

**Library Commission
of the City of Onalaska**
Tuesday, October 6, 2015
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1 The meeting of the Library Commission of the City of Onalaska was called to order at 6:32 p.m.
2 on Tuesday, October 6, 2015. It was noted that the meeting had been announced and a notice
3 posted at City Hall.

4
5 Roll call was taken with the following members present: Ald. Jim Olson, Clay Pollert, Sandy
6 Whiteman

7
8 Also Present: Library Director Chris McArdle Rojo, Friends of the Library President Larry
9 Pohja, Parks and Recreation Director Dan Wick

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11 Absent: Jennifer Kaczorowski, Ron Espe, Bob Wehrenberg

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13 **Item 2 – Approval of minutes from the previous meeting**

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15 The minutes from the June 2 Library Commission meeting cannot be approved as there is no
16 quorum present.

17
18 **Item 3 – Public Input (limited to 3 minutes per individual)**

19
20 Ald. Olson called for anyone wishing to provide public input.

21
22 **Terry Pohja**
23 **626 Gilster Street**
24 **Onalaska**

25
26 “I’m a Friend of the Onalaska Library. I’m here tonight to ask for your support for the library
27 storage, which has been included in the [2016] Capital [Improvements] Budget plan. The library
28 is in desperate need of more storage, and at the present time they are storing items used for
29 programming and events held at the library in other branches of the [La Crosse] County
30 Libraries. This addition would consist of two walls and a roof. The location has been looked at
31 by Mr. Dan Wick, who thinks it would be the best place for the storage addition. He also stated
32 that if this addition was placed at the location the roof problem in this area of the library could be
33 corrected at that time. In 2009, upon completion of the remodeling and addition to the library,
34 the project was finished well under budget. One reason for this was about 5,000 square feet of
35 needed space was cut from the plans. According to the Council minutes of February 10, 2009,
36 [former Third District] Alderperson Kim Smith stated, ‘It is the desire of the Library
37 Commission – and I hope the desire of the Council – to reserve some of the excess funds for
38 some major project that we know will be coming up for the library.’ A motion was made by
39 Alderperson Smith and seconded by [former First District] Alderperson [Dennis] Aspenson to
40 hold \$220,000 back for future library renovations or repair projects. On voice vote, this motion
41 was carried. Of this total, \$100,000 was to be used for Phase III, which was remodeling the
42 museum area for added storage and workspace for the library. Plans were made and are in place

Reviewed 10/12/15 by Jim Olson

43 regarding how that space would be remodeled since the museum was scheduled to be there for
44 only a few more years. According to the minutes recorded June 1, 2010 at a meeting attended by
45 Mr. Clay Pollert, a member of the Library Commission, and with [former] Mayor [Jim] Bialecki,
46 the Mayor indicated that the museum would not be housed in the library after the new tourism
47 center is constructed on the waterfront. The museum would be constructed there. I think we can
48 all agree that this isn't going to happen. Since it is believed that the museum will be staying at
49 the library, we are requesting that some of these funds be used for needed storage. This expense
50 should not have bearing on the Capital [Improvements] Budget since this money was bonded
51 back in 2008 and should be available. The last update on the balance of this account from the
52 Mayor on April 8, 2015 was \$218,138.44. Once again, according to the Council minutes of
53 February 10, [2009], this money can be used at future discretion for its use. Please give this item
54 consideration to help relieve the library of its storage problem and make it possible for the staff
55 to have needed items for programming and events at the Onalaska Library instead of scattered at
56 other branches. Thank you.”

57

58 **Margie Shepherd**

59 **No address given**

60

61 “I'm one of the three women who take care of the books at the library. We have discards, and
62 we have donations. In a year's time the three women take care of thousands of books. Those are
63 then stored to a point at the library. Once the shelves are filled, then it's up to us to get the extra
64 books to City Hall. After a sale we have help from men, including Clay and my husband, and we
65 take books to City Hall. We certainly are grateful for that space. But when it's time for a book
66 sale again, we again need to find people and trucks who are willing to haul those books to the
67 library for us. During the interim, when we're not getting ready for our sale or concluding a sale,
68 it's up to Brenda, Jackie and me to take extra books to City Hall. If it's July it might be 95
69 degrees; if it's February it might be 10 degrees. It is very difficult. Right now our branch
70 manager, Laura, has been gracious enough to let us stack boxes of books in her office because
71 we are approaching another sale. It certainly would be extremely beneficial to us if we could
72 have storage space at the library. The major source of income for the Friends of the Onalaska
73 Library is the book sales. We have the chicken queue, but it always comes down to the books.
74 A few months ago, Karen, the woman who is in charge of the children's department, had
75 wonderful summer programs planned. She needed extra books, and we gave her \$1,000. We
76 paid for some of her programs. That's why we work so hard – then we are able to give back to
77 the library.”

78

79 Ald. Olson asked if the books would be affected by the cold weather if a storage shed is
80 approved and constructed.

81

82 Margie said no.

83

84 It was noted that the storage area would be heated.

85

86 **Brenda Wackerbarth**
87 **No address given**

88

89 “I’m one of the three [women] who takes care of these books that are graciously donated. I
90 would just like to repeat what Margie has said. When the three of us started this we were
91 somewhat younger. It really is [difficult] carrying boxes of books from one area to another,
92 especially when we have to load them into our trunks, haul them, get the cart, take them down
93 the elevator and take them to the room. We really appreciate the fact that we do have a place to
94 store them at this point. We certainly would appreciate it if it was someplace right on site at the
95 library. We have an ongoing sale. We are making over \$100 every month just from books that
96 have been discarded and donated, and that adds up. Plus we have two or three big sales. We
97 have a big one coming up [October] 23 and 24. We usually make \$1,000 or more on that one,
98 and all of this money does go back into the library because the budget doesn’t cover every little
99 item. [The funds paid for] new carts. We even paid for signage one time because signage was
100 not included in the budget. How can you find a book in the library if you don’t have a sign?
101 Thank you. We would really appreciate it.”

102

103 **Larry Pohja**
104 **626 Gilster Street**
105 **Onalaska**

106

107 Larry asked Dan to discuss the location of the proposed storage area and said it is his
108 understanding that this would be a favorable location.

109

110 Dan said he will address this under Item 5.

111

112 Ald. Olson called three times for anyone else wishing to provide public input and closed that
113 portion of the meeting.

114

115 **Consideration and possible action on the following items:**

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117 **Item 4 – Agreement with the La Crosse County Library System**

118

119 Ald. Olson noted that there is no quorum present this evening.

120

121 Chris noted she had updated the dates to October and said the commission had started this
122 discussion approximately one year ago. Chris asked if this item may go before the Common
123 Council.

124

125 Dan said it may be advanced without recommendation to the October 13 Common Council
126 meeting.

127
128 Chris said the only change to the agreement is under Subsection 5 on page 6, and it relates to
129 how donated furniture and fixtures would be handled. Chris said she and Buildings Manager
130 Brian Babiash agreed that donated items may be accepted.

131
132 Ald. Olson said he approves of advancing this item to the Common Council.

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134 **Item 5 – Discussion on storage space and possible solutions to storage problems**

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136 Ald. Olson noted that Larry had addressed this item at the Board of Public Works meeting,
137 which also was held Tuesday evening. Ald. Olson also noted that he had spoken with Ald. Jim
138 Bialecki and said he is willing to consider additional storage space at the library. Ald. Olson said
139 Financial Services Director/Treasurer Fred Buehler had suggested that the Friends of the
140 Onalaska Library also go on record at this evening’s Library Commission meeting.

141
142 Dan noted that a proposal to construct an exterior storage facility “was not the right situation.”
143 In an attempt to resolve this, other options have been examined. Dan referred to the proposed
144 location for a storage facility and noted children have utilized a windowsill to climb onto the
145 library roof. Dan said Steiger Construction had submitted a quote to construct walls and install
146 wiring, and this is represented by the \$50,000 included in the proposed 2016 Capital
147 Improvements Budget. Dan noted that the proposed 2016 CIB is \$12 million, and this total must
148 be reduced to \$3.5 million.

149
150 Clay noted that square footage was removed from the library project because it was believed that
151 the museum would be vacating the facility. Clay also noted that there are funds set aside and
152 said it is up to both Mayor Joe Chilsen and the Common Council to determine whether or not
153 this project proceeds. Clay said square footage would not have been removed had it been known
154 that the museum was not relocating. Clay said, “Now we’re suffering for it. The city is
155 suffering for it. I hope we can put this thing to rest and know where we’re at so we can build for
156 the future.”

157
158 **Item 6 – Report from Library – Chris McArdle Rojo/representative**

- 159
160 A. Library Use Report
161 B. Library Programming

162
163 Chris noted that Onalaska Public Library Branch Manager Laura Black-Law has been mailing
164 meeting room statistics and asked if the commission either wants more or different information.

165
166 Clay and Sandy both said they are satisfied with what Laura has been providing. Sandy also
167 noted that the meeting room had generated \$150 in September.

168
Reviewed 10/12/15 by Jim Olson

169 Chris complimented the Friends of the Onalaska Library for providing all the adult programming
170 and noted there has been continued growth in children's story time attendance.

171

172 **Item 7 – Friends of the Library Report – Larry Pohja/representative**

173

174 Larry noted that attendance at the Friends' fall movie nights is increasing and said the Friends
175 are seeking patrons' support for the storage area.

176

177 A. Book Sale

178

179 Larry noted the next book sale is scheduled for October 23 and 24.

180

181 B. Flower Arrangement update

182

183 Larry said Floral Visions will be at the library on Monday, November 16. Space is limited to 20
184 individuals.

185

186 C. Visiting Authors

187

188 Larry said a local author is interested in becoming involved with the Friends. This author will
189 meet with the Friends at their November meeting.

190

191 **Item 8 – Future meetings date and time**

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193 No future meeting dates were determined.

194

195 **Adjournment**

196

197 Ald. Olson adjourned the meeting at 6:57 p.m.

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199

200 Recorded by:

201

202 Kirk Bey