

Meeting Minutes

Special City Council Meeting Minutes

November 17, 2003, 6:30 P.M.

Council Chambers - County/City Building

Mayor Gary W. Wescott, presiding Roll Call: Present: Alderpersons Sevenich, Walther, Markham, Seiser, Sowieja, Barr, Rackow, Molski, Phillips, Stroik, Moore

Also Present: City Attorney Molepske, Clerk Zdroik, Directors Euclide, Gardner, Schrader; Police Chief Carpenter, Fire Chief Barnes, Transit Manager Lemke, Kate Garsombke (Journal), Gene Kemmeter (Portage County Gazette)

Index to these minutes:

2. Finance Committee minutes of budget hearing held on October 22, 2003.
 3. Public hearing on the general local municipal budget for 2004.
 4. Resolution adopting the budget for the City of Stevens Point for the year 2004.
 5. Resolution appropriating necessary funds for the City of Stevens Point for 2004 and levying the tax rate for the year 2003.
 6. Resolution providing for writing special assessments into the tax roll for 2003.
 7. Adjournment.
2. Finance Committee minutes of budget hearing held on October 22, 2003.

Ald. Barr moved, Ald. Walther seconded, to affirm the action and approve the minutes of the budget hearing held on October 22, 2003.

Ayes, all; nays, none. Motion carried.

3. Public hearing on the general local municipal budget for 2004.

Mayor Wescott declared the public hearing open for anyone wanting to comment or offer testimony.

As no one was present to speak, the Mayor declared the public hearing closed.

4. Resolution adopting the budget for the City of Stevens Point for the year 2004.

Mayor Wescott offered some thoughts and comments on the 2004 budget, a budget that is designed to strengthen our high quality of life and to provide municipal services that the citizens expect of the government. The City's tax rate of \$8.53 per \$1,000. The total expenditures will increase by just over \$500,000, with the majority of the increase attributed to the escalating cost of insurance coverage. The City's tax levy next year is up by 1.8%, the capital improvements budget is still over \$1 million dollars.

The Mayor said the 2003 budget reflects the City's continued commitment to upgrading community infrastructure, improving public safety, enhancing our parks and recreation programs and effectively and smartly planning for our future. This budget supports our goal of a safe, affordable, quality community that demonstrates a well managed and financially sound city. We continue to care for what has been entrusted to us.

Next year we will renovate the Donald Copps municipal swimming pool and the skaters and the patrons at the K. B. Willett Ice Arena will benefit from a new dehumidification system.

The Public Works department will purchase new snow removal equipment allowing us to remove more snow faster, returning slippery streets to safer streets in a shorter period of time.

Requests for life saving emergency and rescue equipment are fully funded in this budget. The residents of Stevens Point will continue to benefit from a high level of professional police, fire and paramedic protection. The fire service will purchase new and improved protective equipment for those who answer our emergency calls and the new foam firefighting tool is going to be added to our fire suppression arsenal.

The budget continues with the City's initiative to work with our metropolitan neighbors in wisely planning for our future. The budget supports our commitments to public transportation and telecommunications. This is important.

At no time since 1995 has the City of Stevens Point been in financial crisis. For seven years the city leaders have made wise decisions making it possible to freeze the municipal tax rate. Since 1995, the City has reduced its debt load by millions of dollars. We have been wise stewards of the people we serve. Having said that, we are all aware that the State of Wisconsin faces a fiscal crisis, the worst financial crisis in our history. Three billion dollars is the current estimated size of the state deficit and it is growing. The rest of the state's fiscal crisis grows deeper because of poor decisions made in Madison. The state's fiscal crisis will affect every Wisconsin community including Stevens Point. We are not immune from future financial uncertainties but our past and our continuing commitment to fiscal responsibility positions our community to better cope with whatever Madison may be planning. It will take experienced municipal leadership to respond to the fiscal fallout. Tonight, with this budget, the leaders of Stevens Point will reaffirm our pledge to responsibly plan for the future.

Mayor Wescott publicly thanked the department heads, the Comptroller-Treasurer's office and staff for their work in assembling the 2003 budget. He thanked the alderpersons for their continued support throughout the year on this immensely important endeavor. The Mayor recognized the Comptroller for his tremendous work on behalf of the people of Stevens Point.

He said included in the packet is a list of changes since the Finance budget hearing. Most of the changes are in the TIF area as it relates to debt service.

Ald. Molski moved, Ald. Moore seconded, to approve the resolution adopting the budget for the City of Stevens Point for the year 2004.

Roll Call: Ayes: Ald. Sevenich, Walther, Markham, Seiser, Sowieja, Barr, Rackow, Molski, Phillips, Moore.
Nays: None. Motion carried.

5. Resolution appropriating necessary funds for the City of Stevens Point for 2004 and levying the tax rate for the year 2003.

Ald. Phillips moved, Ald. Stroik seconded, to adopt the resolution appropriating necessary funds for the City of Stevens Point for 2004 and levying the tax rate for the year 2003.

Roll Call: Ayes: Ald. Moore, Phillips, Stroik, Molski, Rackow, Barr, Sowieja, Seiser, Markham, Walther, Sevenich.
Nays: None. Motion carried.

6. Resolution providing for writing special assessments into the tax roll for 2003.

Ald. Sowieja moved, Ald. Barr seconded, for adoption of the resolution providing for writing special assessments into the tax roll for 2003.

Roll Call: Ayes: Ald. Moore, Phillips, Stroik, Molski, Rackow, Barr, Sowieja, Seiser, Markham, Walther, Sevenich.
Nays: None. Motion carried.

7. Adjournment - 6:40 P.M.

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