

LWV Observer Corps Report November 2023

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

Two Rivers City Council Meeting

Observer Summary- Sue Matczynski

11-6-2023

Highlights:

Council members reported citizen contacts in support of an 8% budget increase for the library; the suggestion that the City use the money allocated for Charter Spectrum's broadcast of City Council meetings (which has thus far not occurred) to start a weekly hometown newspaper similar to the Valders Journal; and a complaint regarding advertisements applied to the surface of public sidewalks.

A representative from Clifton Larson Allen LLP presented the 2022 Audited Financial Statements for the City, and suggested the City develop a policy for "whistleblowers".

The City Manager provided an overview of the 2024 City budget, noting that while there would be no property tax increase for the General Fund, there would be a 2.5% increase due to debt service and library support. City expenses are up by 6.9% driven by employee raises and health insurance. The City Manager also reviewed a resolution opposing a proposed State Senate Bill which would subject local storm water utilities to regulations by the State Public Service Commission, noting this was an unfunded mandate.

The City Council:

Adopted amendments to ordinances regarding the separation of Adult Entertainment Businesses, Loud and Unnecessary Noises, Beer Gardens and Sidewalk Cafes Permits.

Adopted an ordinance for the interim annexation of property at 2423 County Road O and set a public hearing on this annexation for December 4th at 6 PM.

Authorized overnight parking for three campers in Neshotah Park during 2024's Beach Bash.

Considered information provided by the City Attorney regarding whether to opt in or out of class action settlements related to PFAs in drinking water from aqueous film forming foams created by DuPont and 3M.

Authorized the City Manager and City Clerk to sign an agreement with West River Lofts, updating a previous agreement.

Authorized the City Manager and City Clerk to sign agreements with West River Lofts and Scott Crawford Financial related to public shoreline access and shoreline and public trail improvements in conjunction with West River Lofts Residential Redevelopment Project.

Meeting time: 3 hours

Two Rivers City Council Meeting

11-20-2023

Highlights:

There was no public input during a hearing to expand the listing of roofing materials permitted in the City. The Council voted to allow metal roofs but not corrugated roofs.

The City Manager shared that Spectrum will again have cable Public Access channel 993 available on 12/12, with the first City Council meeting to be broadcasted on 12/18. In other updates: 2023 room tax revenue is projected to be 10% higher than 2022; leaf collection will end and the winter parking ban will begin on 12/1; the Central Park West ice skate ribbon is open and skate rental will be available every Saturday afternoon through the winter; and Cool City Christmas (featuring Santa and live reindeer, ice skating, a candy cane hunt, music, hot chocolate and vendors) will take place on 12/16 from noon to 6 PM in downtown Two Rivers.

The Council authorized the City Manager to proceed with the acquisition of a .49-acre parcel with frontage on 13th Street and the West Twin River; there is no purchase price for the property.

The Council went into closed session to discuss matters pertaining to changes for water and sewer connections for the Van der Brohe Arboretum, 3600 Lincoln Avenue.

Two Rivers School District Meeting Observer Summary – Mary Wallace

11-13-2023

Highlights:

Prior to the actual board meeting, there was a work session with an attorney to discuss manifestation hearings for children with IEPs and the expulsion process. A key issue is whether the behavior is tied to the child's disability. This is why gathering all information possible from the family and providers is important. The issue of the behavior being tied to the disability affects whether there can be an expulsion or whether a new IEP is needed.

Fall athletes who had very good seasons in their sports were introduced.

The main focus of the meeting was discussing and approving the next bid package for remodeling of LB Clarke school. Reps were there to discuss the bids that were recommended for things like electrical, mechanical, plumbing etc providers for the construction process and the package was approved. Contracts for the project with Bray Architects and Schmidt Construction were also approved.

Several donations amounting to almost \$5,000 were received for the Angel Fund and Hope Kitchen.

Two Rivers School District Meeting

11-27-2023

Highlights:

The Board approved a pay raise for substitute teachers. Superintendents from Valders, Reedsville, Mishicot, and Two Rivers have met to agree on the same pay for substitutes so they are not competing against each other.

The Board approved the hiring of an additional EL teacher. On another note, two special education teachers resigned as of last week.

The High School Principal talked about the need for upgrades to the high school in the foreseeable future, such as sound, lights and seating for the auditorium, and the expansion of tech ed.

An overview of the state report card was given. Although overall the district met few expectations, the high school and the two elementary schools all did meet expectations. The District score was pulled down by the very low score for L B Clarke middle school which was 41.2 That school's score will be addressed at the next board meeting.

Manitowoc Public School District Meeting Observer Summary- Linda Gratz

11-14-2023

Highlights:

There were 17 people requesting an opportunity for public input. As a result of the large number of people wanting to address the board the Board President limited the amount of time for each individual to 1 minute and then allowing more time at the end if there was time available. Most of the people addressing the board were concerned about the proposal by the administration to end the K-8 Virtual school at the end of the first semester.

Assistant Superintendent Jame McCall gave a brief summary of the school report cards and said she will provide a more in-depth report at the next meeting.

The Tech Ed teacher from Wilson Middle School gave a report on the changes and updates that have taken place in the Tech Ed department since the beginning of the year. He discussed the current projects and his vision for the future. He stated that he will be working to bridge the gap between the middle schools and the high school in the future.

The elementary and middle school representatives gave reports on the progress of SFA in their schools and the challenges they have been seeing as they work to implement the new curriculum. They have been seeing academic growth in the schools and engagement of the students as they move forward. Some concerns were also revealed regarding the work load, class size, behavior issues, and staffing concerns.

Regarding the K-8 Virtual school, McCall apologized to the board for not catching the financial concerns earlier. She said that we only have 28 students enrolled and it's costing the district \$863,000. If the district ended the program at the end of the semester, they would save \$431,000. In order to modify the charter contract mid-year, the McKinley board must approve the changes as well as the MPSD board. In a memo sent by McCall regarding this situation it was said that the McKinley board had unanimously approved this change mid-year. It was clarified that the McKinley board did not vote on approving the change and had not committed to that change. McCall was directed to come back to the board with options for the 28 students and a staff schedule and model for this program if the board decides to move forward with this recommendation.

A CEP report was given and the program has been reinstated in the schools. Some people are looking into ways to increase participation such as a grab and go option. Participation is increasing which will lower the cost of the program.

As a result of the lateness of the meeting, policies that were to be reviewed and the closed session were tabled until the next meeting.

Manitowoc Public School District Meeting

11-28-2023

Highlights:

The Personnel Report was discussed. Board member Trask brought up concerns regarding the loss of 200+ staff over the last year and a half and the fact that all the administrators are new except for 3. There was discussion over why it looks like this and what it means to our district. Some people stated that a lot of districts are having trouble and it's not just Manitowoc, but others suggested that these are huge numbers and asked what is it saying about our culture and our district in particular. The HR director said he hadn't put his finger on one thing that's causing this situation. It was asked whether we had exit interviews and whether the board has seen them. The answer was yes and they have been shared in the past. Staff retention and employee satisfaction had been identified by the board as one of the things they wanted to improve.

District testing was discussed and information shared about progress in reading and math. They have been seeing growth after the first quarter but they aren't sure if this will be the case when it comes to the school report cards next year because they are different tests and can't be compared

The state report cards were discussed. The district score was 57 Meets Few Expectations (58 is Meets Expectations). The district score for the 2022 report was 59.1 Meets Expectations. Our ELA (English Language Arts) proficiency was stagnant while the state is going up. Our math scores went up, but not as much as the state.

CEP update, the budget is being adjusted to show a deficit of \$119,000 rather than \$330,000. The board will need to vote on this at the next board meeting and it will need to be sent to the HTR as a budget correction. Angela Erdmann (Finance Director) said they are working to increase participation and make sure that those who need it will be participating. Board member Vlastelica has been working with Amber Daus from Grow It Forward to address the issue of food waste in the program.

Update on McKinley Academy was given by McCall. The 9-12 program is running in the black and the K-8 virtual program is expected to be -\$431,545. The district can't end this program at the end of the semester because the McKinley board voted no. It is the responsibility of the MPSD board to make sure that the contract is being followed and student achievement is considered. The board can end the charter due to lack of enrollment or achievement issues. Board member Hansen said that the MPSD board needs to take responsibility and communicate better with the parents of the charter school. He cited as an example of the fact that parents weren't notified about the meeting to discuss the future of the K-8 virtual model. A discussion followed regarding the future of McKinley and how the board should move forward.

The district safety plan was adopted with minor corrections.

There was a discussion of the summer school program and who is the head of programming and how they will be reimbursed in the future.

Many policies were discussed and approved for their first read, some were tabled until they linked the policy to others that would impact their functioning, and one was discussed at length regarding whether or not the district policy should follow federal law and include non-discrimination language related to gender identification. Board member Vlastelica said he wanted to see the language removed because he didn't want to promote having males who identified as female using those locker rooms. The discussion continued about how alternative provisions are currently being made while following the federal anti-discrimination laws. The motion to remove the language was voted down with the board consulting with an attorney regarding wording.

The meeting was 3 hours and 40 minutes.

**Manitowoc County Board Meeting
Observer Summary- JoEllen Gramling**

11-7-2023

Highlights:

Type of meeting: Regular meeting

County Exec Ziegelbauer and Chairperson Martell presented a Proclamation Declaring Manitowoc County America Recycles Day 2023.

PUBLIC INPUT: Maura Yost, Town of Centerville, advocated for a .05% sales tax which would allow the County to gain revenue from travelers along the I43 corridor to Green Bay and Door County, and could be used to reduce property taxes and long-term borrowing for the courthouse dome project.

The Board unanimously approved the reappointment of six members to the EXPO-ICE CENTER BOARD (Richard Kohlbeck, Matthew Pawlowski, Savanna Schuette, Paige Soukup, Kristin Winkel and Justin Zipperer) for three-year terms expiring December 31, 2026.

The Board unanimously approved the reappointment of Eleanor Agnew to the HUMAN SERVICES BOARD for a three-year term expiring December 2026.

The Board unanimously approved the reappointment of Mike Demske to the VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSION for a three-year term expiring December 2026.

FINANCE COMMITTEE: Supervisor Hansen explained changes to the bidding process for properties which the County has acquired for tax delinquency. By State law, the properties can be sold for no more than the County's costs. The Board voted unanimously to adopt the 2024 Budget and Property Levy. There was no public input regarding the budget. The budget gives County employees generally a 3% wage increase and also increased health insurance costs to County employees by 5%.

The Board voted unanimously to deny the damage claims of Debra Weyenberg and LuAnn VanderZanden for cars damaged by gravel thrown.

Meeting adjourned at 6:23 pm This County Board meeting is available for viewing at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=afIcTKA9nEI>

**Manitowoc Common Council Meeting
Observer Summary-**

Anyone Interested in Reporting on the Manitowoc Common Council?? Usually, one meeting a month and you can

observe on line. If you are interested just let me know at
lgratz47@gmail.com

Highlights:

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

11-2023 No November Meeting