

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, January 8, 2013, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor Sarah Strommen
Councilmember Randy Backous
Councilmember David Elvig
Councilmember Mark Kuzma
Councilmember John LeTourneau
Councilmember Chris Riley
Councilmember Jason Tossey

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich
Finance Director Diana Lund
Fire Chief Dean Kapler
Police Chief James Way
Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Mark Riverblood
Public Works Superintendent Grant Riemer
Human Resources Manager Colleen Lasher
City Clerk Jo Ann Thieling
Development Services Manager Timothy Gladhill
City Attorney William Goodrich
Development Manager Darren Lazan
Interim Engineer Shane Nelson

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Strommen called the City Council Work Session to order at 5:32 p.m.

2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

2.01: Review Council Organizational Resolution

City Clerk Thieling reviewed the staff report and presented the Council organizational resolution that would be considered at tonight's Council meeting. She indicated the City received a second quote on the official newspaper (*Anoka County Union and Anoka County Record*) so that decision needs to be made as well as appointing legal services.

City Administrator Ulrich stated there will likely be discussion on the official newspaper; however, that item will need to be approved at tonight's meeting. With the legal services, the contract term runs to June of 2013 but if the Council desires to consider other services, he would recommend that be followed as a separate process.

City Clerk Thieling reviewed the City's legal costs since 2010.

Mayor Strommen asked the Councilmembers to first address committee appointments.

Councilmember Backous asked why a Councilmember is on the Environmental Policy Board (EPB).

Mayor Strommen explained that when the EPB was established, it was thought the new board would benefit from the guidance of a Council liaison.

Development Services Manager Gladhill indicated staff can look at the Code to determine whether a Council liaison is required, if the Council finds that to be necessary.

Mayor Strommen noted it is included in the membership under the ordinance so an appointment should be considered tonight. Then the Council can discuss, at a later date, whether a change should be made. She asked if the Council had questions on the legal newspaper.

Councilmember Kuzma asked about staff's impression of the services from the *Anoka County Union*.

City Clerk Thieling advised there have been no issues with the *Anoka County Union* and it has done a very good job.

Councilmember Tossey indicated he does not like having to support either newspaper and would like to approach the Legislature to allow the City to use electronic forms to disseminate legal notices. He stated he has no problem with the service provided by the *Anoka County Union*.

City Administrator Ulrich stated staff has checked with surrounding cities. The City of Anoka considered both newspapers and approved the *Anoka County Union*. The City of Ham Lake decided to approve the *Anoka County Record*, citing cost savings. City Administrator Ulrich advised that in Ramsey, an issue is the timeliness of publication. The *Anoka County Union* is published every week and has a history of that publication timing, which fits well with the City's needs for publication of an ordinance or public hearing. The *Anoka County Record* is a start up company. He stated staff can monitor the City of Ham Lake to determine its experience during 2013.

Mayor Strommen noted the Council's motion tonight will need to specify the publication. She asked the Council if it had questions related to legal services.

Councilmember Elvig stated he would support making appointment for legal services tonight and having it come back to a Work Session to discuss whether the City should issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for legal services.

Councilmember Backous noted this would have to be discussed in the near future because going out for RFPs is a lengthy process. He stated he is not opposed to keeping the legal service provider but would like to look at options soon enough to do something about it.

Mayor Strommen stated it was discussed last year and decided to defer legal RFPs for one year, so the timing is appropriate.

The consensus of the Council was to direct staff to schedule discussion of legal RFPs for an upcoming Work Session.

2.02: Consider Feasibility Report for Riverdale Drive Extension

Interim Engineer Nelson reviewed the staff report and presented the Riverdale Drive feasibility report. It was noted the City has received a \$702,000 grant to help in funding the reconstruction and extension of Riverdale Drive from Armstrong Boulevard to Traprock Street. He summarized methods for recapturing the capital costs of the utilities and stood for questions.

Mayor Strommen asked the Council if it had questions about the project, feasibility study, or funding mechanisms.

Councilmember Riley thanked Interim Engineer Nelson for the thorough staff report that answered his questions. He asked if there would be required timing for connection once the project is completed.

Interim Engineer Nelson stated with the connection charge method, it is at the point of connection with the fees adjusted for inflation. With the assessment method, the timetable is known and payable the following year through property taxes. That method may be more of a consideration if the City issues bonds for the improvement and needs to fund those payments. In this case, it will be funded internally.

Councilmember Elvig stated the City has a policy in place about connecting with available sewer and water. He asked whether the Bank of Elk River and Wells Fargo should have connected.

Development Services Manager Gladhill indicated that US Bank is now connected as part of its site plan approval. The other properties were developed prior to requiring connection to sewer and water.

Councilmember Elvig noted the City's statute would then not force those properties to connect. He asked if the watermain is a loop or dead end system.

Interim Engineer Nelson stated it would be a dead end system.

Councilmember Elvig stated his understanding that a loop system, though expensive, was the preferred system to assure there is not stagnant water at the end of the line.

Interim Engineer Nelson explained that creating a loop system would require connection to Ramsey Boulevard and is not associated with this project. Interim Engineer Nelson explained that currently there is water at Ramsey Boulevard and creating a loop system can be done in conjunction with the roadway connection or when the large parcel sites are developed. He explained that creating a connection to Ramsey Boulevard will require easements and property acquisition, which would delay this project.

Councilmember Elvig asked whether that loop system should be considered at this point so the same equipment could be mobilized. In addition, it would add forced water to benefit the dwellings in that region.

Fire Chief Kapler reviewed that before the City did water looping, there were a lot of times when it almost hit zero water pressure when a hydrant was opened. Since then, the City has been aggressive with looping and increased storage to add water pressure. He noted that in this area there is the new water tower that may add the advantage of flow. However, looping is always the best option.

Interim Engineer Nelson stated it is a valid point and crucial to have looping when there is high demand for the water. However, initially, he did not think there would be a lot of use from this water source other than a few businesses with a handful of employees. He indicated once there is a high water user, it may become an issue and suggested it be added to their list of tasks to determine that solution.

Councilmember Tossey stated that due to increasing the project cost and causing delay, he did not think it would be prudent to consider at this point in time. He stated that looping may be an option in the future, but right now, there are no water lines. In the future as it develops, it could be looked at with the costs offset by the developers. Councilmember Tossey stated he supports moving the project forward tonight so the City does not lose the grant.

Councilmember Elvig stated if a big box or retailer goes into that area, the cost will have to be covered to assure adequate fire suppression. He noted the City receives an MSA allocation of about \$1 million per year and asked staff to provide an update on projects slated for that funding.

Finance Director Lund stated that will be part of the Capital Improvement Plan discussion that is scheduled for the next Work Session.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood noted the vacant land used in this water system may drive the need for additional frontage road. With regard to the pond, staff will discuss with Anoka County Parks the parcel they own to get a better sense when West Mississippi Park will be moving forward and potential for them to help fund the service road.

The consensus of the Council was to support accepting the feasibility report and ordering the preparation of plans and specifications for the Riverdale Drive Extension.

2.03: Approve Consultant Proposal for Three-Year Strategic Action Plan, Governance Plan, and Organizational Assessment

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the staff report and rationale to recommend approval of a three-year Strategic Action Plan, Governance Plan, and Organizational Assessment to assist the City in becoming a high-performing organization.

Mayor Strommen referenced Page 8, the list of six deliverables, and stated she views this as an investment in the City to lay a foundation in addition to the Three-Year Strategic Action Plan. She stated she had worked with Ms. Duckor previously and found that performance measurements are a critical component for the Council to hold itself accountable. In addition, it will create transparency on the direction the Council is heading and accountability with the performance measures. Mayor Strommen stated she hopes that accountability and transparency can be tied to budgeting so if the budget is not raised, the Council needs to determine what is to be cut from the budget.

Anita Duckor, Duckor and Associates, congratulated the Council and thanked them for their public service to put Ramsey back on a positive note. She agreed the process needed to be tied to the budget and it is important to have all marching towards a common direction including elected officials, appointed Commissioners, and staff. She stated she has provided her bio and a detailed proposal for review, and offered to answer questions.

Councilmember Backous asked about the process, whether it is user friendly, and will be followed up in Years Two and Three.

Ms. Duckor indicated it will be user friendly and include an Action Plan, strategic initiatives, measurements, due dates, and resources. The City Council will be able to govern by it and Commissions will understand their components as will staff. She noted that with certain projects, the City will see synergy crossing many departments. Ms. Duckor stated the City will not need to bring her back for subsequent years but during the initial process she will guide and direct, and ask tough questions if the process is not getting to crucial issues. She stated the City will own it and have to make themselves accountable. Ms. Duckor noted the process will give the City the framework to extend beyond three years if everyone does their part.

Councilmember Elvig stated he is excited about this process, which has not been done for six to seven years. He felt there had been significant damage to the organization, creating mistrust, problems, break downs, and discomfort. Councilmember Elvig noted it will take time to get that comfort back and Ms. Duckor will be stepping into the middle of that situation. He asked how the process will make all comfortable with exposing the problems, noting it has to be direct and forthright. He also asked how to assure the process is upbeat and positive.

Ms. Duckor explained the “lion’s share” of investment is around staff. She will spend time with staff and conduct an online survey for all staff members. Ms. Duckor assured the Council that the process will not go negative relating to image and they will make it a new beginning, a new day. She stated the Council needs to understand the roles, responsibilities and deliverables, and she will be asking questions on how it can be improved so all have a voice. Ms. Duckor explained there will be a working team and nothing will be done without that input and their review and debriefing. She indicated that whether or not she is hired, there is a six-month

window to have the trust gel in the organization and community because people need to see positive growth and this process puts it in place.

Councilmember Elvig stated he would like that question asked and answered on camera so the public understands the justification for this expenditure.

Ms. Duckor stated there will also be interaction with the City's Commissions and Boards.

Councilmember LeTourneau thanked Ms. Duckor for her comprehensive approach and significant scope of work to address all the needs. He noted the majority of the work is focused towards staff, which potentially has the greatest opportunity to pull the organization together. Councilmember LeTourneau asked who will shepherd the transition once the City has this tool/road map to guide the others in the organization. He explained he wanted to assure City Administrator Ulrich has the device to control the organization going forward.

Ms. Duckor stated the two people who will shepherd/champion this process are Mayor Strommen and City Administrator Ulrich but all need to own it including all department heads and staff.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that from his discussions, he understands the process will provide metrics, objective measurements, and a value framework to work within in terms of relationships and how we work together. He stated it will provide a good road map.

Ms. Duckor indicated City Administrator Ulrich is ultimately responsible for making it happen.

Councilmember Riley asked if the price was negotiated.

City Administrator Ulrich stated this is the proposal received based on what the City wants to accomplish and negotiation on the price would cut back the scope of work.

2.04: Schedule Joint Meeting with Lower Rum River Water Management Organization (LRRWMO) and Member Cities

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the staff report and request to schedule a joint meeting with the Lower Rum River Water Management Organization (LRRWMO) and member cities.

Interim Engineer Nelson stated the LRRWMO recognizes there are new Councilmembers in its member cities and would like to schedule a joint meeting to discuss watershed related issues.

Following discussion of availability, the consensus of the Council was to select April 25, 2013, at 6 p.m., for a joint meeting with the LRRWMO.

3. FUTURE TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

Noted.

4. MAYOR / COUNCIL / STAFF INPUT

None

5. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Riley, seconded by Councilmember Letourneau, to adjourn the Work Session meeting.

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 6:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kurtis G. Ulrich
City Administrator

ATTEST:

Jo Ann M. Thieling
City Clerk

Drafted by Carla Wirth
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.