

**ABSTRACT/SYNOPSIS OF THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE OFFICIAL ACTIONS OF
THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WHITEWATER, WALWORTH AND
JEFFERSON COUNTIES, WISCONSIN.**

August 25, 2009.

The special meeting (Common Council Retreat) was called to order at 5:15 p.m. by Council President Singer. MEMBERS PRESENT: Olsen, Taylor, Winship, Binnie, Singer, Kienbaum, Stewart. ABSENT: None.

Council Packet Delivery. It was requested that Council packets be delivered on Thursdays instead of Fridays. Councilmembers also stated that they prefer not to have documents distributed to them on the evening of the council meeting. If there is an urgent matter, Council is willing to review the documents; however, most items should be able to be provided to Council in advance of the meeting. **Council Packet Backup Material.** Councilmembers requested that more information be provided in the Council packet, and in particular, that memos of explanation be written when a staff member is presenting an ordinance or item for approval. Councilmembers were pleased with the fact that Consent Agenda items are now being e-mailed instead of photocopied. **Plan Commission Schedule.** Several Councilmembers felt it was not a good idea to have a case before the Plan Commission one evening, and then before the Council the following evening. It was noted that contracted Planner Roffers was not available the second Monday of a month, and therefore Plan Commission meetings were scheduled on the third Monday of each month. It was requested that Neighborhood Services Director speak with Roffers to determine whether his schedule can be changed, or whether there is a possibility that another representative from the firm would be available. **Public Notification Over and Above Legal Requirements.** Of particular concern to some Councilmembers was the notification process for residents affected by a proposed ordinance or action. It was noted that The Whitewater Register is the official newspaper and notices are published there as required by Law. Notifications via the local cable channel and the City website are also done. Concern about costs of sending mailings to all neighbors was expressed. No specific direction was given, although Council encouraged staff members to notify as many sources as possible. **Reports from Boards and Commissions.** Several councilmembers expressed a desire to obtain minutes from Boards and Commissions as soon as possible, rather than waiting for them to be approved by the Board. Some Boards do not meet regularly, and often times, minutes lag months behind the meeting. Clerk Smith agreed to contact Board and Commission Chairpeople / Representatives and request that they submit drafts of the minutes as soon as they are available. **Public Comment at Meetings.** It was clarified that a citizen may speak up to three minutes relating to a general subject, and up to five minutes at a Public Hearing. It was recommended that a sign in sheet be available at each meeting, requiring speakers to sign in and be called when it is their turn to speak. It was also agreed that public comment must adhere to the time limits and that citizens may not “give” their time to another speaker. **E-Mail Policy.** One councilmember requested that his personal e-mail address be used rather than the City e-mail address. It was stated that Council as a whole adopted a policy to have e-mails go to the City addresses. Further information will be forthcoming.

2010 BUDGET DISCUSSION. City Manager Brunner indicated that we are in the broadest and deepest economic recession in our lifetimes, with no real understanding when recovery will occur. He indicated that there is pressure to streamline, collaborate and work together more than ever. Although services are still in great demand, the ability to find new revenues and raise additional property taxes for current and new services is non-existent. Brunner stated that the long-term outlook for the State is bleak and that 2010 could be just the “tip of the iceberg.” Brunner stated that this creates opportunity for Whitewater to improve municipal infrastructure and to finally address personnel or business items that may have been put off. Brunner stated that leadership from the Common Council is necessary and suggests consistency in policy direction, focus on major initiatives and priorities, keep staff on track as to what is most

important, create a respectful decorum and culture, keep connected to the citizens and the community, and support and advocate for a risk-taking culture. Brunner suggested that ideas to consider are 1) analyze fees to ensure they cover basic costs; 2) ensure special revenue and enterprise funds cover appropriate administrative costs; debt be refinanced to capture better rates; investments be managed for the long term; all fund balances be examined. Brunner would like to see a process to prioritize services established as well as a review of the City organizational structure. He encourages cross-training of staff and utilization of resources in the most optimal way. Brunner also suggests sharing services and resources with neighboring jurisdictions and reallocation of staff resources to determine which ones add value. Brunner suggested that informal "Coffee Shop" or "Neighborhood" budget meetings be held, with public meetings scheduled before the budget process formally starts. He also recommends presentations to community clubs and organizations as well as online communications and open houses.

Finance Director Saubert updated Council on the status of the 2009 budget. He feels that parking violation fines will be \$30,000 less than budgeted for and interest income will be \$50,000 less than planned. A \$29,000 insurance dividend plus \$41,000 in water utility taxes are unplanned revenues received and not budgeted for. Saubert predicts that at year end, the City will have 22.10% of its budget in the Fund Balance.

For 2010, Saubert projects a \$243,097 shortfall. This figure assumes that Council will increase taxes the maximum amount of 3%; that ordinance violations will increase by \$25,000; that water utility taxes will increase by \$51,000, and the fund balance will be drawn down by \$75,000. Saubert stated that his projections assume a 2.5% across-the-board wage increase for employees; no change in hours or number of employees; and incorporating a 2% increase in health insurance premiums. Several Councilmembers asked city staff members to bring back information taking into account that the levy may not increase by the maximum allowed 3%.

City Manager Brunner encouraged the Council to view the budget experience as an opportunity as opposed to a burden, and encouraged Council to ask difficult questions and explore new ideas inherent with risk and challenges. He encouraged Council to look to reducing bureaucracies and redundancies and to stay true to long-term financial strategies.

To fill the 2010 budget gap, Brunner recommended considering reduction of personnel costs by not filling vacant positions; consider early retirement incentives; consider salary freezes; restricting or prohibiting overtime; allow for temporary reassignments during slow periods; reduce work hours; furloughs; and eliminating or discontinuing programs or services. For future budget years, Brunner recommended considering evaluating interfund transfer allocations, continuation of pursuit of grant opportunities for infrastructure and equipment needs; evaluate outside service contracts; and continue to apply technology to reduce costs and to improve services. Councilmember Singer requested that budget materials be supplied this year in total, and not in pieces. Singer also requested that specific detail relating to employees, what budgets positions are funded from, what percentage of each position is funded from a specific budget, and detailed cost amounts be included. Brunner stated that further information will be forthcoming.

EXECUTIVE SESSION. It was moved by Singer and seconded by Olsen to adjourn to Closed Session, per Wisconsin Statutes Ch. 19.85(1)(c) "Considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the government body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility." Item to be Discussed: Future employee wages and benefits.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele R. Smith, Clerk

