

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, May 7, 2013, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor Sarah Strommen  
Councilmember Randy Backous  
Councilmember Mark Kuzma  
Councilmember John LeTourneau  
Councilmember Chris Riley  
Councilmember Jason Tossey (arrived at 6:06 p.m.)

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich  
Police Chief James Way  
Police Captain Jeff Katers  
Development Services Manager Timothy Gladhill  
Assistant to the City Administrator Patrick Brama

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Strommen called the City Council Work Session to order at 5:47 p.m.

**2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

**2.01: Interview Law Firms for City of Ramsey Legal Services**

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the staff report, noting it is the City's policy to review outside professional contracts on a three- to five-year basis. The current City Attorney contract for civil and criminal/prosecution legal services has been in place for three years and runs until July 1 but can be extended indefinitely under a 30-day termination provision, if desired. City Administrator Ulrich advised that 14 firms submitted proposals either combined civil and criminal, or civil, or criminal services only. It was noted that a staff panel reviewed all of the applications and selected seven firms to interview this evening. Of the seven, three propose combining civil and criminal, two are civil only, and two are prosecution only. City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the City's legal billing costs for the last three years and explained the schedule for tonight's interviews. He stated it is staff preference to use a combined (civil and criminal) legal firm so there is not overlapping activity. City Administrator Ulrich asked the Council what it preferred from a legal firm, noting a relationship between the Council and City Attorney is important. On the prosecuting side, he noted an attorney with a good level of negotiation is important in prosecuting police cases.

Police Chief Way concurred and stated an important consideration is that they have a good reputation with handling legal cases.

City Administrator Ulrich suggested that following interviews, the Council discuss if there is a preferred firm, appetite for changing legal firms, and staff can then conduct reference checks on the top firms the Council would like to further vet.

Police Chief Way asked if the Council can discuss this matter during a Closed Session.

City Administrator Ulrich stated this is a public meeting and discussions are a matter of public record.

Councilmember Backous stated his personal preference is a prosecutor that does not “throw the book” at a citizen for a mistake and spends time and effort on serious or repeat violators. He asked how the Council can learn what type of prosecutors are within the proposed firms.

Police Chief Way stated he knows Anoka County judges personally and they can be asked about that information.

Prior to each interview, Mayor Strommen welcomed the attorneys and Council and staff introduced themselves.

Councilmember Tossey arrived at 6:06 p.m.

The following firms were interviewed and the following questions were asked:

**RANDALL, GOODRICH & HAAG (Civil and Criminal)**

**BERGLUND & BERGLUND (Civil and Criminal)**

Describe the backgrounds of the civil and/or prosecuting attorneys who will be assigned to Ramsey.

How will your firm make Ramsey a priority and meet the terms outlined in the RFP for meeting attendance, response time for Council staff inquiries, document review turn-around, and office hours?

If your firm is not located locally, how do you intend to manage drive time, getting to City Hall on short notice, would officers be required to come to your office or would you come here for compliant processing, etc? How will you make it convenient for City staff to make filings.

With regard to prosecution services, how would you propose to manage officer time in court to ensure the best use of City funds for overtime? If you proposed a retainer for prosecution, does that include forfeitures and code enforcement work?

Do you feel it is appropriate for City staff to draft legal documents such as ordinances, purchase agreements, development agreements? If not, why? If so, what is your role to ensure the City's interests are protected?

Describe the most challenging municipal issues you have faced during your legal career? What were the circumstances and what was the outcome?

Please describe your philosophy with prosecutions.

Any other questions and/or concerns?

**COURI & RUPPE (Civil Only)**

**RATWIK, ROSZAK & MALONEY (Civil Only)**

Describe the backgrounds of the civil and/or prosecuting attorneys who will be assigned to Ramsey.

How will your firm make Ramsey a priority and meet the terms outlined in the RFP for meeting attendance, response time for Council staff inquiries, document review turn-around, and office hours?

If your firm is not located locally, how do you intend to manage drive time, getting to City Hall on short notice, would officers be required to come to your office or would you come here for compliant processing, etc?

Do you bill hourly for civil work or are you open to retainer to assure staying within budget?

Do you feel it is appropriate for City staff to draft legal documents such as ordinances, purchase agreements, development agreements? If not, why? If so, what is your role to ensure the City's interests are protected?

Describe the most challenging municipal issues you have faced during your legal career? What were the circumstances and what was the outcome?

Please describe your philosophy with serving as the City Attorney.

Any other questions and/or concerns?

**HAWKINS & BAUMGARTNER (Criminal Only)**

**CHRISTIAN PETERSON (Criminal Only)**

**WEIKEL LAW FIRM (Criminal Only)**

**CHRISTIAN PETERSON (Criminal Only)**

Describe the backgrounds of the civil and/or prosecuting attorneys who will be assigned to Ramsey.

If your firm is not located locally, how do you intend to manage drive time, getting to City Hall on short notice, would officers be required to come to your office or would you come here for compliant processing, etc?

How will your firm make Ramsey a priority and meet the terms outlined in the RFP for meeting attendance, response time for Council staff inquiries, document review turn-around, and office hours?

If your firm is not located locally, how do you intend to manage drive time, getting to City Hall on short notice, would officers be required to come to your office or would you come here for compliant processing, etc?

With regard to prosecution services, how would you propose to manage officer time in court to ensure the best use of City funds for overtime? If you proposed a retainer for prosecution, does that include forfeitures and code enforcement work?

Do you bill hourly for civil work or are you open to retainer to assure staying within budget?

Describe the most challenging municipal issues you have faced during your legal career? What were the circumstances and what was the outcome?

Please describe your philosophy with prosecutions.

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**COUNCIL DISCUSSION OF PROPOSALS**

The consensus of the Council was to use Randall, Goodrich & Haag for criminal prosecution and direct staff to further vet and request retainer proposals from Couri & Ruppe and Ratwik, Roszak & Maloney.

**3. FUTURE TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

Councilmember Backous asked staff to schedule a Work Session discussion on whether the City Attorney needs to attend every Council meeting.

**4. MAYOR / COUNCIL / STAFF INPUT**

None

**5. ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Strommen adjourned the Work Session of the City Council at 9:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kurtis G. Ulrich  
City Administrator

ATTEST:

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Jo Ann M. Thieling  
City Clerk

Drafted by Carla Wirth  
*TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*