12, 2024 bills as presented. Seconded by Aldersperson Downs. Motion carried 8-0.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION:

4. **Public Hearing in the Matter of State and Federal Aid for the Improvements at The Richland Airport (93C)**

Director of Public Works Jasen Glasbrenner provided an overview of the public hearing, which is required when seeking state and federal aid. The objective of the hearing is to identify prospective projects and secure funding for various airport projects and improvements. Notifications were disseminated to adjacent property owners and published in the Richland Observer. The proposed developments encompass land acquisition, procurement of snow removal equipment, reconstruction of taxiways and aprons, rehabilitation of runways, and other related activities in accordance with Wisconsin regulations.

Public Hearing Participation:

- Arlys, a pilot and president of the Buena Vista Flying Club, has over 20 years of experience at the airport. He noted that runway expansion joints are rough, affecting taxiing and takeoff, and emphasized the need for improvements. Additionally, he mentioned issues with airport lighting. He explained that both runway conditions and lighting must be addressed for safety reasons.

- Former Mayor Mike Kauffman, a pilot and flight instructor, indicated that the airport has been neglected and proposed forming an airport commission. Kauffman expressed his willingness to provide airport and aircraft education to interested alderpersons.
- Trevor, a Chicago based commercial pilot who travels here frequently, advised that without a hangar, he must utilize another airport. He advocated for the construction of more hangars.
- Art Simpson, a retired pilot, who learned to fly at the airport in 1971, emphasized the need for improvements at the airport, including better runway lighting. He noted that improving the airport could boost traffic and tourism. He echoed support for the construction of hangars, which may increase fuel sales.
- Eric, a New York based commercial pilot who learned to fly at the airport in the 1980s, stated he frequently uses the airport and reiterated the need for runway repairs. Due to limited hangar space, he recently purchased a hangar in Lone Rock, although it's not an ideal solution.
- Jason Edwards, operator of Edwards Aircraft Service in Boscobel, offered to provide assistance with airport improvements. He advised the airport is in disrepair and would benefit from offering a courtesy vehicle.

Motion by Alderperson Tepley to close the Public Hearing in the matter of state and federal aid for improvements at the Richland Airport. Seconded by Alderperson Downs. Motion carried unanimously.

5. **Consider Resolution Petitioning the Secretary of Transportation for Airport Improvement Aid for the Richland Airport (93C):** Director Glasbrenner reviewed the resolution which provides access to \$952,000 in federal aid for airport projects and improvements, with an additional \$263,000 anticipated in 2025. The Planning Commission unanimously approved the identified projects to receive funding, with the Department of Public Works also recommending approval. Motion by Alderperson Downs to waive the reading and adopt the Resolution Petitioning the Secretary of Transportation for Airport Improvement Aid for The Richland Airport (93C). Seconded by Walters. Motion carried 8-0.
6. **RICHLAND AIRPORT (93C) – AGENCY AGREEMENT AND FEDERAL BLOCK GRANT OWNER ASSURANCES:** Motion by Alderperson Tepley to approve the Agency Agreement and Federal Block Grant Owners Assurances for the Richland Airport (93C). Seconded by Alderperson Downs. Motion carried 8-0.
7. **RENEWAL OF MUNICIPAL LICENSES:** Motion by Melby to approve the Municipal Licenses as presented. Seconded by Tepley. Motion carried 8-0.
8. **2025-2026 COMMUNITY MEAL SITE AGREEMENT:** Parks & Recreation Director Jodi Mieden presented a renewal agreement between the City and County for the Community and Senior Center meal site service from January 2025 to December 2026. The County will continue to pay \$300 monthly for kitchen rental. Changes include adjusted service hours: from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. to 12:20 p.m., and meal service starting earlier at 11:45 a.m. Updates were also made to the Rise and Dine program schedule. The County now uses their own cell phone instead of a dedicated line. Overall, City-County meal site collaboration has been positive. Motion by Alderperson Chambers to approve the 2025-2026 Community Center Meal Site Agreement. Seconded by Downs. Motion carried 8-0.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

9. **CONSIDER THE REQUEST FOR THE APPLICATION OF ARLENE FRUIT TO DIVIDE A PARCEL OF LAND LOCATED AT 23741 COVERED BRIDGE DR. (TAX PARCEL 022-0741-4000):** Mayor Coppernoll reported that the Planning Commission and ETZ Board reviewed the application to subdivide this parcel and received no objections. The proposal aims to divide the parcel without immediate intentions for sale; however, it may be structured to facilitate a potential future sale. Motion by Alderperson Downs to approve the request for the application of Arlene Fruit to divide a parcel of land located at 23741 Covered Bridge Dr. (Tax Parcel 022-0741-4000). Seconded by Alderperson Tepley. Motion carried 7-0 with Alderperson Ron Fruit abstaining.

PUBLIC COMMENT: A member of the public expressed safety concerns at the intersection of Hive Drive and Highway 14, noting a recent accident and ongoing issues with traffic.

APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS, BOARDS AND CONFIRM APPOINTMENTS: Motion by Alderperson Walters to approve the following appointments. Seconded by Alderperson Downs. Motion carried unanimously.

- Abby Jongquist to the ADA committee
- Hope Donough to the Library Board
- Toni McCarvel to the Tourism Commission
- Planning Commission citizen members Mark Jelinek, Lisa Miller, and Ray Wilson to the Joint ETZ Board

CLOSED SESSION:

10. **Closed Session for the purpose of considering the represented employee agreement, investment of public funds, and the City Administrator employment agreement.** Motion by Alderperson Walters to enter Closed Session. Seconded by Alderperson McCarthy. Motion carried unanimously at 7:29 PM.

****CLOSED SESSION****

11. **Reconvene in open session.** Motion by Alderperson Downs to reconvene into open session. Seconded by Alderperson Chambers. Motion carried unanimously at 11:15 PM.

Motion by Alderperson McCarthy to approve the agreement with Panorama Estates as discussed in closed session, granting the authority to designated personnel to finalize details within the specified criteria. Seconded by Downs. Motion carried 8-0.

Motion by Alderperson Chambers to approve the Police Union agreement as discussed in closed session, granting the authority to designated personnel to finalize details within the specified criteria. Seconded by Alderperson Downs. Motion carried 7-0 with Alderperson Melby abstaining.

Motion by Alderperson Tepley to approve the agreement with the Administrator as discussed in closed session. Seconded by Alderperson Walters. Motion carried 8-0.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Alderperson Chambers to adjourn. Seconded by Alderperson Downs. Motion carried 8-0 at 11:20 PM.

Meeting Minutes Recorded by Clerk Amanda Keller