

LWV Observer Corps Report March 2025

*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- Sue Matczynski

3-3-2025

Highlights:

- The Police Chief introduced a staff person who had been recently promoted and a recently hired police officer. The City Clerk reviewed absentee voting options for the April 1st election. The City Manager provided staffing and general city updates.
- The Council:
 - Reviewed a draft proposal to address vendor use of parking areas at Neshotah Park and Walsh Field.
 - Authorized a \$15,000 façade grant for Violet inn.
 - Authorized a preliminary resolution to levy special assessments for the Harbor Street Reconstruction project.
 - Received and filed a report from the Council members who participated in the February 19, 2025 Listening Session.
 - Referred a possible zoning code amendment regarding short-term rentals as a permitted use in the R-1 District to the Plan Commission.

Two Rivers City Council Meeting

3-17-2025

Highlights:

- In response to a citizen's inquiry to why the city is not involved with Progress Lakeshore, the City Manager explained that four years ago the Council decided the benefits did not justify the costs. (The City's Community Development position has been vacant since last June.) The City Manager highlighted the employment of high school youth apprentices in the Clerk's Office, and the Water, Fire, and Parks and Recreation Departments. He was pleased to announce that financing for 2025 Capital Projects came in at 3.67 percent for a ten-year note, below the maximum of 4.75 percent estimated by Baird approximately one month ago. The Wisconsin Department of Administration has notified the City of its decision to close out locally administered CDBG Housing Loan Funds, with funds to be re-deployed by the State for a new affordable housing initiative. The status of the Safe Drinking Water Fund and Clean Water Fund Financing for 2025 water and sewer infrastructure work, as well as federal funding for the Sustainable Shoreline Planning project, is on hold at this point. There are also concerns regarding the status of tax-exempt financing for local infrastructure projects.
- The City Council:
 - Adopted the Manitowoc County Hazard Mitigation Plan 2025-2030.
 - Adopted an ordinance amendment regulating commercial refuse/recycling haulers.
 - Adopted an ordinance amendment regulating construction and repair of sidewalks within the city.
 - Authorized overnight camping at Neshotah Beach for the Great Neshotah Beach Campout, August 30-31, 2025.
 - Adopted an ordinance entitled Vendors from Special Vehicles.
 - Approved the appointment of Jack Powalisz to a three-year term on the Lester Library Board.
 - Denied the appeal of a sex offender seeking residency in the city, noting he did not meet residency requirements.
 - Authorized the Public Works Director to sign the 2024 Annual WDNR MS4 Stormwater Report and submit it to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Meeting time: 1 hour, 45 minutes

Two Rivers School District Meeting

Observer Summary – Mary Wallace

3-10-2025

Highlights:

So far Open Enrollment has 37 pupils coming into the district and 17 pupils leaving.

School staff is starting to evaluate if the district should offer a full time 4k program.

Lisa Klein, Career and College Readiness Coordinator, gave information on current programs.

There are 10 teachers at the high school who can teach classes for college credit and they offer 24 classes. 176 students are earning some post-secondary credits. There are 47 Youth Apprenticeship students and a new work site is beginning at the Fire Department. An additional 27 students are in a work-based learning program to improve employability skills.

With all the requirements of ACT 20, the district is looking at increased use of substitute teachers who are currently allowed to work 2 or 2 ½ days per week. Two Rivers has several retired teachers who would be capable of working additional hours.

Two Rivers School District Meeting

3-24-2025

Highlights:

Four Junior Leadership Manitowoc County students from Two Rivers High School explained the program and what they did and learned during the year. The program culminates with a dinner for the students and their parents.

Some information about the winter sports season was given by a member of the combined TR/Roncalli swim team.

The school had received a grant to provide tools and training on them from Snap On Tools and now 20 students are certified on the use of the tools.

The Board meeting was short as they went into closed session to discuss negotiations.

Manitowoc Public School District Meeting

Observer Summary- Linda Gratz

3-11-2025

Highlights:

The Board discussed taking out Policy 2266 Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Sex from the consent agenda until they could discuss and decide on the wording that should be included in the policy. This will return at a later date for action and approval.

Maurice and Patrice Jones contributed \$200,000 to the Baseball Field fund to show their appreciation for all the district has done to promote sports in the community. Maurice gave a wonderful statement regarding how grateful they are to the district and how they felt the need to give back. They are wishing to donate to the baseball field renovations and would like to see the district name the field after the long-time baseball coach, Bruce Steinbecker. The motion to approve the donation passed 7-0.

Cenergestics presented the district with an award for Best In Class for Energy Efficiency. They commended the District for all their time, energy, and hard work to become more energy efficient.

Superintendent Report:

- Interim Superintendent Thennes discussed the Youth Apprenticeship program and introduced Coordinator Bonnie Prosenyak and three students who are doing their apprenticeship program in the MPSD: Paige Novak, Douglas Wetak and Valentina Martinex Bustamante.

- March is Youth Art Month and the student art work will be on display at the Rahr West and open to the public. Also, there will be a Fine Arts Extravaganza on April 2nd and 4th at Lincoln High School.
- There were updates on the school district referendum and facilities committees. The Facilities Committees met for the first time and discussed district strengths, district challenges, and their vision for a thriving MPSD.

The Board voted to approve the addition of a new soccer coach and moving to create a new freshman team in the district.

Board President Able gave a report on the process being used for community input into the superintendent search. He said around 55 people volunteered to help with the interview process and that he proposed that the list be handed over to HR for them to randomly pick a mix of community, staff, parents, and students to participate in the interview process. He also stated that people running for the school board wouldn't be part of that team because those people who win would be included in the process after the election. The plan was approved.

After discussion, it was voted down 5 to 2 (Shaw and Vlastelica voted Yes) to compensate board members for their work on the Board.

Manitowoc Public School District Meeting

3-25-2025 No Open Meeting

Manitowoc Common Council

Observer Summary-Julie Grinde

3-17-2025

Highlights:

PRESENTATIONS:

Swearing in of Police Department K9 Rolo.

Oath of office to Police Officer Brett Stout-Rojas, Motor Pump Operator Christian Rodriguez.

Proclamation - the week of April 19th as National Public Safety Telecommunications Week.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

One person spoke about the proposed change in zoning for residential use at E Magnolia and Memorial Drive. Person was concerned about the amount of parking available now and this will be an issue when this area is developed. People are already parking on streets and this is going to get worse.

PUBLIC INPUT -None

CONSENT AGENDA – approved

COMMITTEE REPORTS

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Approval of Special Events: Acoustic Fest in August and July 3rd street closures.

Discussion and possible action on acquiring property for park purposes on Sylvan Drive.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Fundraising agreement with Friends of the Manitowoc Skate Park for Phase 3 of the Skate Park at Miracles Park. Approved

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Resolution to revise sign-on bonus from \$2000 to \$3000 for newly hired transit drivers.

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

Approval of the three-year Harbor Development Statement of Intentions for 2025-2027.

Report of bids received for River Point Development Phase 4. Approved

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Request for a four-way stop at the intersection of South 33rd Street and Dale Street and flashing pedestrian signs at Redfin Court and Dale Street. This is needed because of the buses at Franklin School. Approved.

PLAN COMMISSION

Request for a Conditional Use Permit for the establishment of a Church and Accessory Office and Gathering Space located at 1418 Grand Avenue. Approved

Preliminary subdivision Public Improvement Plan and Certified Survey Map at former Mall properties. Approved

Resolution for the Preliminary Plat of the Mariner Lux Subdivision. Approved

The meeting was adjourned in 31 minutes.

Manitowoc County Board Meeting

Observer Summary- JoEllen Gramling

3-18-2025

Highlights:

PROCLAMATIONS:

Honoring the Life and Service of Laurie Burke; Honoring the Life and Service of William Geigel Sr. Recognizing April as Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month: In 2024, 419 cases of child abuse and neglect were investigated in Manitowoc. National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week, Apr. 13 to 19. The Joint Dispatch Center provides emergency communication on a 24-hour basis for the City and County of Manitowoc and the Cities of Kiel and Two Rivers.

CONSENT AGENDA (Any routine or non-controversial items)

APPOINTMENTS AND AMENDMENTS –

>Re-appoint three members to the Board of Health: Shirley Fessler, Supv. Mike Grambow, Dr. Brian Konowalchuk. >Re-appoint five members to the Human Services Board for three-year terms expiring April 2028: Donna Burns, Supv. Jim Brey, Supv. Douglas Klein, Supv. Nicholas Muench, and Supv. Leo Naidl. >Re-appoint Supv. Don Weiss to Lester Public Library Board of Trustees for a three-year term expiring April 30, 2028. >Re-appoint three members to the Transportation Coordinating Committee for three-year terms expiring April 2028: Shirley Fessler, Deanna Genske, Birgit Kelly
Planning and Park Commission An amendment to Manitowoc County Code Chapter 14 (Parks) allowing for camping in designated county parks (Lower Cato Falls, Cherney, and Walla Hi). Also allowing for harvesting of edible fruits, mushrooms, wild asparagus, or nuts, and also allowing for metal detecting in county parks. >The Zoning Map was amended for Hunter Griffin and for Shane Wendt and Duchow Acres LLC, also for the Town of Centerville which adopted Manitowoc County zoning. >Resolution 2024/2025-76 Authorizing 2025-2026 Snowmobile Trail Aids Program, a grant from the state for maintenance of the county's 240 miles of snowmobile trails.

COMMITTEE REPORTS, RESOLUTIONS, ORDINANCES

>Board of Health: Supervisor Metzger stated that the health officer's annual report for 2024 is available on line. In 2022 there were 24 overdose deaths, 20 in 2023, and 12 in 2024. Influenza most frequently reported condition for February.

>Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee: Supervisor Falkowski reported currently 12 participants in drug court with one in treatment.

>Expo-Ice Center Board: Supervisor Behnke reported that the finance subcommittee has finalized their 2026 budget, and lots going on with other subcommittees.

>Finance Committee: Supervisor Hansen reported that they got a property back on the tax rolls, thanks to Mr. Neuser. Also thanked Supvs. Hacker and Lillibridge for going through the packet of every charge the county got for the month.

>Highway Committee: The committee is trying to deal with requests for access to farmland from county highways; number of driveways per mile is regulated. Asphalt prices are down.

>Land Conservation Committee: Supervisor R. Phipps reported that the 4-H program is alive and well; they are trying to recruit younger kids and city kids.

>Planning and Park Commission: The Board unanimously approved Resolution 2024/2025-77 Authorizing Planning and Zoning Director to apply for and accept a Recreational Boating Facility Grant from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for the construction and installation of an ADA approved boat and kayak launch pier at the West Twin River access. Also, permits were issued for three disc golf tournaments at Cato Falls County Park, in May, June and July.

>Public Safety Committee: Supervisor Falkowski reported that continuing work at the county courthouse impacts court scheduling. Judges reported to the committee that 40% of litigants now represent themselves, and the waiting time for a public defender to be appointed is months. >Public Works Committee: Supervisor Sitkiewitz gave a brief report. Prices for recycled plastics are up. Two security-related projects at the Human Services downtown building have been completed. The IT department has received many compliments on their service to the 600+ county computer system users.
>

Transportation Coordinating Committee: Supervisor Hacker reported that the replacement bus which was ordered in 2023 has finally been delivered and is in service. Bus ridership for 2024 was up by 22.5% over 2023. Number of volunteer drivers remains at 17. The new ADRC business manager is Lashawn Crain.

Meeting adjourned at 6:36 pm This County Board meeting (3/18/25) is available for viewing at:
<https://www.youtube.com/embed/-UXO1JhvzPw?si=sfeYhf-F8nbFMG5R>

Manitowoc County Human Services Board Monthly Meeting
Observer Summary- Suzanne Zipperer

3-27-2025

Highlights:

The meeting was called to order by chairperson Jim Brey at 4:15 with a quorum present. Minutes of the last meeting were approved.

Education Topic – Children’s Long-term Support

Social Workers Lisa Stephan and Lisa Reindl, managers of the three programs, presented. Each has been with HS for more than 20 years.

- Long-term Support consists of Children's Long-term Support (CLTS), Birth to 3, and Coordinated Service Team (CTS). All are paid for by Medicaid. CLTS and Birth to 3 are mandated.
- 525 children are served by CLTS for physical/cognitive disabilities and mental health challenges
- 154 children are enrolled in Birth to 3. It contracts services once the child is assessed. It is underfunded. Fifty percent of federal funding and 40 percent state.
- CST is a wrap-around program for the family and offers services up to 18 months. There is a \$60,000 grant and \$30,000 from revenue. The program employs two staff. Families may be billed for some of the services.
- The three programs employ 25 team members at the Expo Drive facility. Seventy percent of the case manager's time is billable to Medicaid.

Financial Report

Jessica Huss reported on the 2024 financial status. The last of the request for reimbursements has been submitted. Medicaid reimbursements are not always clear. The deficit for 2024 is \$2.24 million.

Director's Report

Director Lori Fure noted that the job is more difficult than it once was. There was a violent incident involving a parent whose rights were being terminated. Police were called. The terminating did move forward.

Three teens were intercepted as possible shooters. HS was involved. None were clients.

There is a change in how services of people who move to a different county are paid for. It used to be that the county of origin would continue to pay for services, but now it is the county of current residence. People come to Manitowoc for sober living services, so this can add costs. HS states residency is established after 30 days, but the State does not agree with that delay. People moving in are not moved up on wait lists, if there are any. It does seem the exchange of services evens out with movement between counties.

Lori will present to the full board on what is residency and who gets what services, including immigrants.

A Child Advocacy Center has opened in Sheboygan. This is a forensic examination center where victims of physical and sexual abuse can be examined by specially trained staff. The exams are

documented so that they can be admitted as evidence to court. This eliminates the need for the child to be interviewed multiple times.

There are five open staff positions and two on hold.