

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, July 25, 2017, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor Sarah Strommen
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 Matt Kohner
Police Chief Jeff Katers
Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Mark Riverblood
Public Works Superintendent Grant Riemer
Human Resources Manager Colleen Lasher
Community Development Director Timothy Gladhill
City Planner Chris Anderson
City Engineer Bruce Westby
Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Patrick Brama

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: Discuss Request for Annual Contribution Toward the Operation of a River Gauge at the Anoka-Champlin Bridge

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the staff report.

James Fallon, United States Geological Survey (USGS), stated that they are going to install a stream monitoring gauge on the T.H. bridge between Anoka and Champlin. He noted that in 2011, the National Weather Service (NWS) canceled the flood forecast site in Anoka and five other locations. He stated that at that point the USGS began to talk to the communities in that area to determine interest in monitoring. He stated that typically the monitoring is funded through partnerships, including 40 different agencies. He stated that in this instance the gauge would be funded through a consortium of cities that would benefit from the information, which

currently include Champlin, Anoka, Brooklyn Park and Coon Rapids and they are looking to bring in Ramsey, Dayton, and Three Rivers Park District as well. He explained how the equipment would work and the information that would be gained. He stated that they are going to use new technology in this location, which will keep the operation and maintenance costs lower than proposed. He explained that the proposed costs are higher because if the new technology does not work, the other model of equipment would be used which has a higher cost. He stated that the USGS has already paid for the equipment and will fund the installation, which will begin tomorrow. He noted that the consortium of cities would then fund the operating and maintenance costs. He stated that if Ramsey wants to join, the USGS would enter into a cooperative agreement with the City, noting that it is not a legally binding contract and either party could exit the agreement with a 90-day notice. He stated that the gauge will supply real time, robust data which will be used for forecasting to provide more accurate and reliable river forecasts. He stated that the public works department can also sign up for alerts on the river height.

Councilmember Kuzma asked if they have contacted the Coon Creek Watershed.

Mr. Fallon replied that they have not reached out to that organization but advised that the city of Coon Rapids is a part of the consortium. He stated that originally Champlin proposed to divide up the shoreline river miles to prorate that amount between the four river cities that began in the discussion.

Councilmember Kuzma asked what would happen to the Rum River when that gauge is removed.

Mr. Fallon noted that gauge has already been removed in 2011. He noted that was just a simple ruler gauge that someone would read twice per day and phone the data in to the NWS. He stated that the USGS has a gauge in St. Francis on the Rum River.

Mayor Strommen and the Council thanked Mr. Fallon for his time.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that he has updated cost information and provided that information to the Council. He noted that both Ramsey and Dayton would be proposed to pay \$2,000 annually while the other cities would be split based on their percentage of shoreline. He stated that the City could also offer a lower contribution if they desire.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that he finds it beneficial that the monitoring data would be provided from this location all the way north to the Crow River. He stated that he would be okay with \$2,000 as a contribution.

Mayor Strommen stated that she agrees with Councilmember Kuzma that this information would be helpful as it would provide better data to help residents prepare as weather events continue to be stronger and more flash flood type events.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that the new plant in Monticello has changed the dynamics of the river as the water flow no longer freezes and therefore the information will be very helpful.

Mayor Strommen confirmed that the Council would like to participate and there is consensus to contribute \$2,000 as proposed.

City Administrator Ulrich noted that the stormwater management fund would be used for the contribution.

2.02: Discuss Prosecution Legal Services Contract

Police Chief Katers reviewed the staff report and his recommendation to continue the current services and begin the RFP process for prosecution services.

Mayor Strommen asked and received confirmation that the prosecution services would be separate from the civil legal services.

Councilmember Kuzma agreed that it would be healthy to go through the RFP process. He asked if it would make sense to go out for RFP on both civil and prosecution services or whether it would make sense to keep those separate.

Police Chief Katers stated that he does not have a good answer for that. He explained that civil and prosecution services are very different services.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that perhaps they should just do the RFP for prosecution services at this time and wait to do the RFP on civil services.

Councilmember Riley stated that he would be worried about duplicating the effort and would rather combine the efforts to avoid duplication of staff time and interview time.

Mayor Strommen asked if there is a time savings in going through the process for both at the same time.

Police Chief Katers stated that the police department is very involved with the prosecution services while other departments are greatly involved with the civil services. He stated that in the past there was a joint RFP for both services and then multiple staff and Councilmembers were involved in the interview process.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that the services are fairly distinct as the prosecution service works directly with the police department, therefore firms that specialize in just prosecution focus only on that service and therefore have expertise in that area. He stated that the civil service works as the City Attorney and works directly with the staff and Council. He stated that perhaps it would be more efficient to just focus on the prosecution services at this time, as that would lessen the involvement of the Council.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that in his opinion there was not a time savings in lumping the two services together and it actually seemed to cause some confusion in the process.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated that perhaps staff should do the interviewing and make the recommendation as they have more interaction with the legal services than the Councilmembers.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that the City should be very smart in who they hire because of the possibility that body cameras will come into play in the future and therefore this should be a specialized RFP for solely prosecution services.

Councilmember Shryock noted that the civil services expire in December and asked how the timelines would work to keep those RFP processes separate.

Police Chief Katers stated that it would be the discretion of the Council to stagger the RFP processes, as the current firm is flexible and would continue to provide services. He stated that it is labor intensive for staff to go through two RFP processes at the same time and therefore he would prefer staggering.

It was the consensus to begin the RFP process for prosecution services and stagger the timeline between the RFP processes for prosecution and civil services.

Councilmember LeTourneau asked for additional details on why this did not occur in 2016 if the contract expired in 2016.

Police Chief Katers stated that it is a time-consuming process to go through the RFP process. He noted that the City Code is inconsistent on whether the RFP process needs to occur every three years or every three to five years. He stated that the police department is very happy with the services from the current firm and therefore in 2016 brought that forward to the Council to request an extension on the contract for another one-year period.

Mayor Strommen stated that perhaps staff can provide an update in the future on the timeline for the RFP processes for prosecution and civil services and further define the role of the Council in the interview process. She stated that while she agrees that the Council does not need to be involved in every step of the process for civil services, she did believe that the Council should be involved at some level to ensure that the Council feels comfortable with the recommendations that are being provided from the legal counsel.

2.03: Continued Discussion of the 2017 General Fund Budget

City Administrator Ulrich provided an introduction to the continued budget discussion.

Finance Director Lund reviewed the staff report.

City Administrator Ulrich provided additional details specific to the road improvement project costs and the accumulated debt as well as the long-term relation to the levy. He noted that a separate meeting would be scheduled during this process to discuss debt specifically. He moved on to the personnel requests that were introduced at the last meeting and provided additional

details on the requests that were provided by the department heads in response to the Council questions at the last discussion.

Councilmember Kuzma referenced the senior planner position and the difference between that proposed cost and the cost of using consultants.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that as they add a senior planner they would rely less on consultants. He stated that currently the balance between staff and consultants is working but is not working very well as they are not able to keep up with the workload.

City Administrator Ulrich noted that a large portion of the City Clerk's duties is licensing and that senior planner would handle the licensing duties as well.

Mayor Strommen asked if the redistribution of the duties would be temporary during this transition time for the City Clerk or whether when a new City Clerk is hired that would only be needed part-time rather than full-time. She stated that if this is permanent redistribution of duties, she would then want to know what the City Clerk position would look like once the phased retirement is complete and a new City Clerk is hired.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama stated that he is unable to provide a certain answer on that as it is unclear how long the phased retirement will be, whether that is one year or five years plus. He stated that this was an opportunity to redistribute duties and assign them more appropriately. He stated that with this reorganization of duties and personnel, when the half time City Clerk fully retires and if a full-time City Clerk were hired that would only be the addition of a half time personnel credit rather than a full credit.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that unfortunately there are some unknowns at this point.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated that he interprets that City staff is proposing the half time City Clerk position and rather than adding another half time position, staff will be absorbing those duties internally. He stated that this is an opportunity to distribute that other half time credit between existing staff. He appreciated the ingenuity of staff and stated that he is willing to support staff in this attempt.

Mayor Strommen stated that it appears that a job analysis has not been done to efficiently plan not only for the short-term but for the long-term as well. She stated that it seems that the strategic job audit and revisioning of job descriptions are missing from this process. She asked why the City Clerk job would look different in the future other than the fact that the current City Clerk is going to do a phased retirement. She stated that this appears to be shaped by circumstances rather than strategically planned.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that staff attempted to look at this strategically. He explained that licensing seemed to fit more appropriately with community development, which would make a "one stop shop" for homeowners and create a better customer focused opportunity. He stated that staff is intentionally putting several of the staff people through City Clerk training so that they could become certified City Clerks. He noted that while those employees could serve

as backup in the interim, they could also be appointed to the position after the City Clerk fully retires. He agreed that staff could do more work on the job descriptions to provide more detail to the Council.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated that this serves to fill the gap in cross training for employees, and transfer knowledge, but is relatively unique as it is caused by the phased retirement. He stated that this appears to be a reasonable way to address this topic initially, noting that phased retirement may come up again in the future.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama noted that he does have additional information for the Council to review but was attempting to prevent overloading the Council in this discussion. He stated that this was very strategic and there was a thorough review done to find this approach. He stated that rather than simply replacing a position with the same position, staff instead did an analysis to determine better use of staff and time to become more efficient. He stated that staff feels confident that the high level of service provided by the City Clerk would remain at the same level whether the duties would be provided by the City Clerk or other staff members.

Mayor Strommen noted that was helpful information to have.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that he appreciates the process that staff is putting together. He stated that the Council approved the phased retirement option and therefore this is a result of that direction.

Councilmember Riley asked and received confirmation that the new administrative positions are proposed at half time.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that this was staff's attempt at prioritization and if there are additional questions he urged the Council to reach out to staff.

Councilmember Williams stated that it would help her to understand how 2019 and 2020 would be impacted if these positions are added. She stated that it would be helpful to have the five-year impact for personnel in order to make an informed decision.

Councilmember Johns asked for additional information on what would occur if the senior planner is not added.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama noted that three alternatives are provided in the packet which identify the impacts on duties should certain positions not be filled.

3. TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

3.01: Review Future Topics/ Calendar

Noted.

4. MAYOR / COUNCIL / STAFF INPUT

None.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kurtis G. Ulrich
City Administrator

ATTEST:

Jo Ann M. Thieling
City Clerk

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.