

Meeting Minutes

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

Council Chambers, County-City Building

November 18, 2002 - 6:30 pm

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

Excused: Alderperson Nealis

Also Present: Comptroller-Treasurer Schlice, City Attorney Molepske, Clerk Zdroik, Directors Disher, Gardner, Schrader, Van Alstine; Police Chief Carpenter, Fleet Maintenance Supervisor Laidlaw, Assessor Kuehn, Personnel Specialist Jakusz, Susan Kampmeier (Journal), Kate Garsombke (Journal), Gene Kemmeter (Portage County Gazette)

Index to these Minutes:

2. Finance Committee minutes of budget hearing held on October 22, 2002.
3. Public hearing on the general local municipal budget for 2003.
4. Resolution adopting the budget for the City of Stevens Point for the year 2003.
5. Resolution appropriating necessary funds for the City of Stevens Point for 2003 and levying the tax rate for the year 2002.
6. Resolution providing for writing special assessments into the tax roll for 2002.
7. Adjournment.
2. Finance Committee minutes of budget hearing held on October 22, 2002.

Ald. Barr moved, Ald. Phillips seconded, to affirm the action and approve the minutes of the budget hearing held on October 22, 2002.

Ayes, all; nays, none. Motion carried.

3. Public hearing on the general local municipal budget for 2003.

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 2003.

Mayor Wescott offered some thoughts and comments on the 2003 budget, a budget that is designed to preserve our high quality of life and to provide the market basket of municipal services that the citizens expect of the government. The City's tax rate of \$10.83 per \$1,000 assessed value remains frozen for a historic seventh year in a row. 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 2.4%, 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 Police Department will continue its upgrade in its communications area including equipment for our squad cars and the police will receive upgrades in the tactical area to better protect the people of Stevens Point.

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.

Comptroller-Treasurer Schlice commented on the 2003 budget. 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. Sowieja seconded, to approve the resolution adopting the budget for the City of Stevens Point for the year 2003.

Ald. Filipiak gave a brief comment on the budget process in Porto Alegre, Brazil, as he learned in a conference he just attended. This community has a \$500 million budget and the community's involvement plays an important role in the budget process in this part of the world, the alderman

said.

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

5. Resolution appropriating necessary funds for the City of Stevens Point for 2003 and levying the tax rate for the year 2002.

Ald. Seiser moved, Ald. Walther seconded, to adopt the resolution appropriating necessary funds for the City of Stevens Point for 2003 and levying the tax rate for the year 2002.

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

6. Resolution providing for writing special assessments into the tax roll for 2001.

Ald. Rackow moved, Ald. Phillips seconded, for adoption of the resolution providing for writing special assessments into the tax roll for 2002.

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

7. Adjournment - 6:40 P.M.

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