

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

The Common Council of the City of Ashland will meet as the Committee of the Whole on **Tuesday, January 30, 2018** immediately following the City Council meeting which begins at **6:15** p.m. in the Ashland City Hall Council Chambers.

The following items will be considered:

1. Roll Call
2. Council President's Report
3. City Administrator's Report
4. Approval of the Agenda
5. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Reducing the Size of the Ashland City Council (*Councilor Doersch*)
6. Adjournment

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AGENDA BILL

Ref: 024

COMMITTEE AGENDA: 5 (01-30-2018)
COUNCIL AGENDA:

SUBJECT: Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Reducing the Size of the Ashland City Council

RECOMMENDATION: Direct the City Administrator to create a plan that would reduce the size of the Ashland City Council in 2020 (or thereabouts when census data is available) which would include the redrawing of district lines and having at- large members

DEPARTMENT OF ORIGIN: Councilor Doersch

DATE SUBMITTED: January 21, 2018

CLEARANCES: Council President

EXHIBITS:
A- Email Correspondence with Clerk's Office; 11-20-2017, 11-28-2017
B- Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes, 06-25-2013
C- Agenda Bill Item 6D and Meeting Minutes, 07-12-2011

AMOUNT BUDGETED: NA

APPROPRIATION REQUIRED: NA

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

Councilor Doersch has requested a discussion regarding the size of the Ashland City Council. He first requested this discussion at the September 21, 2010 Committee of the Whole meeting. That agenda bill stated:

In an effort to reduce costs, discussion has ensued regarding the membership of the Common Council. Discussions regarding reducing the size of the Council have been discussed during budget meetings and have also been brought to light by Councilor Doersch. Reducing the size of the Council from eleven members to seven members will significantly reduce the costs related to labor, training, and overhead.

In 2010 when researching this topic, Council was informed that it would be best to consider this topic ahead of a census rather than after a census. Therefore, it is timely to revisit the topic. Below are the reasons Councilor Doersch would like the Council to consider reducing the size of the Council.

1) By doing it in advance of 2020 (census year), it would give the County time to adjust their districts if they so wished.

2) In the last few years, none of the Council elections have been contested. With fewer districts plus at-large contests, more people should be interested in being involved in city government. Democracy means giving people choices for whom to vote for.

3) With fewer people on City Council, the pay could be raised which would also be an incentive for people to participate.

4) Fewer Council members would make for more efficient government.

In 2013, reducing the Council size was again discussed. The minutes from the June 25, 2013 Committee of the Whole meeting include:

Comments from Councilors on reducing the Council size included: 1) there would be shorter meetings; 2) keep Council as is because there are a lot of people in some wards to represent; 3) give up pay for attending meetings; 4) reduce size at census time; 5) cost savings to City; 6) reduce size of Council because of size of the City; 7) favor at-large Councilors; 8) if Council pay is raised, more people could focus on doing a good job in these positions.

Carl Doersch has requested that Council consider directing administration to research the pros and cons of reducing the Council size. This may be through an Ad Hoc committee if the administration and Council support that approach.

Suggested Motion: Direct the City Administrator to create a plan that would reduce the size of the Ashland City Council in 2020 (or thereabouts when census data is available) which would include the redrawing of district lines and having at-large members.

Denise Oliphant

From: Kim Westman
Sent: Monday, November 20, 2017 2:20 PM
To: Ward 7
Cc: Deb Lewis; Denise Oliphant
Subject: RE: agenda bill regarding council size for Councilor Doersch

Hi Pat-

Did a little digging and the City of Washburn has 7 councilors, one is at large. They have 4 wards that they have divided up in what I consider a strange way. Don't really understand it. They have 2 reps on the County Board one rep for Wards 1 & 2 and one rep for Wards 3 & 4. The Bayfield County Board has 13 members. Could not get ahold of anyone in the City of Washburn, will keep trying to see how it works for them. Scott Fibert, Bayfield County Clerk says it works OK for them.

As for us, I think 7 wards would be better. However, for voting purposes to avoid confusion and expense for both the city/county for voting expenses (ballots, contests, programming, etc.) I would like to see Ashland County Board reduce their number to 7 districts also. Big argument is that it would save both the City/County some money. However, if the County chooses not to reduce the number of board members it would not affect the city doing so.

I vehemently agree that if you are going to do this please do it at the next census. It would be the best time. Looking over the minutes from Sept. 28, 2010, page 2, Teague argued that there are easier and more effective ways to save money, but nothing was listed. Teague also stated duties and responsibilities of councilors could increase, but I imagine there are other cities our size who make it work with 7 reps. Also stated leaves leadership to 3 or 4; no matter the number of councilors those who will lead will do so, and those who do not won't. Benton stated this would leave the people with less representation. Councilor should represent everyone in the city not just a particular ward. In 2013 one of the comments was some wards had a lot of people to represent. Ward boundaries after the census are redrawn to include approximately the same number of people in each ward.

To date I have not seen a good argument as to what the benefit of a bigger city council is. People can speak, they can participate, no matter if there are 7 wards or 11 wards. By having 7 at large seats, anyone so inclined to run for city council could do so without having to cajole people in a particular ward so that we have a body that will represent their ward. Why not open it up to those individuals who really are interested in working for the best interests of everyone in the City because they want to and let the voters decide. To me that is the best argument for a smaller council.

Kim

From: Ward 7
Sent: Saturday, November 18, 2017 1:03 PM
To: Patti Ekstrom; Kim Westman
Cc: Carl Doersch
Subject: agenda bill regarding council size for Councilor Doersch

Hi Patti and Kim,

Carl has requested an agenda item regarding council size. This was considered roughly 5 years ago. I'm wondering if you can find that agenda bill and send what was in it to Carl and myself for background for the next discussion that Carl is interested in having.

Denise Oliphant

From: Kim Westman
Sent: Tuesday, November 28, 2017 12:57 PM
To: Deb Lewis; Denise Oliphant
Subject: FW: reducing our city council

I consulted with the **Wisconsin Elections Commission attorney** about downsizing the council seats to see what info he had; this is his reply. Kim

From: Judnic, Nathan - ELECTIONS [mailto:Nathan.Judnic@wisconsin.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, November 28, 2017 12:22 PM
To: Kim Westman
Subject: RE: reducing our city council

Hi Kim,
It would appear that Wis. Stat. s. 62.08 – Alteration of aldermanic districts - is probably the statutory section that you would want to focus on if the council is considering a reduction in the number of council members. Specifically, it looks like subs. (3) and (4) appear to be the most relevant. The Elections Commission has not issued any guidelines, but it is possible that the league of municipalities has issued guidance in the past to assist its member municipalities. Waiting until redistricting based on the new census seems like a good idea given the work that is required under sub. (1), but I guess that depends on the urgency of the council to reduce the number. The new districts based on the census are usually not in place until a year or two after the census is completed – so you might be looking at 2021 or 2022 (and that is if the districts are not challenged in court). If you have not already, I would suggest bringing your city attorney into the loop on this as well. One word of caution that we have advised other entities on that look to eliminate or reduce seats, is that you want to make sure the elimination or reduction is clearly communicated and any work is completed in advance of the nomination paper window opening for a seat. Once the nomination paper window opens, individuals could circulate papers and file ballot access documents and could have a legal right to be on the ballot if the work to eliminate the seat has not been completed. Additionally, once a person is elected to a seat for a set term, we have advised that you cannot unilaterally remove them from the seat prior to the expiration of the term that they have been elected to by the people. So when you have staggered terms for members, you must take that into account in any reduction plan.

Hopefully this his helpful. Again, I would consult with your city attorney and potentially the league for additional information or resources they may be able to provide.

Regards,
Nate

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Councilors will be given a copy of the letter the Mayor received regarding Superior Days 2014. Westlund will contact the Extension office regarding costs. This discussion will be revisited at a future meeting when more information is received.

Agenda Item 8: Discussion and Possible Action on Reducing Council Size (Councilor Doersch)

In an effort to reduce costs, discussion has ensued regarding the membership of the Common Council. Discussions regarding reducing the size of the Council have been discussed during budget meetings and have also been brought to light by Councilor Doersch.

Discussion took place during the redistricting process regarding reducing the size of the Common Council by four members as this was the most opportune time. A resolution was considered by the Common Council at the September 28, 2010 Committee of the Whole meeting but no action took place at that time.

Carl Doersch has requested that Council consider directing administration to research the pros and cons of reducing the Council size.

Doersch stated that reducing the Council size would save money. At the April, 2013 elections, the Council races were not competitive as only the incumbents ran for office. In previous years, there were only a few challengers. He stated that the City has more Councilors and Ashland County has more County Board members than most places.

Doersch moved, Pufall seconded a motion to propose that the City Administrator meet with the County Administrator to determine the most advantageous time for changing the amount of members and then have both bodies debate and vote on this issue.

The Mayor stated that when he met with Mayors recently, most of their cities had seven to nine members and most are elected at-large. He thinks more candidates would run for office if there are at-large members.

Comments from Councilors on reducing the Council size included: 1) there would be shorter meetings; 2) keep Council as is because there are a lot of people in some wards to represent; 3) give up pay for attending meetings; 4) reduce size at census time; 5) cost savings to City; 6) reduce size of Council because of size of the City; 7) favor at-large Councilors; 8) if Council pay is raised, more people could focus on doing a good job in these positions.

There was a point of order.

Ketring called the question. All were in favor of calling the question.

On a voice vote, the motion to propose that the City Administrator meet with the County Administrator to determine the most advantageous time for changing the amount of members and then have both bodies debate and vote on this issue, carried 6-5. Those opposed were Kabasa, Williamson, Green, Teague and Peterson. The Administrator will bring a proposal to Council.



AGENDA BILL

Ref: 171

COMMITTEE AGENDA: 7 (06/28/2011)

COUNCIL AGENDA: 6D (07/12/2011)

SUBJECT: Resolution to Adopt a Plan for Wards and Aldermanic Districts Within the City of Ashland (*Approved Unanimously by Committee of the Whole June 28, 2011*)

RECOMMENDATIONS: Approval of Adoption of City of Ashland 2011 Ward Redistricting Plan 2

DEPARTMENT OF ORIGIN: City Clerk

DATE SUBMITTED: June 21, 2011

CLEARANCES: County Supervisory District Plan Approved by Ashland County Board
– May 19, 2011
Approved Unanimously by Committee of the Whole June 28, 2011

EXHIBITS: Resolution to Adopt a Plan for Wards and Aldermanic Districts within the City of Ashland
Letter from Jeff Beirl regarding the County’s Tentative Plan
County Supervisory District Plan Approved by Ashland County Board
– May 19, 2011
City of Ashland 2011 Ward Redistricting Plan 2
City of Ashland 2011 Ward Redistricting Plan 1

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

After each census, local governments are required to redistrict. Redistricting is the process of revising the geographic boundaries within a state from which people elect their representatives to the U.S. House of Representatives, State Legislature, County Board, City Council, and School Board. The process begins with the adjustment of municipal wards, the building blocks used to form election districts. Wisconsin law requires all cities, villages, and towns with populations of 1,000 or more to establish wards.

The only reasons for adjusting ward boundaries are to: 1) comply with the population ranges required by law; 2) reflect changes in municipal boundaries occurring subsequent to the adoption of the previous ward plan; 3) permit the establishment of election district of substantially equal population, and 4) permit the establishment of aldermanic or supervisory districts which enhance the participation of minorities in the political process and their ability to elect representatives of their choice; 5) and aldermanic and supervisory districts should remain compact or contiguous. The intent is that wards will remain permanent and only accommodate changes in population growth patterns or the mathematical requirements of creating election districts of equal population.

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sides of the street so people can walk on sidewalks, not in the streets. There is no financial burden to the resident.

Mike Benton stated that Councilors must act appropriate at meetings. The Fire Department bought recliners from Slumberland and questioned why they were not purchased locally. He stated that the Council will have to make fiscally responsible cuts in the future.

Agenda Item 6: Consent Agenda

Teague moved, Scott seconded a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. On a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 6A: Operator's Licenses

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|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Tara M. Apprill | Kristen M. Beneke | Carol L. Bond |
| Sharon K. Casey | Diane B. Cooley | Ellen Tyndall Erickson |
| Janet H. Esposito | Gloria J. Foris | Melody L. Hoglund |
| David G. Johnson | Christine A. Kabasa | Michele A. Karker |
| Jennifer L. Kelly | Jacquelyn V. King | Carra M. Leair |
| Michael T. Martin | Mary L. McPhetridge | Maribeth Monroe |
| Jennifer R. Munson | Elizabeth J. Nelson | Erick J. Schutte |
| Donald B. Soulak | Kathleen M. Soulak | Taylor R. Tomczak |
| Danielle M. Topping | Jessica E. Tyndall | Dante R. Xavier Wolfe |

Agenda Item 6B: Miscellaneous Minutes

Agenda Item 6C: Treasurer's Report for May 2011

Agenda Item 6D: Resolution to Adopt a Plan for Wards and Aldermanic Districts Within the City of Ashland (Approved Unanimously by Committee of the Whole June 28, 2011) (City Clerk)

After each census, local governments are required to redistrict. Redistricting is the process of revising the geographic boundaries within a state from which people elect their representatives to the U.S. House of Representatives, State Legislature, County Board, City Council, and School Board. The process begins with the adjustment of municipal wards, the building blocks used to form election districts. Wisconsin law requires all cities, villages, and towns with populations of 1,000 or more to establish wards.

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The redistricting is outlined in a three-step process: 1) within sixty days of receiving the census data, County Boards will submit a tentative County Supervisory District Plan to each municipality in the County; 2) municipalities adjust ward boundaries in line with the proposed County Supervisory District Plans; 3) within sixty days of receiving the municipal ward adjustments, Counties are required to adopt a final plan to adopt consisting of whole municipal wards.

The Ashland County Board Redistricting Committee studied several options, but recommended that the County Board stay at 21 county supervisory districts – with the City retaining 11 county supervisory districts. The Ashland County Redistricting Plan, approved by the County Board on May 19, 2011, provides for the following: contiguous ward boundaries, substantially equal representation for all residents of the City, and retains the core of existing districts/wards.

The City's 2010 Census population is 8,216. With 11 districts, the target population is 747 per district. The City of Ashland 2011 Ward Redistricting Plan 2, as proposed by the County, does meet the population requirements and is recommended for approval for the following reasons: 1) the plan is consistent with the County proposed plan which will allow for an easier transition; 2) the population between wards is substantially equal; 3) changes in boundaries were kept to a minimum, 4) this plan meets criteria for population deviation; 4) Council members will remain in their respective wards; 5) and the proposed districts respect communities of interest. If Redistricting Plan 2 is not adopted in favor of Redistricting Plan 1 (no boundary changes), the following will be obstacles during implementation and throughout the election seasons: 1) confusion as to where to vote as there may be multiple locations due to City and County boundary differences; 2) increase costs for elections for ballots, programming for election equipment as a result of variances in ballot types/differences; 3) increased cost for advertising to clarify the appropriate voting wards for each election; 4) increased staff time to manage the variances between the County and the City; 5) and more significant variances in the population between wards. Implementation of the proposed plan will be time consuming at first, as the City will need to notify all affected residents of the Ward changes and possibly increase the amount of poll workers to accommodate residents. However, the plan will be in place for ten years and will be less time consuming and be more cost effective to implement than the alternative.

The City of Ashland 2011 Ward Redistricting Plan 2 outlines the following: 1) the 2001 ward boundaries compared to the proposed boundaries; 2) 2010 Census block participation by Ward; 3) population changes based on the 2000 and 2010 Census information; 4) and polling locations, City Council residences, City boundaries, and population by Ward. There are boundary changes and population changes for the following Wards as illustrated for the following based as illustrated by the Plan 2 map: Ward 1 population has decreased by 71 people and the size has decreased by 453.21 acres; Ward 2 lost 1 resident but the size has increased by 5.44 acres; Ward 3 has lost 33 residents and 6.48 acres; Ward 4 has gained 25 residents and 4.92 acres; Ward 5 has gained 18 residents and 2.34 acres; Ward 6 has gained 26 residents and 1.94 acres; and Ward 7 has gained 36 residents and 445.04 acres. This comparison is using 2010 census numbers only with a comparison of new boundaries to existing boundaries.

The City is asking that the Council approve the 2011 City of Ashland Ward Redistricting Plan 2 for the aforementioned reasons. The plan must also be approved by the Ashland County Board. The County will take formal action on creation of the County Supervisory districts following adoption of the ward boundaries by the Council. Approval from the County Board is expected if Plan 2 is approved.

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The Resolution to adopt a plan for wards and aldermanic districts within the City of Ashland was approved unanimously by Committee of the Whole on June 28, 2011. **(File #16847)**

Agenda Item 7: Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

Agenda Item 8: New Business

Agenda Item 8A: Resolution to Transfer Surplus 2010 General Fund Fund Balance to the Capital Streets Project Fund 470 to Fund a Portion of the 2011 12th Avenue West Reconstruction Project (Treasurer)

On June 28, 2011, the Ashland Common Council authorized funding a portion of the 12th Avenue West Reconstruction project with surplus funds from the 2010 General Fund Budget Year. This resolution formally authorizes staff to make a transfer into the Capital Streets Project Fund (470). It is staff's recommendation to pass this resolution.

Teague moved, Scott seconded a motion to approve the Resolution to Transfer Surplus 2010 General Fund Fund Balance to the Capital Streets Project Fund 470 to Fund a Portion of the 2011 12th Avenue West Reconstruction Project. On a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. **(File #16848)**

Agenda Item 8B: Resolution to Approve the Sale of Lot 7 and Lot 8, Block 2, Phillips Addition Parcel #201-03804-0000, An Approximate 1.55 Acre Parcel of Land Located at 2401 Junction Road to Patrick Pospychalla (Approved Unanimously by the Planning Commission July 5, 2011) (Planning and Development)

Patrick Pospychalla has submitted a written offer to purchase the balance of Lot 7 & Lot 8, Block 2, Phillips Addition of a parcel of City-owned land located at 2401 Junction Road. Mr. Pospychalla stated that the planned usage of the property in the short term is to clean up debris, improve the appearance, and improve the drainage in front of his existing building at 2301 Junction Road as water is able to flow into the building from rain and snow melt. The Pospychallas have improved the drainage situation slightly by shifting drainage to the west and north of the building, but it is still a serious problem. They intend to build a better drainage system to Lots 7 and 8.

Kabasa moved, Eades seconded a motion to approve the Resolution to Approve the Sale of Lot 7 and Lot 8, Block 2, Phillips Addition Parcel #201-03804-0000, An Approximate 1.55 Acre Parcel of Land Located at 2401 Junction Road to Patrick Pospychalla. On a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. **(File #16849)**