

Councilmember Kuzma mentioned that with the Ramsey Foundation, the organization, is moving the responsibility for planning the concerts to the City. He noted that would be part of the event planning for the City employee.

Community Development Director Gladhill reviewed the Strategic Plan initiatives specific to the community development department. He noted that they would like to be more collaborative in improving the image and aesthetic of Highway 10 and Highway 47. He stated that they are in the midst of updating the Comprehensive Plan. He stated that community development would assume the licensing duty from the City Clerk, because the department is already involved in that aspect. He reviewed the desired customer service metrics for the community development department, noting that the department is doing well. He reviewed the staffing plan metrics for the next few years and the variables that can impact those staffing levels. He stated that there is a high level of new developments and a desire to review proposals quicker. He stated that in the next 20 years the City is expected to continue to grow in households, population and staffing needs. He reviewed some of the duties that the community development department is currently involved in.

Councilmember Riley stated that there is a need right now while the City is in the growth phase, noting that the need has been mitigated in the past few years with the use of consultants.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that he anticipates the rapid growth rate for the next decade or two. He agreed that the gap could be filled with the use of consultants but noted that it is then difficult to pair that use of consultants with the ability to provide rapid response to questions. He noted that consultants also have a higher hourly rate. He stated that clients are often not pleased to wait one to two weeks for a response from the consultant and therefore believes it would be helpful to have a full-time position added that would be able to help address the workload and be able to provide customer service.

Councilmember Riley asked if the permit revenue is already budgeted into the projection.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that they attempted to better estimate the permit revenue but noted that there was a large swing that occurred. He stated that he would prefer to err on the side of caution rather than attempting to forecast too high and scramble to cut items during the budget year.

Councilmember Shryock asked why a senior planner would be needed rather than a lower level planner.

Community Development Director Gladhill noted that there would be a high rate of turnover for a lower level planner. He stated that the Council has made the statement that they would like to create a collaborative effort to address code enforcement rather than through violations. He stated that the experience that a senior planner would bring would assist in that environment and would help to prevent that turnover that an assistant planner would bring.

City Engineer Westby stated that the position classified as new in the budget, but noted that there currently is an employee that splits time between engineering/public works/parks. He noted that the employee has taken on the duty of parks reservation and therefore the ability for that employee

to assist engineering has decreased while the workload for the engineering department has increased. He stated that he has taken on most of the administrative duties for engineering himself which keeps him from completing the higher-level duties. He stated that he is asking for this position in order to assist with those administrative duties and handle the duties of coverage not only for engineering but also for other departments. He stated that in the short term he could have an employee working 40 hours per week but could also get by with less. He noted that he could bring additional details if the Council desires.

Fire Chief Kohner stated that the position he is requesting would benefit the department and the City as a whole. He stated that there currently is no backup when he or the Fire Marshal is out, noting that the last full-time firefighter position was added 17 years ago in 2000. He noted that during this time there has been an increase in calls corresponding to the increase in development. He noted that a number of the calls are received during the day and this increased position would help to provide that daytime coverage. He stated that the new position would also assist with building inspections, noting that currently there are two paid on-call firefighters that are assisting with inspections. He stated that fire prevention would also be a great benefit of this position. He reviewed some of the fire prevention activities and educational presentations that the department collaborates to provide to residents. He stated that the new position would align with five of the key strategic initiatives outlined in the Strategic Plan.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood discussed the desire to add a part-time recreational assistant. He provided some of the resident feedback that they have received regarding the course offerings the parks department has offered. He stated that the parks staff sends a survey to each participant of park programming to receive input on the program. He noted that the data they receive on the programing is then used to analyze the offerings by different elements, such as cost, popularity, and categorically for the types of offerings. He noted that the intern also emails out the offerings for the next month, to keep interested residents aware of the programs being offered. He stated that the trend for parks programming is following the same path as the summer concert series at the Draw, gaining participation at a rate of about 30 percent each year. He confirmed that this new position would handle the duties of the summer concert series as that transitions back from the Ramsey Foundation.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer reviewed the public works/parks department, noting that the current slate of staff is one less than what the department had in 2011. He described the duties of the parks department staff and how their seasonal employees assist in filling the gaps from the full-time staff. He stated that they are managing at the lowest capacity for employees currently. He stated that they feel the added position is justified because of the impacts the parks have on the City, as the park system might be the only contact point for some visitors.

Mayor Strommen stated that she was visiting Sunfish Lake Park and met two out of state visitors that were enjoying the park.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that this is the third or fourth year in a row that they have tried for this position.