

MINUTES

August 3, 2023

Members Present: John Kroll, Jay Coldwell, Mary Kluz, Jean Abreu

Others Present: Brad Lenz, Andrew Lynch, Matthew Rosenbloom-Jones

In compliance with Chapter 19, Wisconsin Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and transmitted to the Wausau Daily Herald in the proper manner.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Meeting started at 5:15pm

2. Public Comment

N/A

3. Approve minutes of July 6, 2023 meeting

Coldwell asked that a sentence in #7 be clarified with the phrase “still an option” inserted. Motion/second by Kluz/Coldwell to approve minutes as amended. Vote unanimous in favor.

4. Updates: GHG Baseline and next steps, Riverside Park clean up, Environmental Justice resolution

Lynch reported that he had found the correct contact at WPS and now has the previous 2.5 years of electricity and gas use for City of Wausau accounts. He will check the information to make sure it is comprehensive. Lynch is also working on getting information from fleet managers for Metroride and DPW.

The Riverside Park clean up is complete. The last few remaining pieces of equipment are clearing out this week and Parks will restore the bike polo boards. Kluz asked what substance had contaminated the Park. The committee could not recall the specific issue.

Lenz recalled the history of the resolution, that it had originally started in this committee but ultimately been worked on in the Committee of the Whole. Kroll suggested the committee read up on the resolution further and it can be addressed further at a future meeting. Lynch noted that the mapping requirement may be obsolete with the new EPA EJ screen maps available.

5. Discussion and Possible Action: Food Resiliency and Security – Municipal support for local initiatives

Coldwell mentioned having a discussion with Ben Lee from the United Way. There is a program that will use the community gardens at the former Neighbors Place to host demonstrations on planting gardens, maintaining them. First group would meet August 15th and future sessions could expand the number of people involved and topics covered. Kroll asked who they could bring in to talk about this program. Coldwell volunteered himself as the contact for the program. The workshops are, for now, free for the community. Lynch offered that the City could help spread the word for the workshop via Facebook or

newsletter. Kluz thinks it would be ideal to have more people growing more food in their front yards. Coldwell would like the future programs to cover cooking and preserving the food grown.

6. Discussion and Possible Action: Metroride Fleet Electrification

Transit Director Rosenbloom-Jones presented on the history of electric transit vehicles. Merrill, WI was the first city in the US to use electric buses. After WWII there was a shift to diesel. Now Federal funding for buses is geared toward hybrid and full electric. Metroride was not able to purchase new diesel buses but did have 3 hybrids donated from Duluth. He noted the challenges with the current transit garage facility for future full electric use since it does not have enough electric capacity and is in a flood zone. Metroride will have a facility feasibility study performed and will work towards transitioning the fleet to hybrid and electric buses.

Coldwell asked if there was any thought, due to the cost and environmental implications of the batteries, of returning to the overhead wire to power vehicles. Rosenbloom-Jones noted that the wires were a large infrastructure cost, could be objectionable for many reasons and don't allow for flexibility which is why they are no longer used widely. Kluz asked about his comment that hybrids won't save a lot of fuel. He explained that the optimal hybrid profile to recharge the battery may not be on Wausau routes. Lynch will post and distribute the presentation to the committee.

8. Next meeting date: September 7

Kroll asked about the possibility of a Sustainability page on the City website.

9. Adjourn

Motion/Second by Kluz/Coldwell. Approved unanimously. Adjourned at 6:12pm