

**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 26, 2019, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

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

Members Absent: Councilmember Debra Musgrove

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich  
Police Captain Tim Frankfurth  
Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Mark Riverblood  
Public Works Superintendent Grant Riemer  
Community Development Director Timothy Gladhill

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor LeTourneau called the City Council Work Session to order at 5:37 p.m.

**2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

**2.01: Discuss Remote Attendance Policy**

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember Heinrich stated that she is uncomfortable with out of state/town remote attendance because citizens would be unlikely to attend. She stated that she wouldn't mind if the remote attendance was within the City of Ramsey.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that could be a possibility. He explained that there are members of the Planning Commission that are snowbirds and are out of state at some of the meeting times.

Councilmember Heinrich stated that she would like the policy to state that the person attending remotely would have to be in a public place in Ramsey.

Mayor LeTourneau noted that he does not quite understand how someone would then not be able to make it to City Hall if they are going to another public place in Ramsey.

Councilmember Riley agreed that would defeat the purpose of allowing remote attendance. He stated that while every effort should be made to attend every meeting, there is a limit within the policy to limit the use of the policy. He stated that technology and the current trends dictate that this could be an option.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that the meeting itself would still occur in Ramsey and one person could attend remotely from another location. He noted that members of the public could still attend at City Hall if desired.

Councilmember Kuzma asked if all four cities would have to participate or whether each city could choose whether they want to participate.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that the choice is for each member city to make, QCTV is simply looking for direction on whether each city would like the appropriate equipment to be installed.

Councilmember Riley asked and received confirmation that this policy would also apply to Boards and Commissions.

Councilmember Heinrich asked if the cost could be justified for such a small percentage of uses.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that his expectation is that the cost that would be incurred would allow the City to continue in this opportunity for perpetuity.

City Administrator Ulrich estimated that the equipment would perhaps have a five-year lifespan.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that it is his understanding that on an annual basis, QCTV allocates funds for each member city for these types of equipment upgrades.

City Administrator Ulrich confirmed that to be correct.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that the replenishment of that funding source occurs with some frequency. He stated that the City should make sure that they choose the right upgrades to utilize the funds. He asked if there are projected timelines for the use of the fund currently.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that recently the funds were used for upgrading the cameras and equipment for high definition. He noted that the fund has received about \$20,000 per year for equipment replacement, although there is not an official allotment set for each year. He stated that the fund has also been used for other communication upgrades including upgrades to the screens and projectors in the conference room and monitors in the hallway.

Councilmember Shryock asked if the person wanting to participate remotely would need to use video technology.

Councilmember Riley confirmed that State law requires that video be used.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that this policy could be useful for the Commissions and noted that he would be open to a trial to see how this could work.

Councilmember Shryock stated that she would not be opposed to the policy. She referenced the equipment that would be necessary for the person attending remotely and stated that she was led to believe that the equipment would need to be approved by IT.

Councilmember Riley stated that language is referring to the equipment used at City Hall. He stated that he is comfortable with the policy as drafted. He suggested additional language stating that the computer compliance on the user end would be the responsibility of the user.

Councilmember Shryock stated that she would be in agreement with the policy.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that he would be fine either way. He stated that when he is not present for a meeting because of a vacation, he would not plan to attend remotely. He acknowledged that this is a request from Commission members that would like to continue to provide input, even when they are out of state.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that he will amend the proposed policy as discussed and suggested. He noted that there are attendance requirements for Council and Commission meetings and advised that remote attendance would count as attendance.

## **2.02: QCTV Stakeholder Discussion**

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the staff report. He asked the different ways community leaders are communicating with the residents about the work they do.

Councilmember Riley replied speaking with residents.

Councilmember Kuzma replied that he answers questions and attends different meetings.

Councilmember Heinrich stated that she still has her campaign website and Facebook pages active and keeps those sources up to date with information.

Mayor LeTourneau replied he uses email, telephone, public forums, community events, and talking to residents when they see him in the community.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that communication wants and needs change over time and asked which wants and needs may be different than they were before.

Councilmember Shryock replied that as the City moves forward, people increasingly look to the internet, perhaps that tool could be used more, and that video content could be shared online to residents.

Mayor LeTourneau agreed that it could be helpful to have video content that could be created and stored in an archive that residents could use to search out the answers they are looking for.

Councilmember Kuzma commented that it could be helpful to have a link on the City website with videos of staff explaining how to pull a permit, or when a fire permit is necessary.

Councilmember Heinrich stated that she has heard a consistent message from residents that they would like more information shared on social media or the City website. She noted that there is a misunderstanding that the Ramsey community Facebook page may be connected to City Hall, rather than a separate community page created by residents.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that residents often wonder the features that are available in the community, amenities in the park and things that they can do in the community that could help them explore Ramsey.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that the MRT Trail could be promoted.

City Administrator Ulrich asked how the Council would like to see the City connect with the community through communications in the future.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that he still thinks of the high level of response that the City receives from the City newsletter, as that continues to be a good source of information for the community. He wondered if that trend will continue in the future.

Councilmember Shryock stated that the nice thing is that the newsletter goes to everyone's door and is the most direct form of communication. She stated that technology can be used to further connect with residents looking for additional information. She noted that people may not be comfortable coming to City Hall to ask questions but would be interested in learning more if the information was available online.

Councilmember Heinrich agreed with the comments of Councilmember Shryock that the newsletter goes to everyone's door and includes helpful information. She agreed that digital information could expand on that information.

Councilmember Riley agreed that the newsletter is the number one form of communication because it is delivered to everyone's door. He stated that QCTV is cable based, but only a fraction of the community uses cable television and therefore the information should also be available online. He stated that perhaps QCTV should advertise as well to expand their viewer base.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that the broadcast system is trending less, while internet-based broadcasting is an increasing trend. He stated that perhaps QCTV explore additional methods of providing its content.

Councilmember Kuzma asked if there is opportunity for QCTV to take advantage of the broadband internet access.

City Administrator Ulrich asked if there is a role in QCTV and remote attendance in the future, which could include the ability for residents to check in remotely with comments as well.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that would be an interesting component but noted that people should have to follow the same format of making themselves available via video and announcing their name and address.

City Administrator Ulrich asked what QCTV could do that would better support the communications of the organization with the community.

Councilmember Riley commented that one year ago there were problems with connectivity through QCTV that were not quickly resolved.

Councilmember Shryock suggested QCTV get itself out in the community to advertise their programming and alert people to the programs available.

City Administrator Ulrich provided details on the strategic planning process that QCTV is undergoing in an attempt to continue to keep up with the changes in technology and the trends in the area of cable television.

### **2.03: Discuss Congressional Meetings and Travel**

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the staff report.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that he was able to go in the past and stated that it was a positive experience as the members of Congress really appreciate that the City is going to them. He stated that he also appreciated having Mr. Tinklenberg on the trip, as he plans the schedule and ensures that each meeting has a purpose and expectation, along with providing messaging and script to ensure each person can participate in the discussions. He stated that the expectation was that the City may have 15 minutes with a member of Congress, or their staff, while the group was able to meet with each member of Congress on their list for about 45 to 60 minutes. He stated that Mr. Tinklenberg also has an expanded network and it was great to talk with people they met along the way.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that Mr. Tinklenberg previously worked for the Federal Highway Administration and has connections from that prior position.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that the members that participate in the Highway 10 Delegation should participate in the trip. He agreed that the trip should be approved.

Councilmember Riley stated that transportation continues to be a high focus and the City has had success in doing these trips and therefore would also support the trip.

Councilmember Shryock stated that she was not able to attend the last trip but agreed that it is useful to keep the connections gained from the trip. She stated that the City has been able to

make a lot of progress and this could be a great opportunity to explore additional funding options. She stated that she also supports the trip.

Councilmember Heinrich agreed that there is a tremendous benefit to the trip and Mr. Tinklenberg should be included. She asked who would be in charge at City Hall and if both City Administrator Ulrich and Community Development Director Gladhill would attend the trip.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that Finance Director Lund is the third in line and has served in that role in the past. He stated that he would like Community Development Director Gladhill to attend the trip to help build future networking connections as he continues to move up in leadership. He noted that they would still be available by phone and Finance Director Lund would be available on-site.

Councilmember Heinrich stated that she sees a tremendous cost benefit in sending Councilmembers and City staff rather than lobbyists. She stated that she would be happy to volunteer for the trip.

Mayor LeTourneau noted that Councilmembers Riley and Shryock are members of the Highway 10 Delegation and asked if they are available.

Councilmember Shryock stated that she would be available.

Mayor LeTourneau noted that the recommendation from staff was for two staff members, two Council members and Mr. Tinklenberg to attend.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that if something happens schedule wise and Mayor LeTourneau or Councilmember Shryock cannot attend, Councilmember Heinrich could be an alternate.

Councilmember Heinrich stated that she believes that she has built relationships that would make her a strong candidate to attend the trip.

Councilmember Riley stated that he would support Councilmember Heinrich attending.

The consensus of the Council was that City Administrator Ulrich, Community Development Director Gladhill, Mayor LeTourneau, Councilmember Shryock, Councilmember Heinrich and Mr. Tinklenberg would attend the trip.

#### **2.04: Discuss Interim Public Works Facility Options**

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember Shryock asked the cost for both the different buildings.

City Administrator Ulrich provided details on the estimated costs for the different buildings.

Community Development Director Gladhill provided additional details on the assessed value of a property. He noted that one of the properties has four offers on the table at this time.

Councilmember Riley asked if renting one of these buildings would be an option. He stated that he would be more interested in renting on a short-term basis rather than owning. He also asked the feasibility that the buildings could be used for public works.

City Administrator Ulrich noted that option was not discussed.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer stated that Quality RV is too small to be worth it. He stated that the other site would work much better as the storage could be moved to that space but noted that operations would still be split between facilities because that second space does not have outdoor space. He noted that option would be more feasible.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that in the past he has not been very supportive of a new public works building because of funding concerns. He stated that in the last few discussions there have been some creative funding options presented. He noted that it is very inefficient to have separate operations between two sites and would rather take advantage of the low interest rates and build the new public works campus now.

Mayor LeTourneau referenced the estimated cost of the acquisition of the distribution building and asked if that could be applied towards the land acquisition costs for Highway 10.

City Administrator Ulrich noted that would not be a possibility as the land would be used for a frontage road and not for the highway or interchange.

Mayor LeTourneau asked if the acquisition of the distribution building would put public works in a favorable position for the next ten years.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer stated that would depend upon what could be done with that building, noting that a mechanics bay and wash bay would be his highest needs. He stated that the distribution building does not have floor drains, and therefore those would also be needed.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that Councilmember Kuzma's comment is well taken that this could be wasting money to put a band-aid on something.

Councilmember Heinrich agreed that the cost savings would need to be analyzed to determine if this would be a good option.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that his biggest problem is that the building has been for sale for ten to 15 years and therefore he would also have concern that the City would not be able to sell the property in the future.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that he would also be interested in what would be lost on the tax base.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer replied that the property generates \$68,000 per year for property taxes.

Councilmember Riley stated that he was more excited with the opportunity for Quality RV but agreed that Public Works Superintendent Riemer would know what would work best for his department and therefore he would not want to waste money.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer stated that the utility department could be put into that building and that department could stay there in perpetuity but then utility funds could not be used for financing of the new public works campus in the future.

Councilmember Shryock stated that the building would be good in terms of size, but the cost of the building and necessary upgrades does not seem to make sense financially to provide a short-term solution to a long-term problem.

Mayor LeTourneau agreed that the City is looking for a long-term solution to the problem that exists today. He asked if there is a funding source identified for this short-term solution.

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the different funding options that would be available.

Mayor LeTourneau confirmed the consensus that this would not be a bad option, but additional information would be needed in terms of logistics and feasibility and whether the solution would meet the needs of public works for the next ten years.

Councilmember Kuzma noted that there is also a cost to the inefficiency of public works operating from separate locations.

### **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 6:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

---

Kurtis G. Ulrich

City Administrator

ATTEST:

---

Katie M. Schmidt  
Administrative Assistant

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