

**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 13, 2015, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor Sarah Strommen (arrived at 5:34 p.m.)
Councilmember Jill Johns
Councilmember Mark Kuzma
Councilmember John LeTourneau
Councilmember Chris Riley
Councilmember Melody Shryock
Councilmember Kristine Williams

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich
Finance Director Diana Lund
Fire Chief Dean Kapler
Police Chief Jeff Katers
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
Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Patrick Brama
City Attorney Joe Langel

1. CALL TO ORDER

Acting Mayor LeTourneau called the City Council Work Session to order at 5:30 p.m. and welcomed newly elected Councilmembers Shryock and Williams.

2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

2.01: Fire Station 2 Project Update

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama reviewed the staff report and provided background on the location of the existing Fire Station and location for new Fire Station No. 2 on Alpine Drive between CSAH 5 and Helium Street, a 2.34 acre site that was created as part of the 2006 Meadow Plat and purchased by the City in the mid-1970s.

Fire Chief Kapler explained staff went into the design of Fire Station No. 2 with the thought it would remain a paid-on-call Fire Department. With that in mind, a location was selected that was good to attract fire fighters and provided excellent access to the City.

Mayor Strommen arrived at 5:34 p.m.

Fire Chief Kapler stated Fire Station No. 2 will also contain a police substation and garage space for police vehicles. In addition, Allina Transportation has committed to use this as a host site for ambulances.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama stated staff conducted a Space Needs Analysis in 2006 to determine whether the existing Fire Station building could be renovated or should be demolished and rebuilt on that site. It was determined to not be an effective use of the Old Municipal Center (OMC) site or the building. He noted this is a 21-acre site so use for municipal services is not the highest and best use of the site. Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama described the purpose of the new building as described by Fire Chief Kapler, and presented the project process that started with the Space Needs Analysis, would use surplus City-owned land, preliminary design stage, final design/bid documents, bidding and award of bid, and construction administration. He explained the project is currently at the bidding/bid award step. It is anticipated the bids would be considered by the Council at its March 24, 2015, meeting.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama addressed the funding mechanism including issuance of a Government Obligation Bond with a 20-year term, at a cost of \$290,000 annually with payments to begin in August of 2017 and capitalized interest starting in February of 2016. He explained that the bond payments of \$140,000 annually for Fire Station #1 will be completed in 2016, meaning it would be about a \$100,000 increase to the general levy in 2017 for Fire Station No. 2.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama described what had changed since the preliminary budget of \$4.01 million to a final budget of \$4.14 million. He advised of changes made to cut the project costs by \$150,000 including reconfiguring the meeting space, elimination of the patio area, cutting two feet from the garage space, and changing landscaping materials. Another \$100,000 could be cut if a large portion of the building used a flat roof. However, staff recommends against a flat roof design due to maintenance issues.

Bruce Schwartzman, architect with BKV Group, stated they deal with a lot of cities and he found Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama does an excellent job to put together all of the information.

Councilmember Riley stated all agree Fire Station No. 2 is needed and asked how staff has assured the City gets what is needed without building a 'Taj Mahal.'

Fire Chief Kapler explained that over one-half of Ramsey is without municipal water so the City hauls water more often than it connects to a hydrant. Because of that, the Fire Department needs equipment to haul that water. He reviewed the equipment that will be housed in Fire Station No. 2 and noted there will be additional space beyond what the Fire Department needs to house the Police Substation and Allina Ambulance Services. Fire Chief Kapler stated one mistake made

with the Armstrong Boulevard Fire Station is lack of storage for excess inventory. Because of that, staff has assured Fire Station No. 2 will have adequate storage space.

Mayor Strommen stated this conversation on the preliminary design and what would be incorporated into Fire Station No. 2 started two Councils ago and the original plan has been whittled down from what was originally presented.

Fire Chief Kapler pointed out that the building design does not include sleeping quarters because he is confident the Fire Department will not be a career department at any time in the near future. He explained the effort taken to assure efficient entering of the parking lot, the building, getting to the vehicles, and getting onto the road.

Councilmember Riley stated staff's recommendation is to hire the architect to do the construction administration. He noted a general contractor will also be hired for construction and asked about the purpose of the construction administrator.

Mr. Schwartzman stated the architect would act as the construction administrator and provide continual oversight of the project for the City. He explained the standard contract provides for on-site review and meetings with the contractor twice a month. Mr. Schwartzman stated another option is to monitor the contractor with weekly construction meetings.

Councilmember Riley asked about the availability of SAC and WAC credits.

Community Development Director Gladhill offered staff can explore that option.

Councilmember Riley stated the City owns a pile of dirt in this general area and asked if it will be used with this project.

Mr. Schwartzman stated there is no documentation whether the soil was properly compacted so it will have to be dug out and the soil compacted. He stated they will include information about the soil needed for the site to correct grading and indicate there is soil within the vicinity of the site, which may save \$5,000 to \$8,000.

Councilmember Riley asked if the flat roof section that is proposed would have higher maintenance costs compared to the pitch roof on the rest of the building.

Mr. Schwartzman explained that flat roofs are good to use in areas with mechanical equipment where it can be minimized and not face the street. He explained a qualified experienced contractor would be used to install the minimal flat roof and it would have a life span of 20 years. Mr. Schwartzman stated the pitched metal roof has a life span of 75 years.

Councilmember Kuzma asked about the timing between the old Fire Station, new construction, and sale of the OMC site.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama stated timing was kept in mind when drafting the construction documents and purchase agreement. He stated the timing

contains a two-month buffer, which should be adequate. Another option is to extend the closing date of the OMC site, if needed.

Councilmember Kuzma asked if Fire Station No. 2 will provide additional benefits to residents with lower insurance rates.

Fire Chief Kapler explained that in this area, the ISO insurance rating is at 5 and Fire Station No. 2 will not change that rating as no new services are being added and the ambulance also does not improve that rating. He stated it is their goal to get an ISO rating of 4 even though there is not much of a financial savings between the two. Fire Chief Kapler stated having an ambulance at Fire Station No. 2 will reduce response times by five to seven minutes when compared to response from the Anoka Fire Station.

Councilmember Riley stated there is an extra one-half bond payment added to the first year and asked if an interfund transfer is an option.

Finance Director Lund stated that payment would be about \$59,000 and she thinks it would be an option to fund internally. She explained the debt service was originally proposed at \$299,000 and it is now \$310,000 so it is fairly close. Finance Director Lund stated she can run the numbers to determine what that savings would be.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama stated the purpose of this Case was to provide an update on this project. He offered to meet individually with Councilmembers should there be additional questions. At the next meeting, the Council will act on whether to move the project forward.

Mr. Schwartzman stated they will do internal coordination and release documents for bid on February 12, 2015, and receive bids on March 12, 2015. The pre-bid meeting will be held within those dates to answer questions of the contractor.

Councilmember Riley asked if construction administration will be an additional step for Council consideration.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama stated once the Council awards the contract, the general contractor would be in construction and construction administration will be part of the contract with BKV Group.

Informational; no action required.

2.02: Discuss Council Organization

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the staff report and explained the purpose of this Case is to determine to which Committees, Boards, and Authorities the Council Members will be appointed. He asked the Council to indicate if they would like any changes as it is included on tonight's Consent Agenda.

City Administrator Ulrich noted there had been discussion whether the Economic Development Authority (EDA) should contain two or three Councilmembers, which needs to be determined. He stated additional considerations relate to designating the City's legal newspaper, which is recommended to be the *Anoka County Union/Herald*, continuing contracts for recording secretarial services and legal services, and appointing a Councilmember to serve on the Highway 10 Subcommittee.

The consensus of the Council was to support the appointments as contained in the staff report and continuing contracts for recording secretarial and legal services.

Mayor Strommen asked the Council to address appointments to the EDA.

City Administrator Ulrich read a section from the ordinance that established the EDA, noting it indicates two members should be from the City Council. However, that language would not preclude appointment of three members. City Administrator Ulrich recommended amending the ordinance language should the Council support appointment of three members to the EDA. He indicated the EDA would be comfortable with appointment of three but the Council should then indicate why it was changing from past practice.

Mayor Strommen stated her preference that two Councilmembers be appointed to the EDA as it is consistent with past practice.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated he attended last week's EDA meeting and understood appointing three Councilmembers could occur but the meeting minutes contain a comment that he would rather see it not end up looking like the HRA but be more representative of the community of residents versus the Council. In addition, the EDA minutes indicate that the Mayor will probably make the decision of the two who would serve on the EDA with the third member as the alternate. He stated that is how the EDA saw that going.

Councilmember Riley agreed and added that although the EDA would accept appointment of three Councilmembers, the preference was for two.

Councilmember Johns asked if the EDA is comprised of seven with two from the Council.

City Administrator Ulrich stated there would not be a vacancy created by one of the EDA members becoming a member of the Council.

Councilmember Kuzma stated in the past, there have been two Council appointees with the third as an alternate and he supports continuing that practice.

Mayor Strommen stated her preference that the three Councilmembers on the EDA work it out amongst themselves as to who would become the alternate.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated he brought up the discussion because it was his impression that Mayor Strommen would be making the decision on appointments and if the Mayor felt he could serve another committee in a better capacity, he would be willing to do that.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated he ran his election campaign based on economic development, which aligns with the EDA, but if it is the decision of the group, he would be happy to serve on another committee.

Mayor Strommen stated since Councilmember LeTourneau is now the Acting Mayor with those added responsibilities, she would suggest he move to the Alternate EDA Member.

Councilmember LeTourneau agreed with that suggestion.

Mayor Strommen asked staff to update the resolution to reflect that change.

City Clerk Thieling recommended the Council remove this Case from the Consent Agenda so the revision is transparent.

Mayor Strommen asked if anyone is interested in serving on the Highway 10 Committee.

Councilmembers Shryock and Kuzma expressed interest.

Mayor Strommen suggested that Councilmember Shryock accept that appointment.

The Council agreed with the suggestion of City Administrator Ulrich that the appointments will continue on a two-year rotation.

2.03: Schedule Council / Staff Strategic Planning Session(s)

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the staff report and explained the purpose of this Case is to schedule the annual Council/staff strategic planning session. He asked for input on the schedule, timing, and whether staff should obtain competing proposals. City Administrator Ulrich proposed the dates of February 3 and 17, 2015. He advised of the items to be presented and discussed, noting the proposal came in at \$15,000 plus meals, which is a fairly typical cost.

Councilmember Shryock stated she has a commitment on February 3, 2015, but can make it work if needed. She stated she was shocked at this price tag; however, received a respected recommendation on the Prouty Project, which resolved some of her concern with the cost.

Councilmember Riley stated he is surprised this is a discussion because he does not think this is necessary as it was done two years ago, when it was necessary and time and money well spent. He agreed with the need for an update to the Strategic Plan but thought the City Administrator and department heads could accommodate that work task and lead sessions to update the Strategic Plan. He stated he does not support this cost.

Councilmember Shryock agreed that if only an update is needed, this would be a high cost.

Councilmember LeTourneau agreed the work of two years ago was valuable, needed, and staged the Council for beneficial growth and to gain trust. He found narrowing of the focus and clear vision of direction was critical and has been furthered. Councilmember LeTourneau stated at

that time, it was more ‘A New Day, A New Beginning,’ which has been accomplished. Now the next version for the City is needed so he is excited to bring forth a facilitator with this scope. In addition, there are two new Councilmembers and Councilmember Johns did not participate in that last effort. In that effort, it brought all to the process, gained alignment, and commitment to bring the City forward. Councilmember LeTourneau stated a cost of \$15,000 to bring in a facilitator that is trained and will bring the deliverables is money well spent so he would support the use of an outside facilitator to bring all to that spot.

Councilmember Kuzma stated he is torn on this decision because he feels the process of two years ago was helpful in the healing of the Council and staff and to bring focus. But the City also spent money to conduct a community survey that addressed the Council’s strategic goals. He noted the Strategic Plan contains next steps and while it would be nice to have the facilitator, he would ask if it is really needed.

The Council agreed with the suggestion of Mayor Strommen to add this Case to tonight’s Council Agenda for further discussion.

3. TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

Noted.

4. MAYOR / COUNCIL / STAFF INPUT

None

5. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Strommen declared the Work Session of the City Council adjourned at 6:31 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.