

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, November 28, 2017, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor Sarah Strommen
Councilmember Jill Johns
Councilmember Mark Kuzma
Councilmember Chris Riley

Members Absent: Councilmember John LeTourneau
Councilmember Melody Shryock

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 Engineer Bruce Westby
Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Patrick Brama
Information Technology Manager Jason Fredrickson

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Strommen called the City Council Work Session to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

2.01: Review 2018-2027 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

Finance Director Lund reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember Johns referenced the North Forty project and asked if that has been removed.

Finance Director Lund noted that the project remains as this was set before the last meeting when the project was delayed. She noted that this is a planning tool and the project could possibly be replaced with another project.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that he wanted to talk about road projects and financing. He stated that now that there have been a few projects with assessments perhaps the topic can be

revisited as continuing to bond for road projects will have an impact on the City's debt. He stated that the topic can reassess whether this is the best long-term strategy.

Mayor Strommen asked if the Council would be interested in revisiting the topic in a future work session.

It was the consensus of the Council to place the topic on a future work session agenda.

Councilmember Riley stated that he is skeptical that the Ramsey Boulevard railroad underpass would occur in 2019, but recognized that the project needs to show on the CIP at some point.

City Administrator Ulrich agreed that 2019 would be extremely early. He stated that for comparison purposes, the Anoka Thurston/Fairoak project is planned for 2021, which may be more realistic noting the projects could possibly align.

Finance Director Lund asked if the Council was comfortable with the dates for the other Highway 10 improvements.

It was noted that those dates seemed fine and that they would possibly change in the next iteration of the plan.

Councilmember Riley stated that he has heard comments from multiple residents regarding parks that need improvement. He stated that he would like to hear more information on the plans not just for new parks but improving existing parks.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that previously the park replacement had been included in the supplemental document. He stated that some of the items are hard to balance the return on investment. He stated that in updating an older park, you need to make it ADA compliant, which causes an additional cost. He noted the cost to update an older park that may not get much use, against a demand for the community, such as a splashpad.

Councilmember Riley stated that he appreciates that input and additional information. He noted that the community does have assets that needs to be maintained.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that the parks department is working to develop a list of the capital assets and the plan for updating the parks infrastructure. He noted that it will be an onerous task, similar to the process for roads.

Mayor Strommen agreed that there will need to be a discussion to determine how to create a balance of not only creating new amenities in the parks system but also updating and improving the existing equipment and facilities.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that staff has been working to develop a playground replacement policy that will allow staff to better respond to resident requests.

Councilmember Riley agreed that there will need to be discussion on balancing care for existing parks against creating new parks infrastructure and equipment.

Mayor Strommen stated that she likes the format for the document. She confirmed consensus that the Council is comfortable with the document as presented.

2.02: Proposed AV Updates to City Hall Facilities

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember Riley asked if the demand for the meeting room includes having AV/HDMI capability.

Information Technology Manager Fredrickson replied that he has had many requests to connect equipment. He noted that in rare instances he was able to track down an adaptor or borrow a City laptop to allow the room renter to give a presentation. He confirmed that there is a much higher demand for the rooms that have the AV/HDMI capability versus the rooms that do not have the connections available.

Councilmember Kuzma asked if the QCTV fund is replenished annually.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that the fund is replenished annually, but noted that the contribution is not the same each year. He explained how the allocation is determined by the QCTV Commission. He noted that this year the City discretionary amount was \$20,000 compared to other years when the allocation was perhaps near \$50,000.

Mayor Strommen acknowledged that while technology is expensive, this seems like a necessary update.

Councilmember Riley asked if there was a comparison of equipment costs.

Information Technology Manager Fredrickson provided additional details on the price ranges that he has seen for products and his attempts to find lower pricing.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that the screens for the Council in the chambers also need updating.

City Administrator Ulrich noted that is a part of the upgrading of the four-member cities of QCTV and will be updated.

The consensus of the Council was to move forward with the proposal as presented.

2.03: Non-Union Post-Employment Healthcare Savings Plan

Human Resources Manager Lasher reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that he did not see a downside and viewed this as simply shifting dollars.

Human Resources Manager Lasher confirmed that this would not add much in terms of labor and would be a good option.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that this seems to be a smart option that he would support.

Councilmember Riley asked why someone would be opposed to this.

Human Resources Manager Lasher stated that there is a current sick leave severance and this conversion rate would be a bit higher. She provided the example of how the conversion would occur and asked whether the Council would be comfortable allowing that percentage to go to the HSA.

Finance Director Lund provided additional details.

Mayor Strommen stated that she does not see that this would be a bad thing and agreed that this should move forward.

Human Resources Manager Lasher noted that this would still need to go before the employee group for a vote.

The consensus of the Council was to allow this item to move forward.

3. TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

3.01: Review Future Topics/ Calendar

City Administrator Ulrich provided a schedule for the tree lighting event. He stated that there is an opportunity to obtain a horse drawn wagon and asked if the Council would like to choose that option. He stated that the typical cost would be \$750 but noted that the cost would be \$500 for two hours. He noted that the company does have experience doing the activity for other municipalities and this would be a chance to try a new activity. He stated that there are already 50 guests that have RSVP'd for the event online, with many other people interested.

Mayor Strommen stated that it would be a good addition to the event. She stated that if it is not a good fit, the Council would not have to have the activity the following year. She noted that this is a growing event and the community has been enjoying the activities within the community.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that earlier this summer there was an art fair, which was well attended. He stated that in another community there is a winter event, and this could be a good winter event for the City.

Councilmember Riley stated that his only reservation would be the timing but agreed that this would be a good addition.

Mayor Strommen stated that with the use of social media, there would be sufficient time to advertise for the activity. She stated that she would want someone in charge of taking photos of this coming down Sunwood as this would be a great photo opportunity.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that perhaps there is lighting that could be added to the wagon. He noted that for comparison purposes the cost to have two reindeer at the event would be \$1,000 and a holding pen would be required as well.

City Administrator Ulrich noted that staff will move ahead and secure the horse drawn wagon for the tree lighting event.

4. MAYOR / COUNCIL / STAFF INPUT

None.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 6:18 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.