



Committee of the Whole Council Workshop Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, September 17, 2024, at 5:00 p.m.  
Chilton City Hall – First Floor Chambers  
42 School Street, Chilton, WI 53014

Pursuant to Section 19.84(2) and (3) of the Wisconsin State Statutes, notice is hereby given to the public, to the Tri-County News, the official newspaper of Chilton, and to those news media who have filed a written request for this notice that a meeting of the above-referenced was held at the date, time and location listed above.

Notice is hereby given that a majority of the Common Council of the City of Chilton, or a standing committee of that body were present at this meeting to gather information about the subject matter which they have decision making responsibility.

The above governmental body met to discuss and act on the following agenda items as set forth below:

The Committee of the Whole Council Workshop meeting was held at City Hall and was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Mayor Tom Reinl.

**ROLL CALL:**

Council members Ron Gruett, Rick Jaeckels, Deb Meier, Peggy Loose, Kathy Schmitzer, and Robbie Seipel were present at roll call. Joe Schoenborn was absent and excused. Other city officials present were Chief of Police Jason Kvalheim, DPW Chris Marx, and City Administrator David DeTroye. Rachael Siehs was also in attendance.

Those in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Minutes:** Motion by Jaeckels, seconded by Meier and carried by unanimous voice vote (6 – 0) to approve the minutes from the May 21, 2024, council workshop committee meeting.

**Audience Participation:** None

**New Business:**

1. 2025 Budget Discussion – Mayor Reinl is soliciting input on some of the major expenditures for the 2025 budget cycle in advance of budget review dates.
  - A. DPW Lawn Mower Purchases – DPW Marx informed the council that the largest mower in the city fleet is due for replacement. Replacement is generally every seven years or when the mowers reach one thousand hours. Forty Thousand dollars was allocated in the 2024 budget and Marx received two bids for three separate mowers with cutting decks ranging between ten and a half feet and fourteen feet. Marx made comment that many of the features amongst the mowers are comparable aside from the size. Marx did an analysis for the committee and showed the cost of operation for each of the mowers on an annual basis. DPW Marx is trying to maximize the efficiency and productivity of the mowing operation to try and keep the manpower to a minimum as the department operates lean and has had some recent vacancies. Marx also suggested that many projects have been neglected this year as manpower shortages and plentiful cutting has kept staff busy. Generally, the crew allocates one and a half days per week to mowing. Marx informed the committee that during his employment with the city, they have always purchased Jacobsen Mowers from Horst distributing and the relationship with the city remains strong. An additional bid was received from Riesterer and Schnell. Marx asked for consideration in purchasing the largest mower from Horst and allowing the trade of the used equipment so a budget line-item value could be created for the balance due in 2025. With council approval the process would start this fall and be completed in the new year. A motion was made by Jaeckels, seconded by Schmitzer, and carried by unanimous voice vote to recommend council approve the purchase of a Jacobsen HR 700 from Horst Distributing in the amount of \$96,495.00 and allow for the trade of used equipment to offset the purchase price.

- B. Sidewalk Replacement Program & Fund Allocation – DPW Marx informed the committee that he would like direction and input into the current sidewalk repair/replacement program that is conducted by the city. Three years of work for associated city wards was completed in 2023. No work outside of street projects was completed in 2024. In the past the city has allocated fifteen thousand dollars per year for the repairs, which will need to be adjusted. The current 2025 budget has an allocation of one hundred thousand dollars and continuation of the program was discussed. Marx asked if this is the right time to discontinue the program after all sidewalks are repaired, and turn the repair costs over to property owners? A spirited and lengthy discussion ensued with much of the talk being directed towards potential risk and liabilities. Committee member Jaeckels said he believes that the cost should be born to the city. He believes it would be different if every property had sidewalks, but they do not so he suggested the program should continue. Committee member Schmitzer said she would rather support a raise in taxes to keep the program than its elimination, claiming you cannot charge more for less. Mayor Reini informed the committee that if the process starts over, it would be at the least a five-year commitment to satisfy the repairs in each of the five city wards. DPW Marx also informed the committee that the DPW crew is assessing the current level of repairs, and a report will be generated by ward. The initial evaluation is revealing that certain areas of the city need substantial repair. Reini straw-polled the committee and the consensus of the group is to retain the program and allocate funds accordingly for the designated ward based on the assessment that is currently being completed. No formal action was taken from the discussion.
- C. Emergency Siren Replacement/Repair/Alternatives – In hopes of additional public input and increased transparency, another lengthy discussion ensued about the future of the city alert sirens and other alternatives in advance of the 2025 budget cycle. Pros and cons for all alternatives as well as making repairs and or buying new equipment were discussed. County alert information was discussed, as well as the education that is available to allow residents to subscribe to alerts. The effectiveness of all alternatives was also discussed, and each of the council members was allowed to share input. Differing opinions evolved, but no one alternative was decisive. Much of the discussion was targeted around the specific needs of the city and how this decision affects different groups of people. Comment was made that most people carry phones which are effective alert tools as they are used for school notices, amber alerts, and other notifications. Committee member Jaeckels referenced two of the talking points of the meeting by saying he would rather support the continuation of the sidewalk repair program than continue to maintain an aging and dated siren system. Mayor Reini informed the council that the replacement costs for the siren system could be as high as one hundred thousand dollars when all costs are factored in. The equipment is only a small part of what is needed for the project. Reini suggested that a smaller fund allocation could be included in the 2025 budget which would allow the process to continue with education being a key part of the next phase of the process. Administrator DeTroye informed the committee what channels are available for relaying information to citizens, but also informed the committee that participation and subscriptions by residents remains low. No formal action was taken from the discussion.
- D. Employee Assistance Program Fund Allocation – Mayor Reini informed the committee that the employee assistance program benefit has realized a significant increase in price for the 2025 budget cycle. The city moved away from a structured plan in 2021 due to zero utilization by employees. A pay per use platform was offered in 2022 and 2023 with no utilization by employees of the city. In 2024, the plan was utilized for three meetings, so the city was billed the base fee plus cost per meeting which to date totals eight hundred and five dollars. The city was given notice that the minimal fee for 2025 would be three thousand six hundred dollars. Discussion ensued as to the value of the program based upon the usage. Reini also informed the committee that the police department has a plan within their budget that allows the officers to discuss issues with professionals more involved with police work. The cost of the program is supported by a grant which would offset the expenditure. The consensus of the committee was that other options are available, and the city should move away from the continuation of the benefit. No formal action was taken from the discussion.
2. WWTP Upgrade Discussion – Timeline & Opinion of Probable Costs – DPW Marx wanted to once again have conversation, dialogue, or answer questions if they still existed regarding the current

wastewater treatment plant rebuild project. Marx shared the timeline for the process and costs associated. No other discussion ensue No formal action was taken from the discussion.

3. Lake District Weed Harvesting Update – Wee Doo Boat Information – Administrator DeTroye informed the committee that he has been in contact with a new weed contractor with a smaller more specialized boat for weed removal. The boat would be better suited for the shallow water and shoreline of the millpond that has sporadic tree coverage. The contractor will receive his boat in the coming weeks and has agreed to contract with the city for a trial run yet in 2024. DeTroye informed the committee that if successful, the contractor may want to contract services for 2025. A video of the Weedoo TC 3012 Turbo workboat was viewed. No formal action was taken from the discussion.

**Adjournment:** Motion by Loose, seconded by Schmitzer and carried to adjourn at 6:19 pm.

Meeting Minutes Prepared by:  
David DeTroye  
City Administrator/Clerk/Treasurer