

**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 14, 2020, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor John LeTourneau  
Councilmember Nadine Heinrich  
Councilmember Mark Kuzma  
Councilmember Jeff Menth  
Councilmember Debra Musgrove  
Councilmember Chris Riley  
Councilmember Dan Specht

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich  
Fire Chief Matt Kohner  
Police Chief Jeff Katers  
Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Mark Riverblood  
Public Works Superintendent Grant Riemer  
Administrative Services Director Colleen Lasher  
Deputy City Administrator Timothy Gladhill

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor LeTourneau called the City Council Work Session to order at 5:40 p.m.

**2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

**2.01: Discuss Council Organization**

Administrative Services Director Lasher reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember Musgrove referenced the information in the case related to TimeSaver, the second to last paragraph, which referenced the less than 2.5 percent increase to the rate. She asked for the actual number.

Administrative Services Director Lasher stated that the Addendum is included in the case and includes the charges.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that it appears to list dollar amounts but not the percentage. She asked if staff could provide the actual percentage rate.

Administrative Services Director Lasher stated that the rate increase would be less than 2.5 percent but noted that she can compare the previous rates to find the exact percentage.

Councilmember Kuzma asked if that item would be approved tonight.

Mayor LeTourneau confirmed that the Council will take action on that item at tonight's regular meeting.

Councilmember Heinrich stated that she has not reviewed her schedule to determine if she could actively service as the Alternate for the Planning Commission and asked if any other Councilmembers would be interested.

Mayor LeTourneau asked the Council to discuss whether there should be a liaison to the Parks or Planning Commissions, as the Council has not had a liaison to those groups in recent years.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill stated that the Environmental Policy Board is the only group that has a City Council liaison and provided background information. He stated that the EDA has members of the Council as voting members. He stated that there has been discussion whether to have liaisons to Planning and Parks Commission, but formal direction has not yet been given.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that he does not believe that there has been discussion with himself or the Park and Recreation Commission as to having a City Council liaison.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if having a liaison could lead to more in depth discussions. She stated that as a liaison to the EPB, she has found it valuable to be able to provide input and suggestions to the Board as well as the ability to bring the information she learns back to the Council.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that there is a structure and communication system in place for the Commissions and asked staff for input.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that there would be some value in terms of Council awareness and the larger background on topics that come forward for Council consideration. He stated that a cautionary aspect could be that some Commissioners may not participate as fully with a Council liaison present, as they may not feel as well educated as a Councilmember on certain City topics. He explained that the Park and Recreation Commission provides input on very specific items and staff does not get into operational budget items.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill agreed that there can be value to having a Council liaison for Boards and Commissions but cautioned that there would have to be a well thought announcement as to the reason for a liaison. He explained that the Commission members can feel that there is a lack of trust from the Council in adding a liaison. He stated that staff liaisons

do a good job of providing the information to the Council and noted that meeting videos and minutes can also be found online for review.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that he believes that it would be important to have a Council liaison, at least for the Parks and Recreation Commission, as it appears there are some robust planning activities coming up. He was unsure that a liaison would be needed for the Planning Commission but would not be against that activity.

Councilmember Riley stated that he would support liaisons for those two Commissions. He noted that as a member of the EDA, he does provide a summary of the discussion for items that come forward from the EDA to the Council. He cautioned liaisons from taking too active of a role on the Commissions as that could discourage active discussion and decision from the Commission members.

Councilmember Menth asked if the liaisons would be voting members or non-voting members.

Administrative Services Director Lasher confirmed that the liaisons are not voting members.

Councilmember Heinrich agreed that she sees value in having a Councilmember present to listen and bring forward updates to the Council. She agreed that liaisons should be present to listen and perhaps add input on some items but not to guide the discussion.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that when she moved into the position of liaison for the EPB she was told that her role was to add statements that could help to encourage additional discussion from the Board. She stated that she finds her role helpful and has found that her statements have sometimes added discussion and provided a different point of view for the Board to discuss. She stated that this is another way for the Council to be a part of the Boards and Commissions and encourage open discussion. She referenced a specific Ordinance related to Boards and Commissions, which states that the members serve without compensation. She asked if that information is up to date.

City Administrator Ulrich explained that there is no compensation, but the City provides a stipend to the members of Boards and Commissions. He confirmed that the language is up to date.

Administrative Services Director Lasher stated that the stipend is not considered compensation. She explained that the intent would be for that \$25 stipend to cover the cost of a babysitter or another service that would be necessary for members to attend the meeting. She noted that Board/Commission members can choose to waive the stipend.

Councilmember Heinrich asked if there is a way the language could be clarified. She stated that if Councilmember Musgrove found the language confusing, a resident could find that language confusing as well.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that a stipend could be used for other expenses outside of babysitting. He explained that the stipend was determined by Council resolution for any incidental expenses that may occur as a result of a member of a Board or Commission attending a meeting.

Administrative Services Director Lasher confirmed that the stipend was developed to cover expenses that may occur for someone to attend the meeting, such as babysitting, gasoline, or any other expense of that nature. She reviewed the definition of stipend.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that staff can review the stipend language with legal counsel and report back to Council.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that her intent was not to take away that stipend from the Boards and Commissions but rather if the language should be clarified.

Councilmember Musgrove thanked Councilmember Menth, who will be stepping up as the liaison for the EPB as she was having difficulty making the 6:30 p.m. start time.

Councilmember Menth noted that he has six appointments and asked if any other Councilmembers would like to take any of those appointments.

Councilmember Specht stated that he would be interested in serving on the Highway 10 Committee if any of those members would like a break. He stated that he would serve as the liaison to Youth First.

Councilmember Heinrich stated that she enjoys serving on the Highway 10 Committee and would like to continue her position.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that he would like to remove Item 19, Resolution #20-013, from the Consent Agenda on tonight's regular meeting agenda for additional discussion.

Mayor LeTourneau confirmed the consensus of the Council to have liaisons to the Park and Planning Commissions.

## **2.02: Fire Service Joint Powers Agreement Update**

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember Kuzma asked if Ramsey currently receives \$6,400 per year in addition to truck fees.

City Administrator Ulrich explained that Ramsey is supposed to receive \$6,400 in administrative fees but after the truck fees are calculated Ramsey ultimately pays Nowthen \$4,800 per year.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that it sounds like Nowthen has moved forward with a proposal to terminate the contract in one year, paying Ramsey \$6,400 and waiving the truck fees for that one-year period.

City Administrator Ulrich confirmed that is the proposal on the table, but Nowthen is considering a proposal tonight that would slightly increase the administrative fees to Ramsey. He confirmed that the contract would be terminated after that one-year period. He noted that Ramsey also would have the ability to charge Nowthen the direct training fees, which have not been recovered in the past.

Mayor LeTourneau asked the recommendation of the Fire Board.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that they ran short of time and were unable to reach a conclusion. He believed that discussions needed to continue with the Fire Board and Nowthen. He asked if the Council would agree to the one-year term and agree to let the Fire Board negotiate the payment for that period.

Councilmember Specht asked if there is an informal partnership that could occur between the cities in terms of a large fire incident that could occur after that one-year period.

City Administrator Ulrich explained that all the cities have a mutual aid agreement for large structural fires and therefore the cities would continue to assist in those circumstances.

Councilmember Heinrich asked for input in the situation that the Fire Board deadlocks, as the membership is composed of two members from each city.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that the Joint Powers Agreement allows a fifth member to come, in the case of a deadlock related to fees. He stated that the fifth member would be the President of the Joint Fire Protection Council for Anoka County and in the case of a deadlock would listen to the information and make the final decision.

Councilmember Menth stated that he does not see a reason for Nowthen to negotiate the amount paid to Ramsey higher if the contract is going to terminate in 12 months. He stated that there does not appear to be any leverage for Ramsey to negotiate for a higher amount.

Councilmember Riley stated that he is inclined to agree to the one-year period and just be done with the contract after that time. He commented that he would support charging any additional costs that would be available to be passed to Nowthen through the contract.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that he would also agree to follow the quickest and easiest path. He stated that it appears that Nowthen is taking the lead and willing to create their own Fire Department and therefore would support a quick and simple process that allows both cities to get to that point.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that while he is happy that Nowthen is willing to separate, he believes Ramsey should still attempt to negotiate for additional funds. He commented that \$8,400 is still a long way from \$82,000.

Councilmember Heinrich stated that she respects the President of the Joint Fire Protection Council for Anoka County and therefore sees value in looping him in as the fifth member and seeing where that may lead. She acknowledged that it is another step but noted that she would value that input in this process.

Councilmember Musgrove asked the amount of the payment Ramsey received the previous year from Nowthen.

Fire Chief Kohner replied that Ramsey received \$8,048. He stated that the contract amount specifies \$6,460 and the additional was an agreed upon administrative increase.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that Nowthen was also willing to contribute to the Fire Relief Association and asked for additional details.

Fire Chief Kohner explained the purpose of the Fire Relief Association and its related fund. He explained that Nowthen would be willing to match the contribution from Ramsey to the Fire Relief Association. He noted that would not serve a benefit to Ramsey, as that is used for COLA increases and Nowthen would be funding the contributions for their firefighters.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that she is disappointed that this is the situation that has been created. She stated that Nowthen is now dragging its feet and does not want to be a player or pay its fair share. She stated that she would then be leaning towards just accepting the one-year agreement and moving on.

Councilmember Menth asked for additional information, as he believed that Ramsey initiated the two-year termination period that followed the set amount within the contract.

City Administrator Ulrich explained that the Fire Board can set the rate for that period, which is the action currently being discussed by the Board.

Mayor LeTourneau expressed appreciation for the members of the Council that serve on the Fire Board. He stated that he has a high level of trust that those Councilmembers are serving the community well and will make an informed decision on behalf of Ramsey. He confirmed the consensus of the Council.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that the chargeback amounts for the training and other items specified under the current contract would have an estimated cost of \$20,000 or \$25,000 in addition to the administrative fee that would be collected and Nowthen waiving the truck fees.

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

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

City Administrator Ulrich stated that the House Transportation Committee will be in Ramsey for lunch as they tour sites around the metro area. He stated that he, Deputy City Administrator

Gladhill, Mr. Tinklenberg, and Councilmember Heinrich will greet the Committee in Ramsey. He reviewed the future topics calendar.

Councilmember Riley stated that he would like to have a future discussion related to apartment buildings and The COR.

Councilmember Heinrich suggested another topic that could possibly be combined with that topic.

City Administrator Ulrich agreed those topics would fit well for a joint meeting with the Planning Commission.

Councilmember Musgrove referenced the local road funding discussions, noting that the topic has been kicked down the road for some time. She asked if there is a timeframe identified that would allow for sufficient planning.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that if the City decides to go back to the five-year bonding program that would need to be in place prior to September when the levy is preliminarily approved. He stated that if a ballot referendum were going to be pursued, that would have a different timeline. He stated that if a franchise fee were decided upon, that could be enacted within a 60 to 90-day timeline. He agreed that if road projects are going to be completed in 2021, a decision would need to be made in the first half of 2020.

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

No comments.

#### **5. ADJOURNMENT**

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 6:49 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.*