

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, July 21, 2020, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

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

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich
John Nelson Utilities Supervisor
Public Works Superintendent Grant Riemer
Deputy City Administrator Timothy Gladhill
City Engineer Bruce Westby

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor LeTourneau called the City Council Work Session to order at 5:50 p.m.

2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

2.01: Review Draft Feasibility Study for Centralized Water Treatment Facility

Chris Larson, Water Treatment Manager with SEH, introduced himself and thanked the Council for the ability to work on the project. He reviewed details of the existing infrastructure of the City's water supply and the current treatment that is provided. He explained how the modeling was developed in order to make future projections.

Mayor LeTourneau commented that he is a bit concerned that two of the wells on the east side of the city are potentially not a part of this and asked how they would plan for that.

Mr. Larson replied that those could be left as backups and would not be capped. He stated that the City has already decided not to use one of those wells and therefore it would only be one additional that would not be used in this model. He reviewed the distribution model with the existing demands and provided details on the different PSI levels and provided similar information for the projected needs in 2040. He moved to the issue of water quality noting that manganese is the overriding factor in this instance. He reviewed the Department of Health guidelines for manganese and stated that out of the eight production wells, four of the seven remaining wells have manganese levels of .2 to .4. He stated that the other wells have ranges between .02 and .05.

Mayor LeTourneau commented that the City has continued to monitor manganese and the rates have remained consistent and have not continued to increase. He stated that this is a driving issue around this effort and the City is bumping up against challenges on the mixing side but has been able to maintain the standards and demand.

Utilities Supervisor Nelson provided details on the mixing that is done and the order in which the City wells are brought online during high demand use times.

Councilmember Musgrove asked the dates the information was collected, specifically whether it was the first quarter of the year or from last year.

Mr. Larson commented that these numbers are coming right from the well where it comes out of the ground. He was unsure of the date the data was collected but noted that the numbers do not tend to fluctuate.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that she would assume then that the numbers are not going up or down.

City Engineer Westby stated that this issue first came forward in spring of 2019 and therefore the data could be a little over one year old.

Mayor LeTourneau commented that he recognizes that the Council had been given results at a certain amount of time and asked if the wells continue to be tested individually or whether the mix is tested.

Utilities Supervisor Nelson replied that the mix is tested. He stated that he takes 15 samples each month, noting that he has focused on businesses throughout the community due to COVID.

Mayor LeTourneau commented that it would seem that provides an average, or mean, and if the numbers jump up, samples could be taken from individual wells.

Utilities Supervisor Nelson stated that they have found that the samples tend to be close to the original level. He noted that readings from 1985 have been close to the readings in 2019 and have not been found to change much over time.

Councilmember Menth stated that Ramsey has been testing for manganese for a long time then and asked if the Department of Health changed the rules during that time.

Mr. Larson confirmed that the Department of Health issued an advisory several years ago, but it takes some time for the Department of Health to get around to reviewing each municipality and issuing notices. He confirmed that the manganese level for Ramsey has remained consistent over those years but was recently triggered by the Department of Health. He stated that through the mixing the City does, 98 percent of the time Ramsey is under the range.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that Ramsey is at a place where it now needs to fall within the guidelines.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that it appears that the City's mix tested above the guided range and asked if an alert needs to go out related to that.

Mr. Larson explained that it is an advisory but there would not need to be a warning that the water should not be drank.

Utilities Supervisor Nelson replied that the mapping of the manganese testing is posted on the City website and shared with the Department of Health.

Mr. Larson stated that another constituent that causes complaints is iron and reviewed the ranges the City falls under. He noted that most cities that fall under the range Ramsey does would consider removing the iron. He stated that the other issue would be hardness and reviewed the range of Ramsey. He stated that residents have an option to have a home softener to resolve the issue of hardness. He reviewed unregulated contaminates and how those items could be regulated in the future, noting that most of those are manmade and would not be a concern for Ramsey.

Councilmember Menth referenced the scrapyard in Anoka, with close proximity to Ramsey, and asked if the water flow from that area goes towards Ramsey.

Mr. Larson stated that would most likely flow to the river. He stated that the bigger concern for Ramsey would be the landfill site but noted that there are typically barriers in place to prevent that from entering the groundwater. He noted that his report has more details on groundwater and sensitivity from surface pollution. He provided details on the current water demand, noting that is an average throughout the year.

Utilities Supervisor Nelson provided the record high demand the City has seen on one given day.

Mr. Larson stated that information was used to develop the projection for 2040 and reviewed those projections. He reviewed the additional infrastructure that would be needed for wells if a water treatment plant were developed. He provided details on the aquifers that are available to the City and the different requirements related to use of those aquifers. He stated that they think that there is sufficient groundwater in Ramsey to install future wells, based on the modeling, and to supply drinking water.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if this information places the City in a good position to request additional wells.

Mr. Larson commented that he does not see why the DNR would not grant Ramsey additional appropriations. He stated that by 2040 the City would need three additional wells to support the projected capacity and reviewed potential locations for those wells. He confirmed that the potential locations are not listed in a priority order and explained it would be a matter of opportunity and convenience. He stated that one method to remove the iron and manganese would be to treat the water, noting that most common treatment would be a sand filter. He stated that in order to remove the hardness, softening would need to occur. He stated that they did not spend much time on softening because of the cost. He stated that they did some pilot testing using a sand filter and were able to remove the manganese and iron through that method.

Councilmember Menth asked for details on the sand filter.

Mr. Larson provided a brief summary of how the sand filter works. He noted that the building size itself would be fairly significant. He provided additional details on water treatment plant options.

Mayor LeTourneau shared comments from Andover staff related to a water treatment plant option that is more expensive on the front end but provides a definite time and cost savings after that.

Councilmember Musgrove asked the staff that would be needed to manage a water treatment plant.

Mr. Larson stated that he is unsure on the exact demands but commented that the process is fairly automated and would not require a huge staffing demand. He identified a potential location for a water treatment plant near the fire station.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that she would prefer function over architecture in terms of design and project cost.

Mr. Larson reviewed the estimated costs between the two different treatment plant options including lifecycle costs. He also provided information related to the impact on water rates that a water treatment plant could have, noting that the City has most of the funds set aside already and should be commended for that.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that this presentation included great information.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that in the future she would like to hear input from public works staff on the different options.

City Administrator Ulrich asked if the remaining Councilmembers that were not able to attend tours would be interested in attending a tour.

Mr. Larson confirmed that an additional tour could occur at Andover for those interested.

3. ADJOURNMENT

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kurtis G. Ulrich
City Administrator

ATTEST:

Katie M. Schmidt
Administrative Assistant

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.