

***Denotes things to watch for in the future and things that need action!!! Please let your voices be heard.**

Two Rivers City Council Meeting

Observer Summary

4-7-2025

Highlights:

- The City Manager stated the three incumbents who ran in the April 1st election (Scott Stechmesser, Tim Petri, and Bill LeClair) were all reelected. The City Clerk is one of two Clerks awarded a grant in a three-state region to attend the International Municipal Clerks Conference. The City Hall elevator upgrade has been completed. The annual utility shut off moratorium ends on April 15th. The Parks and Recreation Department will be holding a six-session Summer Kayaking Program this summer.
- The City Council:
 - Adopted a proclamation designating April 18th as Line Worker Appreciation Day.
 - Upheld the denial of a variance from Sex Offender Residency Restrictions for an applicant.
 - Approved a resolution supporting reauthorization of State funding for the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.
 - Awarded the contract for paving Pierce/21st Streets (through Neshotah Park) to Northeast Asphalt Inc. of Greenville based on its lowest qualified bid.
 - Approved a policy amendment to the City's Revenue Recognition Policy, retroactive to January 1, 2024, to state that revenues may be recognized if received within 60 days following year-end, except that grant revenue may be recognized within 180 days following year-end.
 - Adopted the report "City Strategic Goals and Objectives – Review of 2024 Accomplishments and Updating Goals for 2025".

- Authorized a 3 percent wage increase, retroactive to January 1, 2025, for the City Manager position. (This is consistent with the wage increase for other non-union employees.)
- Appointed Patricia Klein to a three-year term to the Plan Commission.

Meeting time: 1 hour, 20 minutes

Two Rivers City Council Meeting

4-21-2025

Highlights:

- No citizens spoke at the Public Hearing on authorizing special assessments for the paving of several city streets. The Council adopted the resolution.
- At the Public Hearing on adding short term rentals as a permitted use in Single Family Residential Districts, one citizen spoke against the proposal arguing it allowed a business in a residential district. The Council adopted the ordinance.
- During the Public Input section, one resident protested the difficulty involved in adding solar panels to his property within the city.
- The City Manager stated the application deadline for the City Manager position is April 28th, with the plan to start the person hired by mid-July. The Washington Street bridge will be closed for at least three weeks starting on April 21st due to the Memorial Drive project; Memorial Drive is slated to be reopened by Memorial Day. The Woodland Drive compost site has re-opened for the season. A climbing wall will be installed at Neshotah Park. Taco Bell will not start construction until August. Two Rivers representatives (including the City Manager) will be visiting the Sister City of Domazlice, Czech Republic for its 2024 Liberation Day observance. Public and private representatives of the city met with representatives of the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers regarding harbor issues (including shoaling).
- The Police Chief shared his Department has formed a local entry team which will become involved in situations which do not rise to the level of involvement by Metro Drug. He stated the Department does not condone vigilantism by citizens which is an infringement of rights and urged people to contact the Police Department with concerns.
- The City Council:

- Adopted a proclamation designating May 4-10, 2025 as Municipal Clerks Week.
- Awarded the contract for reconstruction of Harbor, 16th and Emmet Streets to Vinton Construction of Manitowoc.
- Adopted a resolution authorizing Outdoor Recreation Grant application to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for upgrades to Riverside Park.

Meeting time: 1 hour, 44 minutes

Two Rivers School District Meeting

Observer Summary

4-14-2025

Highlights:

There was a report on winter sports participation, 99 students were involved with a sport.

Heather Ihlenfeldt from the Senior Center spoke about the annual Back to School Carnival as well as other things they do to support students such as hair cut vouchers and a caring tree at Christmas.

The Representative from USI insurance spoke about tweaks that have been made to the self-funded insurance plan based on participant feedback.

Three resignations at the end of the school year were accepted. So far, there are significantly less staff resigning than last year.

The Board Members did exit interviews with the senior students and discussed the conversations they have had.

There was no mention of the \$500,000 budget deficit that has been mentioned. Seems like a lot gets decided in closed session.

Two Rivers School District Meeting

4-28-2025

Highlights:

The board was reorganized after the election and Tim Klinkner was elected President.

Two Rivers School District was approved by DPI to offer a Wisconsin Global Education Achievement Certificate.

One resident asked about the possible \$500,000 deficit and what the district's policy is on males in girls' bathrooms. The board did not provide answers to her questions.

There was an update on Act 20. All students in 4K through grade 4 have been assessed. Only 6 4K students were found to be at risk. However, 45% of the grade 1 through 4 students need a Personal Reading Plan.

There has been a yearly drop in the GPA of 9th graders. A task force is working on remedies for this including better preparation of middle school students for high school.

Manitowoc Public School District Meeting

Observer Summary

4-8-2025

Highlights:

Public Input:

School Board members who were leaving the board were thanked for their years of service, an unsuccessful candidate (Brayden Myer) for school board listed all the things that the school board has done wrong over the last few years including listening to ALLY and the LWV who are part of the Democratic Party, a parent spoke in support of keeping Riverview school open because of its accessibility and pool program.

Board Agenda:

The board asked to have the personnel report removed from the consent agenda and asked about the 14 resignations and 2 retirements. Board member Spaulding questioned why paraprofessional turnover has been higher than usual and asked the Tech Ed person in attendance why he was resigning and if he had any insights he would like to share. The Tech Ed person stated lack of opportunities, stress, behavior issues, facility improvements not going to happen soon, and the need for more space at the High School.

The student representative to the board gave a report and highlighted the successful candidate's forum that the students conducted for school board candidates.

Superintendent Report:

Interim Superintendent Thennes welcomed the newly elected board members to the board and thanked the community for supporting the borrowing referendum with 60% of the vote. He also presented the board members who are leaving their positions with certificates of appreciation.

The Facility Advisory Committees are continuing to meet monthly and are working on a plan for prioritizing projects for the buildings. He also praised the staff volunteers for all the committee work they have been doing looking at goals and plans for getting students to return to the district.

Other Business:

The district is going to be coming up with a policy regarding naming rights which will include a screening process that will go through the Superintendent.

The Curriculum Committee is working on making sure that there is curriculum consistency from school to school.

Summer School is going back to the old format and it looks like the diverse focus is increasing enrollment already.

The recent staff survey was discussed. Although there was a lot of positives in the recent survey there continues to be concerns regarding student behaviors. Although there have been some gains as a result of the SFA curriculum regarding behavior at the elementary level there needs to be more done at the middle school. They are looking at social/emotional curriculum and supporting staff and students around mental health needs.

Board member Spaulding asked to table the proposal to increase the teachers' salaries by 2.95% for next year until the new board was instated. The motion passed.

Chartwell's 5-year contract for food service with yearly renewal was passed with a 3% increase.

Board President made a statement about the fact that he will be declining any position as board president or committee chair because he feels these duties should be spread out to other members of the board and not the same person year after year.

Manitowoc Public School District Meeting

4-29-2025

Highlights:

New board members David Bowman, Ann Holsen, and Mary Lofy Blahnik were sworn in. The Organizational Meeting was called to order by Superintendent Lee Thennes. Board member Able moved to move forward a slate of officers including: Biff Hansen for President, Keith Shaw for Vice President, and Kerry Trask for treasurer. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. Laurie

Braun was nominated to serve as Board Secretary and the Director of Business to be named as the Deputy Treasurer. Both items were passed.

Unfinished Business: The board passed a 2.9% raise for Administrative Staff and all other District staff.

Hansen will stay on as CESA 7 Board Rep and Trask will continue to be the representative to the WASB convention, with Bowman as his alternate.

Meeting went into closed session to discuss Superintendent contract.

Manitowoc Common Council

Observer Summary

4-21-2025

Highlights:

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Justin Nickels at 6:30 pm

Proclamations:

April Parkinson's Awareness Month

May 4-10 National Travel and Tourism Week and Professional Municipal Clerks Week

May 11-17 National Police Week

May 15 Peace Officers' Memorial Day

Public Hearings;

There were 4 public hearings with no parties to speak to the matter.

Transitional housing use at 1201 S. 10th Street and one at 1222 S. 7th Street. These are requested sites for people needing restoration recovery transitional living.

Committee Reports:

Approval of listed Special Events to be held in Manitowoc during the year.

Approval of Red Arrow Parking lot be one way along beach and angle parking.

Approval of several grants.

Approval of stop sign at Summit Street and South 21st Street.

Approval of ordinances to regulate Swimming Pools, Hot Tubs and Spas.

Approval of ordinance to regulate Fences and Walls.

Approval of Restoration Recovery use to establish Transitional Housing Use at 1201 S. 10th Street and at 1222 S 7th Street.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:01 pm

Manitowoc County Board Meeting

Observer Summary- JoEllen Gramling

4-15-2025

Highlights:

Regular meeting Cty Exec Ziegelbauer and Chairperson Martell proclaimed May as Foster Care Month; 131 children are in out of-home care in Manitowoc County. They also proclaimed May as National Therapy Animal Day

REPORTS: Ben Peters from Mani County United Way, Laura Apfelbeck, UW-Extension FoodWise Coordinator – Manitowoc County Hunger Coalition, and others presented statistics from 2023-24 Food Security Survey. 30% of households in Manitowoc Cty experience food insecurity. In the Manitowoc School District, 2000 students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch (these students are food-insecure). This is 30% to 40% of the student population. About 100 students are homeless. Grow It Forward (a food pantry) experienced a 21% reduction in food resources due to federal cuts, while pantry visits increased 30%. The director of the Salvation Army presented similar statistics for their food pantry and called for persons in power to support policies to empower food programs. Sup Hansen noted that Peter's Pantry has tripled the amount of food they need to buy to fill community needs. By far the majority of people receiving food assistance are employed.

CONSENT AGENDA (Any routine or non-controversial items)

Appointments by County Executive: 1. Appoint Catherine Wagner to Board of Health to succeed Shannon Kanter for two-year term expiring April 2027. 2. Appoint Jason Orth to Traffic Safety Commission.

Ordinances and Resolutions 1. From the Land Conservation Committee: A resolution urging the State Legislature to supporting increased county conservation base staffing grant. 2. From the Planning and Park Committee: Ordinances amending zoning map for David Pekarske (Town of Cato), Bryce Fischer and Amy Johnson (Manitowoc Rapids), Vogel Family Farm (Manitowoc Rapids), Randall and Anne Sellen (Schleswig), and Nancie Cayemberg (Two Rivers).

COMMITTEE REPORTS, RESOLUTIONS, ORDINANCES

>Aging & Disability Board: Supervisor Hacker reported that the ADRC business manager hired in January has resigned; Dir Hutterer will fill the role until another candidate is hired. Three additional openings exist; recommendations from the Board are welcome. ADRC received a marketing grant in February to promote awareness of their many programs, one of which is the nutrition program which provided 11,253 home delivered meals in Jan and Feb 2025. Dementia care training will begin again in May.

>Board of Health: Supervisor Metzger: Influenza, RSV and Covid activity is low. WIC report for March is 1,164 participants.

>Finance Committee: Supervisor Hansen reported that discussions have started with the sheriffs' department re cameras and videotaping. The Board unanimously approved a resolution authorizing \$2.57 million bonds for highway projects. Interest rate to be determined at a future time as rates in general are in flux at the moment.

>Land Conservation Committee/UW-Extension Education and Agriculture Committee: Supervisor Engelbrecht reported that the Wildlife Damage Abatement Program budget was amended for 2025 due to additional costs to process wild game for donation. The program allows hunters to donate excess deer taken to provide others with healthy food.

>Planning & Park Commission: Supervisor Falkowski gave a brief report. Rezoning was dealt with under the Consent Agenda. Ten ordinance violations were forwarded to corporate counsel for consideration.

>Public Safety Committee: Supervisor Falkowski reported that the new Deputy Emergency Management Director is Melissa Nielson. Annual corrections facility tour scheduled for June 11.

>Public Works Committee: Supervisor Sitkiewitz gave a brief report. The Recycling Center processed 2,700 tons of recyclables last year, with only 2.5% being unable to be processed and sent to the landfill. This is a very low residual rate and shows that the public is doing a good job of recycling the right materials. Annual hazardous materials recycling event will be May 16 (farms and businesses) and May 17 (residential). This will again be a drive-through event at the highway shop. Reminder to the supervisors that the repairs that were made to the courthouse dome are temporary and will need to be revisited in the future.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: IT security training scheduled for just before the May Board meeting. Also hoping to fit in another presentation by the Human Services Director; notice will be published when it is scheduled. Meeting adjourned at 6:18 pm

This County Board meeting (4/15/25) is available for viewing at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aMbP_v91xJA&t=100s

Manitowoc County Human Services Board Monthly Meeting

Observer Summary

4-24-2025

Highlights:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Jim Brey at 4:15 with a quorum present. There was no public comment. Minutes were approved.

Education Topic: Supported Independent Living

Betsy Johnson reported on Point Creek, which is subsidized housing and support services for people with a mental health diagnosis and substance abuse disorder. This project is privately owned and is located near Citizen Park. It started in 2014 with a family group home of eight beds. There are now 15 beds in furnished apartments, most of which are remodeled and serve one person. There is a

community living center where residents get support services, have enrichment activities, and can socialize.

Support services include monitoring medication, transportation, shopping, financial management, and employment assistance. Rent and fees for services are taken out of the resident's SSI or other benefit checks. This offers a least restrictive environment while it ensures the residents have their needs met. It saves \$80,000 annually as without these services this group may end up hospitalized or in higher level of care. It is unique as no other counties are known to have such facilities. Residents are ages 20 to 70. Many times, they move on to other independent housing, but with the current shortage, that is difficult to find.

Financial Report

Jessica Huss reported that the deficit for 2024 is at \$2.10 million. This year accounting shows a balance. Higher expenses are seen in vehicle repaired/maintenance, insurance, and residential care. The number of days juveniles were in secured detention went up in March from three to 27 with a cost of \$4,420.

County Executive Bob Zeigelbauer reported that the auditors found some of the errors that accounted for the \$6 million reported deficit. In the 2023-24 budget, these accounted for \$2.25 of the deficit. Three of these were things being entered incorrectly and one was a grant of \$53,000 that was not renewed showing as income. The revenue from the sales tax has not come from the state as yet. Some businesses only report it quarterly.

Information on Manitowoc County's tax levy going to HS was distributed. In 2024 this was \$8.5 million; in 2026 it is expected to be \$10.4 million. Manitowoc County's expenditure is lower than Sheboygan and Brown Counties, but higher than Kewaunee and Calumet Counties. The opioid deaths are down since the high in 2019 when the pain clinic was shut down. It is estimated that 750 families were impacted by the clinic.