

LWV Observer Corps Report December 2020

Two Rivers City Council Meeting 12-7-2020 and 12-21-2020 Observer Summary- Sue Matczynski

12-7-2020

The City Manager announced the resignation of a Council member who has been unable to attend City meetings due to his second-shift work schedule. The City Council will need to determine at its next meeting how to proceed with the vacant seat (which is up for election in April 2021).

There were no comments from the public during the public hearings regarding the installation of a drive-through service window at the library and the rezoning of a parcel of city property.

During the swearing in of new City Clerk Jamie Jackson, retiring City Clerk Kim Graves expressed gratitude for her employment with the city and pride in the integrity of Two Rivers City elections.

Updates shared by the City Manager included: a Christmas at the Beach event sponsored by the Fire Department and local businesses; the delayed enforcement of the winter parking ban pending the arrival of snow; the City's receipt of \$43,629 as a beneficiary of the life insurance policy of recently deceased long-time City Council member Jim Taddy; the decision of a prospective buyer to not proceed with the purchase of the former Paragon property given the cost to adapt the building to meet their needs; the recarpeting of the Lester Public Library funded by community donations; the City's intent to file for a COVID-related grant for a drive-through window at the Senior Center (to assist with the Meals on Wheels program); and the sharing of two radio ads promoting Two Rivers to vacationers and businesses.

Among Formal Items, the Council: approved the establishment of Branding and Marketing as a permanent committee and approved appointments to that committee; adopted a resolution to pursue a Splash Pad/Ice Skating Rink Facility as a joint City-Community project; authorized the City Manager to renew the City's agreement with the Lakeshore Humane Society to house and care for stray animals for three more years; and authorized the City Manager to enter into a Fleet Leasing Program with Enterprise.

The City Manager noted that nomination papers for City Council Candidates for the April 2021 election are available and must be filed by January 5, 2021.

Meeting time: 2 hours, 30 minutes

12-21-2020

Two representatives of the American Legion shared that Two Rivers now has an Auxiliary, and that a historical marker was unveiled at the Manitowoc/Two Rivers Wayside on American Legion Memorial Drive on Pearl Harbor Day.

A citizen proposed the creation of a local arts council and increased citizen engagement in furtherance of other strategic goals of the City. The same citizen proposed the creation of a Civic Internship Program targeting local high school, trade school, college and/or university students.

The Police Chief introduced the City's newest full-time police officer, who previously served as a probation and parole agent working onsite at the police department.

A representative from a Certified Public Accounting firm provided an overview of the City's 2019 Annual Financial Statement noting there were no major concerns.

Updates shared by the City Manager included: congratulations to the Two Rivers Fire Department and area sponsors for their successful first-ever "Christmas at the Beach"; shared that the Manitowoc County Recycling Center offered free Christmas light recycling; noted that pay kiosks had been installed at Vets Park and Harbor Park which accepted cash for day or season boat launch passes; and shared that city room tax revenues have set a record this year.

Among Formal Items, the Council: adopted a resolution authorizing a 2% wage increase for non-union employees as provided in the 2021 budget, although several council members expressed concern with this across-the-board wage increase and the absence of a system to assess merit; approved the appointment of seven citizen members and two council persons to the Splash Pad and Ice Rink Planning Committee; decided to reach out to two former council persons to see if one was willing to complete the term (until April 2021) of a council person who recently resigned; and authorized street lights on downtown's main street be turned off from 6 PM to 10 PM on Christmas Eve – a return to a Two Rivers Christmas tradition.

Meeting time: 2 hours, 30 minutes

**Two Rivers School District Meeting 12-14-2020
Observer Summary- Mary Wallace**

12-14-2020

There was a presentation from the Magee Principal with students responding to the question "What is the best part of me?" The goal is to build self-esteem so students will want to learn. There was also a presentation about student government at the High School. The High School Principal talked about all the activities that have been planned by student government this semester.

The facilities committee gave a report on their projects which include fixing cracks in boilers at the high school and getting bids on the roof as well as studying playground replacement priorities at Koenig School.

The Superintendent's report included plans for Christmas activities and arrangements for family meal packages that will be handed out before Christmas. She also went over all the information that is available on the school district website. 14 students or faculty are currently quarantining, which is .1% of the school district population. Fall sports are going and are live streamed.

Next meeting in January.

Manitowoc County Human Services Board Monthly Meeting Observer Summary- Nancy Slattery

12-10-2020

The Board meeting occurred at 4:45 pm on Dec 10. Again, the public could attend in person or by zoom. I attended by zoom and the sound was again so faint that the presentation by Lori Fure on **State Opioid Response Grant Renewal and Plan** was inaudible. A committee member attending by zoom asked for increased audio but that increased volume only lasted 2 minutes or so. A real disappointment as the topic was extremely interesting and pertinent.

Ms. Fure's report was amazing it seems as the congratulations she received were loud and many, though I could not hear what it was she did.

Items that were heard:

- More staff need to be hired
- \$\$ are probably federal and or state-not clear
- Less frequent auditing of economic support payouts now due to COVID-19 limitations.
- Energy assistance in Oct 2020 831 households while last year in Oct 2019 was 892.
Warmer climate this year maybe.
- 34 Children reunifications- Time period unclear

4 days later I called and spoke to Rick Hendrickson of this committee. Here is what he gave me in info

- An.\$800,000 grant for opioid recovery services to county residents either in their homes or in provider's offices/clinics
- The money was federal in origin and Lori was notified of the awarding recently.
- This was not a payout from the lawsuit against the drug companies that Man Co joined. That is still unsettled.
- Next time Lori Fure asks for money she will ask for \$1million. .

Manitowoc County CJCC Meeting Observer Summary- Mary Wallace

12-4-2020

Jason gave an update on the Drug Court. There are currently 17 active participants. Although court hearings are virtual, he is meeting face to face with clients with safety measures in place. Jason will be presenting his annual report to the County Board. The DA has picked some potential clients for the diversion program and has sent letters to them.

There was some low energy discussion about the role and mission of the CJCC. Patricia Koppa had looked into other CJCCs and some do more diversion or focused on other issues. Ann Larson suggested looking at the current strain on the criminal justice system. The original map done by Amy Wergin had been sent, but everyone was too busy to really look at it. Because they hadn't looked at the map, they decided to skip the January meeting to give them more time to pinpoint issues on it. They will meet next in March.

Manitowoc County CJCC Executive Committee Meeting Observer Summary-Ceil Held

Next meeting January 18th at 12:15

Manitowoc Public School District Meeting 12-8-2020, and 12-22-2020 *All the School Board meeting handouts are not all available to the public. The observer will be continuing to address this issue with the Board President and the Administration to promote public access and information transparency.

**Observer Summary- Linda Gratz
12-8-2020**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00.

One of the significant things that took place during this meeting was the amount of community interest in this Board meeting. Several citizens addressed the board regarding their concerns over district planning for when children will return to in-person learning. This was the first meeting where the school district provided an opportunity for community members to provide public input and the number of people watching the meeting was 2,475 much more than any other meeting that I've been observing over the last year. The people providing testimony were by and large interested in the district providing more in-person learning because their children were struggling with the virtual format. One person spoke to continuing the on-line learning to protect the students and staff from Covid. Everyone was very reasonable and spoke out of a real concern for the quality of learning for children in the district.

39/44 new teachers responded to the district survey indicating that they felt supported by their principals and colleagues during their first year of employment with the district.

They discussed the possibility of doing another operational referendum for the spring 2021 election. If they do not get a referendum approved, they will need to make a 3.5-million-dollar reduction in the budget and using 1.2 million from fund balance for 21-22. The board will discuss this more at the next board meeting.

The return to school update consisted of the district's proposed plan to re-open the schools to in-person instruction. Phase 1 will consist of support services such as IEP completions, GED 02 being in person, access to Lincoln High School internet and support. This phase has no in-person instruction included. Phase 2 was discussed with the board members requesting additional details before they would vote to approve. Phase 1 recommendations were approved.

An announcement was made that the board had received a resignation letter from board member Elizabeth Williams effective immediately. The board will move forward to replace Williams before the spring election.

Meeting adjourned at 10:09.

12-22-2020

The meeting was called to order at 12:00.

The Finance Committee reported that they discussed the need for an operational referendum to be placed on the April 2021 meeting and that they will be moving forward with a request to draw up the referendum wording for board approval.

The Curriculum Committee reported on the new SLLs that have been employed in the district and how they have been providing support to the teachers. A new program in collaboration with LTC has been implemented in the district. Students receive instruction from Manitowoc district teachers who work with LTC on classes that can lead to a technical diploma.

The new Director of Business Services, Angela Erdmann was introduced to the board.

The return to school update Phase 2 was discussed and questions answered. The targeted group includes children with IEPs. These children will need to have updated IEPs and will be returning for 4 days/week and a maximum of 2 hours and 45 minutes. They are hoping to have the start up begin January 18th. There are over 800 students in the district with IEPs. The district has surveyed parents regarding returning to in person classes to see what they prefer and this information will be used to plan for future in-person instruction.

A discussion took place regarding moving forward with drafting an operational referendum of 4.3 million dollars for the spring election. The board will discuss this further at the January meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:42 and went into closed session to evaluate the Superintendent's job performance.

Manitowoc County Board Meeting 12-15-20

Observer Summary- Erica Strauss

See agenda, minutes and You Tube recordings for details not mentioned here (available on the county website- Manitowoc County, Government, County Board)

12-15-2020

See agenda and minutes for details not mentioned here.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm. Opening items proceeded without comment.

Item VII, Reports of County Supervisor, Offices, and Department Directors, included two proclamations: 1) naming January as Mentoring Month for Big Brothers and Big Sisters and 2) commending Clean Sweep Program volunteers and staff. Becky Wilhelm, director of Big Brothers and Big Sisters, noted the isolation children are feeling as a result of the pandemic and the importance, at this time, of these relationships. County Executive Bob Ziegelbauer also introduced the new health officer, Stephanie Lambert.

No one present expressed a desire to speak during the public input session, and so the board moved on to appointments, of which there were nine: James Gutman, finance director; Shirley Fessler, Tim Nichols, and Linda Langman for terms of varying lengths on the ADRC; Kristin Winkel, filling the remaining term of Derek Fitzgerald on the Expo-Ice Center board; Stephanie Lambert filling the remaining term of Mary Halada on the Local Emergency Planning Committee; Supv. Jim Baumann, Julie Grinde, and Jeremy Schloff, to the Library System Board of Trustees; and Gregory Grotegut to the Traffic Safety Commission.

Highlights of XII, Committee Reports, were as follows:

Aging and Disability Resource Center. Prompted by the Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources, a resolution combining the ADRC of the Lakeshore Commission on Aging and the ADRC of the Lakeshore Governing Board.

Board of Health. A budget adjustment resolution was passed.

Executive Committee. A resolution creating a Special Committee of Number and Apportionment of Supervisory Districts passed, whereupon a slate of appointments also passed.

****Finance.** A *fair housing* resolution creating Manitowoc County Code 2.06, which would conform with Wisconsin statute 106.50 and provide for prevention and removal of housing discrimination, mandating records of complaints under the code, was passed. Creation of this county code is intended to prevent loss of funding for the county's revolving loan program through the Federal Community Development Block Grant Program for Economic Development.

Human Services. Unfortunately, audio very poor.

Personnel. Supv. Maresh reported that a 6-month term on several limited-term employees was waived due to the pandemic. Resolutions accepting a bargaining agreement with the Sheriff's Department, authorizing two FTE employees in Human Services to deal with AODA issues and one FTE employee program assistant were passed.

****Public Safety.** Also related to federal funding for the county's Revolving Loan Program was a resolution adopting an excessive force policy, also required to receive funds from the federal agency that has supported this program in the past. The resolution passed over Supv. Zimmer's objections that excessive force is not well defined and that the policy would include language allowing peaceful protesters to access public buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:37 pm.

Manitowoc Common Council Meeting 12--2020 Observer Summary-

Sorry, no report submitted for this month.

***Denotes things to watch for in the future**