



Common Council Workshop Minutes
Common Council Chambers, 224 E. Jefferson Street
September 13, 2011

The Council Workshop began at 7:25 p.m. with the following council members in attendance: Mayor Bob Miller and Aldermen Bob Prailes, Edward Johnson, Peter Hintz, Tom Vos, Steve Rauch, Jeff Fischer and Katie Simenson. Also in attendance: City Administrator Kevin Lahner, Department of Public Works Director Connie Wilson, Public Works Supervisor Dan Jensen, Police Chief Peter Nimmer, Fire Chief Richard Lodle, City Treasurer Steve DeQuaker, Library Director Gayle Falk and Building and Zoning Inspector Patrick Scherrer.

- Mayor Miller gave an overview of the Citizen Budget Partners explaining that it was a group of ten citizens of Burlington chosen by the Council that act as an advisory committee to provide quality feedback for the annual budget.
- City Administrator Kevin Lahner gave a presentation regarding the Citizen Budget Partners results from workshops held in July and August. He explained that the group was given preliminary budgets for 2012 and educated on the various policies and services of the city. After several discussions the group was given an opportunity to vote on which policies and services they felt important to include in the budget.

The highest rated policies included:

- Keeping essential services (road maintenance, park maintenance, plowing and public safety).
- Maintaining street maintenance funding of \$500,000 per year.
- Increasing the hotel/motel tax to 8%.

The lowest rated policies included:

- Sidewalk replacement being fully paid by the property owners.
 - Saving funds towards a new City Hall and Library.
 - Putting money towards downtown revitalization, retaining current library funding and eliminating leaf pick up.
- Alderman Vos questioned whether the low votes for new facilities was due to the economy or based on the idea new facilities weren't needed. Administrator Lahner stated he wasn't sure. Alderman Fischer questioned if funds for new buildings would be similar to the Equipment Replacement Fund currently in place. Administrator Lahner stated it would. Mayor Miller stated this would be more of a savings plan for new buildings instead of having to bond for them when the time comes for replacement.

- Discussion ensued regarding the policy of shutting off water for delinquent water bills as opposed to putting the balance on the real estate tax bill. Public Works Director Wilson stated there are many issues to consider with shutting off water including health and property regulations, PSC rules and labor costs. She further stated that the 2011 third quarter had 360 delinquent bills, the highest it's been. Wilson stated 55% of Wisconsin communities put delinquent water bills on the tax bill and 45% shut off water.
- Discussion ensued regarding raising the hotel/motel tax, currently at 3%, to 8%. Administrator Lahner explained that 70% of the tax received goes to the Chamber of Commerce to promote tourism per state statute. Lahner further stated that the Citizen Budget Partners would like to see the percentage raised and use the City's portion towards beautification of the city.
- Administrator Lahner continued his presentation explaining that the members also felt economic development, city-wide employment increase, volunteerism and shared municipal services with neighboring communities are important.
- Alderman Vos questioned if the members felt their opinions and ideas were influential in the budget process. Administrator Lahner stated he received a lot of positive feedback from the members and felt they were very engaged in the discussions and process. Mayor Miller stated the Citizen Budget Partners was a highly successful experiment and would like to see it continue yearly.
- Alderman Fischer stated he would like to see the annual budget more detailed with items that reflect the various policies, such as brush pick up, road repair, etc. Administrator Lahner responded that staff would do their best to implement more details in the budget.
- Mayor Miller thanked the staff and Citizen Budget Partners members for their work so far with the budget.

The workshop ended at 8:22 p.m.

Recording Secretary
Megan E. Johnson
Assistant to the Administrator