

**Parks and Recreation Board
of the City of Onalaska**

Monday, August 22, 2016

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1 The Meeting of the Parks & Recreation Board of the City of Onalaska was called to order at 5:15
2 p.m. on Monday, August 22, 2016. It was noted that the meeting had been announced and a
3 notice posted at City Hall.

4

5 Roll call was taken with the following members present: Ald. Jim Binash, Andrea Benco, Brian
6 Udermann, Victor Hill

7

8 Also Present: Parks and Recreation Director Dan Wick, Parks Maintenance Supervisor Mark
9 Hanson, Buildings Manager Brian Babiash, Recreation Coordinator Samantha Knudson

10

11 Excused Absences: Gretchen Newhouse, Ohbe Johnson

12

13 Andrea Benco noted that Andrea Vogler has resigned her seat on the board.

14

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

16

17 Ald. Binash noted the following correction needs to be made to the July 25 meeting minutes:

18

- 19 • Line 444 – Ald. Binash said he believes he used the word “exact” when discussing
20 developers giving city money for development in the Nathan Hills area. Ald. Binash
21 stated he should have said “proportionately pay the amount that developers give the city.”

22

23 Motion by Ald. Binash, second by Brian Udermann, to approve the amendment to the minutes
24 from the July 25, 2016 Parks and Recreation Board meeting.

25

26 Motion by Brian, second by Victor, to approve the amended minutes from the previous meeting.

27

28 On voice vote, motion carried.

29

30 Andrea said she had received a telephone call from Ald. Jim Bialecki after the minutes from the
31 July 25 meeting were made public. Andrea said that both Ald. Bialecki and Ald. Bob Muth
32 wanted her to clarify to the board that the limitations on the budget did not originate with them.
33 Andrea noted that the board was asked to keep the 2017 budget to a zero-percent increase and
34 stated it is not clear from where the zero-percent increase originated. Andrea explained that such
35 as request typically would come from the Mayor. However, a City Administrator position was
36 created and is currently vacant. In addition, Mayor Joe Chilsen no longer has the authority to
37 make such a request regarding the budget.

38

39 **Item 3 – Public Input (Limited to 3 minutes/individual)**

40

41 Andrea called for anyone wishing to provide public input.

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42

43

JoAnn Wickizer

44

1024 Oak Avenue North

45

Onalaska

46

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“I’m here to thank you, and I have a letter to read signed by about a fourth of the number of people who are routinely showing up to play pickleball. It’s overdue, and I apologize, but I can’t tell you how surprised and happy everyone was to go and find a sign saying ‘dedicated pickleball court.’ We didn’t know it was coming – and we were very happy with the Parkridge arrangement – but this is unbelievable. I just have a short letter to read: *‘We would like to formally express our deep appreciation for the addition of the Oak Park Pickleball Courts to the city park system. Pickleball is one of the fastest-growing sports in the country. It’s fun for all ages, easy to learn, and a great way to be active. Participation in Onalaska has grown each year thanks to the painting of lines on the Parkridge tennis courts and especially now with the beautiful Oak Park courts, the only dedicated pickleball courts in a 90-mile radius. We have even had players from as far away as California and Tennessee stop in Onalaska to play after finding our information on the USAPA website. Like us, all have been favorably impressed with our wonderful facility. Both new and experienced players are welcome and encouraged to join us. We are happy to teach anyone interested in learning the game. With the continued help of the Onalaska Parks and Recreation Department, we would like to help participation in pickleball grow even more by hosting learn-to-play sessions next spring. Once again, thank you for your forward thinking in renovating the Oak Park tennis courts. This is one more reason that Onalaska is a great place to live, work and play.’*” We do appreciate it, and thank you.”

65

66

Dan asked JoAnn to update the board on the number of participants.

67

68

JoAnn told the board there had been 22 to 24 participants on August 15, noting there were full courts when she departed at 4:50 p.m. Play had begun at 4:30 p.m. JoAnn said the courts typically are full on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. JoAnn noted that several individuals were playing at approximately 11 a.m. Sunday, and she also noted that there are individuals playing pickleball on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. JoAnn suggested that perhaps beginners could utilize the courts on Tuesdays and Thursdays next year.

74

75

Andrea called three times for anyone else wishing to provide public input and closed that portion of the meeting.

76

77

78

Consideration and possible action on the following items:

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80

Item 4 – Three Rivers Roleo – Katie Rick

81

82

Katie, the Director of Three Rivers Roleo, noted she had provided board members with a copy of

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83 the program from this year's event, which was held in July, as well as statistics regarding the
84 growth of the event since its inception in 2008 and a list of sponsors. Katie noted there were 24
85 amateur participants at the inaugural Three Rivers Roleo in 2008. The number of participants
86 grew to 67 (42 amateurs, 25 professionals) in 2016, including all eight of the top-ranked women.
87 Attendance for the 2016 event was nearly 1,000, and it was broadcast on both Fox Sports North
88 and Fox Sports Wisconsin. Katie noted the Nielsen Rating only covers the Minneapolis and
89 Milwaukee markets and said viewership in those two markets was estimated at 57,000.

90

91 Victor asked Katie if she believes attendance will increase by virtue of the high caliber of
92 athletes who participate in the event.

93

94 Katie said yes, noting the event was moved from August to July in 2015, which in turn helped
95 secure television coverage. Katie noted the event had received prime-time coverage (9:30 p.m.)
96 following a Milwaukee Brewers game on July 20. It also aired on July 21 (9 a.m.) and July 23
97 (11 a.m.). Katie told the board that The Waterfront Restaurant and Tavern and The Charmant
98 shared title sponsorship. This is the first year Three Rivers Roleo had a title sponsor.

99

100 Andrea asked if there is a chance booms and docks will be installed at the Great River Landing.

101

102 Victor, who also sits on the Great River Landing Committee, said the committee had not
103 discussed this at its August 11 meeting, adding that the focus of Phase I of the Great River
104 Landing Project is on installing the trails.

105

106 Dan said he believes the focus of this phase of the project is on the east side of the railroad
107 tracks.

108

109 Victor noted that the committee had talked about future phases and said he would not be
110 surprised if the committee began discussing at future meetings what will occur after Phase I is
111 completed.

112

113 Ald. Binash asked Katie if she has discussed Three Rivers Roleo with anyone from Explore La
114 Crosse.

115

116 Katie said Explore La Crosse had included log rolling in Onalaska as part of its "Day on the
117 River" video. Katie also said Three Rivers Roleo is eligible to apply for grant funding from
118 Explore La Crosse in January 2017.

119

120 Ald. Binash asked Katie if she has approached the Rotary Club or other organizations about
121 possibly providing assistance with the docks.

122

123 Katie said no, but noted that Rotary After Hours of La Crosse had obtained a permit to sell beer

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124 at this year's Three Rivers Roleo, which has begun forming a relationship with that organization
125 as well as A.J. Frels, the Executive Director of the La Crosse County Convention and Visitors
126 Bureau.

127

128 Ald. Binash, who also sits on the LCCVB, suggested to Katie that she make a presentation at one
129 of the LCCVB's meetings.

130

131 **Item 5 – City of Onalaska Invasive Species Management Plan – Nick Gilman**

132

133 Nick told the board he had spent the summer working in all the city parks and green spaces so he
134 could develop a management plan for the City of Onalaska. Nick noted there are 116 different
135 terrestrial plants in the city and immediate surrounding area that are regulated by the Wisconsin
136 Department of Natural Resources under an act entitled NR 40. Nick said the focus is on the
137 plants that are considered more detrimental to the area. Nick said the goal of his plan is to
138 educate, inform, provide and guide information in order to help manage areas along in the
139 process. Other goals include educating citizens on the identification techniques; informing them
140 of proper practices (best management practices) established by the Wisconsin DNR; and also
141 providing statistics and photographs to assist with the process.

142

143 Nick said the management plan consists of four parts that should be prioritized: Rowe Park, Van
144 Riper Park, Greens Coulee Park, and Holiday Heights.

145

- 146 • **Rowe Park:** There is a wooded plot in Rowe Park that includes Black Locust, which
147 reduces the functionality of the area. The thorns and dense canopies Black Locust can
148 obtain cause difficulties for individuals who wish to recreate in this area. Nick said a
149 goal is to eradicate some of the low-lying annual and biannual plants, including Garlic
150 Mustard, on the hillside as to better promote the ecology in the area. There also is an
151 optional turf management plan for low-lying annual plants such as Creeping Charlie.
- 152 • **Van Riper Park:** Poison Ivy is prevalent in the wooded area of Van Riper Park. Also,
153 Black Locust is prevalent on both the southeast and southwest side of the park. Nick said
154 the goal is to remove some of the larger individuals of Black Locust. Removing them all
155 at once would subject the wood lot to "environmental shock." Nick said Garlic Mustard
156 also is a problem at Van Riper Park as it emits a chemical into the soil that disrupts
157 pathways that are subjected to mycorrhizal fungi, which attach to the root systems of
158 trees.
- 159 • **Greens Coulee Park:** A goal is to eradicate invasive species such as The Burning Bush
160 and Buckthorn. Another goal is to eradicate Wild Parsnip and Oriental Bittersweet.
- 161 • **Holiday Heights Park:** Wild Parsnip, which has sap that can cause rashes, blistering
162 and discoloration of skin, is prevalent in this area. Nick said a goal is to eradicate this
163 invasive species from this area.

164

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165 Nick said a root wrench is an effective device that has the ability to pull up to a 3-inch caliper
166 stem, and it would drastically reduce the amount of chemical needed for the landscape. Nick
167 said the Parks Department also would like to implement the use of two more solo backpack
168 sprayers for the sole utilization of eradicating invasive species. Nick said two chemicals that are
169 frequently utilized are Glyphosate, the active ingredient in Killzall, and Picloram, the active
170 ingredient in Tordon. Glyphosate is utilized in eradicating large populations of species, and
171 Tordon is utilized on cut stumps. Nick noted that it is not ideal to mow Wild Parsnip past July
172 15 as seeds are sown past that date. Nick said an effective method in eradicating invasive
173 species is to start with the outlayers and then work into the core infestation. Nick said the total
174 startup cost of the plan is slightly less than \$1,000. This would include the implementation of
175 two backpack sprayers, two root wrenches, Glyphosate and Tordon. Nick said it would be
176 possible to purchase one backpack sprayer and one root wrench if it is not possible to obtain
177 funding immediately. After that, the annual cost would only be for the chemical. Nick predicted
178 that chemical usage likely could decrease yearly because species will be eradicated, and also the
179 Parks Department will have the knowledge of knowing how many are being utilized per year.

180

181 Ald. Binash asked if chemicals can leach into the ground and affect aquifers.

182

183 Nick said yes, noting that his report states that the chemicals should only be utilized when
184 absolutely necessary.

185

186 Dan said he believes the city needs to move forward with the plan now that it has one.

187

188 **Item 6 – Authorization to proceed with the following projects at the Omni Center:**

189

- 190 a. LED light Replacement
- 191 b. Surge Protection on Heating and Cooling systems
- 192 c. Arena 2 Audio System
- 193 d. Valve Replacement on Arena 2 Sprinkler System
- 194 e. Omni Center Phone App development

195

196 Dan said the five items are funds that are remaining either from the 2015 Capital Improvement
197 Projects or the 2016 CIP. Dan said he is seeking funding on items 'a' and 'b' for the financial
198 figures that are proposed. Dan said items 'a,' 'b,' 'd' and 'e' would be utilizing one account
199 number (415-51000-098). Item 'c' would come from Account No. 204-55450-810. Dan said the
200 LED light replacement has been included in the 2017 budget and noted that approximately half
201 of the lights will be replaced. The plan is to replace 800 fluorescent bulbs with LED bulbs.

202

203 Brian Babiash noted that both Arena No. 1 and Arena No. 2 have T5 lights and fixtures that have
204 been replaced within the last few years. Brian noted that several lightbulbs have burned out, and
205 also that regular T5 lightbulbs are expensive. Brian said there is a five-year warranty on a T5

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206 LED light and noted that a significant amount of time and energy costs will be saved by no
207 longer having to replace the T5 lightbulbs.

208

209 Dan said the anticipated cost of the LED light replacement is \$20,750, and he pointed out that
210 based on 12 hours of operation per day for all the lights wattage would decrease from 44,000 to
211 22,000. This would have a simple payback of less than a year if an anticipated \$5,300 rebate
212 from Riverland Energy is included. Dan said there should be a substantial savings if half the
213 building's lights can be replaced now and funding for the other half can be secured in 2017. Dan
214 also pointed out that city staff would install the LED lighting.

215

216 Dan addressed the surge protection, stating it has been "an anomaly of a year" at the Omni
217 Center due to power outages at various times. Dan noted there is no backup power at the facility,
218 which also serves as a Red Cross shelter. Dan addressed the Omni Center phone app
219 development and referred to a handout he had distributed to board members describing a
220 program called "StriveON." Dan said staff had met with the developers of the program in 2015
221 and asked them to prepare a proposal that would assist in marketing the Omni Center;
222 specifically, tracking who is utilizing the facility and determining the economic impact it has on
223 the area. Dan said there was no funding available last year for this item. However, some
224 projects had come in under budget, and Dan said he reached out to "StriveON" again because
225 believes this is something that is important and he saw an opportunity. "StriveON"
226 representatives visited the Omni Center on August 17, and Dan said he told them he would like
227 to determine how many individuals are utilizing the facility as well as the economic impact on
228 the area. Dan said there also was discussion of breaking down statistics based on sporting
229 events, wedding, reunions, and other events. Dan said another goal is to promote the Omni
230 Center and other businesses.

231

232 Dan said "Strive On" proposed the following solution:

233

234 Phase 1: Includes "scanalytics," which is placing floor mats inside the front doors of the Omni
235 Center as well as any entrance to the building. Everyone who enters the facility would be
236 tracked. Mats also could be placed in front of concession stands and other areas of the building.
237 There also would be beacons around the facility. Dan said "StriveON" is an app, and individuals
238 who utilize the Omni Center would be encouraged to sign up for the app and log onto their
239 phones for information regarding upcoming events. Dan said it would be possible to obtain
240 demographics and determine where patrons are staying, eating, shopping and purchasing
241 gasoline. Dan said he believes this data would be valuable as it could be shown to area
242 businesses.

243

244 Dan said "StriveON" representatives told him it would be possible to create a geofence around
245 the Omni Center. Anyone visiting the facility would receive a popup on their phone that would
246 inform them about events at the facility. As they leave, area businesses could offer discounts.

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247 Dan said, "It's an opportunity, and with what we have in front of us in trying to make this facility
248 go, it's something that I really think is a key opportunity for us."

249

250 Victor asked Dan if he has looked at any other groups in addition to "StriveON."

251

252 Dan said no.

253

254 Victor asked why.

255

256 Dan said "StriveON" is based in Wisconsin and noted the group is doing projects in Chicago and
257 Colorado. Dan said, "When you try to find other people to do this type of work, I haven't found
258 anybody."

259

260 Victor asked if it is necessary to put out a Request for Proposals.

261

262 Dan said, "Because it's so new they're developing this for us that I don't believe we would need
263 to. It would be a sole-source project."

264

265 Victor said there are others who can develop apps and told Dan he does not want to see him get
266 into a situation where the project begins and another developer asked why they were not
267 informed about it.

268

269 Dan said no action would be taken until the Common Council has been given the opportunity to
270 provide input and approve the project. Dan said it would be difficult to find someone else who
271 has the same business plan as "StriveON" and stated, "I'm not saying there's not somebody out
272 there that has it, but I've yet to find it."

273

274 Ald. Binash said he agrees with the installation of LED lighting and the surge protection, and he
275 asked if the audio system will achieve the desired results.

276

277 Dan said yes.

278

279 Ald. Binash said the sprinkler system "is an absolute must." Ald. Binash also said, "[Regarding]
280 the Omni Center app, I like the idea. Is \$15,000 going to do it? Is that what they quoted you?"

281

282 Dan admitted that there might be some ongoing costs that have not yet been discussed. Dan also
283 said, "A lot of this stuff is very minimal. The beacons that they put in the building are four AA
284 batteries. It's the analytics that come back behind it, like the mat part of it."

285

286 Ald. Binash asked who obtains the information.

287

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288 Dan said, “It will all be web-based that we will be able to see.”

289

290 Victor said the primary point of “StriveON’s” business model is to utilize the data with other
291 groups and predicted there will be an annual cost in the future.

292

293 Ald. Binash asked Dan if the app can pay for itself if he shows it to area businesses.

294

295 Dan said he can approach establishments and ask if they want to participate. Dan said, “The idea
296 would be for any of these events we have at the Omni is to get the people before they come –
297 click on here, download this app. If it’s before you’re coming, now we can work with some of
298 the lodging facilities that would be willing to give them an Omni Center rate or a code that they
299 could get in there to get that at local facilities.”

300

301 Victor said “StriveON” can examine behaviors from the data it obtains and determine ways to
302 adjust, citing the example of looking at ways to maximize revenue at concessions stands. Victor
303 said, “Maybe you get a 20-percent bump in your revenue that you can then turn around and use
304 to reinvest in this so that you’re increasing your profit, but then you’re still able to pay for the
305 service on a recurring basis.”

306

307 Dan said, “Ideally, the Omni Center is a start to this,” noting that beacons may be placed
308 anywhere, including the Great River Landing, Rowe Park and the Omni Center. Dan said,
309 “What we have to do for us to sustain the funding that we have at the Omni Center – and to be
310 honest with you, get more funding for what we do in our parks – this is a way. We are limited
311 with staff right now, and to try to do something that we can do on a click of a button to say
312 where we’re at, that’s what we’re trying to do: be somewhat cutting edge.” Dan noted that 78
313 percent of the population owns a smartphone and said, “[There are] people coming in [the Omni
314 Center] who can log in. Say we don’t even get all of them, but now you can use that as a
315 percentage because if we get every person that walks in [the Omni Center], coming through the
316 door we have, and now knowing how many people have downloaded the app we can get that
317 information and now we can really start making very educated decisions on how many people
318 are staying and where they’re at and how many establishments in town.”

319

320 Ald. Binash asked if any of the funds being discussed may be utilized for the purchase of the
321 equipment to eradicate invasive species.

322

323 Dan said the funds were allocated for the Omni Center and that it would be necessary to go back
324 and reexamine the Capital Improvements budget to determine if any funding is available for
325 invasive species.

326

327 Andrea noted it would be necessary to have two individuals run the equipment and said she does
328 not see that in the budget.

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329

330 Victor asked if it is possible to download the app and tie it into social media accounts.

331

332 Dan said yes.

333

334 Motion by Brian Udermann, second by Victor, to approve Omni Center projects items 'a' (LED
335 light replacement), 'b' (Surge protection on heating and cooling systems), 'd' (Valve
336 replacement on Arena 2 sprinkler system), and 'e' (Omni Center phone app development).

337

338 Andrea asked if 'e' can be removed from the motion.

339

340 Ald. Binash asked Andrea why she wants to remove 'e' from the motion.

341

342 Andrea said she wants to abstain from voting on 'e,' but not 'a,' 'b' and 'd.'

343

344 For clarification, Ald. Binash asked Andrea if she does not want to include 'e' in the approval.

345

346 Andrea said she does not want to vote on 'e.'

347

348 Dan said the motion on the floor includes 'a,' 'b,' 'd' and 'e' and explained to Ald. Binash that
349 Andrea is trying to say she fully supports 'a,' 'b' and 'd' and "has hesitations" on 'e.'

350

351 Andrea said Dan is correct.

352

353 Motion restated:

354

355 Motion by Brian Udermann, second by Victor, to approve Omni Center projects 'a' (LED light
356 replacement at a cost of \$20,750), 'b' (Surge protection on heating and cooling systems at a cost
357 of \$7,900), and 'd' (Valve replacement on Arena 2 sprinkler system at a cost of \$6,590), with
358 funding coming from Account No. 415-51000-098.

359

360 On voice vote, motion carried.

361

362 Motion by Brian Udermann, second by Ald. Binash, to approve Omni Center project 'e' (Omni
363 Center phone app development at a cost of \$15,000), with funding coming from Account No.
364 415-51000-098.

365

366 On voice vote, motion carried, 3-0, with one abstention (Andrea).

367

368 Andrea explained she abstained from voting because she has concerns regarding privacy and
369 security.

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370
371 Motion by Brian Udermann, second by Ald. Binash, to approve Omni Center project item 'c'
372 (Arena 2 audio system at a cost of \$30,890), with funding coming from Account No. 204-55450-
373 810.

374
375 On voice vote, motion carried.

376
377 **Item 7 – Fall/Winter Activity Guide**

378
379 Dan said Samantha, who was recently hired, has been working on the Fall/Winter Activity
380 Guide. Dan welcomed feedback from board members and asked that they inform staff of any
381 changes that need to be made by Wednesday or Thursday.

382
383 **Item 8 – Report from La Crosse County Bluffland Steering Committee**

384
385 Dan said La Crosse County Planner Charlie Handy had emailed him asking if it would be
386 possible to meet in mid-September and discuss signage.

387
388 **Item 9 – Report from Onalaska Enhancement Foundation**

389
390 No report.

391
392 **Item 10 – Report from Great River Landing Committee**

393
394 Victor said the committee had received an update regarding Phase I of the Great River Landing
395 Project at its August 11 meeting.

396
397 Ald. Binash noted that the cost for archaeological services had increased to approximately
398 \$100,000.

399
400 **Item 11 – Director's Report**

401
402 **a. Parks Update**

403
404 Mark reported the following:

- 405
406
 - 407 • Summer employees will be leaving within the next week and a half.
 - 408 • Staff is continuing to do tree work.
 - 409 • A tree was planted at Van Riper Park in memory of Joanne Van Riper.
 - 410 • The city will be required to maintain the new trail along State Trunk Highway 35.

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411 Dan noted that Lane Zahrte has been hired as the new full-time maintenance employee.

412

413 **b. Recreation Update**

414

415 Dan reported that tackle football begins tonight, and volleyball begins the week of August 28-
416 September 3.

417

418 **c. Aquatic Center Update**

419

420 Dan reported that the Aquatic Center closes for the season on August 28, and the “Diggity Dog
421 Dip” is scheduled for September 3.

422

423 **d. Omni Center Update**

424

425 Brian Babiash reported the following:

426

- 427 • The sound system is being installed. The all-call feature will supersede anything being
428 played or said in the entire building.
- 429 • A new door was installed on the Zamboni room.
- 430 • There are plans to host a flea market/rummage sale and a youth hockey tournament called
431 “Pucks Before Bucks” the weekend before Thanksgiving.
- 432 • A Thursday night boys high school hockey league is in the planning stages for summer
433 2017.
- 434 • A varsity volleyball tournament hosted by Onalaska High School is in the planning stages
435 for September 2017. The goal is to attract 16 teams from around the state.
- 436 • A one-day junior varsity volleyball tournament is in the planning stages for August 2017.
- 437 • The former Tourism office is being rented out as a boardroom.

438

439 **Item 12 – Closed Session**

440

441 To consider a motion to convene in Closed Session under Section 19.85(1)(e) of the Wisconsin
442 Statutes for the purpose of deliberating or negotiating the purchasing of public properties, the
443 investing of public funds or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or
444 bargaining reasons require a closed session:

445

- 446 • Tornado Youth Hockey Contract

447

448 If any action is required in Open Session, as the result of the Closed Session, the Board will
449 reconvene in Open Session to take the necessary action and/or continue on with the printed
450 agenda.

451

Reviewed 8/26/16 by Dan Wick

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452 Motion by Ald. Binash, second by Brian Udermann, to convene in Closed Session.

453

454 On roll call vote: Ald. Jim Binash – aye, Andrea Benco – aye, Brian Udermann – aye, Victor
455 Hill – aye. In Closed Session.

456

457

458 Recorded by:

459

460 Kirk Bey