



Left to right: Ald. Steve Kurkowski, Ald. Greg Loreck, Ald. Jim Ruetz, Mayor Dan Bukiewicz, Ald. Lisa Marshall, Council President and Ald. Ken Gehl, Ald. Chris Guzikowski, and City Administrator Andrew Vickers.

## FROM THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR

Hopefully this edition of *In a Nutshell* finds everyone in great spirits and good health as we round out another year. That was quick!

The Common Council and its various committees had a very busy month of October and November. In this issue, we wanted to discuss some of the positive things affecting our City employees as we head into 2024 such as improved PTO and a new extended paid leave bank.

On November 21, Common Council adopted the new 2024 Operating and Capital Improvement Budget, including major enhancements to public safety staffing in the community. We'll cover that, and a few other items of interest around the City, in this edition.

We look ahead to 2024 with a lot of promise and excitement, and a few more resources to achieve our goals. As always, the work of our staff makes the community what it is. The public sector has some unique challenges, but the work is important. Our Departments have excellent individuals and teams helping to manage the City in an interesting time. Thank you for doing what you do.

With Gratitude,

Andrew J. Vickers, City Administrator

## ACTIONS TAKEN

### Paid Time Off (PTO) Enhancements

Background: Out of the 232 staff members who took part in the 2022 Employee Sentiments Survey, only one-third expressed satisfaction with the PTO provided by the City. While it's expected that everyone values more time off, our experiences in recruiting and retaining employees, along with feedback from our staff, indicated a need to review Oak Creek's PTO policies. In May 2023, the Common Council adopted the new 2023-2027 Strategic Action Plan (SAP) [\[Link\]](#), which included the following goal statement: "Ensure policies on fringe benefits and work-life balance are competitive and align with today's workforce."

The Finance and Human Resources teams, specifically Max Gaggin and Toni Vanderboom, led the analysis and conversation about PTO for non-represented full-time and regular part-time employees.

On November 7, the Common Council unanimously approved changes to the PTO policy and accrual schedule. These changes do not affect employees still receiving traditional vacation and sick leave accruals, such as employees covered by a police or fire union agreement.

In sum, City's PTO accrual schedule was out of market a bit with:

1. The amount of starting PTO for new staff;
2. The ability to accrue more PTO based on years of service; and
3. The amount of time it took to reach max PTO accrual.

The enhancements to the PTO policy and accrual schedule [\[Link\]](#) will address these issues and will also address coverage for employees who do not have sick leave accrual to draw upon in the event of a longer-term absence or short-term disability.

The new PTO policies and accrual schedule will be effective January 1, 2024.

[\[Link to new PTO Policy and Common Council Report\]](#)

**Gratitude:** Thanks to Max and Toni for doing the legwork for this policy update and to the Personnel & Finance Committee for their robust evaluation of the proposed changes.

# ACTIONS, CONT.

## Extended Paid Leave Bank

As part of the PTO analysis, the Common Council also wanted to find a way for employees to avoid going unpaid for longer absences or short-term disability. With the PTO policy changes approved on November 7, the City created an “Extended Paid Leave Bank” for all non-represented full-time employees.

To begin, the City will front-load 40 hours into the Extended Paid Leave Bank for all applicable employees. Employees can then voluntarily contribute additional accrued PTO up to a maximum amount of 280 hours to cover qualified events. Read the new PTO policies in their entirety here: [\[Link\]](#)

**Gratitude:** Thank you to the Mayor and Common Council for valuing our employees, and for additional benefit options and Paid Time Off that maintain a positive balance between our work and our families.

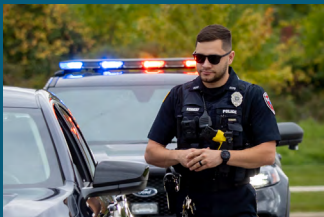
## 2024 Budget Approval and Public Safety Staffing Plan

Another big accomplishment to round out 2024 was the Common Council’s adoption of next year’s operating budget at the November 21 meeting. Their unanimous budget approval allocated funding for all programs, services, wages/salaries, as in the past, and it also allocated funds for the 2024 Public Safety Staffing Plan. This was a priority item also outlined in the 2023-2027 SAP [\[Link\]](#).

For more information:

- 2024 Annual Budget and Capital Improvement Plan [\[Link\]](#)
- 2024 Public Safety Staffing Plan Article [\[Link\]](#) and FAQs [\[Link\]](#)

**Gratitude:** Thank you to our leadership in the Fire and Police departments and Finance department for working through not only the 2024 budget as a whole, but also finding a way to propose a public safety staffing planning that our Elected Officials could easily rally around. You should be proud to know the staffing enhancements will positively affect our workplace and the community into the future.



## Zone E Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan Approved

The Common Council approved the Zone E Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) at its November 7 meeting.

This project involved the restructuring of the City’s existing emergency management guidance document to better align with county and state plan documents, but to also encompass a more cohesive collaboration of the Zone E communities of Oak Creek, Cudahy, South Milwaukee and St. Francis in the event of a large-scale emergency. Having a common plan across all four communities will help to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of available resources to prepare for and respond to emergency situations.

The governing bodies of the other Zone E communities will individually evaluate and vote on approving the CEMP in the near future. Pending all approvals, the document will move through final revisions and edits. An exercise to test the plan in action will occur in 2024.

[\[Link to the approved CEMP document.\]](#)

**Gratitude:** Thank you Brianna Campbell, the City’s Preparedness Coordinator, for the work she put into developing this comprehensive document with the input of the four south shore Emergency Management teams.

## Ultimate Ninjas Milwaukee

Council approved a conditional use permit for Ultimate Ninjas, an indoor obstacle course-style gym, planned for 400 W. Bell Court.

Ultimate Ninjas is a nationwide brand [\[Link\]](#) that operates similar gyms in Indianapolis, Chicago, and St. Louis, and has a direct relationship with the popular television show with the same name.

[\[Link to proposed gym details.\]](#)

## 27th Street Property Donation

The Common Council accepted the donation of a 12-acre property at 8330 S. 27th Street at its November 21 meeting.

The heavily-wooded parcel was donated to the City as part of the ongoing CR Devco/Heyday housing development currently under construction south of Puetz Road and west of I-94. This donation will serve to preserve the land for natural resource park purposes, an potentially future passive park use.

[\[Link to land donation information.\]](#)