

## **LWV Observer Corps Report October 2023**

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

### **Two Rivers City Council Meeting**

**Observer Summary- Sue Matczynski**

**10-2-2023**

#### Highlights:

- The Council observed a moment of silence and adopted a resolution in remembrance of Scott Paulow, “Two Rivers Raiders #1 Sports Fan”. Numerous coaches and players from the high school’s sports teams were present.
- The City Manager provided updates, including a recent visit from dignitaries, teachers, and students from Two Rivers’ Sister City, Domazlice, Czech Republic; the installation of an extension to the East River Pedestrian/bicycle trail; the resumption of Thanksgiving Dinner at the Senior Center (the first since COVID); and the initial review of 2024 budgets submitted by City Departments.
- The City Council:
  - Adopted resolutions proclaiming the week of October 1-7 Public Power Week, and the week of October 8-14 Fire Prevention Week.
  - Designated city Treat or Treat Hours as 4:30-7 PM on Tuesday, October 31<sup>st</sup>.
  - Referred the matter of whether the City of Two Rivers should be included in proposed nationwide class action lawsuit settlements related to PFAs contamination in drinking water sources from Aqueous Forming Foams to the City Attorney. Defendants in the lawsuit are DuPont, 3M and others.

Meeting time: 1 hour

### **Two Rivers City Council Meeting**

**10-16-2023**

#### Highlights:

- There was no public input during the hearing regarding a conditional use permit for the operation of a drive-through at the former Schwarz’s Pub. The Council approved the permit for a proposed Starbucks at that location.
- Council members received a complaint letter from someone who resided near All Energy in the Industrial Park complaining about the sound generated by the wind turbine. Several council members drove to the site but did not note a loud sound.
- The City Manager provided updates, including the completion of the East River Street Trail extension (to be joined to a planned bike/pedestrian lane over the Washington Bridge during road work in the Fall of 2024); the painting of the new Two Rivers logo on the east water tower; and the closure of rest rooms in city parks for the winter (with the exception of those in Central Park West as they are heated).
- The City Council:
  - Adopted an amendment to the Project Plan for Tax Increment District 14.

- Authorized the City Manager to sign a three-year renewal agreement, for calendar years 2024-2026, with the Lakeshore Humane Society and the City of Manitowoc providing for the housing and care of stray animals from the two cities.

Meeting time: 1 hour

## **Two Rivers School District Meeting Observer Summary – Mary Wallace**

**10-9-2023**

### Highlights:

The first part of the board meeting focused on the budget and enrollment. The proposed budget, which was approved, for next year is \$24,867,290. There are some numbers that aren't finalized yet, like the cost of the voucher program, which has gone up considerably. Enrollment has gone up by 57 students. In addition, there are 62 more students enrolled in the Lighthouse Academy. 15.1% of district students have a disability.

There was also a presentation on district goals which will be approved at the next meeting. The goals are in the areas of professional practice, student achievement, character and behavior, safety, staff and stakeholder engagement, facility, technology and operations and attendance. This year attendance was 92.7% and the goal is to raise it to 94%.

There was a presentation on the purchase of new pool starting blocks which is being privately financed. The current ones are wobbly and non-skid proof, so unsafe.

## **Two Rivers School District Meeting**

**10-23-2023**

### Highlights:

The student guests were high school students in the fall play, Bye Bye Birdie.

A main task was certifying the tax levy which would increase significantly this year due to a combination of lower state aid and increased cost of the voucher program. The cost of the voucher program this year is expected to be \$693, 151 which includes an increase in cost per student. The tax levy is increasing by 17%

School staff have focused on absenteeism and are pleased that their current attendance rate is 94%. Staff explained all of their interventions with individual students which includes a van to pick them up if necessary.

There was an explanation and discussion on the new state school report cards which are scheduled to come out on November 15.

Board members reported on their interactions with the schools they have picked to be involved with. They reported on many activities and classes that they have attended.

## **Manitowoc Public School District Meeting Observer Summary- Linda Gratz**

**10-10-2023**

### Highlights:

The school board room was crowded with community members, many of whom addressed concerns with the board. There were 16 people who addressed the board and the public input lasted for about an hour. 3 people spoke in support of Superintendent Feil's decision to drop out of the CEP meal program for all children, 9 individuals spoke in favor of CEP and voiced their frustrations with Feil for his decision to drop out of CEP, 1 spoke out regarding social media and controversial books in the libraries, and 1 person voiced concerns over the growing lack of respect for the LBGTQ community and removal of rainbow and safe place stickers in our district.

The Third Friday count of student enrollment was shared with the board. We have 107 students who enrolled into our district and 348 who enrolled out of the district for an open enrollment In/Out of -241 at a cost of -\$2,022,310 to the district. This number does not include students who are choosing to go to private voucher schools. The district is now levying taxes for \$3.8 million dollars to cover the cost of paying for students who are enrolled in private schools. They will be surveying families in the next few weeks to determine why they are opting out of the Manitowoc district.

Assistant Superintendent McCall shared information regarding the Response to the Community Concern-Book Titles. She shared a memo containing five book titles and if they exist in our libraries or not. The Board does have Policy 9130 in place and would like to bring this policy forward for a first read and determine if we have a solid policy in place to address these concerns. She also suggested that the board create a community group to review any items of concern.

The district is reviewing and updating many district policies at this time.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10.

## **Manitowoc Public School District Meeting**

**10-24-2023**

### Highlights:

The meeting started with a discussion regarding district infrastructure needs focusing on the Junior High School pool. There is a concern over the pool and whether it will need major repairs in the near future. They just wanted to inform the board that this could be a problem and that there are also potential changes coming from the Health Department regarding pool regulations.

There was a long discussion on the CEP food program and why it was dropped and why the Superintendent is changing his mind about the program. Superintendent Feil voiced his concerns that all the public backlash to his decision to end CEP has led to a distraction and hurt their ability to focus on student academic success. He asked the board to vote their support for pursuing a waiver to return to the CEP program. Board members voiced their opinions about the program but did not take a vote. Board member Able questioned the cost of the program and voiced his concerns that this is a policy decision and not something that the Superintendent should decide on his own. Biff Hansen tried to make a motion to apply for the waiver but the motion failed for lack of a second. Board President Soeldner stated that the superintendent has the authority to make the decision on his own whether to apply for the waiver.

The budget for 2023/24 was approved. The board approved a budget that didn't use \$3.1 million that they were approved to use because of passing the referendum and chose to take a million out of fund balance to balance the budget for this year.

The AP Environmental Science curriculum and the Biology textbook at the High School were both approved.

Substitute teacher pay was increased from \$150 to \$200/day to match the Sheboygan District because it's getting harder all the time to find substitute teachers. The district is looking into an income protection program that would allow staff to donate some of their sick days to others who are sick and running out of sick days.

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

**10-10-2023**

### **Highlights:**

CLA Financial Officer Bryan Grunewald presented the 2022 Audit Report. The 2022 financial statements were found to be complete & accurate; the County's debt is very low; fund balances are high. County Exec Ziegelbauer presented the proposed 2024 budget. Exec Ziegelbauer reported inflation continues to be the number one challenge, but with the net new construction in 2023 there will not be an increase in property taxes. The 2024 priorities fall into three main categories of combating inflation with an investment in human capital by raising the pay scale up 3% and proceeding with a 5% increase in the health insurance premiums; making a major expansion in the Human Services department designated to get a handle on mental health, child welfare, and the opioid crisis; and the final category of continuing with an aggressive highway maintenance program for 19.1 miles of road resurfacing.

**PUBLIC INPUT:** None.

The Board unanimously approved County Exec Ziegelbauer's appointment of Rhonda Green as Emergency Services Director.

Chairperson Martell announced the Annual County Board meeting and Public Hearing on the 2024 Budget will be Monday, October 30, 2023 at the Heritage Center. Meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm This County Board meeting is available for viewing at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uzqcY0muGPM&t=932s>

## **Manitowoc County Board Meeting**

**10-20-2023**

Annual Meeting and Public Hearing on the 2024 Annual Budget

County Exec Ziegelbauer and Chairperson Martell presented proclamations commemorating the lives of James M. Hendricks and Ricky K. Sloan.

**PUBLIC INPUT:** No one present wished to speak regarding the proposed budget. Maura Yost, Town of Centerville, advocated for a .05% sales tax which could be used to reduce property taxes.

**Planning and Park Commission:** The Board unanimously approved Resolution 2023/2024-42 Adopting Manitowoc County Planning and Park Commission Fee Schedule.

**Board of Health:** Supv Metzger reported that covid has been moved from Category 1 to Category 2. Syphilis is increasing statewide. The Board voted unanimously to adopt Resolution 2023/2024-43 adopting Health Department Fee Schedule.

**Expo-Ice Center Board:** Supv Sitkiewitz reported that the theme for the 2024 county fair will be "Make a Beeline for the Fair". Rummage sales will be Dec. 9 and Feb. 10. The ice sheet has been installed and youth hockey and figure skating groups are skating daily.

**Finance Committee:** Supv Hansen moved to adopt Resolution 2023/2024-44 Canceling County Checks Not Presented Within Two Years of Issuance. Upon vote, motion carried unanimously. The County will, however, honor any checks cancelled by this resolution if you present the actual physical check.

The Finance Committee will discuss and approve the proposed budget at their Nov.6 meeting; the budget will be presented to the Board for approval on Nov. 7.

**Highway Committee:** Supervisor Behnke first reported on airport issues, including the new airport manager. Fuel sales at the airport increase significantly while the EAA is on. For highway projects within the city, often jurisdiction is transferred to the county, then back again when the project is complete.

**Public Works Committee:** Supv Geroll reported that Nov. 15 will be America Recycles Day. Regarding the courthouse dome project, 12 architectural firms have been sent requests for proposal which are due Nov. 1. A timeline has been set for window replacement and HVAC project and discussions held with 3 local contracting firms.

**Transportation Coordinating Committee:** Supv Hacker reported that their grant application will allow for replacement of one of the three buses. Another is to be replaced in 2024. Ridership is up 79% over 2022. Meeting adjourned at 6:37.

The video for this meeting can be viewed at

[https://www.youtube.com/embed/C4AklbHLkp4?si=iivpMNknLdsc53Z\\_?rel=0](https://www.youtube.com/embed/C4AklbHLkp4?si=iivpMNknLdsc53Z_?rel=0)

**Manitowoc Common Council Meeting  
Observer Summary-**

**10-2023 No Report Submitted Anyone Interested in Reporting on the Manitowoc  
Common Council??**

Highlights:

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

**10-2023 No Report Submitted, it will be included with the November Report.**

Highlights: