

**Special Common Council
of the City of Onalaska**

Tuesday, March 15, 2016

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1 The Special Meeting of the Common Council was called to order at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday,
2 March 15, 2016. It was noted that the meeting had been announced and a notice posted at City
3 Hall.

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5 Roll call was taken, with the following members present: Mayor Joe Chilsen, Ald. Jim Binash,
6 Ald. Jim Olson, Ald. Jim Bialecki, Ald. Bob Muth, Ald. Harvey Bertrand. Ald. Barry Blomquist
7 participated via telephone.

8
9 Also Present: City Clerk Cari Burmaster

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11 Mayor Chilsen said he is recusing himself in favor of Ald. Bialecki, the Common Council
12 President.

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14 **Item 2 – Approval of minutes from the previous meeting (March 8, 2016)**

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16 Motion by Ald. Olson, second by Ald. Muth, to approve the minutes from the previous meeting
17 (March 8, 2016) as printed and on file in the City Clerk’s Office.

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19 On voice vote, motion carried.

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

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23 **Item 3 – Approval of request to amend Class “B” Liquor License for The Wharf Lounge,**
24 **103 10th Avenue South, Onalaska to include the outdoor area for an event on Saturday,**
25 **March 19, 2016 from 12-6 p.m.**

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27 Motion by Ald. Muth, second by Ald. Olson, to deny a request to amend Class “B” Liquor
28 License for The Wharf Lounge, 103 10th Avenue South, Onalaska to include the outdoor area for
29 an event on Saturday, March 19, 2016 from 12-6 p.m.

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31 Ald. Muth said, “This request does not follow proper procedure. It did not go through [the
32 Administrative and Judiciary Committee] like any other organization that holds an event. I also
33 think that in this case especially – and I did check – the neighbors have not been notified about
34 this event. I talked to Mr. Olson, who happens to be my dentist, across the street. He had no
35 knowledge of this whatsoever. No one has talked to him. He in the past has had events across
36 the street where his parking lot is left with beer cans, broken beer bottles and vomit, and people
37 are using his parking lot without his permission. If you look at the location where they’re
38 planning to have this, they have like 15 parking spots. If they put a tent out there they’ll have
39 even less parking area. They will be parking who knows where. Everything about this is done
40 wrong. It’s not done according to the way we do everything else, and I don’t think there should
41 be an exception to the rules. I just think this is wrong.”

42

Reviewed 3/16/16 by Cari Burmaster

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43 Ald. Olson said, "I'm a little embarrassed that this happened the way it did. I agree with you that
44 I think that it should be done properly. There were other avenues. We had a Council meeting
45 last week. That's where we should have dealt with this issue, if that was up there. There are all
46 kinds of places available here. We have the Omni Center. There are other opportunities, so I
47 agree [with Ald. Muth]."

48
49 Ald. Bialecki noted that it is normal practice for individuals who wish to hold an event to send an
50 application to the City Clerk. From there, the request goes before the Administrative and
51 Judiciary Committee and then before the Common Council for final approval. Ald. Bialecki also
52 noted that the neighbors are notified and said he believes public safety researches and determines
53 if there have been previous problems. Ald. Bialecki noted that this request came in "after the
54 fact" and said it is his understanding from what Ald. Muth and Ald. Olson have said that the
55 Council might be setting a precedent if this request is approved.

56
57 Ald. Bertrand said it is his understanding a request such as this one must first go to committee.
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59 Ald. Binash, who sits on the Administrative and Judiciary Committee, told the Council he had
60 spoken with Cari and asked if this request is allowed. Ald. Binash said City of Onalaska
61 Ordinance states it is allowed because a \$25 fee was paid. Therefore, a special meeting may be
62 called. Ald. Binash said that while a meeting such as this one is "a little unusual," it is not
63 something that is done out of order.

64
65 Cari admitted this is not a normal practice, but she also noted that it has been done in the past,
66 albeit very infrequently. Cari said once the \$25 is paid, she is under obligation to call the
67 meeting.
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69 Ald. Muth said he discovered that the event being held at The Wharf Lounge is for Mayor
70 Chilsen's reelection and stated, "I think if we do anything and we make an exception to a rule on
71 this, it will make the Council look terrible that we're bending the rules for one of our own. It
72 also makes the appearance of an endorsement of the Council if we OK this and go around it the
73 way this is going around. I just think it's wrong."
74

75 Ald. Binash said, "By ordinance it would be allowed. But there are things being said here that I
76 agree with, especially by Alderman Muth, that I think we would have to notify the people who
77 live in the general area. And if there are problems, at least have them give some input to what
78 may or may not ..."
79

80 Ald. Bialecki said, "To me, either you have a policy or you don't. If you do, you follow it and
81 you bend no rules."
82

83 Ald. Bertrand asked Cari if there have been discussions in the past about establishing a mandate
84 that states a request such as this must first go through committee.

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85

86 Cari said that while the standard procedure is for individuals to bring in an application that would
87 first go before the Administrative and Judiciary Committee and then the Common Council, the
88 ordinance states that an applicant has the option to call a special meeting.

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90 On voice vote, motion carried, 6-0.

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92 **Adjournment**

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94 Motion by Ald. Bialecki, second by Ald. Bertrand, to adjourn at 6:08 p.m.

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96 On voice vote, motion carried.

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99 Recorded by:

100

101 Kirk Bey