



MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL

TUESDAY, APRIL 15, 2025 AT 6:30 PM

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 6:30 PM. Members present were Ron Fruit, Karin Tepley, Tom McCarthy, Rachel Schultz, Melony Walters, Steve Downs, and Ryan Cairns. Absent: None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Alderperson Walters to waive the reading and approve the minutes of the March 4, 2025 regular meeting as presented. Seconded by Alderperson Downs. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Motion by Alderperson Tepley to approve the agenda. Seconded by Alderperson Fruit. Motion carried unanimously.

PROCLAMATION HONORING OUTGOING ALDERPERSONS: A special proclamation was presented honoring outgoing Alderperson Mark Chambers for his distinguished service highlighting lasting impact on the education and welfare of Richland Center citizens. Alderman Chambers expressed gratitude to the community.

CITY AND UTILITY DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS AND CONCERNS:

Director Glasbrenner reported the Buildings and Grounds Department has been preparing for spring, including improvements to ball fields, tree removal, and brush trimming. Glasbrenner also reported that the Street Department is actively collaborating with Utilities to clear power lines and patching roads. Adjustments are being made to mowing practices to reduce costs and support environmental sustainability by encouraging prairie grass growth, which also benefits local wildlife. The Public Works Committee welcomes public input on these changes.

Clerk Keller reported a successful Spring Election with over 50% voter turnout. Process improvements reduced staffing needs and contributed to a smooth, efficient, and user-friendly voting experience.

Financial Officer Molzof reported that her first two weeks have been very productive, especially regarding reconciliation efforts. She is confident the team will meet the auditors' requirements ahead of their field visit in May.

Utility Manager Gald reported the end of the winter moratorium, leading to disconnect notices for customers. A letter regarding a drinking water violation was sent due to clerical errors in reporting to the DNR, but there are no issues with the city's water. Preparations for next summer's DOT project on Highway 14 are underway, with wastewater assessing wire depths to avoid relocating primary wires. Efforts are ongoing to hold and potentially reduce wastewater rates. AMI electric and water installations are progressing, with about 500 water and 950 electric modules installed. Notification received regarding a 3% tariff from Honeywell on electric meters, with an option to delay it. Tree trimming and valve exercising are in progress.

Gald reported that the Richland Fire Department is adapting to new service demands, now utilizing drones for various operations, with five pilots and a second drone added to their fleet. They upgraded equipment, including a Can-Am UTV for transporting individuals and responding to frequent grass fires, essential for locating hot spots. Seven members recently achieved entry-level firefighter certification. A needs assessment for their 1953 building indicated \$23,500 is needed for upgrades. Additionally, Gald highlighted challenges with electric vehicle fires, which require significantly more water and costly single-use fire blankets for containment.

Administrator Oliphant reported that Financial Officer Molzof has been with the team for two weeks, helping to prepare for an upcoming audit. The city is working on several grants and donations opportunities and noted that an important article on population decline in Richland County is featured in the latest edition of The Municipality. Currently, all full-time positions are filled, but there are seasonal openings. Some upcoming efforts include preparing an RFP for garbage and recycling services, reviewing all municipal fees, and considering a development incentive policy.

MAYOR AND ALDERPERSONS:

Aldersperson Karin Tepley announced the completion of the library tagging project, which tagged nearly 40,000 items over two years for easier book checkouts. A landscaping project is upcoming, community volunteers are encouraged to participate. Programming remains robust with 13 youth programs attracting 248 participants and five adult programs.

Aldersperson Ron Fruit reiterated Clerk Keller's remarks regarding the recent election, which was notably successful.

Aldersperson Melony Walters announced that the Symons Natatorium Board received donations, including an updated key fob system, a new basketball hoop, and other maintenance supplies. Director Mike Hardy plans to apply for two grants: one for renovating the tennis and basketball courts to meet ADA standards, and another for trail signage and mapping behind the recreation complex and the former UW campus.

Mayor Todd Coppernoll introduced the newly elected District 2 Aldersperson Rachel Schultz. Coppernoll acknowledged the outstanding attendance of local citizens at the meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Financial Officer Molzof presented the Treasurer's Report for February and March, introducing a new column on interest rates. Discussions addressed finance charges and timing issues in bill processing.

PAYMENT OF BILLS: Motion by Aldersperson Cairns to pay the April 15, 2025 bills as presented. Seconded by Aldersperson Downs. Motion carried 7-0.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION

5. **Presentation from MarketPointe for a Potential GrandStay Hotel Development:** George Jansen from MarketPointe Development and Peggy Monaco from GrandStay Hospitality proposed a 52-room upscale GrandStay Hotel & Suites on Orange Street. The project would feature a mix of standard and extended-stay rooms, an indoor pool, a lobby bar area, and strong design elements reflecting the local community's character. The development team emphasized their commitment to partnering with local banks and investors, while also retaining partial ownership. Council members who visited an existing GrandStay noted the personalized decor options and efficient layout. No motion was made as the Council concluded that additional time was necessary to evaluate this proposal in relation to an earlier presentation by Cobblestone Hotels.
6. **Ordinance 2025-03 Tobacco Free Parks:** Attorney Windle presented Ordinance 2025-03, an amendment to the existing ordinance, Chapter 701 Park Regulation. The recommended measure prohibits the use of nicotine and tobacco products in any form within all City Parks. The ordinance provides enforcement penalties ranging from a minimum forfeiture of \$100 up to \$400 plus court costs. Motion by Aldersperson Downs to waive the reading and approve Ordinance 2025-03 Prohibiting the Use of Tobacco Products in Richland Center Parks. Seconded by Aldersperson Tepley. Motion carried 7-0.

FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION

7. **Authorization to Purchase Crack Seal:** Aldersperson Ryan Cairns reported the need to purchase crack seal material for routine street maintenance. The Public Works Department received three quotes, which were evaluated by the Public Works and Finance Committees. They recommend approving the purchase using Roadways/Equipment Repair Budget funds, not exceeding \$8,200. Motion by Aldersperson Cairns to approve the purchase of crack seal at a cost not to exceed \$8,200. Seconded by Aldersperson Downs. Motion carried 7-0.
8. **Request for End Loader Repair:** Motion by Aldersperson Cairns to approve the repair of an End Loader within the Street fleet, at a cost not to exceed \$3,200.00. Seconded by Aldersperson Walters. Motion carried 7-0.
9. **Resolution 2025-05 Consider Acceptance of a Sunshade Shelter Donation:** Public Works Director Glasbrenner presented a proposal to accept a \$12,400 donation from the Rotary Foundation

of Richland County for the purchase and installation of a sunshade shelter near the aquatic center splash pad. The shelter, designed to complement the existing facility, includes a removable tarp to reduce UV exposure and improve visitor comfort. The Park Board, Public Works Committee, and city staff have reviewed and recommended the project. Glasbrenner and the Council Members expressed their appreciation to the Rotary Foundation and Keith Behling for their contribution. Motion by Alderperson Tepley to approve Resolution 2025-05 Acceptance of a Monetary Donation from the Rotary Foundation of Richland County for the purchase and installation of a sunshade shelter. Seconded by Alderperson Cairns. Motion carried 7-0.

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION

- 10. Application For Temporary Class "B"/ "Class B" Retailer License for Richland County Performing Arts Council on 5/10/2025:** Motion by Alderperson Downs to approve a Temporary Class "B"/ "Class B" Retailer License for Richland County Performing Arts Council for "The Jammers" Band on May 10, 2025 at 182 N Central Ave. Seconded by Alderperson Fruit. Motion carried unanimously.
- 11. Temporary Alcohol Beverage License for NASCAR Fans United G.R.A.C.E Team, Quilt Gala on 5/17/2025 from 6pm-11pm at the RC Community Center:** Motion by Alderperson Tepley to approve a Temporary Class "B"/ "Class B" Retailer License for NASCAR Fans United G.R.A.C.E. Team for the Quilt Gala on May 17, 2025 at 1050 N Orange St. Seconded by Alderperson Fruit. Motion carried unanimously.
- 12. Street Closing Application for The Creative Outlet Block Pool Party, 100 Block of East Court Street between 10am and 5pm on 8/16/2025:** Motion by Alderperson Downs to approve the Street Closing of the 100 Block of East Court Street for The Creative Outlet Block Pool Party on August 16, 2025 from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Seconded by Alderperson Schultz. Motion carried unanimously.
- 13. Rodeo Parade Permit for 6/14/2025:** Alderperson Ron Fruit reported the Rodeo Parade which is scheduled for June 14, 2025 will proceed along its traditional route, as construction activities have concluded from the previous year allowing floats to set up in the hospital parking lot. Motion by Alderperson Downs to approve the Rodeo Parade Permit for June 16, 2025. Seconded by Alderperson Tepley. Motion carried unanimously.
- 14. Memorial Day Parade Permit for 5/26/2025:** Alderperson Ron Fruit reported the Memorial Day Parade organized by the Bower-Gunmill-Dalton VFW Post 2267 scheduled for May 26, 2025 will proceed along its traditional route , as construction activities have concluded from the previous year. Motion by Alderperson Downs to approve the Memorial Day Parade Permit for May 26, 2025. Seconded by Alderperson McCarthy. Motion carried unanimously.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION

- 15. Consider the Application of Shawn's Auto Repair of Richland Center for a Conditional Use Permit to Allow an Auto Repair Garage at 184 E. Mill St. (Tax Parcel ID 276-2100-0210):** Mayor Coppernoll reported that Zoning Administrator Williams identified the permit for the long-standing business had expired. The owner was notified of the permitting requirements. The Planning Commission reviewed the application and recommended its approval. Motion by Alderperson Downs to approve the application of Shawn's Auto Repair of Richland Center for a conditional use permit to allow an auto repair shop at 184 E. Mill St. (Tax Parcel ID 276-2100-0210) with conditions as presented. Seconded by Alderperson Walters. Motion carried unanimously.
- 16. Consider the Application of A&G of Richland Center for a Conditional Use Permit to Allow a Car Wash and Oil Changing Service at 1001 US Hwy 14 E. (Tax Parcel ID 276-2811-2000):** Mayor Coppernoll reported A&G of Richland Center has applied for a permit to operate a car wash and oil change service at 1001 US Highway 14 East, following a change in ownership. The Planning Commission reviewed the

application and recommended its approval. Motion by Alderperson Tepley to approve the application of A&G of Richland Center for a conditional use permit to allow a car wash and oil changing service at 1001 US Hwy 14 E. (Tax Parcel ID 276-2811-2000) with conditions as presented. Seconded by Alderperson Downs. Motion carried unanimously.

17. **Consider the Application of Bindl Tire & Auto for a Conditional Use Permit to Allow an Auto Repair Garage or Facility at 243 E Court St (Tax Parcel ID 276-2100-0930):** Mayor Coppernoll reported Zoning Administrator Williams shared that the business had significantly improved site conditions. Recent photos demonstrated noticeable cleanup efforts. Williams and the Planning Commission reviewed the application and recommended its approval. Motion by Alderperson Downs to approve the application of Bindl Tire & Auto of Richland Center for a conditional use permit to allow an auto repair shop at 243 E. Court St. (Tax Parcel ID 276-2100-0930) with conditions as presented. Seconded by Alderperson Tepley. Motion carried unanimously.
18. **Consider the Application of Guru Ramdas Shaa LLC for a Conditional Use Permit to Allow an Auto Repair Garage or Facility at 789 Sextonville Rd (Tax Parcel ID 276-2100-7581):** City Attorney Michael Windle clarified that the Zoning Ordinance includes a 100-foot buffer requirement from residential districts for similar uses. Because the property is within that distance, the Council could not proceed under the “similar use” provision without violating the existing ordinance. Motion by Alderperson Downs to approve an Auto Repair Garage or Facility at 789 Sextonville Rd (Tax Parcel 276-2100-7581). No second was made. Motion by Alderperson Downs to waive the 100-foot rule and approve the Conditional Use Permit under the similar use provision of an Auto Repair Garage or Facility at 789 Sextonville Rd (Tax Parcel 276-2100-7581). No second was made. No action was taken, and the matter was referred back to the Planning Commission pending legal review by Attorney Windle of zoning amendment options.
19. **Ordinance 2025-04 Consider Petition for Annexation from Michael Lamont for Tax Parcel 022-1711-1000:** Mayor Coppernoll reviewed the annexation petition filed on March 3, 2025 for the land owned by Michael Lamont. The annexed area, with a current population of zero, is zoned as one and two-family residential (R2), designated as part of Ward 18. The City will pay the Town of Richland a total of \$428.60 in property taxes over five years, based on the last tax year, 2024. Motion by Alderperson Walters to approve Ordinance 2025-03 annexing Michael Lamont tax parcel 022-1711-1000 as described in the Zoning Administrator’s materials and CSM. Seconded by Alderperson Fruit. Motion carried 7-0.

APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS, BOARDS AND CONFIRM APPOINTMENTS

20. **Announcement of District 3 (Wards 7, 8, and 9) Vacancy:** Mayor Coppernoll announced a vacant seat for District 3 (Wards 7, 8, & 9) due to a recent resignation. Coppernoll invited the public to express interest in the seat and reported receiving notice from five interested individuals. Three candidates attending the meeting introduced themselves and shared their interest in serving: John Collins, Doug Martyniuk, and George Hegge. John Collins withdrew his name from consideration to support new community involvement. Coppernoll noted that a decision will be made to fill the seat at the following meeting scheduled for May 6, 2025.
21. **Annual Reorganization Appointments:**
 - **Nominate & Elect Council President:** Alderperson Tepley nominated Ryan Cairns as Council President. No other nominations were received. Mayor Coppernoll closed the nominations. Ryan Cairns was elected Council President unanimously.
 - **Nominate & Elect Two Council Representatives to the Utility Commission:** Steve Downs nominated himself to serve as Council Representative to the Utility Commission. Karin Tepley nominated Melony Walters to serve as Council Representative to the Utility Commission. Confirmations carried unanimously.

- **Appointment of Finance Commission:** Mayor Todd Coppernoll initially proposed appointing all eight council members to the Finance Committee to ensure broad engagement in the budget development process. He emphasized the challenges posed by inflation, levy limits, and the need for early and thorough participation from the full Council. Concerns were raised regarding procedural clarity and potential redundancy in approving finance items twice. After discussion, the Mayor agreed to reinstate a traditional three-member committee structure, appointing Ryan Cairns (Chair), Karin Tepley, and Melony Walters. Amended Motion by Alderperson Schultz to approve the appointments. Seconded by Alderperson Downs. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Appointment of Public Safety Committee:** Mayor Coppernoll appointed Ron Fruit (Chair), Steve Downs, and the District 3 Alderperson to the Public Safety Committee. Motion by Alderperson McCarthy to approve the appointments. Seconded by Alderperson Downs. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Appointment of Public Works/Property Committee:** Mayor Coppernoll appointed Ron Fruit (Chair), Rachel Schultz, and Melony Walters to the Public Works/Property Committee. Motion by Alderperson Tepley to approve the appointments. Seconded by Alderperson Downs. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Appointment of Tourism Commission:** Mayor Coppernoll appointed Ron Fruit and citizen members Karin Tepley, Toni McCarvel, Dennis Fry as Hotel Representative, and Jayme Walsh as Downtown Representative to the Tourism Commission. Motion by Alderperson Walters to approve the appointments. Seconded by Alderperson Schultz. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Appointment of Natatorium Board:** Mayor Coppernoll appointed Rachel Schultz to the Natatorium Board, Melony Walters is currently serving a 2-year term. Motion by Alderperson Fruit to approve the appointments. Seconded by Alderperson Downs. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Appointment of the Planning Commission:** Mayor Coppernoll reappointed citizen Ray Wilson to the Planning Commission and noted the mayor serves as Chair while Ryan Cairns and Karin Tepley are currently serving a 2-year term. Motion by Alderperson Walters to approve the appointments. Seconded by Alderperson McCarthy. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Appointment of Tree Board:** Mayor Coppernoll reappointed Steve Downs to the Tree Board, Ryan Cairns (Chair) and Ron Fruit are currently serving a 2-year term. Motion by Alderperson Tepley to approve the appointments. Seconded by Alderperson Walters. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Appointment of Joint Ambulance Committee:** Mayor Coppernoll appointed District 3 Alderperson to the Joint Ambulance Committee, Mayor Todd Coppernoll will continue to serve. Motion by Alderperson Fruit to approve the appointments. Seconded by Alderperson Schultz. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Appointment of Fire District:** Mayor Coppernoll reappointed Tom McCarthy and Steve Downs to the Fire District. Motion by Alderperson Walters to approve the appointments. Seconded by Alderperson McCarthy. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Appointment of Personnel & Insurance Committee:** Mayor Coppernoll reappointed Melony Walters (Chair), Ryan Cairns, and Tom McCarthy to the Personnel & Insurance Committee. Motion by Alderperson Fruit to approve the appointments. Seconded by Alderperson Tepley. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Appointment to the Board of Review:** Mayor Coppernoll appointed Rachel Schultz, Tom McCarthy, and District 3 Alderperson to the Board of Review with Karin Tepley as an alternate; Mayor Todd Coppernoll and Clerk Amanda Keller are required to serve. Motion by Alderperson Walters to approve the appointments. Seconded by Alderperson McCarthy. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Appointment of the Park Board:** Mayor Coppernoll appointed the District 3 Alderperson and citizen Brad Wegner to the Park Board. Motion by Alderperson Tepley to approve the appointments. Seconded by Alderperson Fruit. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Appointment to the Historic Preservation:** Mayor Coppernoll reappointed Karin Tepley and citizens Gretchen Jelinek and Russ Shannon to Historic Preservation. Motion carried unanimously.

- **Appointment to the Library Board:** Mayor Coppernoll appointed Karin Tepley and citizen Lisa Rewald to the Library Board. Motion by Alderperson Walters to approve the appointments. Seconded by Alderperson Schultz. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Appointment to the Housing Authority Board:** Mayor Coppernoll appointed citizens Bruce Kaasa and Trinity Fuss to the Housing Authority Board. Motion by Alderperson Downs to approve the appointments. Seconded by Alderperson Walters. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Appointment to the Police Commission:** Mayor Coppernoll reappointed citizen Pete Walsh to the Police Commission. Motion by Alderperson Tepley to approve the appointments. Seconded by Alderperson Fruit. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Appointment of City Assessor:** Mayor Coppernoll appointed Accurate Appraisal, LLC as the City Assessor. Motion by Alderperson Walters to approve the appointment. Seconded by Alderperson Downs. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Appointment of the City Newspaper:** Mayor Coppernoll reappointed the Richland Observer as the City Newspaper. Motion by Alderperson Walters to approve the appointment. Seconded by Alderperson Downs. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Jim Heiar expressed concern about property conditions on the 600 block of North Jefferson Street. Mayor Coppernoll requested a private meeting to discuss the matter with Mr. Heiar.

CLOSED SESSION

- 22. Closed Session for the purpose of discussing three separate matters - Investment of Public Funds, Update on Ongoing Litigation, and Report on Conduct of City Personnel:** Motion by Alderperson Downs to enter Closed Session. Seconded by Alderperson Tepley. Motion carried unanimously at 9:01 PM.

****CLOSED SESSION****

- 23. Reconvene in open session:** Motion by Alderperson Tepley to reconvene into open session. Seconded by Alderperson Walters. Motion carried unanimously at 10:36 PM.
- a) Motion by Alderperson McCarthy to direct Director Glasbrenner to conduct a financial analysis for both hotels with the Ehlers with cash on hand not to exceed \$20,000. Seconded by Alderperson Steve Downs. Motion carried 7-0.
 - b) Motion by Alderperson Walters to accept the settlement offered contingent upon waiver of interest fees and with prejudice. Seconded by Alderperson Tepley. Motion carried 7-0.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Alderperson Downs to adjourn. Seconded by Alderperson Tepley. Motion carried unanimously at 10:38 PM.

Meeting Minutes Recorded by Clerk Amanda Keller