

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the City Council Held on May 17, 2021 Pursuant to Notice Duly Given:

1. Meeting called to order by Mayor Heier at 6:00 p.m.
2. Roll Call: Al Schreiber, Dean Reed, Mayor Heier, Jean Feldt, Roger Reed, John Reed, Kim Bronikowski, Sue Anderson, Todd Hearley, Tere Hochmuth, Attorney Calvert
Excused: Diane Motiff

Also Present: Park & Rec Director John Bostedt, Sara Perrizo, Administrator and as recording secretary and other interested parties

3. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance by Alderperson J. Reed
4. Approval of Agenda

Moved by Schreiber, seconded by Feldt to approve the agenda.

9 ayes

5. Correspondence/Public Input.

Lenny Nigh, 502 Park Avenue, stated that a lot of yards in the city are not large enough for private pools. He opined that City Park is not clean enough to swim and stated that he has donations from local businesses contingent upon the pool opening.

Zoe Clough, 1590 Krause Road, has many memories that were made at the pool. She is trying to give the kids at The Zone (Oconto Area Non-Profit Childcare) similar memories. For these children to use City Park, a lifeguard is required.

Ross Gnotke, 318 Jefferson Street, moved here in 2019 from a smaller town that has a new pool which is supported by that community. That pool was open last year, even with COVID, with no problems. His daughter is six years old and loves the pool. He understands the financial cost to the pool, but asked that the costs to people who would have to put up private pools be considered. Gnotke opined that City Park and the river are only good for splashing. There should be money for lifeguards budgeted and they should be able to be hired now and put on the payroll.

Mike Prey, 405 Krueger Avenue, opined that nearly everyone at the meeting has used the pool and questioned why it isn't open.

Amy Huggett, 225 Quincy Street, stated that it would be beneficial to have the pool open from Memorial Day to Labor Day and asked why the lifeguard jobs were not posted sooner. There are kids coming from college that would be looking for work.

Sue Eparvier, 1680 County A, asked if it was thought of to ask for volunteers to work at the pool.

6. Discussion/Action/Recommendation on the Following:
 - a. 2021 Aageson Pool Operations

Perrizo stated that the recommendation from the Park & Recreation Committee was to keep the pool closed in 2021.

Feldt stated that it would have been good to have members of the public at the recent Park & Rec meeting where the pool was discussed for over two hours. It is disappointing that no one from the public attended. We can't open the pool this year, but are trying to provide alternate

activities for the kids. We can make much needed improvements to the pool this year, but they can't be done until the end of June. The Park and Rec Committee is working with other departments in the city to find alternate activities. It is unfortunate that this happened, but we will be able to repair the pool so it can last for many years in the future.

Bronikowski attend the Park & Rec meeting and there are numerous pieces that lead to the pool being unable to open. It comes down to safety and if anything were to happen, it would come back to the city. She is not willing to take that risk.

J. Reed wanted to hear from the public and has spent many days with John Bostedt trying to figure this out. Safety is the number one issue. It is not like the pool is closing forever, and the Bond Center has a pool that can be used this year. He understands not wanting to swim in the Bay or the River, but he will not bend on safety. A group of city officials met with three individuals regarding the pool and a conference call was going to be held with the State, but that didn't happen because at least one of the individuals make a call on their own. It is not safe to run the pool this year. We have placed a band aid on it each year because there is not enough time to fix it correctly. The State Inspector will not put in writing that we can "tweak" the guidelines. Measurements were taken and only 45 patrons could be in the pool at one time. J. Reed wants Oconto to thrive, and we all need to work together. Park & Rec genuinely tried to open the pool. They are going to propose that the budgeted money be used to make necessary repairs. There are also many people who feel that the pool does not need to open. He appreciates the people that have come forward on this issue.

Schreiber stated that the pool was closed permanently approximately eight years ago. John Bostedt worked hard to get it to reopen. At that time, it was found that the expected life of the pool was 25 years, and it is much older than that. If that State would have said in March that we could open, things may be different. John Bostedt has to work with the State Inspector. If we can get the pool into shape using the budgeted money, maybe it can be open earlier next year. The Park & Rec Committee members did an excellent job and Schreiber asks for patience. No one here wants the pool to close, but it is necessary for this year.

Anderson was really bummed last year that the pool didn't open as she had lots of plans for activities there. She does not feel comfortable that the kids can be kept safe there this year. There was discussion at the Park & Rec meeting about other activities that can be done this year in a safer manner.

Moved by Hearley, seconded by Feldt to close Aageson Pool in 2021.

Motion carried upon verbal roll call vote.

9 ayes

7. Adjournment.

Moved by Bronikowski, seconded by d. Reed to adjourn at 6:31 p.m.

Motion carried upon verbal voice vote.

9 ayes

Respectfully Submitted:
Sara J. Perrizo, Administrator