

**CITY OF STEVENS POINT  
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COMMON COUNCIL**

**Stevens Point Police Community Room  
933 Michigan Ave**

**May 01, 2019  
5:30 P.M.**

**Mayor Mike Wiza, Presiding**

**PRESENT:** Ald. Jennings, Shorr, Nebel, Johnson, Slowinski, Kneebone, Dugan, Dalton, Phillips, Morrow.

**VACANT:** District 4.

**OTHERS**

**PRESENT:** Clerk Piotrowski, Attorney Beveridge, C/T Ladick, Joe Bachman – Portage County Gazette, Brandi Makuski – Metro Wire, Alan Hovorka – Stevens Point Journal.

**Consideration and Possible Action on the Following:**

**2. Presentations by Candidates for appointment for District 4 Alderperson and Interview questions by the current Council Members.**

Mayor Wiza registered citizens to speak on agenda item 2.

Clerk Piotrowski explained the process for the selection of new alderperson.

Ald. Dalton said she did some research and read that when voting it cannot be a secret ballot and their names have to be attached somewhere to the ballot.

Mayor Wiza said Council has had written secret ballots in the past and asked the City Attorney.

Attorney Beveridge said off the top of his head he was unsure, and said he would look into it.

Ald. Shorr asked Mayor if Council can ask a question to all three candidates.

Mayor Wiza replied yes. He said the candidates will get a chance to talk first and then it will go to council for a questions.

Attorney Beveridge said per State Statute Council cannot vote a secret ballot.

Mayor Wiza told Council that when they get their ballot to put their last name on it and the candidate they would like for alderperson.

Mykeerah Zarazua, 740 Sixth Avenue, said she is excited to run for fourth district alderperson. She said she truly cares about the people she meets. Ms. Zarazua said her strongest skill is being able to research a topic and make an educated decision. She

said she is interested in how the City can improve the City bus system and promote ridership. Ms. Zarazua said she would also like to see more affordable housing because there is a continuous need. She said she brings a compassion for people, a willingness to learn, the ability to research, and the desire to be a voice for District 4 while working with Council to ensure the City of Stevens Point is a wonderful place to live.

Brian Worzella, 717 Washington Avenue, said if he is elected he plans to listen to his constituents and to make the best decision that benefits masses and not only the individual. He said he believes that listening is a skill that one must possess to be an effective alderperson. Mr. Worzella said this is not a "me" job and promises to listen with an open mind and come to a decision that benefits the whole picture. He said he is not against bicycle lanes, but is against the reduction of a four lane major artery to a two lane road. Mr. Worzella said if elected and his constituents want a road diet, he will vote in favor of it.

Will Stites, 425 Bukolt Avenue, said he is elected as fourth district alderperson he will listen to his constituents and work hard to make the best decisions for the district and the City. He said his position with the DNR has best prepared him for this position. Mr. Stites said he worked collaboratively with individuals who had projects that would affect waterways and would work with them to modify their project to meet their needs and state laws. He said some issues that are important to him are: having parks, providing a variety transportation alternatives, providing a variety affordable housing opportunities and putting an emphasis on conserving energy, conserving resources, and increasing population to the City. Mr. Stites said if elected he would do his very best to listen to the residents, to represent them, to help with their concerns, and work hard to make the best decisions for the best of the City of Stevens Point.

Ald. Jennings asked Mr. Worzella if he is against representative government.

Mr. Worzella replied no, and said he plans on representing his constituents. He asked Ald. Jennings what she meant by representative government.

Ald. Jennings said Council currently has a system of representative government. She said it sounds like he is advocating for direct government which is where the people vote through you.

Mr. Worzella said he believes that the majority of the people have a say in the topic. He said if he gets the seat, he represents the fourth district and if the majority are in favor then he would vote in favor. Mr. Worzella said if there was additional information that is against the majority he would explain to those why he not voting that way.

Ald. Jennings said Mr. Worzella has advocated in the past on social media for a parking ramp behind the library or on the southeast corner of the former Shopko parking lot. She said parking ramps cost approximately \$20,000 per stall and asked how he plans on paying for the parking ramp.

Mr. Worzella said he believes there should be a parking structure there or more parking available for downtown. He said parking is very limited and said if the kiosks go in the

City would be taking away more spots. Mr. Worzella said it would be up to Council to pay for the parking structure.

Ald. Shorr asked all the candidates what they think is the most essential role is or what their essence of their job is on deciding different matters.

Mr. Stites said the most important role is the planning aspects of how the City makes decisions for what the community is going to look like in the future and said budget decisions would be the second most important.

Mr. Worzella said budget and transparency are the most important. He said the more transparent you are the questions typically get answered right away.

Ms. Zarazua said everything is important, even if it seems minor is important. She said she recognizes that the final vote by Council is the end result of a topic that had a lot of discussion prior.

Ald. Nebel asked all three candidates how Council should work with landlords and City ordinances to come up with ways to improve our neighborhoods.

Mr. Worzella said it comes down to common sense and safety orientated. He said he believes there should be a more comprehensive area where safety factors are put into place. Mr. Worzella said ordinances are a good thing to move forward with.

Ms. Zarazua said the City definitely needs ordinances. She said with so many ordinances it can be hard to know what they all are. Ms. Zarazua said she understands the importance of the ordinances for the health and safety of the community. She said when she says she does not have a lot of knowledge in ordinances because she has faith in her public officials and trusted her alderperson to provide information.

Mr. Stites said ordinances are important and are a source of friction. He said he is dissatisfied with the lack of maintenance of sidewalks during the winter. Mr. Stites said ordinances pertaining to appearance and upkeep are important but these cases probably warrant a warning first. He said when there is a violation the homeowner and tenant should both be notified of it.

Ald. Johnson read the powers of Common Council from State Statute. She asked all the candidates what one or two core values they hold to help execute the power from Council.

Ms. Zarazua said one of her core values is a compassion for people and said when making decisions for people you have to have compassion with everything you do. She said another one of her core values is having facts and information from experts.

Mr. Stites said one of his core values is having respect for individuals. He said if you meet people with respect and listen to them it is much easier for you to understand what motivates them and communicate with them. Mr. Stites said anytime an ordinance or statute is created it takes freedom away from someone so it needs to be done with respect and with listening.

Mr. Worzella said one of his core values is to not judge a book by its cover. He said you do not know where other people have been that you are helping. Mr. Worzella said you should go into something with an open mind and do not have any pre-judgements.

Ald. Slowinski asked all three candidates to name something that Council voted on recently that they strongly agree or disagree with. He said another question he has is to name something they would like seen to be done in the fourth district.

Mr. Stites said the approval by Council for the twin home development on the former Grant school site was an item that had some controversy and said he was in favor of it. He said it is important to bring more affordable housing into the core part of the City and said the project has the potential to do that. Mr. Stites said it would be nice to see the storm water drainage improved. He said he would be to remove all the industrial activities out of Bukolt Park and have it restored to park use.

Mr. Worzella said he was in favor of the twin homes on the former Grant School site as well. He said improvement wise he would like to see an improvement in snowplowing especially on his road near St. Peter's Middle School.

Ms. Zarazua said the redoing of the streets is one thing that causes a lot of controversy and said she was against it at first but is now happy after it is done. She said she would like to see the project continued so then everyone can benefit from not having water in their basement or yards.

Ald. Kneebone asked Mr. Worzella if he could identify who the bike police are that he referenced in his Facebook comment.

Mr. Worzella said he used the term bike police to refer to the people who were in favor of the road diet. He said he could have phrased things differently.

Ald. Kneebone read another comment when Mr. Worzella referred to City Council as "worthless" and asked which ones if not all of the Council members were worthless.

Mr. Worzella said he was venting and said he was against the project from the start. He said he let his anger get ahead of him and did not direct the comments towards anyone and said it was a blanket statement.

Ald. Dugan asked the three candidates how they would respond if constituents wanted them to vote one way and after research found out that the opposite position is recommended. She said her other question is if the City Council should raise the wages of the City's working poor, why or why not. Ald. Dugan said her last question is if the City should license and inspect rental properties and why or why not.

Mr. Worzella said when it comes to matters on improving on a park or beautification he will take the opinions of his constituents. He said when it comes to construction he will listen to the experts in their field. Mr. Worzella said it needs to be weighed evenly because if you raise it to \$15 an hour it may put a lot of places out of business. He said he believes rental properties should be inspected.

Ms. Zarazua said she cannot vote a certain way based off of one person's input. She said if multiple people raised the same concern then she will see how she can best represent what people are bringing to her. Ms. Zarazua said she has to vote based on the data, finances, and what is best for the whole City. She said increasing wages for the City's working poor sounds amazing because minimum wage is not a living wage and said this would be a much bigger conversation and research. Ms. Zarazua said she would be in favor of licensing and inspecting rental properties and said this would need research as well.

Mr. Stites said it is up to City Council to use their best judgement when they make a decision. He said if an alder gets a lot of phone calls saying they are against something, there must be good reason for it. Mr. Stites said in that instance you would need to re-evaluate and see if there is something you are missing. He said licensing and inspecting rental properties would be a good thing; however, it would require a budget and there would need to be a reasonable fee associated with it. Mr. Stites said there probably is not much of a role that Council can play with minimum wage. He said Council could try to encourage businesses to pay people a living wage and said he doubts that the businesses would listen to him.

Ald. Dalton said she talked to residents in district four and in her own district to see who they knew and what their opinions were. She asked all three candidates what they did to reach out to their constituents to garner their role here.

Ms. Zarazua said she decided to apply for this position about a week and a half ago and said she has not had a lot of time to try and connect with the constituents. She said she met with former alder Heidi Oberstadt to talk with her and see what her role is on City Council, talked about how meetings work, how to handle if one constituent wants something and others don't, and the amount of time it takes to research topics. Ms. Zarazua said her primary focus was to get more information and see what her role would be as well as the time commitment. She said she has met with a few constituents and said some have reached out to her.

Mr. Stites said he has talked with Heidi Oberstadt and got insight for the alderperson position. He said he met and talked with City staff, but has not talked with his neighbors.

Mr. Worzella said he reached out and talked with Heidi Oberstadt. He said there were a few people in his district that he talked to but did not go door to door. Mr. Worzella apologized for his comments on Facebook.

Ald. Phillips asked all the candidates if they are Green Bay Packer fans and who their favorite NASCAR driver is.

Mr. Stites said he is not a sports fan. He said when he's a football fan he is a Packers fan. He said he likes Dale Earnhardt Junior Junior, which is a rock band.

Mr. Worzella said he bleeds green and gold and said his favorite NASCAR driver is Dale Earnhardt senior.

Ms. Zarazua said she has heard of NASCAR and Daytona Beach. She said she is a Green Bay Packer fan, but is more of a SPASH football fan.

Ald. Morrow said there can be hot topics that come up and people get very heated about. He asked all the candidates how they will determine the true wishes of all of the people that they serve rather than catering to the vocal heated few for the betterment of everyone.

Mr. Worzella said he would base his decision on what the experts of that field suggests. He said he would hear what constituents have to say about an issue and said he would try to explain why he would be voting opposite. He said you cannot win over everyone.

Ms. Zarazua said dealing with heated people could have an impact on how she feels on an issue and said she would let that deter her from the bigger picture of making a decision in the district.

Mr. Stites said there is no way to find out how the district as a whole thinks on any issue. He said if someone has a heated opinion on something then their opinion deserves consideration and their points deserve to be looked into and answered. Mr. Stites said alders have to make a decision based on the best information they have available. He said he would go to his neighbors as well to see what their opinions are on a particular issue.

Lyn Ciarro, 2309 Stanley Street, said he believes Mykeerah Zarazua will best represent district four. He said he runs a business in district four and has worked with Mykeerah on varying roles and sees the capacity in which she can connect with Stevens Point residents. Mr. Ciarro said she is a strong force of positive change that the City will be worse off without.

Chai Moua, 2949 Minnesota Avenue, said she knows Mykeerah personally and professionally and believes she will add to the Council. She said she has seen her step up and take on leadership when needed. Ms. Moua said she is asking the alders to choose Mykeerah as alder.

Kelly Wilz, 2220 Oxford Court, Plover, said she is here to support Mykeerah in role of alder. She said this is a good opportunity for Council to appoint someone who can represent the voices that are not typically heard.

Danny Werachowski, 200A Washington Avenue, said he is in for any one of the three candidates. He asked that whomever is elected seeks feedback from residents. Mr. Werachowski said district four is a very diverse district and proposes they use diverse ways to reach out.

Ald. Johnson read a letter from Trevor Roark, 601 Washington Avenue, writing in favor of Mykeerah Zarazua for district four alderperson. He said with her experience she cares deeply about her community. Mr. Roark said Will would be a good candidate as well. He said Mykeerah's experience and passion will speak volumes.

Mayor Wiza said he had two contacts, one supporting Will Stites and one supporting Mykeerah Zarazua.

### **3. Action on Selecting the New District 4 Alderperson.**

C/T Ladick distributed ballots to the Alderpersons. Mayor Wiza said they need to write their last name and the name of the candidate they would like to see elected. He said if there is a majority winner with the first round of voting, that person will be sworn in as alderperson right after the meeting. Mayor Wiza said if there is not a majority then the person with the lowest amount of votes will be eliminated and Council will vote again.

The results were:      Stites –              Jennings, Nebel, Kneebone, Dugan, Phillips. (5)  
                                  Worzella –        (0)  
                                  Zarazua –        Shorr, Johnson, Slowinski, Dalton, Morrow. (5)

Mayor Wiza called for another round of ballots to be cast. He said Council will be voting for either Mykeerah Zarazua or William Stites.

Ald. Phillips said the voting is not secret and suggested everyone just raise their hand.

Mayor Wiza said seeing someone's hand go up to vote for a particular candidate may influence someone else's vote. He said by having everyone write the name of the candidate down it takes away that variable.

The results were:      Stites –              Jennings, Kneebone, Dugan, Phillips. (4)  
                                  Zarazua –        Shorr, Nebel, Johnson, Slowinski, Dalton, Morrow. (6)

Mayor Wiza congratulated Mykeerah Zarazua on becoming the new fourth district alderperson.

### **4. Adjournment.**

Adjourned at 6:48 p.m.