

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Monday, August 12, 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

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich
Finance Director Diana Lund
Fire Chief Matt Kohner
Police Chief Jeff Katers
Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Mark Riverblood
Administrative Services Director Colleen Lasher
Community Development Director Timothy Gladhill
City Engineer Bruce Westby

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

2.01: 2020 General Fund/Levy Review – Continued Discussion

Finance Director Lund reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember Musgrove recognized the steps that staff has taken to lower the budget in different areas. She asked if the Council could review the end of year policy for fund distribution.

Finance Director Lund replied that the policy was changed four years ago and provided additional clarification on the current percentage splits.

Councilmember Kuzma asked the percentage of the budget that is due to new personnel requests.

Finance Director Lund replied that the total personnel requested would be an increase of about \$67,534.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that the Police Officer position was included in the 2019 budget but was carried over as the choice was made to delay that hire.

Councilmember Riley asked for additional details on the figures shown on the nondiscretionary/discretionary information.

Finance Director Lund provided additional clarification, noting that there is currently \$350,000 that is non-restricted at this time. She continued to review the staff report.

Councilmember Heinrich asked for additional details on the part-time police records technician.

Police Chief Katers stated, that as the department grows, they need to ensure that there is sufficient staff for records and records retention, along with the changes to data retention. He stated that there are currently three full-time and one part-time records employees in that department. He stated that service that is more efficient could be provided to citizens with the additional staff. He noted that the department receives many records requests not only from residents but other outside entities, such as insurance companies or others. He stated that there is an alarm ordinance and this person would also assist in following up on those calls. He noted that his department has been asked for more metrics and this person would be able to assist with that and crime analysis. He stated that there are tools available that are not utilized because there is not sufficient staff. He stated that as the community and his department grow, he needs to ensure that there are sufficient support staff in place.

Councilmember Heinrich asked if his support staff is struggling to complete the current workload.

Police Chief Katers confirmed that to be true.

Councilmember Heinrich asked for additional information on the reclassification of the Community Development Director to Deputy City Administrator.

City Administrator Ulrich explained that position currently acts in his place when he is not in the office. He noted that this change is a succession management tool and helps to provide that staff person with additional growth opportunities. He explained that the position would also have more cross-department activity.

Councilmember Heinrich stated that she is not in support of the reclassification at this time from a budgeting standpoint. She stated that she appreciates the level of expertise and motivation that the employee has and did not want to discourage the employee, but simply does not support the request at this time.

Councilmember Musgrove asked for additional input on the current role and the implication that employee would have for handling more duties.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that Community Development Director Gladhill currently handles a broad task of duties in development and as Acting City Administrator; this would

simply provide additional duties and the recognition. He stated that the employee has been effective in increasing the efficiency and productivity of his department and growing his staff to handle additional tasks as well.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if there would be a threat of burnout adding additional tasks to that employee.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that he would consult with the employee to ensure that he would not feel that way. He noted that there are always opportunities for additional support if an employee feels burned out.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that his role has expanded over the years. He stated that his department has grown and each of the three divisions now has a Manager, whom will handle their Commission work. He stated that delegation has allowed him to focus on other tasks. He referenced the Highway 10 project management that he has assisted with, which translates well into handling other similar projects that he would handle with the reclassification.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that she has received one comment from a developer that the process is long for smaller things, rather than sorting those out from the larger projects. She appreciated that Community Development Director Gladhill is willing to handle more responsibility.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that he would support that reclassification as that is smart planning for the future.

Community Development Director Gladhill and other City staff left the room.

Councilmember Heinrich reviewed some of the comments that she has received from residents regarding how Community Development Director Gladhill interacts with the community. She stated that those residents feel that his communication skills could be improved and therefore she would be hesitant to support the reclassification. She stated that she would like that image to be improved prior to making the reclassification.

Councilmember Riley stated that he has heard some of those comments as well but explained that those comments should be taken with a grain of salt. He explained that it is Community Development Director Gladhill's job to say no at times and those residents often take it out on the employee rather than the City policy.

Councilmember Heinrich commented that her experience with Community Development Director Gladhill has always been positive and professional; she is simply representing resident comments.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that part of the reclassification is also to provide additional opportunities outside of code enforcement. He noted the code enforcement is a task that can create burnout and Community Development Director Gladhill receives the brunt of resident

frustration based on the code enforcement direction from the Council. He believed that this would be a good opportunity for growth.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that this is a great discussion on how to create a better presence on those issues, specifically how code enforcement is communicated and how those cases are worked on. He stated the time in code enforcement is a new world, noting that as the community has changed over the past ten years, residents have different expectations and it is a learning experience.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that the problem comments typically come back from the residents that have repeat issues and there are not positive comments received from the great projects that Community Development Director Gladhill is involved in, using the example of Affinity and Highway 10.

Community Development Director Gladhill and the other City staff members rejoined the meeting.

Councilmember Riley asked for additional information on the fire truck request.

Fire Chief Kohner explained that there is a replacement schedule of 20 years on the large fire equipment, noting that they attempt to extend the lifespan of that equipment through maintenance. He stated that this vehicle scheduled for replacement is a 1999, which will be 23 years old at time of replacement. He stated that when the annual maintenance is completed, he receives a report on the overall condition. He noted that they are starting to spend more on repairs and therefore its time is due for replacement.

Councilmember Musgrove asked for more information on the mower.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that this is a large area mower that is used daily during the summer season. He stated that while they originally thought that the lifespan would be ten years, because of the frequent use they are reaching the mark much earlier because of the repairs needed after four or five years. He explained that when the mower is down, they fall behind on the mowing and have actually had to rent/lease at times when the mower is being repaired.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the purchase was made through the State contract and whether there would be an option to receive a better deal.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood confirmed that almost all of the equipment purchases are made through the State contract because of the lower prices that can be obtained. He recognized that these are expensive pieces of equipment that are heavily used. He noted that this mower is six years old.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that she was thinking that perhaps a lower cost could be obtained by looking outside of the State contract.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood provided additional details on the State contract.

City Administrator Ulrich noted that the State contract is typically the best price. He noted that staff can always look outside for pricing details as well.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that perhaps at a future worksession there could be a short presentation on the maintenance tracking system that is used to determine the expected lifespan of equipment.

Finance Director Lund stated that she would need input on the option that the Council is comfortable with moving forward.

Councilmember Riley stated that he would want to see the PIR used for the road improvements. He stated that he liked that the report included option three, highlighting what it would look like to place road financing on the general fund, which equates to an 18 percent tax increase.

Councilmember Heinrich stated that she would support option two, which uses PIR funds.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that preliminarily he would support option two with use of the PIR fund. He noted that some things will depend on the franchise fee and how that will move forward.

Councilmember Riley stated that he is not willing to start with an eight percent increase. He stated that he would support six percent.

Councilmember Heinrich stated that she would like to see that percentage decrease further from the options provided, which will lead to tough decision making.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that it appears there will need to be another discussion for the Council to decide where to make cuts.

Councilmember Kuzma asked what would happen if there is a deadlock on the decision.

Finance Director Lund confirmed that the budget would revert to the last approved budget, but the City would still be liable for the contracted increases, which would then need to be taken from other line items.

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 6:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kurtis G. Ulrich
City Administrator

ATTEST:

Katie M. Schmidt
Administrative Assistant

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.