



## MINUTES OF AN OFFICIAL MEETING:

Special Meeting: Legislative & Licensing Committee  
Date and Time: Tuesday, March 20, 2023 @ 6:00 pm  
Location: Council Chambers at City Hall, 2000 N Calhoun Road, Brookfield WI  
Members Present: Alderman/Chair Gary Mahkorn, Alderman Bill Carnell, Alderman Chuck Bloom, Alderman Rick Owen  
Others Present: Attorney Jenna Merten, City Clerk Michelle Luedtke, Mayor Steven V. Ponto, Alderman Chris Blackburn, Alderman Kris Seals

3/20/2023 - Minutes

### 1. Roll Call.

Alderman Mahkorn noted a quorum present and called the Legislative & Licensing Committee meeting to order at 6:02 pm. Introductions were made to the candidates in attendance.

Alderman Mahkorn went over the process for interviewing.

Additional questions were added to the original set. The questions were as follows:

1. Why are you interested in serving on the Brookfield Common Council? asked by Ald Owen
2. What qualifications do you have that you feel would make you an effective Council member? Ald Carnell
3. Describe your involvement in the community. Ald Bloom
4. Do you anticipate any conflicts of interest that could arise if you are appointed to the Common Council and, if so, how would you intend to handle them? Ald Mahkorn
5. Why do you think you are the best candidate for this position? Ald Mahkorn
6. Extra: If someone is chosen by this committee, do they plan on running for the seat in 2024? Ald Owen
7. Extra: There is a significant time requirement for this position. between 4-6 meetings per month or more and a lot of material to read. How would this fit in with their home life? Ald Bloom
8. Extra: What issues are most important in your district? Ald Carnell
9. Extra: Where do you see Brookfield in 10 years? Ald Bloom

Alderman Mahkorn noted the meeting was being held in open session as required, however he asked candidates to consider leaving the room until their own interview, in a sense of fairness to all. He explained that the last interviewee has an advantage in that they will be listening to all of the answers given by the other candidates. All candidates agreed and exited the Council Chambers except the first candidate.

### 2. Interview Of Candidates Interested In Being Appointed To The Vacant District 3 Aldermanic Position. Candidate Order Was Randomly Drawn.

Audio: 10:14

Thomas Szews – opening remarks – He has been a resident for quite some time. Background in sales and business development. Worked with the booster club and a condo association. He tries to see all sides of the issue. He did a career change. This is his first year as a teacher in high school. To be an effective teacher, he needs to understand where the students are coming from. He believes he has valuable skills. He was also at St Johns Military Academy in Delafield.

Owen Q1 – Answer: They decided to stay here into their retirement. Grew up in West Allis. Wants Brookfield to be the kind of place he wanted to move to 26 years ago.

Carnell Q2 – Answer: He has the ability to understand all sides of the issue. First step in a controversial situation he seeks to understand. Beyond that, electrical engineering degree. Master's in business administration. Background in business development.

Bloom Q3 – Answer: He added coaching to the list. Worked elections for a few years. Involved in kids catholic parish school when they were young.

Mahkorn Q4 – Answer: He can't think of any right now. If one pops up he would ask his peers. He would step aside.

Owen follow-up: Has he seen the last meeting? A: No, he views agendas and minutes. He has been following the wheel and sprocket project.

Mahkorn Q5 – Answer: He is not sure he is the best. He is a good one with his career change. He will have more time this summer. He will be able to have conversations outside of the formal process. He has a lot of background in civic issues. He can work with people to find a path forward.

Owen Q6 – Answer: Yes.

Bloom Q7 – 4 Answer: His school day ends at 2:40pm. Delafield is 25 minutes away so he can be here a little after 3:00pm. Outside of teaching, there is nothing that he has.

Bloom follow-up: Will he be participating in sports? A: He would not be coaching.

Owen follow-up: He emphasized that this is a part-time position. The idea is that there is a significant commitment that requires a lot of time. A: He has had this approach to places that pay nothing. He has given a lot of time in thankless jobs.

Carnell Q8 – Answer: The biggest is the wheel and sprocket. In their neighborhood they have people on both sides of wanting to be like Wauwatosa and wanting nothing to be like Wauwatosa. He wants to interact with them and see what they are all about. People have different ideas of what the success of Brookfield looks like.

Carnell follow-up: You can do what's best for the entirety of the city or your residents. Which one do you choose? A: He would do what's best for the city and hopefully be acceptable to his district.

Bloom follow-up: His view of the city of Brookfield in 10 years? A: Economically vibrant, good value for tax dollars, place where people want to live. Keeping good schools.

Makhorn indicates that Bloom's follow-up is now question Number 9.

Closing remarks from Szews: Thank you. This is a thankless job.

Audio: 40:00

Sean Firmiss – opening remarks – On Feb 21, he was a candidate in the primary election for Elmbrook Schools. He had spent two full months exposed to negative feedback from members of the community. He was able to turn 6 believers in to 2200 votes. The winner received 2400. He has no major financial backing, no political experience, and no bias. If he is nominated, he will seek reelection. Man of conviction and resolve. He can see this being the next 20 years of his life. Representing his community. Keeping open lines of communication. Sticking to his morals.

Owen Q1 – Answer: He started with the first school board meeting. Seeing people engaged in debate and open communication all for the purpose of representing the children was fascinating. He has done a fair amount of independent research, but fell in love with the board philosophy. To serve on the common council would be corollary to serving on the school board.

Carnell Q2 – Answer: He has been retired for 9 years. Before he retired, he worked at a law firm for 10 years. He facilitated meetings. He had to create and implement policies and procedures to ensure clients were represented perfectly/admirably. He was accountable. He had no other employees to pass the buck onto. He has also done some handyman work. It requires the same skillset and he is the only one accountable.

Bloom Q3 – Answer: He does not have any extensive or personal history. His community involvement is more one-on-one and family based.

Mahkorn follow-up: He asked about running for school board and how he approached that election. His strategies/involvement in campaign. A: In December they found out he would be running against two others for the same seat. He ran as a grass roots candidate on a common sense platform. He did not have additional funds or donations from groups. He was going door-to-door on a scooter.

Mahkorn Q4 – Answer: He doesn't know what conflicts of interest he could possibly have. Any potential conflicts of interest he would have to confront the issue to see what the conflict would be. He would consult the City Attorney of members of the Council. He would recuse himself from any questionable issue.

Owen follow-up: Did he view the last meeting with ethics? A: He was here for the meeting. Risk mitigation is his life.

Mahkorn follow-up: Do you follow agendas and minutes? A: Not many. He was focusing on the school district at the time.

Mahkorn Q5 – Answer: Since 2007 he has had 2 jobs. Working at the firm and now. He loves what he does. He loves solving problem and learning. If he decides he is going to do something, he is going to do it.

Owen Q6 – Answer: Yes.

Bloom Q7 – Answer: His number one commitment when he was running for the board was that he was going to study resources to prepare for items on the agenda at least once per week. He would do that in a public location and announce where that would be so that members of the community would know where he was going to be and for how long. He would like the opportunity to do the same thing here. He would like to engage with members of the community on a regular basis.

Carnell Q8 – Answer: Coffee house sitting on a wood frame. Wheel and Sprocket. Construction for drainage lateral. Safety issues in the neighborhood.

Carnell Q8a: You can do what's best for the entirety of the city or your residents. Answer: district first.

Bloom Q9: Answer: He wants the city to be a place that people who live elsewhere look at and say they want to live there. Where businesses who have brick and mortar locations want to work. The community

grows in a responsible and respectful manner.

Closing remarks from Firmiss: Representing your community is one of the most important jobs one can have. He does not seek this responsibility lightly. He can do excellent work for the people of this city. He just wants to serve in this community.

Audio: 1:22:00

Mary Wacker – opening remarks – Thanks for the opportunity. Very interested in serving the City of Brookfield. She has reflected on what is an alderman and what they do. Aldermen should be curious on how to do things better. A good aldermen has to exercise good judgement because nothing is 100%. They have to live with integrity. They have to have time to serve. Has to be a collaborator and an advocate. Finding a way to meld those things. She has taught and lived this philosophy. Most of all a good alderman needs to find pathways to "yes". We put hurdles up in our way. She is looking to clear those hurdles. These are her foundational goals.

Owen Q1 – Answer: Has had a passion for community service. Non-profit service related. Now is the right time for her. This opportunity has come when she has a flexible job. She has been coming to meetings. She has driven around and sees how the community has evolved. Some growth has been fantastic and some could use a second thought. She wants to see Brookfield grow into its adulthood.

Mahkorn follow-up: What are the "many" challenges she sees in Brookfield's future? A: the conflict is between the low tax rate for Brookfield and the high expectations. They are naturally set to collide. What are we getting for what we are spending?

Carnell Q2 – Answer: She has been involved in teaching her entire life. She is a lifelong learner. She has worked with all types of people. Making sure people are seen and heard. She would afford that respect to her colleagues.

Bloom Q3 – Answer: Preschool teacher at Brookfield congregational, still a volunteer at Dixon, on Swanson Wisconsin Hills Task force, works as a coach at Brookfield East. Mentor team of DSAW (Down Syndrome Association of Wisconsin).

Mahkorn Q4 – Answer: None. If there were something, she would openly disclose it. She would recuse if needed.

Mahkorn Q5 – Answer: She stated she is a great candidate for the position. She won't say she is better, but has a different skill-set. She would not be offended if someone else was picked.

Owen Q6 – Answer: Yes. This will give her time to learn the job.

Bloom Q7 – Answer: Well at this point. Currently she works full time in a flexible job. She schedules her classes and works from home. The company is amiable to employees doing community service. Now is a good time in her life to make a commitment to the city.

Carnell Q8 – Answer: Safety and taxes are always an issue. She knows what is important to the parents in the community. Great schools. People want to stay here after their kids are grown. Good roads, clean when it snows, good trash pickup.

Mahkorn follow-up: Is there one thing concerning about D3? A: The high school; drinking, and football games.

Carnell Q8a: You can do what's best for the entirety of the city or your residents. Answer: Best interests of the city at large, but advocate for your district as well. Transparency is important in this case.

Bloom Q9: Answer: She hopes to still be here. Vacancies and places that went fallow to be reimagined and more vibrant. Wants to be fiscally sounds. Maintain services. Attract young families. The things that drew her family here in the beginning.

Closing remarks from Wacker: She has history in the city. Her daughter and son in law live here and is the 4<sup>th</sup> generation in Brookfield. She loves the history of this. It makes her hungry to build the future. She wants her grandkids to want to move back to Brookfield.

Audio: 1:51:00

It was confirmed that Mr. Greg Keller was not in attendance.

3. Discussion And Selection Of Candidate To Recommend To The Common Council For Appointment To Fill The Vacancy In The 3rd Aldermanic District For The Remainder Of The Term April 16, 2024.

Attorney Merten advised the Aldermen to write down their candidates in the order in which they wanted them to serve. With 3 points being given to their first choice, 2 points to their second choice, and 1 point for their third choice. Attorney Merten tabulated.

Audio: 1:55:00

Thomas Szews received 11 points, Mary Wacker received 8 points, and Sean Firmiss received 5 points.

Owen – It was difficult to place points on this. We try to quantify this as best we can.

Carnell – There are ample opportunities to participate in the community on Boards, Committees, and Commissions.

Mahkorn – The decision honed in on community involvement for me. These are all impressive resumes. The amount of comfort at the table. Reasons he chose Tom as the top candidate - He is very community involved. He had put his name in before. Alderman McCarthy had a high recommendation for him the first time. The community contribution is not lost on them.

**Motion by Alderman Owen, seconded by Alderman Bloom, to recommend Thomas Szews to the District 3 Aldermanic position for the remainder of the term. Motion carried 4-0.**

4. Adjournment.

**Motion by Alderman Carnell, seconded by Aldermen Bloom, to adjourn. Motion carried 4-0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:04PM.**