

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, February 27, 2018, 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

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich
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
Public Information and Event Specialist Nichole Wenberg

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Strommen called the City Council Work Session to order at 5:33 p.m.

2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

2.01: Select Overall Grand Prize Photo for 2017 Photo Contest

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood reviewed the staff report. He asked the Council to complete the ballot forms to complete the voting and then submit the forms to staff.

The consensus of the Council was to continue the photo contest in 2018.

2.02: Consider the 2018 City of Ramsey Legislative Platform

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that he understands the cost savings mechanism but advised that he does not want to see the print go away.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that some of the timelines and deadlines are problematic, in addition to cost savings.

Mayor Strommen stated that the last sentence states that the cities should have the authority to delegate if they choose to advertise the information in print.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that the *Anoka County Union* offers advertisements on their website at no charge.

Councilmember Riley asked why this item is being discussed at this time. He explained that it seems late as the legislature is already in session and this won't be adopted for another two weeks. He believed that this should have been done at the beginning of the year.

City Administrator Ulrich noted that rather than proposing legislature, this would dictate more as to how the City responds.

Mayor Strommen agreed that while this is still worth doing, in the future this should be in place prior to the session beginning.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated that the City's plan would be somewhat dependent on what other entities are doing and asked if the City would then be able to get much more ahead of this.

Mayor Strommen confirmed that other entities have their platforms adopted early enough for Ramsey to adopt their platform earlier in the year in the future. She noted that because this is a bonding year, Highway 10 is a main focus while the other items are more standing policy items. She suggested pulling out the Highway 10 item separately to gain more focus.

2.03: Discussion Regarding Proposed Updates to the Personnel Policy

Human Resources Manager Lasher reviewed the staff report.

Mayor Strommen thanked Human Resources Manager Lasher for taking the time to update the policy.

2.01: Select Overall Grand Prize Photo for 2017 Photo Contest (Continued)

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood presented the voting results.

2.04: 2018 City of Ramsey Resident Survey

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

Councilmember Johns asked why the road question was removed from the survey. She stated that she is interested to gain additional input from residents now that more residents have experienced assessment for road repairs.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama replied that it was his belief that the determination was made to only include that question on the 2014 survey. He noted that he could include the question again but would need to drop another question to make room.

Mayor Strommen agreed that residents may respond differently if they have been assessed. She noted that you may not receive a fair response as not all residents have been assessed. She believed that it is an important question to continue to ask as the climate may change.

Councilmember Shryock referenced question 11 and asked if State or County should be included rather than jumping directly to Federal government.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama stated that this is standard language in the survey but believed that the additional language could be added.

Councilmember Johns stated that while it may be good to add the language, people may not distinguish the difference.

Mayor Strommen agreed that it would make sense to add the additional language.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated that perhaps that question could be removed in general. He stated that there really is not good information gained from the response.

Mayor Strommen provided additional details, noting that sometimes those types of questions distinguish the level of trust that people have for different levels of government. She stated that if the intent is to rate the level of City services, that could simply be asked.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated that the question is not objective, and he is not sure as to the value that is added from that question.

Councilmember Johns noted that value type questions are asked throughout the survey and agreed that perhaps this question is not necessary.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama stated that this item is not time sensitive and advised that he can go back to the survey company to gain additional information on the meaning of this question. He noted that after review, the road funding question was asked in 2014 and 2016 and therefore it would make sense to continue asking that question in order to gain trending data. He stated that staff will make amendments to the survey and will bring the item back to the Council in a future work session.

Councilmember Kuzma asked if the cost is lower because the City has gone through the process before or whether the cost has increased.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama replied that the cost remains stable with slight increase for inflation. He stated that \$13,000 was budgeted for this item and \$3,500 is received in outside funding from the State. He estimated that the cost would be about \$15,000 but noted that he can obtain more accurate information.

Mayor Strommen referenced the nuisance related questions and asked if those two questions could be combined to free up some space. She referenced the demographic data, which asks for a person to rate their health. She stated that she would be suspicious if the City were asking her to rate her health on a survey.

Councilmember Shryock stated that there is no mention of a community center in the survey and asked if that is intentional.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama stated that staff can attempt to add that language in, noting that there is limited space and it can be difficult to gain adequate response.

Councilmember Shryock stated that in the past the question has been asked if residents would like a community center if there was an increase in taxes to support that item.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that he would not like to see the community center mentioned. He noted that including that element would make residents think that it is a possibility while there are other more important elements that require funding at this time, such as a public works facility.

Councilmember Riley stated that using that justification perhaps there are other elements that should not be considered.

Councilmember Shryock stated that it would be nice to have the trending data on the desire for a community center.

Councilmember Riley referenced the question which states to build a facility to incubate business and stated that is outside of the purview of the City and does not want to see that included on the survey.

Mayor Strommen stated that if that item is going to be included against the other items listed, perhaps more explanation would be needed. She noted that the community center has at least been mentioned before. She stated that while the idea of an incubator has been discussed, the Council has not discussed building a new facility for that aspect.

Councilmember Shryock stated that perhaps the incubator item should be separated out into a new question.

City Administrator Ulrich agreed that there was a lot of discussion around including the incubator question on a staff level and stated that perhaps that item is dropped, and the community center element could be added in its place.

3. TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

3.01: Review Future Topics/ Calendar

Councilmember Riley asked if effort could be made to add dates or some sort of timeline on the calendar. He recognized that a level of flexibility is needed but stated that perhaps a season could be added to the items to give the Council an idea of when the items will be discussed.

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed a few topics and asked for direction from the Council on the priorities. He asked for direction on the issue of road financing and the type of information the Council would like to have at the work session discussion.

Mayor Strommen replied that the discussion should begin well in advance of the budget. She noted that she will not be present at the next meeting. She stated that it would be helpful to have broader conversations on how the topic would be broached.

Councilmember Riley stated that if the issue is going to be seriously discussed, he would want to keep in mind the November election time should the desire be to include the question on the ballot.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that the brief history of the assessment policy could be discussed including future options. He stated that although currently a referendum is not needed, there is a dynamic to consider as the Charter Commission has had some strong opinions and therefore the best option may be to take the topic to the voters.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that he would like to have a discussion regarding disaster recovery. He noted that the Council has discussed the topic several times but perhaps this would be a good time for a refresher.

Mayor Strommen agreed that a refresher would be a good idea.

Councilmember Riley stated that the important element is that the people that need to know (Police Chief, City Administrator, etc.) are aware of the process but he agreed that a refresher would be good.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that traditionally that element occurs in April in coordination with tornado awareness month.

Councilmember Johns stated that she would like to review the policy regarding home occupation businesses.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that he tentatively planned the Boards and Commissions interviews to be completed on March 20th and confirmed the consensus of the Council on that date. He noted that holding the interviews on a separate date would free up work session time for other discussions.

4. MAYOR / COUNCIL / STAFF INPUT

Noted.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 6:36 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.