

Craig, Sondra

From: City of La Crosse Notices - No Reply
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2026 11:46 AM
To: Craig, Sondra; Elsen, Nikki; Janssen, Barb; Kahlow, Chris; Sleznikow, Larry; Trost, Jennifer; Mindel, Mackenzie; Dickinson, Tamra; Goggin, Erin; Steele, Annette; Washington-Spivey, Shaundel; Weston, Lisa; Newberry, Aron; Bedford, Crystal; Padesky, Gary; Stine, Olivia; Northwood, Rosanne
Subject: City Council Contact Form: Disappointment in Administrator Vote

Submitted on: 2/13/2026

Name: Kelly Leibold

Email Address: kellysueleibold@gmail.com

Is this related to a legislative agenda item: Yes

Agenda item number: 24-1287

Subject: Disappointment in Administrator Vote

I'm incredibly dissatisfied in the result of last night's meeting dismissing the opportunity to incorporate a City Administrator. I appreciate Council member Aron Newberry's leadership on this issue and transparency with the community. As your colleague (and partner on initiatives like the Pathways Home Plan), I think La Crosse County is in great shape thanks in large part to guidance from our Administrator Jane Klekamp. I hope the City reconsiders this instrumental step forward. As Aron says, "Despite this collaborative work (like the CAWG), the extended timeline, and overwhelming support from community stakeholders including Emplify Health, the School District, the Franciscan Sisters, and many others, the ordinance ultimately fell short." My employer Habitat for Humanity has also been a strong advocate for how a City Administrator could improve our local government. From an October 2025 blog post, "Right now, communication can be complicated and processes can get muddled. Council members can be deeply involved in the day-to-day operations of city staff. Political pressure can affect decisions, and frequent changes in leadership make it tough to stick to long-term plans." 64% of similar Wisconsin cities use this "administrator" model because it works. The question isn't whether La Crosse needs professional city management: the question is when we'll be ready to make that change.

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From: City of La Crosse Notices - No Reply
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2026 10:55 AM
To: Craig, Sondra; Elsen, Nikki; Janssen, Barb; Kahlow, Chris; Sleznikow, Larry; Trost, Jennifer; Mindel, Mackenzie; Dickinson, Tamra; Goggin, Erin; Steele, Annette; Washington-Spivey, Shaundel; Weston, Lisa; Newberry, Aron; Bedford, Crystal; Padesky, Gary; Stine, Olivia; Northwood, Rosanne
Subject: City Council Contact Form: City Administrator

Submitted on: 2/13/2026

Name: Ron Haag

Email Address: ronhaag1952@charter.net

Is this related to a legislative agenda item: Yes

Agenda item number:

Subject: City Administrator

For those Alder(wo)men not old enough or lived in LaCrosse long enough. the issue of a City Administrator is not new. When Pat Zielke was Mayor I believe there were 2 Administrators on two occasions. It was an on & off again position, probably be due to budget cuts. I'm glad the current Common Council has abandoned the proposal - for now. \$250,000 seemed like a steep price.

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From: City of La Crosse Notices - No Reply
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2026 10:59 PM
To: Craig, Sondra; Elsen, Nikki; Janssen, Barb; Kahlow, Chris; Sleznikow, Larry; Trost, Jennifer; Mindel, Mackenzie; Dickinson, Tamra; Goggin, Erin; Steele, Annette; Washington-Spivey, Shaundel; Weston, Lisa; Newberry, Aron; Bedford, Crystal; Padesky, Gary; Stine, Olivia; Northwood, Rosanne
Subject: City Council Contact Form: Administrator position

Submitted on: 2/12/2026

Name: Dennis Beeskau

Email Address: dbeeskau56@icloud.com

Is this related to a legislative agenda item: No

Agenda item number:

Subject: Administrator position

Just wanted to thank all of you who voted against the Administrator position. Thank you for thinking of the tax payers. Thanks Dennis

Craig, Sondra

From: City of La Crosse Notices - No Reply
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2026 4:42 PM
To: Craig, Sondra; Elsen, Nikki; Janssen, Barb; Kahlow, Chris; Sleznikow, Larry; Trost, Jennifer; Mindel, Mackenzie; Dickinson, Tamra; Goggin, Erin; Steele, Annette; Washington-Spivey, Shaundel; Weston, Lisa; Newberry, Aron; Bedford, Crystal; Padesky, Gary; Stine, Olivia; Northwood, Rosanne
Subject: City Council Contact Form: City Administrator

Submitted on: 2/12/2026

Name: Paul C. Brown

Email Address: pbrown1005@aol.com

Is this related to a legislative agenda item: Yes

Agenda item number:

Subject: City Administrator

I just learned that the zzcouncilmembers@cityoflacrosse.org was discontinued as of 1/21/2025. That is why this letter is being re-sent today because I had no idea that my original letter was not received even though I received no bounce back and even though I copied Nikki Elson in my original email. Here is the content of the letter and no of course there is no time left for you to read and consider it.

1. The long-standing ordinance for City Administrator currently proposed was voted down by referendum long ago. If you the City Council approves the original proposal, you will be defying the will of the people who voted against the referendum.
2. Mr. Newberry's new, 11th hour proposal:
 - a. Is not yet understood by the public.
 - b. Allows the City Administrator to live outside the city which recreates the problem we have with the School District of La Crosse. Superintendent Aaron Engel lives in Trempealeau, pays no District Taxes, has never had his children in district, has no fiscal accountability to the residents, and we can't terminate him. You will create the same problem for the City if you approve the Newberry proposal.
3. You will create a 3rd layer of government by adding the administrator position without dual consideration of changing or eliminating the mayor's position. This is costly and complicates city government unnecessarily. Eau Claire has a City Administrator without a mayor. La Crosse does not need both? You have given great consideration to hiring an administrator, but you failed to consider the mayor's role at the same time. These are not separate matters. They are deeply intertwined; yet you are deciding one (administrator) without consideration of the other (mayor).
4. Some on Council and the mayor have said the winners in the last election ran on being in favor of the city administrator. That may be, but it is a huge stretch to say this means residents want the position as currently conceived to be approved. Last April was not a one issue election. Some of the losing candidates also supported the administrator position or expressed feeling unsure at the time due to insufficient information. You appear to be ignoring the failed referendum of the past even though you are considering approval of the same ordinance. You have not put it to a recent vote via referendum so you really do not know the current will of the people. If you (Newberry) are so convinced the people want this approved as stated in your recent WIZM interviews, then why are you and the rest of the Council refusing to put it to a referendum?

5. The Newberry proposal has not been vetted, is largely unknown to the public at large, was not studied by the work group, and no presentations were made to the public unlike the original proposal. To paraphrase Nancy Pelosi, it feels like you are trying to pass it to see what is in it. This is sneaky and underhanded Mr. Newberry.

6. The Council is aware the public's biggest concern on the proposal is that an administrator cannot be held accountable to the public. Yet you may be ignoring this concern. You have not identified any methods or remedies to address this important concern or how you will manage the administrator.

7. You have said in work group presentations that that it will be very important to choose the "right" administrator for the job, but you have not identified any criteria to choose the "right" person and have not identified any goals for the administrator to achieve, nor any consequences if goals are not met.

8. The mayor has stated he hopes the proposal fails. Really? Will you, mayor, veto the proposal if one of the 2 proposals is actually approved by the Council? And if you do not like it, why did you not participate in the work group?

9. You have been understating the cost of an administrator. You have not included the cost of support staff, office equipment and office space, annual salary increases AND you have not identified ANY spending reductions to offset the cost of an administrator. Have you determined where the administrator and support staff will be housed? I understand space is at a premium in City Hall.

10. You have said we need an administrator to find efficiencies and to save money. Jeepers City Council. It is not hard to stop voting in favor of spending money. Stop voting for unnecessary spending. Stop borrowing money. Pay down and pay off debt. Make it a goal for 2026 and beyond. You do not necessarily need an administrator to make the good decisions for you. Supporting an administrator abdicates your fiscal responsibility to the public.

11. Now to complicate my points above. The previous Council had a \$22 million gift from the allocated ARPA funds and spent it all. What a tremendous missed opportunity. Tamra Dickinson admitted on WIZM that y'all should have planned better for the future. Despite this 22 million dollar gift, you have taken the city residents into greater debt with greater borrowing. You continue to spend money on unnecessary and non-essential projects (like unanimous approval to replace bubblers, duplicative bubblers (next to so called historic bubblers), bump outs, bike lanes, interest payments, "donations" of tax money to large corporate airlines, huge spending on homeless and clean up at multiple locations just to name a few. With history as a guide, YES, you need someone to manage a budget because you are clearly incapable of managing money and the budget in a cost-effective, fiscally conservative manner yourselves. Even if you could manage the budget effectively, the next Council is unlikely to have the ability to do so. Remember, history is the best predictor of future behavior.

In summary, I do think the City of La Crosse needs a City Administrator. You need someone who knows how to manage money and a budget effectively, someone who is a fiscal conservative, someone who can say No to spending, someone who has a vision to decrease spending, to eliminate debt, to spend only on essential services and maintenance, someone with a plan instead of ruling by committee so to speak. With that in mind, please create a City Administrator position, but do it the right way instead of the current proposals. Vote against both administrator proposals for now. Go back to the drawing board by eliminating the mayor completely (or at least redefining the role and duties of the mayor as a figure head with no power), find ways to offset the cost of the administrator position, identify specific goals you want an administrator to meet, present it thoroughly and in a well-polished fashion to the public (not the question and answer presentations made by the work group), and then put it to referendum. If you put together a sound proposal to reduce the size, scope, and cost of City government, you need not be afraid to put the question to a referendum like you are afraid to do now.

Paul C. Brown

Former candidate City Council
District 13

Craig, Sondra

From: City of La Crosse Notices - No Reply
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2026 7:54 AM
To: Craig, Sondra; Elsen, Nikki; Janssen, Barb; Kahlow, Chris; Sleznikow, Larry; Trost, Jennifer; Mindel, Mackenzie; Dickinson, Tamra; Goggin, Erin; Steele, Annette; Washington-Spivey, Shaundel; Weston, Lisa; Newberry, Aron; Bedford, Crystal; Padesky, Gary; Stine, Olivia; Northwood, Rosanne
Subject: City Council Contact Form: Bike lanes / city administrator

Submitted on: 2/13/2026

Name: Lisa Olsen

Email Address: lolsenkish@gmail.com

Is this related to a legislative agenda item: Yes

Agenda item number:

Subject: Bike lanes / city administrator

I am solidly against spending more on bike lanes especially another thoroughfare that our healthcare workers use to get to work. They just completed Greenbay Street and it would be fiscally irresponsible to redo it when there are so many unfixed streets.

As for the city administrator; I think for a city of our size, the mayor and city council can handle the duties. It looks as proposed that the administrator would do the work and the mayor would be a ceremonial figurehead. As a senior on a fixed income whose property taxes have gone up at least \$500 a year for the last 5 years, this is not acceptable.

Please vote no on both proposals and focus on improving our infrastructure in a fiscally responsible manner serving everyone not just bikers.