



**CITY OF WAUWATOSA**  
**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**  
**MINUTES • NOVEMBER 20, 2012**

Regular Meeting

Common Council Chambers

6:45 PM

7725 West North Avenue, Wauwatosa, WI 53213

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ITEMS**

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Peter Donegan	Alderman	Present	
James Moldenhauer	Alderman	Present	
Kathleen Causier	Alderman	Present	
Craig Wilson	Alderman	Present	
Jeffrey Roznowski	Alderman	Present	
John Dubinski	Alderman	Present	
Tim Hanson	Alderman	Present	
Gregory Walz-Chojnacki	Alderman	Present	
Jill Organ	Alderwoman	Excused	
Dennis McBride	Alderman	Present	
Bobby Pantuso	Alderman	Present	
Joel Tilleson	Alderman	Present	
Brian Ewerdt	Alderman	Present	
Donald Birschel	Alderman	Present	
Cheryl Berdan	Alderwoman	Present	
Jason Wilke	Alderman	Present	
James Archambo	City Administrator	Present	
Alan Kesner	City Attorney	Present	
Kathleen Ehley	Mayor	Present	
Anthony Brown	Asst. to Administrator	Present	

2. Presentation by the City Administrator of the results of the recently conducted citizen survey

Mr. Archambo introduced the recently-completed survey, noting that the city faces many big issues and projects; it is easy to get lost in this effort. This survey is a good chance to look at the big picture and obtain feedback from citizens.

The National Research Center (NRC), in collaboration with the International City/County Management Association, created the national citizen survey (NCS). It provides a statistically valid survey of residents' opinions about their community, is scientifically based and is standardized. Wauwatosa's elected officials and staff should feel good about the results. About 500 benchmark communities have participated in these surveys nationwide and Wauwatosa was compared to that database. Those cities who elect to perform surveys are not random; they tend to be municipalities that are focused on improving service to citizens. This survey was awarded through the city's 2012 internal grants.

The survey process effort began in February; a goal was for it to be objective and to garner benefits. Three mailings were made to 1200 randomly selected households. The data input done by NRC; the margin of error is plus/minus 5%. The survey was weighted to represent our population fairly. Two reports were provided - one

related to benchmarking, and one more comprehensive. The survey itself was conducted in August. Data collection occurred in August and September. The final report was received in October.

Four hundred thirty residents completed the survey, or 38%. The city was ranked above the benchmarks 80% of the time. For most questions, over 100 jurisdictions were included in the benchmark comparisons. The different areas surveyed included community quality, community design, public safety, environmental sustainability, recreation and wellness, community inclusiveness, civic engagements, and public trust. Two customized questions were also asked.

The survey answers many components of why a person moved to Wauwatosa: geographic location, safety, sense of community, historic character, quality of services, recreation, schools, public trust.

One area where the city ranks lower is in the area of civic engagement - civic attentiveness. This could also be interpreted to mean, however, that people are satisfied overall and do not feel the need to become more involved.

Ald. Birschel observed that 89% of the respondents rated highly the contact they've had with city employees.

In response to a query by Ald. Pantuso, Mr. Archambo stated that they'd like to repeat the survey again in 2-3 years. With the baseline information obtained in this survey, changes can be tracked.

Mr. Brown also explained that the city could develop more than two customized questions for future surveys, but that would cost more money.

Ald. Walz-Chojnacki asked whether any past surveys had been completed that could be analyzed to get some trend sense; Mr. Archambo stated the last survey was conducted in 2003. Information can be made available.

Responding to a question, Mr. Archambo stated that comparative criteria can be pulled from the other 500+ municipalities in the database on issues such as, say, snow plowing.

Mr. Archambo further noted that he has been somewhat concerned about code enforcement, and the survey confirmed this. To that end, additional dollars have been added for this area in the 2013 budget. Additionally, the survey suggests that the city must continue to be attentive to general street maintenance. The differences in perceptions about feeling safe during the day and during the night is of concern, but there are no quick answers. The matter of civic engagement is open to interpretation; while Wauwatosa's responses may fall below other cities' benchmarks, it may simply mean that most residents are very satisfied overall and don't feel the need for more engagement.

Mr. Archambo also commented that he found it interesting that the city newsletter and city website received so much attention; he expected social media to score higher than it did.

He also noted that even though recycling participation is high, 6% of respondents apparently don't recycle at all. If participation can be increased, that means the city can be paid more for its recyclables (now at \$100/ton). By contrast, the city pays \$300/ton for material going to the waste stream.

Ald. McBride observed that respondents indicate satisfaction with the police, fire, and public works services they receive. He acknowledged the employees for this fine response.

In closing, Mr. Archambo stated surveys such as this provide an opportunity to the local press to report this favorable information about Wauwatosa. He added that the survey will become part of performance measurement efforts in next year. "We do this to strive for perfection and we might hit excellence."

The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Carla A. Ledesma, City Clerk

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