

**CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF RAMSEY
ANOKA COUNTY
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

The Ramsey City Council conducted a work session on Tuesday, February 1, 2011, in the Lake Itasca Room, Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor Bob Ramsey
Councilmember Randy Backous
Councilmember David Elvig
Councilmember David Jeffrey
Councilmember Colin McGlone
Councilmember Jason Tossey
Councilmember Jeff Wise

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis G. Ulrich
Deputy City Administrator Heidi A. Nelson
Police Chief Jim Way
Economic Development Manager Aaron Backman (*get Aaron's full title*)
Crime Prevention Specialist Chandra Kreyer
City Attorney William K. Goodrich
Development Manager Darren Lazan

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Ramsey called the work session to order at 5:56 p.m.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

Chief Way asked to have discussion of the Police Department Survey first on the agenda, as Ms. Kreyer was present for that discussion.

2) Police Department Survey

Chief Way stated that the Ramsey Police Department is interested in surveying the residents of Ramsey to get their opinions on public safety issues and the services provided by the Department. He proposed the survey be sent with utility billing. He pointed out that once surveys were received back, the Department could begin to tailor programs to help our residents feel safer. He stated that Ms. Kreyer has spent a lot of time working with people at community events. Many people do not know what is offered or what we can do for them. Chief Way noted the survey was part of the case.

Councilmember Wise stated he did not see anywhere where the PD asked for the residents address. If you are talking about crime – there has to be pockets where there is more crime than in others.

Crime Prevention Specialist Kreyer offered that we could ask for that voluntarily.

City Administrator Ulrich suggested maybe giving the nearest intersection to their home.

Mayor Ramsey said the resident could be asked to volunteer their address.

Councilmember Elvig thought that would be fine providing the resident is informed as to why we would like their address.

Councilmember Jeffrey stated that he really likes the survey and would like to see it get out as broadly as possible. He suggested it might be a good idea to send an abbreviated survey home with the Ramsey Elementary students. He stated that he asked his 13-year-old daughter these questions and got totally different answers than you would from an adult – he felt it would be good to hear from the kids in the community – maybe survey a different demographic - maybe survey the Safety Camp kids.

Councilmember Elvig thought that was a great idea but it may be a problem sending it home with the kids – it might be a better idea to have the kids take the survey at school.

Councilmember Backous thought it would be a good idea to coordinate it with the school – at the school.

Mayor Ramsey, in reviewing the survey, asked what difference it makes if you rent or own.

Ms. Kreyer responded that maybe you have more of a buy-in with your community if you have more of an investment here.

Councilmember Backous commented that this survey is an awesome idea but dangerous sometimes as he wondered what the PD's thoughts are on how we are going to act on these things we find out.

Ms. Kreyer stated her goal is to look at the preventative stuff; use it as a tool to educate people – look at what the demand is.

Councilmember Wise stated we have talked some about issues with our ordinances - maybe ask questions if some of our ordinances are being misused – manipulated.

Chief Way thought that might be something for the *Ramsey Resident* instead.

City Administrator Ulrich suggested if we put a notice in the utility bill and say go on line to fill out the survey – that's an extra step. Maybe if the survey comes in with the bill they will be more apt to fill it out. He would prefer we put it in the utility bill and see how that goes – or in the *Ramsey Resident*.

Councilmember Tossey stated this would give them a chance to respond – and/or to criticize if they want to.

Councilmember Elvig suggested you might want to go as far as including a self-addressed, stamped envelope or at least a return envelope.

Councilmember Backous agreed that the least manual the better but added that it will take a lot of staff time if this all comes in on paper.

Councilmember McGlone disagreed with surveying children. Maybe have the parents ask their kids if they feel safe instead. He inquired what the cost would be for mailing.

Chief Way estimated about \$4,000.

Councilmember McGlone stated that we are trying to get tech savvy – put a survey on our website and advertise that it is there in the *Ramsey Resident* and in the utility billing.

Councilmember Backous stated he would second that.

Mayor Ramsey asked what if we gave them \$5 off their utility bill for filling out the survey.

Councilmembers Wise and Elvig thought that was a great idea.

Mayor Ramsey continued that he likes the idea of doing it on line and if we incent them, we may have a better response.

Mr. Ulrich reported that the City has about 8,000 accounts.

Mayor Ramsey added we should put a disclaimer on there or ask if they want to give their email address and we can send them City stuff.

Councilmember Elvig commented that we do a lot of preventatives when it comes to the Fire Department but we do not hear a lot about that with the Police Department.

Mr. Ulrich stated he likes the idea of trying to build this database for feedback. The Police Department this month – maybe Community Development next month.

Councilmember Backous suggested that \$5 is a lot – if we are going \$5, we should add more questions.

City Attorney Goodrich cautioned that he would want to make sure we can keep that information private. That could be public data.

Councilmember McGlone suggested what about something like they would get a coupon page for Ramsey businesses – that would pay off in the end.

Mayor Ramsey stated he liked that idea but we are complicating this.

Councilmember Elvig expressed concern about what if we do not contact certain businesses.

Mayor Ramsey stated he was not in favor of spending money for this to go in the utility bill if we have to pay extra unless we get some information back that we can make contact easier in the future. People may not fill this out and send it in.

Councilmember Elvig stated that a coupon for \$5 off is a great idea – simple and straightforward.

Councilmember McGlone stated he does not like that idea. If he is spending \$40,000, he would rather spend it on getting another Police Officer or something. People are reading the *Ramsey Resident*. He added this should be sent to the EDA too.

Councilmember Wise stated that if we spent \$40,000, that means we got everyone back – that would be worth it.

Mayor Ramsey agreed that it would be worth it and we would save money in the long run.

Councilmember Backous stated that only if we take advantage of the exercise, talk to other Department Heads, and get more information out.

Councilmember Tossey stated we just hired Himle Horner to do that.

Councilmember McGlone stated that maybe ask them to add these few questions to their survey.

Mr. Ulrich reported that was about a 300 random survey.

A poll was taken for those in favor of \$5 off the next utility bill:

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Councilmember Tossey | No |
| Mayor Ramsey | Yes |
| Councilmember Elvig | Yes |
| Councilmember Wise | Yes |
| Councilmember Backous | Yes |
| Councilmember Jeffrey | Yes |
| Councilmember McGlone | No |

Mayor Ramsey suggested staff put together logistics for that and review it.

Mr. Ulrich stated staff would check with Himle Horner too.

1) Review of the Ramsey Hunting Ordinance and 2010 Hunting Season

Chief Way presented a recap of last year's hunting: 24 different locations within the City with shotguns, 42 bow – 109 hunters – four people did target practice for bow. He rejected two permits – one bow on private property and one handgun practice – too close to neighbors.

Twelve deer were taken but he felt that number was a little low. There were changes in the hunting ordinance in July 2009 – permits allows us to know where the hunting is going on. He furnished the Council with the ordinance and the permit application. He stated that John Enstrom has expressed concern to him about hunting on small parcels. He talked about hunting down/tracking deer - for example – the deer goes four properties down and you have to get permission - you have to knock on the door to get permission to chase the deer. There might be kids playing in the yard and now someone has to chase down a wounded deer. We only had one complaint of that but it is a concern.

Councilmember Tossey stated you do not need permission for a landowner to track a wounded deer.

Chief Way stated but if you have to shoot it again, that's against the law without the proper consent.

Mayor Ramsey stated we can be more restrictive than State Statutes, but are we?

Chief Way stated that we have granted some permits on our own property.

Mayor Ramsey asked staff to get clarification if it's legal to hunt on our own property if it's 300 feet from a building.

Chief Way responded we do not have any hunting on one-acre lots. On two and 2-1/2 acre lots, we go out and check where they will be hunting on their own property to make this as safe as possible. We make sure we are not overstepping our bounds. He clarified that the ordinance states any structure – it does not call out if it's your structure or not.

Mayor Ramsey stated we cannot be less restrictive.

Chief Way stated we never allow anyone to violate the State Statutes.

Mayor Ramsey asked what liability we open ourselves up to. He wondered why we would inspect – it would be their own house.

Councilmember McGlone expressed favor of sticking to State Statutes and told about an illegal hunter he had on his property. It could have been stressed that he was breaking the law.

Chief Way stated that the message he heard from the Council was to work with people. He stated he would not give any permits to hunt if he felt it wasn't safe.

Mayor Ramsey stated that the “John Enstrom issue” was there were people hunting on their own property but on the edge of his; they have small lots but they abut his much larger one.

Councilmember Tossey thought that Mr. Enstrom had an issue with the Police Department process itself.

Mayor Ramsey stated that other large property owners get a permit. He would prefer that they get a permit to hunt on their own land and they take care of granting others the right to hunt.

Chief Way stated he would prefer to know who's hunting – who's supposed to be on that property.

Mayor Ramsey stated he feels the landowner should be controlling who hunts where and when, etc.

Chief Way stated there is better control if each person has to come in to the PD for a permit.

Councilmember Tossey stated he would prefer that the landowners have the responsibility for their own land. They would have to show they have a State license first.

Chief Way stated we have to check if they have a license before we issue a permit.

Discussion ensued relating to the permit should be granted before the license in case the person doesn't get to hunt – then they spent money on a license that they can't use.

Councilmember Tossey suggested maybe putting a disclaimer on the permit that says a license is also necessary.

Mayor Ramsey and Councilmember Elvig agreed with Councilmember Tossey about a disclaimer.

Chief Way summarized the direction: Do not be concerned about hunting licenses and to place a disclaimer on the permit. He inquired if Council is still interested in the individual hunting applications.

Councilmember Tossey felt that \$5 is too cheap when you consider an officer's time.

Mayor Ramsey stated to let the landowner come in and get a permit and then he didn't care how many hunted. That way the landowner is responsible for everyone on his property – the City is not involved. He added that the other option is to go by the State Statutes and the Police would be completely out of it – no permits at all.

Chief Way stated that would not be his preference.

Mayor Ramsey stated he does not like the idea of making these people come in and fill out paperwork – it's a waste of time – he would prefer it all be up to the landowner and the City does not have to worry about it. We are interested in safety but the landowners should be responsible.

Councilmember Elvig felt that we will have people hunt in backyards and there's an element of safety we have to check out.

Councilmember McGlone commented that hunting is a regulated activity for safety. At what point are we wasting our time – just go back to the state law and live with it.

Councilmember Backous stated that when it comes to people with firearms in City limits, he is all for the Police Department having as much information as possible. Each hunter having a permit is not too much to ask.

Councilmember Elvig suggested that is a “gift” we are giving the people.

Mayor Ramsey felt that the large landowner’s rights have been taken away. They meet the State guidelines of where they can hunt or not. Because we feel we have to have a firearm ordinance, you are taking away the landowner’s rights.

Councilmember Tossey suggested going by State guidelines and if they are in violation – tag them. Let’s just be done with it.

Mayor Ramsey stated that then we do have an issue with the Chief – he is not happy because he does not know where people are hunting.

Councilmember Tossey suggested to just scrap the firearms ordinance and go by State Statutes alone. Most hunters are responsible and they want to follow the law. Landowners will be responsible for their own land.

Councilmember Backous stated we are not talking about the John Enstroms – we are talking about smaller lots. We are not in Nowthen – we are in Ramsey – this is part of growing up.

Chief Way commented, “it’s not broke – it’s working well.

Councilmember Elvig agreed it’s not broken except for a couple of people complaining.

Mr. Ulrich asked if it would help to have a larger threshold on the land.

Councilmember Jeffrey stated he did not want to create an exception for one or two people who complain.

Councilmember Tossey wondered if the DNR requires any kind of landowner permits as well and that he would like clarification on the structure portion.

Councilmember McGlone suggested to just enforce State law.

Mayor Ramsey stated we do not need to change anything other than requirements for license. We should get a legal opinion on whether we can even let this type of hunting go on.

Chief Way stated, for clarification on the structure, your own structure does count so you would have to be 300 feet away from your own. He added that a portapotty is even considered a

structure – and the ordinance says 300 feet from any structure – so that’s what he goes by. All we are doing is opening up for legal hunting – we are following State Statutes.

Consensus of the Council was to leave it as is but they do not have to first show their hunting license.

3) Consider Use of 2011 QCTV Capital Funds for Technology Upgrades

Deputy City Administrator Nelson stated that as part of the 2011 budget process, the Quad Cities Cable Commission allocated \$30,000 to each member city for the purpose of technology related equipment or applications. The Commissioners for each city are required to request the funding from the Commission on behalf of the member city. Historically the Commission has kept these dollars but they are doing pretty well so the decision was made to allow the cities to get the \$30,000 back and use it for technology upgrades. She stated that staff is proposing the following items: A ceiling mounted projector for The COR Room, which would include potential relocation of ceiling mount lighting at an estimated cost of \$3,000; a wall mounted white board for the Lake Itasca Room to improve clarity of images on the white board at an estimated cost \$4,000; an upgrade of the scanner for the Building Division for scanning of documents at an estimated cost of \$6,000; and a Citizen Request Management Application at an estimated cost of \$5,000. Ms. Nelson explained that this is a system that interfaces with the City’s website and explained the process. Staff is seeking input from the Council with regard to other technology improvements desired by the Council.

Mayor Ramsey suggested using the white board to project on the smart board – there would be no cost to that.

Discussion ensued relating to that idea.

Ms. Nelson stated that she thought we wanted a wall mount one.

Councilmember Jeffrey stated that we may be looking at \$5,000 instead of \$4,000 as getting a real “Smart Board” is more compatible.

Mr. Ulrich stated that Chief Way indicated he would like a piece of equipment like this in the Alexander Ramsey Room.

Councilmember Elvig asked if we could sell our old scanner.

Ms. Nelson replied that it’s pretty tired but that she would check into that.

Councilmember Elvig stated that the \$30,000 is for 2011 – he did not mind saying “go” on these items but he would rather hang on to the rest of the money – maybe keep \$10,000 - \$15,000.

Councilmember Backous inquired where the \$30,000 came from to which Ms. Nelson replied it came from fees – paid by Comcast, etc. Councilmember Backous stated he feels better about spending the money knowing it was not originally paid in by the City/residents. Councilmember Tossey stated he too, was pleased to know this had no public funding.

Councilmember Jeffrey stated that if \$30,000 is set aside for Ramsey, can we go back for the rest of it if we do not use it all at this time or is it a one-time shot.

Mayor Ramsey stated we will ask for our \$30,000 and put it in an account for technology.

Councilmember McGlone stated he would advocate spending all the money. We need to get all our boards and commissioners off paper. We should do what it takes to make that happen.

Mayor Ramsey stated he is not interested in buying all the Commission members laptops.

Mr. Ulrich suggested maybe computers to use at the dais could be purchased.

Councilmember Jeffrey stated he just wants to make sure we do not get too much for Dean Busch to take care of.

Councilmember Backous inquired if Ms. Nelson was asking for Council to prioritize this list.

Ms. Nelson stated that if the desire is to save money from QCTV, we will bring back a refined list for the Council.

Mayor Ramsey stated he is in favor of all these projects and finding out what we need for the Boards and Commissions.

Councilmember McGlone suggesting auditing ourselves – see what each department needs. He wanted to have something to show to the public for this money.

Councilmember Elvig stated that is a grand idea – we have talked about some form of a library.

Councilmember Backous stated that if we do get some new flashy technology, we could educate people that this came from their cable bill, etc.

Mayor Ramsey stated that technically we could use it to cut that dais down. That would actually help QCTV.

Consensus of the Council was to request the \$30,000.

Mayor Ramsey stated he would advocate getting these four pieces of equipment and putting the rest of the money aside and looking at what it would cost to bring in a citizen kiosk and to get the Boards and Commissions paperless.

Councilmember Backous stated he loves the idea of a citizen kiosk.

Council agreed with Mayor Ramsey.

4) Consider Community and Business Event Participation

Deputy City Administrator Nelson stated there are a number of key events that take place in a year that the Council and staff receive invitations for. There are various galas and golf events in support of community and business organizations. The City's Discretionary Expenditures Policy requires that annually, the City Administrator review upcoming events and discuss attendance by the Council and staff. Additionally, the policy states that annually the City will establish a maximum amount for community and business relation expenses. The following events are anticipated for 2011: Anoka Area Chamber Gala and Boy Scout Breakfast in February, Mayors Prayer Breakfast in March, Mercy Unity Foundation Crystal Ball in April, various golf events May through September which include Anoka Area Chamber, Anoka/Ramsey Rotary, Anoka Technical College, Bridge Link, Golfin' for Kids, Mercy & Unity Hospitals, Ramsey Lions, North Metro Mayors Association. She stated there is about \$1,900 allocated for these types of events. The EDA budgets separately for different golf events.

Councilmember Jeffrey felt the list was fairly complete.

Mayor Ramsey stated there are a couple he would not go to and questioned if the Crystal Ball would really benefit Ramsey.

Councilmember Elvig stated the benefit would be for the community hospital. He talked about the cardiac wing and how it's great that this hospital is so close to our own community.

City Administrator Ulrich commented that when the City was "courting" Allina, there was a good reason to have a showing there.

Councilmember Elvig stated that to have a quality local hospital is a big deal.

Ms. Nelson stated that the Anoka Area Chamber Gala is coming up at the end of the month and it is \$125 for two people to attend. The policy says we pay for staff but not a guest. The Boy Scout breakfast – they are always looking for a table captain. The Mayors Prayer Breakfast – we have always brought a few people to that. The Alexandra House Gala is quite spendy.

Mayor Ramsey stated that the City has given the Alexandra House money for years.

Councilmember Backous stated he would like to go to the Anoka Area Chamber Gala. Councilmember Jeffrey stated he would be attending the gala as a representative of the college. Councilmember Elvig stated he has gone to all of these on his own dime.

Councilmember Backous and Councilmember Tossey expressed interest in attending the Mayors Prayer Breakfast.

Councilmember McGlone stated he would like to attend the Chamber Gala.

Councilmember Elvig stated he would like to do the Boy Scout Breakfast and the Mayors Prayer Breakfast to which Councilmember McGlone stated he would too.

Councilmember Elvig stated he would attend the Mercy/Unity Crystal Ball and the Alexandra House event.

Consensus was that the City should purchase a table for the Boy Scout Breakfast as well as for the Mayors Prayer Breakfast.

Mayor Ramsey didn't feel it was necessary to golf in the Golfin' for Kids (different County) tournament but he felt it was important to have a presence at the rest of them. He suggested adding Golfing for Groceries, which is sponsored by Village Bank. He stated that everyone will have to respond if they want to play or not.

5) Review Proposals for Legislative Consultant Services

City Administrator Ulrich stated that the Council recently approved a consulting services agreement with The Tinklenberg Group for \$6,000 for Federal and \$18,000 for State lobbying efforts. We got into the governor's bonding request and our goal is to keep that in there. There was somewhat of an interest to see someone on the Republican side. He noted that he solicited four proposals and discussed them briefly. The prices range from \$12,000 up to \$24,000. He noted that Tinklenberg works well with both Republicans and Democrats. He added that we are working with Abeler and Jungbauer and they will monitor the capitol bonding bill. Senator Jungbauer thinks there probably will be one but it will be later in the session – after the resolution of some of these bigger items. In summary, Councilmembers want to be active and that has worked well. He stated he believes it is covered enough. He feels it is not worth spending more money.

Consensus was to back off these proposals and move forward like we have been doing.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Tossey and seconded by Councilmember Backous to adjourn the work session.

All voted in favor.

The Council work session adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kurtis G. Ulrich
City Administrator

ATTEST:

Jo Ann M. Thieling
City Clerk

Minutes drafted by Jo Thieling, City Clerk