

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, March 13, 2018, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present:     Acting Mayor John LeTourneau  
                          Councilmember Jill Johns  
                          Councilmember Mark Kuzma  
                          Councilmember Chris Riley  
                          Councilmember Melody Shryock

Members Absent:     Mayor Sarah Strommen

Also Present:        City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich  
                          Police Chief Jeff Katers  
                          Public Works Superintendent Grant Riemer  
                          Community Development Director Timothy Gladhill  
                          Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Patrick Brama

**1.     CALL TO ORDER**

Acting Mayor LeTourneau called the City Council Work Session to order at 5:32 p.m.

**2.     TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

**2.01:  2018 City of Ramsey Resident Survey**

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

Councilmember Shryock stated that the changes look good and she was glad to see additional levels of government listed in one of the questions. She commented that she also liked the inclusion of the road financing question as that will assist the City in the collection of comparison data.

Councilmember Johns referenced question 17 and asked why the school question is included as the City does not have much control.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama stated that question was generated through the public input process involved in the updating of the Comprehensive Plan. He noted that education is one of the four key themes identified by the community and therefore that question is representative of that theme.

Acting Mayor LeTourneau asked if that question is asking for the survey taker to rank the priorities.

Councilmember Shryock replied that the user would not necessarily be ranking the items but identifying the most important.

Councilmember Riley agreed that it seems odd that one of the four pillars of the Comprehensive Plan is something the City does not have control over.

Community Development Director Gladhill noted that although the City is not in control of building the capital or operation of the school, there has been input from residents that there needs to be better planning between the City and School District. He explained that the City can help to plan for the needed elements regarding education and can work together with the School District to plan for the future.

City Administrator Ulrich noted that it would be difficult to determine if survey users view change as a positive or negative.

Community Development Director Gladhill provided additional details and noted that staff can revise the language.

Councilmember Riley asked what would occur if the response is that element is not important.

Community Development Director Gladhill noted that the survey would provide additional data and the draft Comprehensive Plan can be adjusted, if needed.

Councilmember Johns referenced question 16 and noted that may be a place to include the possible creation of space for incubator businesses.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama stated that is where the incubator question was included in the last draft of the survey and community center was added in its place. He stated that he did not believe that there would be sufficient space on the page to add that additional line.

Councilmember Shryock stated that she is pleased to see community center added back into the survey in order to continue to gain data on the opinion of the residents. She referenced the question regarding road financing and asked if the element regarding franchise fee should include a range of price rather than including just the one figure.

Councilmember Johns stated that she would be comfortable with the \$8 figure being included.

Acting Mayor LeTourneau stated that if a range were included, residents may focus on the high or low number rather than the actual number.

Councilmember Riley stated that he would also include \$8, as that is the figure the Council has discussed in the past.

Councilmember Kuzma confirmed his consensus with using \$8.

Acting Mayor LeTourneau confirmed the consensus of the Council to move forward with the questions as discussed.

**2.02: Review Policy for Attendance and Participation at City Meetings (Council and Commissioners) via Electronic Medium**

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember Johns referenced the statement that eligible users may use this option up to four times. She stated that for the Council that would be a good number but for some of the Commissions and Boards that would equate to 25 percent of their meetings for the year.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that there is a cost to use Skype and asked if the individual would be responsible for having that technology or whether there would be a City funded cost.

Councilmember Riley stated that there would be a regular Skype that does not have a cost.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that there may be additional charges, should someone be remotely attending from a far location. He noted that would be an item for discussion as to whom would be responsible for that cost.

Councilmember Johns stated that perhaps there would be international charges for some users.

Councilmember Riley stated that this option would be at the user's convenience and therefore it should be their cost.

Acting Mayor LeTourneau stated that he would like additional information on the cost for using this technology for a meeting as that will help determine whether he would even be interested in this option.

Councilmember Shryock agreed that four meetings would be a lot for Board and Commission members that only meet 12 times per year. She suggested setting the limit for those users at up to two meetings per year.

Councilmember Riley stated that his expectation is that this method for attending meetings be used very rarely and suggested adding that language to the policy. He suggested that this policy be limited to one person per meeting, as it would be difficult to accommodate technology for two users to attend remotely.

Acting Mayor LeTourneau stated that he would be interested in the cost for both one and two users.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that there was talk of televising the other Commissions and received confirmation that all meetings are now televised.

City Administrator Ulrich noted that as discussed, he will add the preamble of the expectation for use of this policy, the additional notification period, amending the number of allowed users to one per meeting, reducing the number of allowed times of use to two per year for Boards and Commissions, adding language on decorum, and adding a statement that specifies that an individual would be responsible for the cost. He stated that he will also investigate the possible cost and bring this item back to the Council again in the future.

### **2.03: Review Construction Manager Option for Public Works Campus**

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the staff report.

Brian Recker, RJM Construction, provided background on his organization which has been in business for 21 years and focuses on healthcare, corporate clients, and municipalities. He provided information on how cities traditionally deliver a construction project utilizing the competitive bidding process. He stated that municipalities have struggled with that process because rather than bringing on a partner for the project, they are bringing on the lowest bidding contractor. He stated that construction management came into the metro market about 25 years ago and the process brings on a construction manager at the beginning of the project, often times before you hire an architect, and that manager becomes the advocate for the City throughout the process. He stated that the architect and construction manager will work together and as the architect designs the project, the construction manager continues to check in and ensure that the budget remains consistent. He stated that if the budget checks in above budget, the construction manager then provides input on cost savings or reduction ideas that could be implemented to bring the project back to the budget. He stated that the construction manager will look through all the plan documents to ensure that there are no gaps or grey areas that a bidder could leave out of their bid and come back to the City later with a change order. He stated that the construction manager will also review the materials to ensure that the best value will be gained for the City. He noted that the project will need to be publicly bid once the plans are prepared. He explained that the plans will be broken up into packages and each individual trade will bid on their applicable scope of work and the recommendation would be made to accept the low bidder for each individual plan package. He stated that the construction manager would also provide a job superintendent that oversees the activity from the contractors and would oversee the project throughout the entire process as an advocate for the City. He stated that there are two ways to provide construction manager services, through an agency construction manager or a construction manager at risk. He explained the differences noting that with an agency construction manager, the City would hold the contracts with the individual contractors. He stated that some cities had bad experiences with that method because the construction manager was not taking full responsibility on the job site and communicating with the contractors because the City is holding the contracts. He stated that because of that experience a new method was developed, construction manager at risk, in which the City still goes to bid for the plan packages and a recommendation is made to accept the low bidder for each plan package, but the contracts are then held through the construction management office rather than the City holding each contract. He provided an example where a contractor was working on a municipal job and went

out of business over a weekend. He stated in that example, the construction management office handled the necessary action towards the contractor that closed their business rather than the City having to handle that work because the municipality used the at-risk method.

Acting Mayor LeTourneau asked if there is a price difference between agency and at-risk models.

Mr. Recker replied that sometimes there is difference between agency and at risk, where an agency project may have a percentage of 2.8 compared to a percentage of 2.35 for an at-risk model. He stated that often RJM charges a lower rate for an at-risk method because they have the experience and overhead to handle those services.

Councilmember Kuzma asked at what point it would be helpful for a construction manager to be involved.

Mr. Recker replied that it is his understanding that there has already been a feasibility study and project estimate completed and therefore it would be a good time to bring the construction manager on. He stated that the construction manager can review the budget information to ensure that the project is within the right spot before an architect is hired. He stated that if the City were within a year of when they would like to start the project, that would be a good time.

Councilmember Kuzma asked how long the estimate would be good for.

Mr. Recker stated that when the conceptual estimate is done, the construction manager would look at the estimated time of construction and would review the current prices of similar projects and also build in inflation. He stated that further along in the process they would refine the budget further and the budget would be refined again in the design/development phase where more accurate pricing information is gained from the current market. He stated that once the plans are 95 percent finalized, about two to three months before the plans are ready to be bid, he would again obtain more formal budget estimates.

Acting Mayor LeTourneau asked if there is a model that shows the hard cost savings provided by the use of a construction manager.

Mr. Recker explained that in a traditional bid a general contractor will obtain bids from all of the subcontractors that they use and add that with the superintendent and the fees that the general contractor will have for their trailer and additional services. He stated that with a construction manager, the fee for using the construction manager would be similar to the fees of the general contractor to oversee the project. He stated that what the City would be losing by not using a construction manager would be the opportunity to obtain cost savings throughout the design process and the ability to stay more on budget.

Public Works Superintendent Reimer stated that using a construction manager will provide the City with knowledge. He explained that an architect will tell you certain elements are needed, and the construction manager will be able to provide their input on what elements are actually needed, as City staff does not always have that knowledge.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that the City would also save staff time in management of the project.

Councilmember Riley asked if a construction manager was used for Fire Station #2 and asked how this would be different.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama stated that a construction manager was not used for Fire Station #2. He stated that although the architect and general contractor attempt to help the City throughout the process, each person has their own wants and is not looking out for the best interest of the City. He stated that if the construction manager at risk service would be provided for the same cost, he would believe that to be a great service as it would save staff time. He stated that if the City has someone that knows the industry and knows the design process, they will be able to pick up on language gaps that could equate to change orders later in the process to help avoid those change orders.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that he likes the at-risk method but is concerned that this would be jumping into the process too quickly as he is still unsure how the project will be funded. He stated that the City has enough concern with road debt that needs to be resolved before this additional debt is added. He agrees that this will be a great way to go but believes that this is too early in the process.

Councilmember Riley echoed those comments exactly. He stated that there needs to be head on discussion of whether the City can fund this project rather than these off-center discussions that continue to move the City down the path.

Mr. Recker stated that if the construction manager is brought on to help with the budgeting and true cost determinations, there are abilities for phasing of services and long-range projections.

Acting Mayor LeTourneau thanked Mr. Recker for his time.

Councilmember Riley stated that he supports hearing more about the project but the Council needs to know how this project could be funded and the budget implications before this goes forward. He agrees that there is a need for the project but noted that funding needs to be discussed.

Councilmember Johns agreed. She stated that the Council keeps saying that discussion needs to occur but it really needs to happen.

### **3. TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION**

#### **3.01: Review Future Topics/ Calendar**

City Administrator Ulrich stated that the next work session agenda will include road financing options. He noted that additional information was added to the calendar to provide specific dates.

#### **4. MAYOR / COUNCIL / STAFF INPUT**

Councilmember Shryock referenced the most recent issue of the *Ramsey Resident* that featured information that the Council wanted to share with residents. She thanked staff for following through on that notion.

Councilmember Riley stated that one of his goals is to increase voter turnout. He suggested making an announcement during the meeting, both at the beginning and end of the meeting, reminding people to vote.

Councilmember Shryock stated that perhaps a statement be made after the pledge of allegiance.

#### **5. ADJOURNMENT**

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 6:44 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 Amanda Staple  
*TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*