

PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE

Date and Time: Monday, May 20, 2024, at 5:15 p.m., Council Chambers

Members Present: Lisa Rasmussen (C), Lou Larson (VC), Becky McElhaney, Sarah Watson, Carol Lukens

Others Present: Mayor Diny, Matt Barnes, Jeremy Kopp, Todd Baeten, Nathan Cihlar, Tracy Rieger, Tegan Troutner, James Henderson, Kaitlyn Bernarde, Kody Hart, Alder Gisselman

Noting the presence of a quorum Chairperson Rasmussen called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

Approve minutes of a previous meeting (04/22/2024).

Motion by Watson, seconded by Larson, to approve. Motion carried 5-0.

Consider approval or denial of various license applications.

Christopher McGuirk and Kelly Oxendine, applicants for New Public Transportation License did not appear to appeal their denial recommendation. Eric Hendrickson and Sara Zoromski, applicants for New Bartender/Operator License did not appear to appeal their denial recommendation. Brian Klippel, applicant for Bartender/Operator License Renewal, appeared to appeal the denial recommendation and provided a statement.

Motion by McElhaney, seconded by Lukens, to accept or deny the license applications as recommended by staff with the exception of Brian Klippel. Motion carried 5-0.

Watson questioned if renewal applications are reviewed in the same way as new applications and if the applicant can reapply. It was stated renewal and new applications are treated the same and applicants can reapply after denial.

Larson stated the difficulty of allowing a bartender with an alcohol addiction to continue to serve with an unresolved 3rd OWI and stated support of the denial recommendation by the Chief of Police.

Rasmussen stated often the cure is time to allow the court case to resolve and for the recommended treatment program to be completed.

Motion by Watson, seconded by McElhaney, to grant the license application of Brian Klippel against the recommendation of staff. Motion failed 1-4, with Watson in support.

Discussion and possible action amending Wausau Municipal Code 5.52.120 and 5.52.090 (Pawnbrokers, Secondhand Article Dealers and Secondhand Jewelry Dealers) to include the remainder of the acceptable forms of ID from the Wisconsin State Statute 134.71(8).

Motion by Watson, seconded by Lukens, to approve the ordinance amendment. Motion carried 5-0.

Presentation on the Current Animal Control Program and 2025 Proposed Model.

Rasmussen questioned the animal licensing citation trends between 2013, when the program was created, and current day. It was further stated by Rasmussen that citations increased in 2020 but has dropped off in recent years. It was stated that citations slowly increased since the start of the program and compliance had also increased but has also since dropped off in recent years.

Rasmussen stated the goal of the program was to relieve the pressure of patrol officers to respond to animal related issues and that currently patrol officers are involved so much of the time. It was also stated the community resource officers have been involved in inspections compliance operations and could be involved in animal compliance operations as well. Rasmussen questioned if this would be in place for the 2025 fiscal year. The program in its current format runs out of funding in October of this year and the proposed model, if approved, would be included in the budget of 2025. It was further stated that the current workload and volume of animal related calls during nights and weekends is not conducive to a weekday 9-5 humane officer and a change should make the service more available.

McElhaney stated the fees for licensing was increased to fund this position with a positive outlook of animal-owning residents and that with the increased fees the city must provide the service that was offered.

Without objection, public comment was provided.

- 1) Judy Lombard, 149988 Skylark Lane, Wausau, WI 54401 – spoke in opposition of the proposed model.
- 2) Ashlee Bishop, current Humane Officer with the Wausau Police Department – spoke in opposition for the proposed model.

Rasmussen questioned if community resource officers would be specifically trained on animal handling. It was stated that the job training would be provided which would accompany a higher pay rate. Rasmussen stated that the Human Resources Committee should discuss how to restructure this program in terms of job description and pay allotment.

Larson stated this may not be a step forward and stated support for bringing on additional community service officers while retaining the current humane officer. It was stated that other municipalities that are successful with the proposed model distribute the institutional knowledge across multiple supervisors within the department which this model would achieve.

Motion by McElhaney, seconded by Watson, to recommend discussion in the Human Resources Committee to review this model and make a recommendation to the full council on the animal control program. Motion carried 4-1, with Larson opposed.

Larson stated the vote in opposition was on the basis of wanting to explore how the current humane officer would fit into a new model.

Tavern Activities Report - April 1, 2024 – April 30, 2024

Larson stated that the report noted several checks to see if the Domino Bar is open for regular business hours. It was stated that the Police Chief spoke with those owners and that their current business practice is to be open only for private events and that the business is currently on the market to be sold. The owners were also encouraged to come to the committee to have this discussion.

Rasmussen requested to send a formal letter of concern to the owners of the Domino Bar stating concerns that the establishment is not holding to regular business hours and should come to the next committee meeting to discuss the situation.

Larson stated the alcohol license is not meant to be used for businesses that are only open for private events.

Report placed on file.

Community Outreach Update

Rasmussen stated the Common Council had voted to hold a Committee of the Whole on the state of homelessness in the city in a two-part way. One meeting with a status update on the status of programs and a second meeting on actions that can be taken with other units of government and agencies.

Rasmussen stated Catholic Charities should present periodically to the committee on their on-going operations of the day shelter and the night shelter.

Without objection, public comment was provided.

- 1) Diane Poulos, 402 E. Cassidy Drive, Wausau, WI 54401 – spoke in support of the Community Outreach Coordinator and in support of expanded services to the unhoused.

Report placed on file.

Adjourn

Motion by Larson, seconded by Lukens, to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

For full meeting video on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L6NRBargSdw>