

WAUKESHA COMMON COUNCIL

Council votes to remove mandatory masks in city buildings

Vote only applies to
public spaces, exempts
transit, library

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WAUKESHA — The Common Council voted 13-2 Tuesday night to remove mandatory masks in public spaces within city-owned buildings by May

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15, with the exclusion of the Waukesha Transit Center building and the Waukesha Public Library.

The two no-votes were Alderwoman Cassie Rodriguez and Alderman Jack Wells.

The item was put on the Common Council agenda by Alderman Eric Payne and Alderman Cory Payne.

Cory Payne said he felt it was time to put it on the agenda after receiving inquiries on the mandate and there being no enforcement on the county level.

Mayor Shawn Reilly asked that the item exclude the transit building, as it could have major financial

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■ Council approves funds for cemetery building repairs. **2A**

■ Reilly delivers State of the City Message. **2A**

implications related to COVID-19 funding for the city. Reilly clarified at the meeting that department heads are able to make their own rules in relation to staff, as the vote applied to public spaces.

Alderman Rick Lemke originally asked not to have to wear a mask in the library and said individuals are not prevented from wearing a mask if they wish to do so.

Alderman Frank McElderry also voiced his agreement with Rick Lemke and said several county buildings have not required mask mandates for weeks now.

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Nikki Brahm/Freeman Staff

Alderman Eric Payne was elected the new Common Council president Tuesday night by a vote of 9-6. Eric Payne and Alderman Cory Payne brought the mask amendment before the Common Council Tuesday.

Masks

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Alderman Jack Wells, who appeared at the Common Council meeting virtually, asked to amend the date to lift the mask requirement to June 1. Wells said he, like others in the community, has yet to receive his second COVID-19 vaccination. Wells said waiting to lift the mask mandate until June 1 would provide more time for individuals interested in getting the shot.

While some discussion was provided on the topic, with City Administrator Kevin Lahner saying it would give city employees more time to prepare for the change with prior notice, the amendment did not receive enough support from council members, and the May 15 date remained.