

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY OF NEW BERLIN
COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday, September 16, 2009
5:00 PM**

**NEW BERLIN CITY HALL
3805 S. Casper Drive
Common Council Chambers**

Please note: Minutes are unofficial until approved by the Communications Committee at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Call Meeting to Order

Alderman Hopkins called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM.

Roll Call; Declaration of Quorum and Public Notice

Members present: Alderman Hopkins, Alderman Seidl, Alderman Moore, Bruce Peterka and Kris Scalzo. Also present: Information Technology Director Nick Roethel and Attorney Mark Blum.

Minutes

Motion by Alderman Seidl to approve the June 17, 2009 minutes as printed. Seconded by Bruce Peterka and carried unanimously.

New Business

Social Media for City communications

IT Director Nick Roethel stated he was going to start asking the Committee for the information they need to help make this decision. He stated after studying many social media sites he has ruled out most except for specifically Facebook and felt a need for some presence on this type of venue. He stated there are some concerns including time for updating the site, internal administrative policy for posting and the amount of time people spend personally on Facebook. He spoke of an option for uncensored citizen feedback on items the City would post and is asking what recommendation the Committee would make to Common Council regarding this specific social media on the public internet and allowing citizen feedback.

There was discussion regarding if this social media could be used for informational purposes only, what other cities have done with sites that give feedback and what sites won't allow feedback and the familiarity of Facebook among the Committee.

IT Director Nick Roethel spoke of people in the City of New Berlin utilizing Facebook seamlessly to get City information, the information on the media being the same advisory information found on our website, automating the process and integrating Facebook directly into the website. He stated a need to hit all the demographics of our community, IT Director Nick Roethel showed a presentation on what other communities are doing at this time.

There was discussion regarding the type of feedback the City can expect and the importance of useful and powerful feedback from people not only in the City but elsewhere from demographics that haven't been heard from. IT Director Nick Roethel cautioned the Alderman that there will be feedback and comments from issues that have never publicly been posted before.

Alderman Hopkins questioned if a decision was needed tonight and IT Director Nick Roethel stated the Committee should take as much time as they need. Alderman Hopkins also stated one the largest group today using Facebook is women in their early 40's and that in his opinion he felt the City needs a Facebook presence.

There was discussion on needing a venue for email responses and someone to specifically take care of that venue unlike the webmaster which is taken care of by the IT department. IT Director Nick Roethel stated it would need to be handled outside the scope of additional staff.

Alderman Moore asked how this item had gotten initiated and IT Director Nick Roethel stated it was brought forward internally because it became very evident the City was not reaching their full audience. Alderman Moore stated he has very mixed opinions on this subject and that he feels there is the need for as much input as possible but is concerned with the extremist's feedback. He also stated what he doesn't want is to do nothing at all. Alderman Hopkins stated he was impressed with the examples that were shown. Alderman Seidl stated he agreed with Alderman Moore's reluctance, that a full audience is not being reached, and that various types of information and reminders could be obtained at all times.

Motion by Kris Scalzo to recommend to Common Council that the City establish a presence on Facebook beginning with a pilot with the understanding that the Committee may consider allowing comments and feedback at a later date.

There was discussion regarding time and staff to construct the pilot. IT Director Nick Roethel stated Park and Recreation and Library have volunteered their time and services because it would directly benefit their department and would use the venue to its fullest. He also stated there would be no need to allow feedback at this time with the departments involved.

Seconded by Alderman Seidl and carried unanimously.

Alderman Hopkins stated a need to educate the Council on Facebook and Alderman Seidl stated he would be willing to help. There was discussion on the value of the examples presented, the time and effort to present one positively, the ability for constituents to be more active and to have greater presence in the City of New Berlin. There was discussion regarding allowing feedback, the differences between the City's website and Facebook, examples of how the City's Department would use Facebook and the importance of getting this program started. There was also discussion regarding the time needed to update on a daily basis.

Old Business:

Advertising on City website

IT Director Roethel summarized his findings. He stated there is a potential of earning \$3,600 in revenue by going with a company in the Chicago area. He presented a website that uses the advertising and that there would be some up front cost of approximately \$1,000. He stated the amount of revenue earned would be determined by the amount of space sold. He explained we may have to deviate from the original idea of targeting to only area businesses to targeting specific areas that would be of interest to people viewing the website. He also stated advertisers would work their advertisements around our website, work with us to find areas where it would look the best and providing they sold they would cut us a check. He stated the City does not sell the advertisement, would not talk to the companies, that tags would be placed on the website and information would be fed to the tags within our website with no administration or staff time needed.

Attorney Blum reviewed the sample ordinances he received that would be needed to allow advertising to take place. He stated the ordinance allows for the advertising to take place and adopts a series of policy statements and specifically lists the areas found to be in-appropriate. He stated a concern to deem it is a non-public forum for first amendment legal purposes. He stated if a lawsuit would arise the concern would be if it met the characteristics of a public forum and in his opinion it is unknown to some extent how a court of law would look upon this. He stated advertisers would need to be based on reasonable criteria that are not discriminatory on a viewpoint and content basis. He stated the ordinance recommended by the advertiser for Cook County is well done and protective from a first amendment challenge, he is not sure it is enough. He stated from his legal analysis he feels there are still issues for concern.

There was discussion on the pros and cons of advertising, budget constraints, revenue issues, limited audiences and risks involved. There was also discussion allowing forums to be held at City Hall, political advertising, liability, freedom of speech and limiting only New Berlin businesses. IT Director Nick Roethel stated they offer a service, he places tags on the website and his job is complete. He stated he only looked at it from the stand point of being a recipient of service not from determining how viable they were from an advertising perspective.

There was an understanding that the City does not have a good idea of the prospective revenues generated at this time. This item will remain on the agenda.

Web streaming and video on demand for City meetings

IT Director Roethel stated the budget he will be bringing forward to the Common Council represents the lowest possible budget that will provide adequate security for our community and that there is no money for anything other than status quo in the 2010 IT budget. He stated the Committee may want to hold off and see what Common Council says about the 2010 budget before making any decisions. No action taken.

Responsibilities of the Communications Committee/Structure/By-Laws

Alderman Hopkins stated he hopes to have something distributed to the Committee by next meeting for their consideration. No action taken.

Adjourn

Motion by Seidl to adjourn at 6:16 PM. Seconded by Alderman Moore and carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted and transcribed by:
Christine Stefanich
Deputy City Clerk