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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a regular meeting on Tuesday, December 9, 2014, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor Sarah Strommen  
Councilmember Randy Backous (left the meeting at 7:48 p.m.)  
Councilmember Jill Johns  
Councilmember Mark Kuzma  
Councilmember John LeTourneau  
Councilmember Chris Riley  
Councilmember Jason Tossey (left the meeting at 9:07 p.m.)

Members Absent: None

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  
Community Development Director Timothy Gladhill  
City Engineer Bruce Westby  
City Planner Chris Anderson  
Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Patrick Brama  
City Attorney Joe Langel  
Councilmember Elect Kristine Williams

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Strommen called the regular meeting of the Ramsey City Council to order at 7:02 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mayor Strommen.

**2. PRESENTATION**

**2.01: Recognition of Anoka High School Tornadoes Boys Soccer Team**

Mayor Strommen read in full a resolution of proclamation recognizing and congratulating the Anoka High School Tornadoes Boys Soccer Team for winning the Class 2A State Title.

Coaches Seul and Becklin and Michael Talbot, the team member who scored the game winning goal stepped forward to accept the proclamation. They expressed their appreciation for this recognition and indicated the team's success is a result of hard work and belief in their abilities. The Council and audience responded with a round of applause.

Councilmember Backous noted that one-half of the students attending the Anoka High School live in Ramsey and commented on the pride taken by the City in their accomplishments.

## **2.02: Strategic Plan Update**

City Administrator Ulrich presented an update on the City's Strategic Plan, its vision, mission, and goals/imperatives. He commended the City Council for moving the City forward and staff for its work on the City's behalf.

Mayor Strommen added the appreciation of the Council for staff's commitment to the Strategic Plan and its process, noting it has paid off in a number of areas including success in achieving funding for Highway 10.

## **3. CITIZEN INPUT**

Mayor Strommen noted this is the last meeting of the year and the last meeting that will be attended by Councilmembers Backous and Tossey. She thanked both for their four years of service to Ramsey, stating she will miss working with them. It was noted that a formal recognition will be scheduled after the first of the year.

## **4. CONSENT AGENDA**

Motion by Councilmember Riley, seconded by Councilmember Tossey, to approve the following items on the Consent Agenda:

- 4.01: Receive October 2014 Financial Reports – General Fund and Enterprise Funds
- 4.02: Receive Cash and Investments for Period Ending November 30, 2014
- 4.03: Consider Waiving / Not Waiving statutory Tort Limits
- 4.04: Adopt Resolution #14-12-261 Approving Cash Disbursements Made and Authorize Payment of Accounts Payable Invoicing received During the Period of November 20, 2014, and December 3, 2014
- 4.05: Adopt Resolution #14-12-245 Decertifying Tax Increment Financing District #4
- 4.06: Adopt Resolution #14-12-251 Authorizing Local Road Improvement Program Funding Application for Riverdale Drive Extension from Traprock Street to Ramsey Boulevard
- 4.07: Adopt Resolution #14-12-256 to Accept the City Administrator's Annual Performance Evaluation
- 4.08: Adopt Resolution #14-12-259 to Hire an Engineering Technician III
- 4.09: Report from the Public Works Committee Meeting dated November 18, 2014:
  - 1) Consider Stop Sign Installations on 146<sup>th</sup> Avenue at Iodine Street – *Ratify the recommendation of the Public Works Committee to approve the installation of stop signs on 146<sup>th</sup> Avenue on both sides of Iodine Street.*

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor Strommen, Councilmembers Riley, Tossey, Backous, Johns, Kuzma, and LeTourneau. Voting No: None.

## **5. APPROVE AGENDA**

Motion by Councilmember Backous, seconded by Councilmember Johns, to approve the agenda as revised to add Case 7.00: Discuss 2015 Legislative Platform.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor Strommen, Councilmembers Backous, Johns, Kuzma, LeTourneau, Riley, and Tossey. Voting No: None.

## **6. PUBLIC HEARING**

### **6.01: Public Hearing on 2015 Tax Levy and General Fund Budget and Adoption of Final Levies and Budgets**

Mayor Strommen closed the regular portion of the City Council meeting at 7:20 p.m. in order to conduct a public hearing.

#### **Public Hearing**

Mayor Strommen called the public hearing to order at 7:20 p.m.

#### **Presentation**

Finance Director Lund presented the 2015 Proposed Tax Levy and General Fund Budget of \$9,407,821, a reduction of \$2,677 from the preliminary budget. She advised that the Council has decided the HRA will be dissolved effective January 1, 2015, so there is no HRA levy in 2015. Finance Director Lund also presented details of the 2015 EDA/HRA budget and levy of \$116,444, a 4.39% decrease since 2014.

City Administrator Ulrich stated this is a culmination of a yearlong process, noting the 2016 budget will start in the first quarter of 2015 starting with the Strategic Plan to determine what is to be accomplished. He noted that adjustments can be made and while the levy can be decreased, it cannot be increased.

#### **Citizen Input**

There was none.

Motion by Councilmember Backous, seconded by Councilmember Kuzma, to close the public hearing.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor Strommen, Councilmembers Backous, Kuzma, Johns, LeTourneau, Riley, and Tossey. Voting No: None.

The public hearing was closed at 7:39 p.m.

### **Council Business**

Mayor Strommen called the regular City Council meeting back to order at 7:39 p.m.

Mayor Strommen stated this has been a lengthy process and a lot of the Council's discussion and focus was to address funding for road maintenance. After hearing from the public and Charter Commission, it was ultimately decided that the original proposal of franchise fees was not supported, which is the major factor in the budget increase.

Councilmember Backous felt a major accomplishment of the Council in 2014 is dissolving the HRA to remove that hidden tax. He stated he supported franchise fees because he thinks assessments are also a hidden tax but really prefers to have all costs placed on the books so there are no hidden taxes.

Motion by Councilmember LeTourneau, seconded by Councilmember Riley, to Adopt Resolution #14-12-252 Adopting the 2014 Payable 2015 EDA levy in the amount of \$116,444; to Adopt Resolution #14-12-253 Adopting the 2015 EDA Budget in the amount of \$204,301; to Adopt Resolution #14-12-254 Adopting the 2014, Payable 2015 Municipal Tax Levy in the amount of \$9,407,821; and, to Adopt Resolution #14-12-255 Adopting the 2015 General Fund Budget in the amount of \$10,423,759.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor Strommen, Councilmembers LeTourneau, Riley, Backous, Johns, Kuzma, and Tossey. Voting No: None.

### **6.02: Public Hearing on the Dissolution of the Ramsey Housing and Redevelopment Authority**

Mayor Strommen closed the regular portion of the City Council meeting at 7:43 p.m. in order to conduct a public hearing.

### **Public Hearing**

Mayor Strommen called the public hearing to order at 7:43 p.m.

### **Presentation**

City Attorney Langel reviewed the staff report and indicated the purpose of this Case is to hold a public hearing on whether the Ramsey Housing and Redevelopment Authority should be dissolved. It was noted that at its November 12, 2014, meeting, the Council decided to dissolve the HRA and transfer its assets to the City. He explained that upon adoption of the draft resolution, the HRA will be dissolved on December 31, 2014.

### **Citizen Input**

There was none.

Motion by Councilmember Riley, seconded by Councilmember Johns, to close the public hearing.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor Strommen, Councilmembers Riley, Johns, Backous, Kuzma, LeTourneau, and Tossey. Voting No: None.

The public hearing was closed at 7:45 p.m.

### **Council Business**

Mayor Strommen called the regular City Council meeting back to order at 7:45 p.m.

Motion by Councilmember Backous, seconded by Councilmember Tossey, to Adopt Resolution #14-12-232 Dissolving the Ramsey Housing and Redevelopment Authority.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor Strommen, Councilmembers Backous, Tossey, Johns, Kuzma, LeTourneau, and Riley. Voting No: None.

## **7. COUNCIL BUSINESS**

### **7.00: Discuss 2015 Legislative Platform**

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama reviewed the staff report and presented the City's draft 2015 Legislative Platform, which is drafted and adopted annually. It was noted this document includes a list of Legislative priorities, specifically related to the City. Upon adoption by the Council, this Platform will be forwarded to Anoka County, State, and Federal elected officials. In addition, this document will be used internally by staff as a supplemental work plan for 2015.

Councilmember Backous left the meeting at 7:48 p.m.

Mayor Strommen asked for the Council's feedback on whether the items included in the City's Legislative Platform are appropriate.

Councilmember LeTourneau supported the idea that 'less is more' and removing the items suggested by staff to keep an eye on the highest priority items.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama explained the first and second items are listed in order of priority and the remaining are randomly listed.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated support to narrow the Legislative Platform by removing the e-cigarette smoking ban and regulation of massage therapists.

Councilmember Tossey concurred and advised the new Council to assure Highway 10 is kept as a priority.

Mayor Strommen noted the Council has had recent discussion relating to an e-cigarettes smoking ban and massage therapist licensure and agreed that neither issue rose to the category of other items on the Platform. She offered an option to remove those two items from the City's priority list and include them on another list of items supported for the League of Minnesota Cities' Legislative Platform.

The Council discussed whether to remove those two items from the City's Legislative Platform and include a general statement of support of the League's Platform.

Councilmember Johns noted the Council does support the State regulating e-cigarettes and massage therapists so that should be indicated, yet she does not want to dilute the City's other Legislative Platform items.

The Council supported the suggestion of Mayor Strommen to direct staff to draft a statement indicating there is Ramsey support for the following items in the League of Minnesota Cities Platform: e-cigarette smoking ban and regulation of massage therapists.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama explained why it is problematic for the City to support the League's entire Platform and suggested catch all language indicating the City will consider, on a case-by-case basis, items as they come forward.

Police Chief Way agreed those issues are not a priority at the level of Highway 10 or ground water but when the State does take up those issues, he would ask for the Council's support.

The consensus of the Council was to direct staff to draft a final Legislative Platform based on tonight's discussion for formal adoption on January 13, 2015.

**7.01: Consider Adopting Resolution #14-12-258 Approving the 2015 Non-Union Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) and Non-union Health Insurance Contributions**

Human Resources Manager Lasher reviewed the staff report and recommendation to authorize the 2015 non-union City health insurance contribution and increase the non-union wage sale by two percent.

Councilmember Kuzma expressed the Council's appreciation to Human Resources Manager Lasher for her work on the City's behalf.

Motion by Councilmember Kuzma, seconded by Councilmember Johns, to Adopt Resolution #14-12-258 Approving the 2015 Non-Union Health Insurance Contributions and Non-Union Health Insurance Contributions.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor Strommen, Councilmembers Kuzma, Johns, LeTourneau, Riley, and Tossey. Voting No: None. Absent: Councilmember Backous.

**7.02: Consider Adopting Resolution #14-12-257 Approving a Two-Year Labor Agreement with the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)**

Human Resources Manager Lasher reviewed the staff report and recommendation to settle a two-year labor agreement with the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).

Councilmember Riley noted the recommendation is for the City to give a cost of living raise to City staff, which is a fair amount while also being fair stewards of the public's money. He indicated that in view of high health insurance cost increases experienced by others, the City is lucky it is only experiencing a 10% increase.

Councilmember LeTourneau concurred and extended the Council's appreciation to Human Resources Manager Lasher and staff for their due diligence in negotiating these contract terms.

Motion by Councilmember LeTourneau, seconded by Councilmember Riley, to Adopt Resolution #14-12-257 Approving a Two-Year Labor Agreement with the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor Strommen, Councilmembers LeTourneau, Riley, Johns, Kuzma, and Tossey. Voting No: None. Absent: Councilmember Backous.

**7.03: Consider Adopting Resolution #14-12-250 Adopting Special Assessments Policy for City Improvement Projects**

City Engineer Westby reviewed the staff report and recommendation to adopt the draft Special Assessment Policy. It was noted that if adopted, staff will complete the Garnet Street Reconstruction Feasibility Report and present it to Council for approval on January 13, 2015, with approvals for plans and specifications and bidding to be requested in the spring of 2015.

Mayor Strommen described the Council's lengthy consideration in developing this Policy and thanked staff and all who contributed towards that effort including the Public Works Committee.

Councilmember Riley noted the Policy highlight is that it is compliant with the City Charter and the focus is street reconstruction. He clarified that the City would not assess higher than the increase in value to the property as calculated by an outside appraiser.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated this Policy is part of a strategy that includes many complex pieces. He stated support for the Policy as it offers flexibility and addresses the larger question of how the City will maintain and reconstruct its streets.

Motion by Councilmember Riley, seconded by Councilmember Kuzma, to Adopt Resolution #14-12-250 Adopting Special Assessments Agreement for City Improvement Projects.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor Strommen, Councilmembers Riley, Kuzma, Johns, LeTourneau, and Tossey. Voting No: None. Absent: Councilmember Backous.

**7.04: Review and Respond to the Anoka Conservation District's Draft 2015-2019 Comprehensive Plan**

City Planner Anderson provided of an overview of the Anoka County District's (ACD) draft 2015-2019 Comprehensive Plan and the City's draft response. He reviewed items that staff recommends highlighting, recommendation for approval, and to submit the City's response to the ACD.

Mayor Strommen advised that to avoid a potential perception of influence, as she works for the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), she will abstain from this discussion and the vote.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated the Environmental Policy Board (EPB) has discussed this topic and he appreciates that staff revised the draft to reflect those comments including that relating to education.

Motion by Councilmember LeTourneau, seconded by Councilmember Riley, to approve the draft response to the Anoka Conservation District's 2015-2019 Comprehensive Plan.

Further discussion: Councilmember Tossey stated during his tenure on the Council, the issue of groundwater supply and quality has seen no headway and he is concerned that it may result in a crisis if the new Council does not focus on it. Councilmember Riley supported the stronger language drafted by staff, noting this issue was also raised at tonight's Work Session with the Metropolitan Council representatives as it is a regional issue.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Councilmembers LeTourneau, Riley, Johns, Kuzma, and Tossey. Voting No: None. Abstain: Mayor Strommen. Absent: Councilmember Backous.

Mayor Strommen advocated for the City assuring the issue of ground water remains a focus as well as addressing and including conservation tools in the City's Comprehensive Plan Update. The Council supported the suggestion of Mayor Strommen to ask the EPB to study this issue including current research and information being gathered by other regulating agencies.

**7.05: Consider Work Order for Preparation of Plat for Park Dedication Purposes for Rivers' Bend Park**

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood reviewed the staff report and recommendation to approve the work order for Hakanson Anderson to prepare a plat to formally dedicate to the public the area known as Rivers' Bend Park.

Councilmember Kuzma stated during the Work Session discussion he indicated he could not support this Case due to the \$10,000 cost of the survey; however, he could now support this recommendation as the cost is lowered to \$7,000.

Councilmember LeTourneau advocated for approval, noting it is supported by residents in that area who have indicated it is an issue of parks.

Motion by Councilmember LeTourneau, seconded by Councilmember Riley, to approve the work order for Hakanson Anderson to prepare a plat to formally dedicate to the public the area known as Rivers' Bend Park, at a not-to-exceed amount of \$7,000.

Further discussion: Mayor Strommen agreed this action relates to certainty and the City's long-term intentions relating to this property. She felt this was a modest investment when compared to the first estimate to provide that certainty to those residents.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor Strommen, Councilmembers LeTourneau, Riley, Johns, Kuzma, and Tossey. Voting No: None. Absent: Councilmember Backous.

Councilmember Tossey expressed his appreciation to Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood for his dedication and support of the City's park facilities.

#### **7.06: Consider Authorization of Sale of 1989 Fire Tanker Truck to the City of Nowthen**

Fire Chief Kapler reviewed the staff report and recommendation to authorize the sale of the 1989 Ford L9000 tanker to the City of Nowthen for the amount of \$13,500. He reported that the City of Nowthen has approved the purchase and staff had obtained two independent valuations that resulted in a value window of \$12,000 to \$15,000. The funds will be used to offset the price of the newly purchased vehicle.

Councilmember Riley noted this equipment has lasted 25 years, a testament to the quality maintenance it has received.

Motion by Councilmember Riley, seconded by Councilmember Kuzma, to authorize the sale of the 1989 Ford L9000 tanker to the City of Nowthen for the amount of \$13,500 contingent upon approval of the Nowthen City Council for purchase of the same said vehicle.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor Strommen, Councilmembers Riley, Kuzma, Johns, LeTourneau, and Tossey. Voting No: None. Absent: Councilmember Backous.

#### **7.07: Consider Adoption of Anoka County Fire Protection Council Joint Powers Agreement**

Fire Chief Kapler reviewed the staff report and recommendation to adopt the Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) with the Anoka County Fire Protection Council as it will benefit both Police and Fire Departments. He explained the need to formulate a JPA with the 22 communities involved and thanked City Attorney Langel for his assistance and review of the JPA.

City Attorney Langel stated this JPA, because it involves so many differing types of entities, has been reviewed extensively to assure it works the best possible for all entities that will enter into

the Agreement. He stated this Agreement has to be accomplished by the end of 2014 and he believed this document was a good starting point.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated that while this is a complicated document, from a public safety perspective, it will provide a higher level of service to Ramsey's residents.

Motion by Councilmember LeTourneau, seconded by Councilmember Johns, to adopt the Anoka County Fire Protection Council Joint Powers Agreement.

Further discussion: Councilmember Riley asked what concerns have been raised relating to the JPA. City Attorney Langel stated there are no glaring issues but there had been discussion about who can be a member and how a Board can be created because of the many different entities involved. He agreed it is complicated and the City can see how it works over the next few years knowing it can be modified, if needed. Councilmember Tossey clarified that this action will just make the Anoka County Fire Board, which runs well, official for joint and shared responsibilities (Dispatch CAD System and Records Management System). Councilmember Kuzma asked about the term of the JPA. City Attorney Langel explained it is a perpetual document with terms to elect in and out of the organization. Mayor Strommen stated this has been a long-standing collaboration that the JPA would formally memorialize.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor Strommen, Councilmembers LeTourneau, Johns, Kuzma, Riley, and Tossey. Voting No: None. Absent: Councilmember Backous.

Councilmember Tossey left the meeting at 9:07 p.m.

#### **7.08: Consider Adoption of Resolution #14-12-263 to Dissolve Shared Fire Service Study Group**

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the staff report, advised of areas determined for shared services that will be of benefit to Ramsey, and recommendation to dissolve the Shared Fire Service Study Group.

Fire Chief Kapler concurred this has been a great process, noting the City brought away some great things such as joint and coordinated training topics and standardized ordering of vehicles. He stated every 'rock' has been overturned to see if it is feasible but at this point, several major obstacles remain that cannot be resolved.

Mayor Strommen agreed it was a worthwhile and important effort, noting it confirmed that a full merger is not in Ramsey's best interest, and that the City's fire services are being delivered in the best method possible. She extended the Council's appreciation to Fire Chief Kapler for his important leadership in this effort.

Councilmember Riley agreed this was a good discussion that has now run its course.

Motion by Councilmember Riley, seconded by Councilmember Kuzma, to Adopt Resolution #14-12-263 to Dissolve the Shared Fire Service Study Group.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor Strommen, Councilmembers Riley, Kuzma, Johns, and LeTourneau. Voting No: None. Absent: Councilmember Backous and Tossey.

**7.09: Consider Offers to Purchase City Owned Property Located at 15153 Nowthen Boulevard (portions of the case closed to the public)**

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama reviewed the staff report and separate informal offers from NIK Management Group and D.R. Horton to purchase City-owned property located at 15153 Nowthen Boulevard. The property is listed by CBRE and currently listed at \$40,000 with a total asking price of \$820,000. Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama described the due diligence process that may result in slightly evolving offers.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama stated both offers propose a two-phase approach with the buyer purchasing all developable land (14 acres) now and a second phase to purchase the remaining 6.5 acres after Fire Station #2 is relocated and the buildings are removed. It was noted that both informal offers require the City to deliver a clean site at second phase.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama provided background information on both companies and advised that the D.R. Horton offer includes a land swap relating to about 10 acres.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama reviewed the anticipated timeline and advised that under Minnesota Statutes, Section 13D.05, Subd.3, the meeting can move into closed session to develop a negotiation strategy for the sale of City-owned property located at 15153 Nowthen Boulevard.

Motion by Councilmember LeTourneau, seconded by Councilmember Johns, to move to Closed Session to discuss acquisition negotiations.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor Strommen, Councilmembers LeTourneau, Johns, Kuzma, and Riley. Voting No: None. Absent: Councilmembers Backous and Tossey.

The City Council meeting moved into a Closed Session at 9:24 p.m.

The City Council reconvened in Open Session at 9:45 p.m.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama stated the Council met in Closed Session and reviewed informal offers for City-owned property at 15153 Nowthen Boulevard from NIK Management Group and D.R. Horton and direction was given for staff to negotiate with NIK Management Group to prepare a purchase agreement for Council review in January of 2015 and to discontinue negotiation with D.R. Horton on this property but to continue conversation on other property within Ramsey.

## **8. MAYOR, COUNCIL AND STAFF INPUT**

City Administrator Ulrich announced upcoming meetings and events including the December 22, 2014, 11 a.m., visit by Governor Dayton and Senator Klobuchar for the Highway 10 project kick-off. He also announced the opportunity to donate items to the different charitable organizations who had drop boxes set up at City Hall. City Administrator Ulrich stated the Grant Evaluation and Ranking System (GEARS) Committee is soliciting members, which may be of interest to Councilmember LeTourneau. He noted this is the final Council meeting of 2014 and the next meeting will be January 13, 2015.

Mayor Strommen commented on letters received from third graders as a result of her elementary school visit that described a problem in the community. She wished a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to residents.

Councilmember Kuzma acknowledged the attendance of Councilmember-Elect Kristine Williams. City Administrator stated there will be a ceremonial public swearing in of new Councilmembers at the first regular meeting of 2015.

## **9. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Councilmember Riley, seconded by Councilmember LeTourneau, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried.

The regular meeting of the City Council adjourned at 9:54 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.*