

CITY OF WATERLOO COMMON COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES: March 18, 2021

Digital audio files are archived with these written minutes additionally serving as the official record.

1. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & ROLL CALL. Mayor Quimby called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Alderpersons present: Rhynes, Schoenwetter, Kuhl, Griffin, Thomas, Stinnett and Petts. Others attending remotely or in-person: Mark Herbst; Amber Gerber with the Courier; Parks Coordinator Gabe Haberkorn; Fire Chief Wes Benisch; Utility Superintendent Barry Sorenson; Utility Office Manager Joy Bisco; Police Chief Denis Sorenson; WLOO videographers; and Clerk/Treasurer Hansen. The pledge of allegiance was recited.
2. MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL: March 4, 2021. MOTION: Moved by Kuhl, 2nd by Griffin to approve the minutes. VOICE VOTE: Motion carried.
3. CITIZEN INPUT / PUBLIC COMMENT. Maureen Giese objected to website items and to Clerk/Treasurer office use of Facebook to convey municipal communications. She objected to previous website items, now not on the current site.

4. MEETING SUMMARIES. Brief verbal descriptions were provided, see respective minutes for details.

a. 3/9 Library Board	b. 3/10 Cable TV Regulatory Board
c. 3/16 Community Development Authority	d. 3/18 Finance, Insurance & Personnel Comm

5. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

- a. February Reports Of City Officials And Contract Service Providers. MOTION: Moved by Schoenwetter, seconded by Griffin to approve the consent agenda items. VOICE VOTE: Motion carried.

i. Parks	iv. Public Works	vii. Water & Light Utility Commission
ii. Fire & EMS	v. Police	viii. Watertown Humane Society
iii. Building Inspections	vi. Library Board	

6. RECOMMENDATION OF BOARDS, COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS

- a. Finance, Insurance & Personnel Committee

- i. February 2021 Financial Statements

1. General Disbursements, \$1,593,541.27. MOTION: Moved by Thomas, seconded by Kuhl to approve disbursements in the amount stated. ROLL CALL VOTE: Ayes: Schoenwetter, Rhynes, Kuhl, Thomas, Griffin, Stinnett and Petts. Noes: none. Motion carried.
2. Payroll, \$67,540.09. MOTION: Moved by Thomas, seconded by Schoenwetter to approve payroll in the amount stated. ROLL CALL VOTE: Ayes: Schoenwetter, Rhynes, Kuhl, Thomas, Griffin, Stinnett and Petts. Noes: none. Motion carried.
3. Treasurer's Report & Budget Reports. MOTION: Moved by Thomas, seconded by Rhynes to accept the reports. ROLL CALL VOTE: Ayes: Schoenwetter, Rhynes, Kuhl, Thomas, Griffin, Stinnett and Petts. Noes: none. Motion carried.

- ii. Resolution #2021-07 Revising The Employee Handbook As It Relates To Sick Leave And The Start Of Health Insurance. MOTION: Moved by Thomas, seconded by Griffin to table the item until a later date. VOICE VOTE: Motion carried.

- b. Water & Light Commission

- i. Resolution #2021-08 Authorizing An Increase In Sanitary Sewer Rates And The Restructuring Of How Sewer Rates Are Calculated. DISCUSSION: Alder Thomas asked Superintendent Sorenson to provide background. Sorenson said: the utility had lost a major customer; a \$168,000 revenue shortfall was anticipated due the loss; Utility Commissioners had reviewed three options presented by staff and had formulated a fourth option which it was before the City Council. The proposal created a tiered charge for sewer service based on the water meter size. In response to a Mark Herbst question, Sorenson said if a large new customer were to seek service sewer rates could be reduced. In reply to a Petts questions, Sorenson said the last rate increase was 2018. Bisco said there were no costs to reduce, adding the Utility had to clean sanitary sewer flow to DNR standards discharging it into the river. Failure to do so would mean the loss of treatment plant's license. In reply to Rhynes questions, Sorenson said yesterday the engineer estimated a 10% - 15% reduction in operating cost due

to the loss of the customer. He said cost were being shifted to other customers. He said the sewer still has fixed costs. Sorenson listed the fixed costs. He said sizing the treatment plant was a dilemma for bringing in wet industry or not. In reply to Quimby questions, he said the savings was not considered when formulating the increase. He said a huge increase was coming, likely in two years. He said Commissioners did not want to raise rates for the future treatment plant costs. He said they wanted only to cover the costs due to the customer loss. He said the loss of this one wet industry is equal to 500 new residential homes. He invited attendees to come down to the office to discuss further. Kuhl said the increase would affect the profitability of the affected businesses. He asked if they had been notified. Bisco said no because it had not been approved. It was clarified that the proposal was just the meter, fixed charge – not volume. The Mayor said our rates would be different from Marshall's because they have more residential parcels and Waterloo had more business. Sorenson said the volume charge would be consistent across communities. Petts looked up Marshall's rates online and said the Marshall 6" rate was \$323, Waterloo \$924. She said Marshall's 2 inch rate was \$56, Waterloo \$148. She said the increases were excessive. Petts asked if there had been a public hearing, or input from customers? The Mayor said no. Sorenson said these rates would change drastically, doubling in the next two years with the sewer plant updates. He said this proposal is to get the Utility through the next two years. Petts said there must be a better way.

Looking at his bill, Rhynes asked how customers know their meter size? And how they would determine where they are at, and what level they are going to? Sorenson and Bisco said the size that determines the sewer charge is on the bill under the water charge section. Rhynes said his bill just shows a dollar value for the water figure. Sorenson said information was on the website. Sorenson said the size could be reduced by a homeowner or plumber. Rhynes asked if, no matter how many customers, the costs are fixed, is there savings in chemicals. He asked to see additional information and a cost analysis. Sorenson said the cost analysis was the one-sheet of paper distributed to Alders. The Mayor said anything greater than the savings would go towards the future treatment plant update. Sorenson said a cost study costs \$20,000. Sorenson said a study would be done when a proposal for updating the treatment plant was presented. Petts and Quimby asked questions about interpreting the handout. Bisco and Sorenson described the handout. Petts said 63 customers get a sizable increase. Sorenson said those with 1 inch water services could have a plumber change it to 5/8 inch, to reduce the monthly recurring charge. Sorenson said Commissioners wanted the charge more directed towards volume, his preference was to have the base charge higher because it was guaranteed income. Thomas said Commissioners were not happy with the numbers that came across. He said treatment plant update planning was taking place. Sorenson clarified that the proposed option was option #4. Rhynes asked if these changes in charges were arbitrary. Sorenson replied yes. Bisco, Quimby and Rhynes calculated the rate of increase for a residential 1" customers. Bisco confirmed an average 1" customer would have a \$34.78 increase per month. Sorenson clarified that the proposed option #4. Bisco said the scale used was in the ordinance and was now being applied. Kuhl said it was the responsibility of the Utility to review the ordinances. Hansen asked about Town of Portland users. Bisco and Sorenson described services provided to the Town of Portland. Sorenson talked about fixed versus volume, and the ability of users to change a charge based on less use. MOTION: Moved by Kuhl, seconded by Schoenwetter to approve the resolution as presented. ROLL CALL VOTE: Ayes: Schoenwetter, Rhynes, Kuhl, Thomas, Griffin and Stinnett. Noes: Petts. Motion carried.

7. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS. # Haberkorn referenced the Firemen's Park Easter Hunt.
8. ADJOURNMENT. Moved by Schoenwetter, seconded by multiple to adjourn. Motion carried. Approximate time: 8:16 p.m.



Attest:
Mo Hansen, Clerk/Treasurer