

## LWV Observer Corps Report October 2020

### **Two Rivers City Council Meeting 10-5-2020 and 10-19-2020 Observer Summary- Sue Matczynski**

#### **10-5-2020**

During the public input section of the meeting, two citizens shared their concerns about the noise and beer garden ordinances and supported the Police Chief's position regarding these ordinances. A petition signed by residents of a neighborhood across the river from a noisy tavern was presented to the Council.

Council members shared they had been contacted by constituents with concerns about the noise and beer garden ordinances. A Council member shared they were contacted by the widow of blues musician Brian Lee about getting a memorial bench for her late husband and this expanded into an event with other musicians possibly holding a memorial "jam" session. Another Council member shared the Two Rivers Swim Club is fundraising for renovations. A Council member encouraged the public to participate in upcoming budget meetings.

The City Manager shared in his updates: a new City Clerk has been appointed who will begin transitioning prior to the current City Clerk's retirement in January 2021; an offer has been accepted regarding the sale of the former Paragon Property which has the potential to bring 100 full time jobs to the city within four years; a redevelopment project is being planned along the West River involving the old M&M Restaurant and an adjacent parking lot; a new curbside drop-box has been installed in front of City Hall for utility and tax payments (the City Clerk clarified that absentee ballots placed in the drop box will be counted); the Public Works Department has installed signage for the Spirit of the Rivers monument; and the city has thus far had 990 absentee ballots returned of the 1924 ballots sent (the city has 6142 registered voters).

With regard to Formal Items, the Council: tabled a motion authorizing the purchase of replacement dump trucks/salters as the cost was \$97,630 over budget given the purchase was repeatedly "kicked down the road" as prices increased – Public Works was directed to review the warranties on existing vehicles and get another quote; approved the ordinance amendment entitled "Loud and Unnecessary Noises Prohibited" as supported by the Police Chief; and, after much discussion, repealed and recreated the ordinance regarding the regulation of beer gardens (in line with the wishes of citizens who had contacted the Council). One Council member noted the Council had received no feedback from the Tavern League regarding the proposed ordinance while Council members had been contacted by numerous citizens with their concerns.

Meeting time: 2 hours, 45 minutes

**10-19-2020**

Updates shared by the City Manager included: some paving work has been completed on the Mariners Trail; in a letter regarding a recent sanitary survey inspection, Wisconsin's Department of Natural Resources commended Two Rivers on improvements made to its water system in the past three years; the city has several options available for voting, including curbside service for absentee voting; 1447 out of 6304 Two Rivers registered voters have returned absentee ballots; Hartman's Bakery was welcomed as a new downtown business; and the Fall and Winter Parks and Recreation Guide is available online only (no paper Guides were printed).

With regard to Formal Items, the Council: approved a motion to award a bid for resurfacing an additional portion of the Mariner's Trail; received a status report from the Community Development Director on the Floodplain Ordinance and recommended that information pertaining to the ordinance be posted to the city's website (which has occurred); adopted a resolution authorizing the city to apply to the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation for an Idle Sites Grant to assist with the redevelopment of the city-owned former Paragon Electric facility; authorized spending for additional COVID-related outlays (including a drive-through window for the library, expanded WIFI, and technology for distance learning of city staff) from the Wisconsin Routes to Recovery program; and authorized the purchase of up to \$35,000 in COVID-related materials and supplies to be donated to the Two Rivers Public School District from the Wisconsin Routes to Recovery program.

Meeting time: 1 hour, 20 minutes

**Two Rivers School District Meeting 10-12-2020 and 10-26-2020  
Observer Summary- Mary Wallace**

**10-12-2020**

There were 3 main topics. First, they showed a really cute video of a kindergarten teacher teaching her virtual class.

Second, they discussed how TR is doing vis a vis the virus. It is going well so far with 5 cases among adults and 2 cases among the children. One of the things that would trigger total virtual learning is if there wasn't enough healthy staff. The pool of subs is small too. A chart was provided with the breakdown of students attending in person versus those learning entirely virtually.

The main topic was a presentation of the school's 5 goal areas which were presented after a review of the district's mission and vision statements. The 5 goal areas are: Teaching and Learning for Professional staff, Teaching and Learning for students, Family and Community Engagement, Technology and Facilities and Operations. Within those 5 areas are many sub goals that will be focused on during this school year. Included in the Teaching and Learning for Students area was a subsection on social and emotional learning which included Kids at Hope

Report Cards tailored for different grade levels. This section was presented by building principals who were present remotely.

### **10-26-2020**

The Koenig school principal gave a presentation on a virtual school assembly she had given on expectations, the “Raider Way” and Kids At Hope principles. And the LB Clarke principal showed how they do morning announcements which was really cute. The Superintendent will be doing spooky Halloween stories with the elementary students.

The School Board approved the tax levy, some temporary borrowing and talked about the good fund balance the school district has. They were also shown a graph which depicted how much of the school taxes goes to voucher schools. The amount has risen from \$20.00 on a \$100,000 home in 2015 to \$75.00 on that same home for 2020.

So far, they are continuing their hybrid model for school attendance. Fall athletics have gone well and they are planning to have basketball and wrestling in the winter.

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

### **10-22-2020**

**Due to the poor quality of the audio during this meeting there is no observer report, but we have included the minutes.**

## **MANITOWOC COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

### **CALL TO ORDER:**

The Manitowoc County Human Services Department Board met at 4:45 p.m. on Thursday, October 22, 2020 in open session at the Manitowoc County Human Services Department, 801 Jay Street, Manitowoc, WI. The meeting was also accessible electronically by Zoom.

Board Members Present: Cavanaugh, Henrickson, Bauman, Shimulunas, Nasep

Board Members Attending by Zoom: Agnew, Williams, Ruggirello

Board Members Excused: Burke

Board Members Absent: None

County Board Members Present: None

County Staff Present: Joas, Kinzel, L. Fure, Randolph, Kubec, Dodge, Ziegelbauer

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

No public comment.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

A MOTION WAS MADE BY CAVANAUGH, SECONDED BY BAUMANN TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS REGULAR MEETING. MOTION CARRIED.

**EDUCATION TOPIC: Information on Family Reunifications – Lane Kinzel:**

Lane Kinzel, Child & Family Services Supervisor presented information regarding legal permanency for kids taken into custody in Manitowoc County compared to the state averages. When kids enter foster care we want to get them home. In Manitowoc County currently, roughly 80% of all placements are because of drug use. We look for family members first and a lot of kids are placed with relatives. That is why our percentage of kids under guardianships is higher than the state average.

The numbers of children served for 2020 will be higher. We've had a hard week with an additional 13 children placed this week.

The percentage of reunifications has increased in the last two years mainly due to the Drug Court. The drug court workers have been a huge help to the CFS unit. They come to unit meetings and discuss what they can do to help parents succeed. We have also received TSSF (Targeted Safety Services) funds from the State. Those are used when children are close to going home and a parent may just need help with rent or day care for a short time to get on their feet. We probably have 15-20 kids that were not placed due to using TSS funds.

We have 4 workers doing training from the State on how to get kids home. It is a very time consuming process. There is also a pilot program for Tailored Court Ordered Conditions we will be participating in. Hopefully it will be easier for parents to understand their conditions and they will be more tailored to their home conditions.

Legal Permanence is considered a TPC with adoption, Guardianships, Reunification or the child ages out and exits. The law has changed so foster children can stay in care until age 21 if they have an IEP in school or until they graduate from high school or age 18. Most foster children want to leave when they are 18 or right after graduation.

**FINANCIAL AND STATISTICAL REPORTS THROUGH SEPTEMBER, 2020:**

Inpatient mental health (Winnebago) expenses along with 3 placements of children in Residential Care is higher than budgeted. We are anticipating a deficit thru year end to be \$68,000. This may change depending on if we receive any adjustments or if there are additional placements.

**QUESTIONS AND INPUT FROM BOARD MEMBERS ON THE STATUS OF THE HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT:**

Is there a department-wide policy on in-person meetings? No, we do not have an across the board policy. Each unit can be different depending on the circumstances, there may be some employees off on quarantine or waiting for test results. We are working with the health department where we need to. Family visits can also be difficult, some foster home don't want the kids to go out on visits and then come back and possibly spread Covid.

There was a question on what happens if you can't find a home for a child tonight. We have respite homes but if they are full we try and place them in shelter homes. We work with Brown County also and have 1 provider through Brown County that is great and willing to take very difficult kids. The hope is they can stay for a few days as a cooling off period and we can get services set up for them to go back home.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT OF AGENCY OPERATIONS:**

Workers have been trying to have family meetings/visitations outside as much as possible but now with the cold weather that is ending. We have very limited space in our building so we will be renting space in the Lakeshore CAP building. We have gotten some furniture donated by WG&R to help get that room set up. The rent is very reasonable. We will also continue to have meetings by Zoom where appropriate.

We are looking for providers to manage our Crisis/Respite Home. There is also a shortage of crisis foster parents.

Staff updates: We have interviewed candidates to fill the Financial Specialist position. We also had an outpatient psychotherapist give her notice and that position has been posted. One of our CST workers has accepted the position in Youth Justice at Clarkbridge Hall, so her position in CST is open.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**

The next regular meeting of the Human Services Department Board will be held on Thursday, December 10, 2020 at 4:45 p.m. The meeting will be held in the 8<sup>th</sup> Street building at 801 Jay Street.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

A MOTION WAS MADE BY BAUMANN, SECONDED BY CAVANAUGH TO ADJOURN THE MEETING OF THE HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT BOARD AT 5:18 P.M. MOTION CARRIED.

**Next full CJCC: November 4, 2020, time and location to be determined.**

**Manitowoc Public School District Meeting 10-13-2020, and 10-27-2020 \*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  
10-13-2020**

The meeting was called to order by Dave Nickels at 6:30 for the Annual Meeting to present the proposed budget to the community. Board member Catherine Shallue was absent. Enrollment is down 63 Full time equivalent according to the third Friday count. There has been an increase in open enrollment out of the district. They aren't sure why the numbers are going down; it may be parents are keeping their 4-year olds home because of the Covid 19 virus and 4K isn't mandatory, they may be opting out for other districts in the county that are offering more in person instruction, or it may just mean there are fewer children. 4K numbers are down to 242, they have never been that low. They feel that next year may be higher, but it will be a challenge planning for staffing because of all the unknowns. (It was very hard to see the supporting documentation that was shown on the screen because of the size of the print, which made it harder to understand the budget information being presented)

The monthly meeting was called into order at 7:00.

The Finance and Budget Committee met and reviewed the proposed budget for 2020/21. The final numbers will be approved at the meeting on 10-27-20.

The Personnel Committee discussed possible changes in the school calendar to include virtual attendance. Also, Policy 8210 was discussed to allow for employees to work remotely. Teacher evaluation system changes were discussed to waive the Teacher Effectiveness Evaluations due to Covid 19. They will be looking to modify the evaluation model by including goal setting, principal feedback, and coaching. The Exit interviews that were conducted this year on 38 teachers who left the district. There were 9 retirements and 29 resignations. A school board member asked if they could see all the surveys and was told that probably not because of confidentiality and public access requirements.

The district is continuing to offer free meals to all students in the community as long as funds are available. Children under 18 are eligible to participate whether or not they are enrolled in the district.

The Superintendent and Director Reports were discussed and board members allowed to ask questions on the written reports. (These reports are currently not available to the public).

They will be looking to request a waiver for instructional minutes and cutting back on the teacher effectiveness evaluation requirements. They must have a public hearing to submit these waivers. The hearing will be immediately before the October 27<sup>th</sup> board meeting. The hearing will be scheduled for 11:45 with the regular meeting to follow.

The district is now 2 days in to the virtual learning model and Covid cases keep going up in the community. The district is in touch with the Health Department and are continuing to monitor the situation. The Burden Rate is now 750 which puts the county in the very high-risk category. They are looking for it to fall to 200 or lower for 2 consecutive weeks to re-open for in person learning.

The Superintendent was voted in a raise commensurate with other employees. There was discussion regarding the fact that there has not been an evaluation of the Superintendent with established goals. Several board members expressed concerns over the lack of an evaluation process. They may review this in January.

The next meeting will be held on 10-27-20

### **10-27-20**

The meeting was called to order at 11:45 to approve the waiver for instructional minutes. This was presented and there were no questions submitted by the public. DPI is accepting waiver requests to waive the number of hours required, this has never been an option that has been offered in the past. The meeting ended and the regular meeting of the school board was called to order at 12:00.

Meredith Sauer, Curriculum Committee Chair, reported that the district has initiated a 3-year agreement with a company to provide training to district employees regarding identified racial inequities in our district. They are starting with people in leadership roles, and then all staff. This is the result of the Federal ruling which identified our district as deficient in this area. Then she moved on to discuss that the committee had received an excellent overview of the math curriculum in the district and how they are including new strategies to help facilitate teaching math virtually to our students.

Dick Nitsch, Finance Chair, gave a breakdown of the 2020-21 Budget adjustments based on the final state aid formula. The State aid is up 1.29% for this year, but less than what they originally thought. This will result in a .09% decrease from last year in the tax levy. The tax levy will be \$7.81/\$1,000 of equalized value. (72 cents of that tax rate goes to voucher schools in our community up 28% from last year to \$1,972,499) this is money that the district includes in their tax levy that pays for vouchers to participating private/parochial schools in the community. The board approved the \$81 million dollar budget for 2020-21.

It was announced that the Finance Director will be leaving the district to become the Finance Director for the City of Manitowoc. The Board members praised Mr. Alfred and wished him good luck in his new position.

A presentation regarding Summer School was presented to the Board. There was a discussion of what went well and things they learned from what happened and how they can make improvements in the future.

The District Activity Update was given by the Superintendent. He is going to be meeting tomorrow with the Health Department to discuss increasing Covid numbers in the county and school district plans. He also discussed the increasing number of people taking advantage of the free lunches that are being distributed by the district. Then he also discussed the growing needs of families in general such as clothing, housing, etc. They are discussing ways they can help families reach out to community agencies for needed help. They discussed that there will be no sports in the district if learning remains all virtual. Mr. Holzman praised the teachers and staff about their great work going virtual once again. He sees a lot of progress from last Spring.

The McKinley Academy contract modifications were approved. The 2020-21 budget was approved as well as the tax levy. The Emergency Nursing Plan Report was presented and approved. The next meeting will be Tuesday November 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:00. The meeting adjourned at 12:45

### **Manitowoc County Board Meeting 10-13-20 and 10-27-20**

#### **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)**

#### **10-13-20**

Good summary in the minutes. Budget also included continuation of Drug Court grants and support of pretrial diversion. County Executive Ziegelbauer noted that the county retired \$4.275 M of outstanding debt in 2020 and will retire another \$2.260 M in 2021 bringing total debt to less than 9 percent of state maximum. The Expo Center has suffered major losses this year that were offset by the land sale to Meier. No salary increases in salary or in health care premiums for county workers in 2021.

#### **10-27-20**

Devin LeMahieu received the Legislator of the Year Award from the Wisconsin County Assn. for service to the county. It appeared he directed some one-time funding from a State surplus to the county for local needs.

Margaret Pauwles of Franklin was the only person speaking during the public input segment, questioning the increase in library budgets given library closures. She pointed to the need for library services for schoolchildren during the pandemic. She also urged the County Board not to pass a resolution similar to one passed in Winnebago County that would eliminate days in which the office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court from the detention hearing timeline for juveniles taken into custody.



Items IX and X were skipped.

Two appointments were approved: Stephanie Lambert to Health Officer and Mike Williams to the Industrial Development Corporation.

Highlights of XII, Committee Reports, were as follows:

*Planning & Park Commission.* Two resolutions passed. One provides \$10,000 for a bathroom at the Horseshoe Lake boat launch, a walking path at the Fischer Creek Conservation area, and various repairs and upgrades at the Devil's River State Trail. The second provides up to \$15,000 for an ADA handicapped-accessible boat launch and other improvements at English Lake. Two rezoning ordinances were also approved.

*Board of Health.* Reported loss of one and hiring of two public health nurses for contact tracing. Noted that capacity for contact tracing and community testing is limited, and that vaccine roll-out plans have been pushed back to December from November and that preliminary planning with community partners for this roll-out is continuing.

*Expo and Ice Center.* Contracts are signed for 2021 events. Rental fees from the Ice Center are helping with expenses. Three board members are slated to go to the state convention, Jan. 10-13, at present

*Finance.* Budget meeting with public input scheduled for Nov. 2. Two resolutions passed: one to enter into an agreement with the Wisconsin Investment Series Cooperative and participating in its investment programs and the second to repeal and replace, for updating purposes, the Citizen Participation Plan for Community Block Grant Program.

*Highway.* Reported the resignation of Highway Commissioner and his replacement.

*Public Works.* Reported a new compost agreement with the City of Manitowoc's Infrastructure Committee. Apparently there was a report by Tony Greer (??) reporting on continuing daily issues with cybersecurity and the need for intergovernmental support to address this ongoing issue.

### **Manitowoc Common Council Meeting 10-19-2020**

**Observer Summary- Linda Gratz (Welcome to Dolly Stokes who will be joining Christine Aguilar in reporting on these meetings in the future, we are still looking for additional reporters to lighten the load for others)**

The meeting was called to order at 7:50 by Mayor Nickels, it was originally scheduled for 6:30. The Mayor started the meeting by presenting the proposed 2021 city budget to the Council. Some of the highlights included:

- Department heads were instructed to put together budget proposals with 0% increases

- To support local tax payers during the Covid 19 pandemic the city is presenting a budget with no tax increases. The budget does include a 2.07% decrease in property taxes.
- Funding is included in the budget to repair several city streets including several blocks of Washington St.
- Money is included in the budget for additional downtown improvements, including reconstruction of the turning lane at North 8<sup>th</sup> and Maritime Drive to improve safety concerns. Also, there is 3.3 million dollars for the River Point project, additional downtown parking, and Mariners Trail resurfacing and widening.
- Money is budgeted for general maintenance of city parks and Camp Vits improvements.
- A special Covid 19 fund is being established to help businesses during this time.
- City debt will continue to decrease in this budget.
  - ❖ For agendas, minutes and to listen to this presentation you can go to the Manitowoc City website, click on government, common council, committee of the whole and videos

The Mayor also thanked retiring Finance Director, Steve Corbeille, for his outstanding service to the community.

During the public input session Elizabeth Neuser presented concerns she has over the upkeep of the Manitowoc Zoo. She stated that the wolf habitat is overgrown and not kept up, as are other areas in the zoo. She also questioned how much money is budgeted for the upkeep of the zoo. (The minutes do not include public input during these meetings)

Julie Vogel and Mike Howe were appointed to the Zoning Board of Appeals, with their terms to expire 6/1/2023.

The Common Council approved the consent agenda and all items on the agenda were therefore approved and we moved on from page 2 to page 5 of the agenda. (Consent agenda items typically allow items to be approved in a block coming out of committee with little public discussion)

The remainder of agenda items were passed as presented and the meeting adjourned after 49 minutes.

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

