

**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 8, 2019, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor John LeTourneau  
Councilmember Nadine Heinrich  
Councilmember Mark Kuzma  
Councilmember Debra Musgrove  
Councilmember Chris Riley  
Councilmember Melody Shryock

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich  
Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Mark Riverblood  
Administrative Services Director Colleen Lasher  
City Clerk Jo Ann Thieling  
Community Development Director Timothy Gladhill  
City Engineer Bruce Westby

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

**2.01: Discuss Council Organization**

City Clerk Thieling reviewed the staff report.

Mayor LeTourneau asked if guidance is provided by City Code or Statute in regard to the type of publication, specifically whether a transition could be made to digital publication.

City Clerk Thieling stated that topic comes forward at the legislature each year, but digital publication is not allowed at this time under State Statute as a primary method of notification.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that he believed that the price from the *Star Tribune* was a bit cheaper but would prefer the *Anoka County Union/Herald* as it is a local newspaper.

Councilmember Heinrich agreed with Councilmember Kuzma stating that she would prefer to use the local paper.

Mayor LeTourneau asked for details on the subscriptions active within Ramsey.

City Clerk Thieling confirmed the subscription rates quoted within the staff report. She confirmed that the pricing comparison is an apples-to-apples comparison.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that if the attempt is to try to communicate a message to the largest audience possible, it would indicate that the *Star Tribune* might be a better choice because of the higher number of subscribers.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that the local paper is in the community and includes news and stories from the local community in addition to the City notices that are published.

Councilmember Shryock stated that she believes in supporting local businesses but when comparing the number of subscribers, the *Star Tribune* has a much higher subscription rate and therefore she would have a hard time cutting that access by such a drastic amount.

Councilmember Riley stated that historically the City has used the *Anoka County Union/Herald* and therefore he would think residents would look to find that information in that paper.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the publication notices from Ramsey would be lost in the larger *Star Tribune* paper rather than the smaller local *Anoka County Union/Herald*.

Councilmember Shryock noted that the notices are also published online. She stated that the City has used the *Anoka County Union/Herald* and therefore changing might be confusing.

Councilmember Heinrich stated that the *Star Tribune* subscription numbers may include only the weekend subscribers and therefore would be giving a skewed figure.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that it helps to think of who will be looking at the published notices, as there is a limited audience that obtains information in that manner. He noted that the City mails out notification to property owners within a certain distance from a project. He stated that people are used to being able to find the information in the *Anoka County Union/Herald* and noted that the information would continue to be available on the City's website as well.

Mayor LeTourneau confirmed the consensus of the Council to continue to utilize the *Anoka County Union/Herald* for published notifications.

City Clerk Thieling stated that the proposed 2019 appointments and welcomed any additional input.

Councilmember Riley stated that he would be interested in the Acting Mayor role.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that she believed that the Acting Mayor position was appointed from an At-Large position.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that under Mayor Strommen, the Acting Mayor was always an At-Large position and before that, it was always a senior member of the Council. He stated that there is no written policy and the position is to be appointed by the Council.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that he is also interested in that position and believes that it would be a good growing experience.

Mayor LeTourneau noted that Councilmember Kuzma was listed as Acting Mayor because he expressed interest in that position and that was the only interest expressed prior to tonight's meeting.

Councilmember Heinrich asked Councilmembers Kuzma and Riley to provide brief background information for the new members of the Council.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that both members joined the Council during the same election cycle, have been upstanding members of the community and have served in similar capacities. He resisted changing the discussion into an interview process.

Councilmember Heinrich stated that it would be difficult for her to make a decision, as she does not feel that she has the information to make the right indication as to who would best serve in the position. She stated that she would like to hear additional information on why each would like to serve in that position.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that both would be great candidates. He noted that Councilmember Kuzma stated that he is interested in the position to further personal development and leadership experience.

Councilmember Riley acknowledged that they have both served the same number of years. He noted that he does have experience leading different Boards/Committees.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that he has gained a lot of experience serving for the past six years as well and has been self-employed for the past 41 years. He stated that he would enjoy providing that backup role to the Mayor.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that historically it seems that the Acting Mayor position has been filled from an At-Large position and asked for additional information.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that the process for determining an Acting Mayor vary from Mayor to Mayor and therefore there is not a consistent policy on how the appointment is managed and therefore he did not feel he had sufficient direction on how the appointment should be made. He stated that Councilmember Kuzma expressed interest in the position and that was how he filled that appointment.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the process would have been better served if the other senior Councilmembers should have been asked if they were interested.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that it was the process of the Council and this is where it has evolved to at this point.

Councilmember Riley stated that if the position would have been included on the form, he would have rated the position highly. He stated that he was also under the impression that the position would go to an At-Large position. He stated that he was then surprised to see Councilmember Kuzma listed in that position.

Councilmember Shryock stated that both Councilmembers would do a great job. She stated that she was under the general impression that the appointment would go to an At-Large position. She stated that because both members have the same amount of seniority, she believes that the appointment should go to the At-Large position to provide consistency.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that it feels that the consensus is that the Acting Mayor role should be attached to an At-Large role.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that when Councilmember Riley ran for special election, he was elected by 300 votes, whereas he received many more votes than that. He stated that he does not want the decision to be based on an At-Large designation because the votes of each Councilmember count the same.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that Councilmember Kuzma stepped up and took the initiative to ask and show interest, whereas Councilmember Riley made an assumption that the position would be awarded to him.

Councilmember Heinrich stated that the vote totals are tricky. She believed that the assumption of residents would be that an At-Large position would hold the Acting Mayor position. She stated that if consensus is not reached tying that appointment to the At-Large position, she asked how consistency would be reached in the future on that appointment.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that he would be fine either way, noting that if the Council wishes to tie the appointment to the At-Large designation, he does not have a problem with that.

Mayor LeTourneau confirmed the consensus to appoint the Acting Mayor position to an At-Large position, which would make Councilmember Riley Acting Mayor.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that she will ask her employer for the flexibility to attend the LRRWMO meeting but noted that she may have a conflict from time to time.

Councilmember Kuzma asked and received confirmation that the appointments will go into effect this week.

Councilmember Shryock stated that it referenced the Quad Cities Cable Communications Commission. She noted that both members listed for appointment are staff members, which she does not have a problem with. She stated that when she does the Ramsey update with QCTV she has received the questions/information the day before rather than receiving that information prior to from the City.

Councilmember Riley stated that he would agree that the information should be coming from City staff to manage the message that is being shared.

Councilmember Heinrich stated that she would possibly be interested in joining the Joint Law Enforcement Council and asked if that is traditionally held just by Police Chief Katers and City Administrator Ulrich.

City Administrator Ulrich replied that he is one of the few City Administrators on the group, as it is primarily composed of City Council members and the Police Chief.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that he was the last Councilmember to serve on the group, but noted that because the meeting is held at 2:00 p.m., he had difficulty attending. He stated that he would highly recommend participation if her schedule allows.

Councilmember Heinrich stated that she could attend the meeting and would be interested in serving.

Mayor LeTourneau confirmed consensus with making that adjustment and with the remaining appointments as presented.

City Clerk Thieling reviewed the remaining services to be appointed which include Health Authority and Legal Services.

Councilmember Riley stated that he is happy with the current City Attorney but asked for input from staff. He noted that changes were made to the meetings that are required for attendance and asked if the City staff believe that the City is still receiving the service that it needs.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that staff believes that the City is receiving the necessary services from the City Attorney, noting that he is responsive, and he and his firm provide good legal opinions. He stated that staff is extremely satisfied with the service and do not recommend a change.

Mayor LeTourneau asked if the contract rate includes meeting attendance or whether there is an additional charge for meeting attendance.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that the cost for attendance at Council meetings is in addition to the contract cost and therefore staff only requests attendance when necessary.

Mayor LeTourneau explained that in the past, the City Attorney attended each City Council meeting, and as that need decreased, the Council found more efficiency in not requiring that attendance.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that if the Council believes that there is a need for the City Attorney to attend the meeting, which has not been recognized by staff, the Council could alert staff and the City Attorney can plan to attend the meeting. He provided clarification that prosecution services are provided by another firm, and bond counsel is provided by a third firm.

City Clerk Thieling stated that the last item would be the renewal of the contract with TimeSaver Off-Site Secretarial Services.

Mayor LeTourneau confirmed the consensus of the Council to continue with TimeSaver as proposed.

## **2.02: Discuss 2019 Legislative Platform**

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that he does not like the language stating that the City would want to remove the outdated printed publication language. He stated that he would support the use of digital publication in addition to printed publication.

Councilmember Heinrich stated that she would be in support of that request as the elderly residents are not on the internet and get their news from printed publications.

Councilmember Shryock stated that perhaps the last sentence be changed to state, “modify the requirements for communication processes.”

Councilmember Riley stated that this language simply states that cities should have the authority to determine if web publications should supplement or replace printed publications. He stated that this legislation would just give cities the option and each city would still make its own determination and therefore he would support the language as written. He stated that the outdated language is related to the requirement.

Mayor LeTourneau agreed that the City would still have the option to do one or both.

Mayor LeTourneau confirmed the consensus of the Council to modify the language as discussed.

Councilmember Riley believed that this year would be a good year to push for the City to have its own zip code. He stated that a very different group decided the City’s position on the Met Council and therefore perhaps that topic should be revisited in the future.

Councilmember Shryock agreed that the topic should be revisited, and the City should take a stance one way or the other. She stated that there are other communities that may have similar feelings and there could be power in numbers to enact a change.

Mayor LeTourneau agreed that it would make sense to hold that discussion at a future worksession perhaps inviting someone from the Metropolitan Council.

City Administrator Ulrich noted that Anoka County would also be good to invite to that worksession.

Mayor LeTourneau agreed that this would be a good year to push for the zip code. He confirmed consensus with the language in the platform as proposed and discussed tonight.

### **2.03: Discuss the City Administrator's 2019 Professional Development Plan**

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember Musgrove asked and received confirmation that these goals/priorities are not listed in any specific order.

Councilmember Riley asked if there are measurable ways to measure these goals/priorities.

Mayor LeTourneau noted that although there are not necessarily measurements for success, the Council will continue to hold an annual review.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that he could provide benchmarks.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that the public works campus is much more important than a community center. He stated that while it would be nice to have a community center, the City would have a hard time paying for that as residents continue to age. He stated that the public works campus is a needed facility rather than a want.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that the items are not exclusive or dependent upon each other. He stated that the Council will have continued input as how this moves forward. He stated that the issue is not so much about solving the issue of a community center but discussing the issue. He stated that there is a lot of enthusiasm in the community for that type of amenity.

Councilmember Shryock agreed that this would be a way to gain answers for some of the questions that are out there. She stated that this will simply help to provide more information on the topic.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that she would hate to have information developed on the community center with a potential partner coming forward and the City stating that it could not do that.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that he would want to resist the chicken and the egg situation and would rather support making informed decisions at the right time.

Councilmember Shryock stated that the City should continue to be mindful of the community center and potential planning. She stated that perhaps direct contact with potential partners is not explored at this time.

### **2.04: Schedule Council/Staff Strategic Planning Session**

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember Shryock stated that perhaps there is a brief presentation of background information at a worksession prior to the planning session to provide additional information to the new Councilmembers.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that he also thought about that element in making that process more efficient.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that a status report could be provided as a worksession case prior to the planning session.

The consensus of the Council was to hold the Council/Staff strategic planning session on February 19<sup>th</sup>.

**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 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kurtis G. Ulrich  
City Administrator

ATTEST:

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Katie M. Schmidt  
Administrative Assistant

Drafted by Amanda Staple  
*TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*