

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, November 10, 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
Finance Director Diana Lund
Fire Chief Matt Kohner
Police Chief Jeff Katers
Public Works Superintendent Grant Riemer
Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood
Deputy City Administrator Timothy Gladhill
City Engineer Bruce Westby

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor LeTourneau called the City Council Work Session to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

2.01: Discuss Resolution #20-225 for New Curbside Recycling Contract with ACE Solid Waste, Inc.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that he thinks the flat fee over the five years would be the best option.

Councilmember Musgrove appreciated the new information in the case including the comparison information and the new proposal from ACE with a flat rate. She stated that she would not want to see the industry standard changes be a detriment to ACE. She asked if the flat rate could be done for three years with a potential increase in the last two years if there are changes in the recycling market.

Randy Triplett, ACE Solid Waste, stated that many of the cities have a processing fee clause that can trigger the rate to increase to cover any changes in processing rates for the year. He stated that ACE has processing contracts and are comfortable with the flat rate fee proposal they submitted.

Councilmember Riley stated that he also likes the fixed rate fee structure for five years.

Councilmember Specht asked for input on a three-year contract versus a five-year contract.

Mr. Triplett replied that historically they have held five-year contracts with the City which assists their business in planning for capital needs during that period.

Councilmember Menth stated that he also supports the five-year flat rate proposal.

The consensus of the Council was to support the five-year contract at a fixed rate with ACE Solid Waste. It was noted that the contract will come forward to the City Council at its next regular meeting for formal approval.

2.02: Review 2021-2030 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

Finance Director Lund reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember Riley agreed that with the savings available, the public works facility should be bonded for. He asked and received confirmation that staff would recommend not bonding for the water treatment center as there are internal funds available. He asked if this also includes the five percent increase suggested.

Finance Director Lund replied that the increase would be 2.5 percent.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the City would bond at the lower rate for the public works facility project because the bonding interest rate is lower than the internal loan interest rate.

Finance Director Lund provided additional explanation on the bonding which resulted in the internal loan not being necessary.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the increase in rates for the water treatment center would be based on projected rates that have not yet been approved.

Finance Director Lund provided background information on the water study completed in the past which estimated that an increase of 2.5 percent each year would allow the City to fund a water treatment center in the future. She stated that the sewer fund would also contribute funds for the project.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the final number would be impacted if the 2.5 percent increase is not approved for the next year.

Finance Director Lund confirmed that would have an impact. She stated that has been the increase each year in order to fund the future improvements that would be necessary to continue to support the City projects. She stated that at the regular meeting there is a zero percent increase proposed for the sewer fund. She noted that the proposed fee schedule will include the 2.5 percent increase for the water fund along with the recycling charge negotiated during the last case.

Councilmember Specht asked if staff could provide him with a calendar of when these annual reviews and discussions take place, as that could help him better prepare in the future.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that a budget calendar is adopted in January of each year and includes those dates.

Finance Director Lund highlighted the upcoming dates related to the budget.

Councilmember Specht referenced the inclusion of the community center and asked if that is a project supported by the Council or whether it should be removed from the CIP.

City Administrator Ulrich commented that there is a question on the citizen survey related to that item and perhaps that feedback should be gained, along with the input of the Councilmembers that will join the Council in January prior to that discussion.

Mayor LeTourneau commented that the item has remained on the list as it is a desired amenity of some of the residents and therefore has been left on as a placeholder.

Councilmember Musgrove asked for input from public safety and public works related to vehicle replacement and how that timing is determined.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer commented that vehicle replacement is slotted for certain years but that does not mean the replacement will occur in that year. He explained that he ranks the vehicles based on a point system and therefore just because a vehicle is slated for replacement in a year, does not mean it would need to be replaced in that year.

Mayor LeTourneau explained that this is a planning document, but it is very fluid, and things can be moved around based on needs.

Police Chief Katers commented that public safety has an ideal and optimal schedule for vehicle replacement but reality comes into that as well, noting that some vehicles are in accidents and need replacement and the life of others can sometimes be extended. He stated that they work with their mechanic to get the most life out of the vehicles without increased maintenance costs.

Councilmember Kuzma referenced the fire truck purchase which was originally slated for purchase in one year but was then split between two years. He noted that police vehicles are constantly on the road and therefore wear out much sooner than typical vehicles.

Councilmember Riley referenced some of the park improvements slated for the next year which seem to be additions of maintenance heavy items. He asked if those funds would be better spent

maintaining existing park features rather than adding items that will require additional maintenance.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood replied that staff reviews maintenance obligations when projects are approved. He noted that many of these projects have been planned for years and have been pushed back. He explained how park dedications are planned to be used in connection with developments from which they were generated along with providing a diversity in projects. He stated that the capital maintenance fund is used for maintenance of existing park items while park dedication is used for the addition of new parks and/or park features.

Councilmember Riley asked if the additional land for Central Park would be for field or parking use.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that he would like to add discussion of that in an upcoming Council worksession if time allows.

Councilmember Riley stated that he would be less inclined to support the items that seem labor and maintenance intensive.

Councilmember Musgrove referenced the replacement of a UTV shown for public works to be used by parks for maintenance and asked for additional explanation.

Public Works Superintendent noted that each department has separate equipment, but the funding comes from the equipment fund. He stated that the same fund is used for the purchase of equipment, but the ongoing costs and maintenance are delegated to the appropriate department.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that there is some equipment sharing that occurs for the UTV's even though the primary use would be athletic field maintenance.

Councilmember Musgrove identified some of the park projects planned for 2022 which make that a budget heavy year. She suggested that those projects be better balanced.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that the larger projects require a lot of project development. He noted that the Park and Recreation Commission will make a recommendation later this week on its 10-year capital improvement plan. He explained that the larger projects are often phased or begin with project design and specifications that help to guide the process. He stated that even though the project is shown in a certain year, the expenditures do not often fall in that year and those projects are funded through the parks trust fund, which is mostly funded through development. He stated that it may not be appropriate to carry a large park trust fund balance because there needs to be a balance of the payment of those fees and when they are invested into the community to provide those park elements to the residents.

Councilmember Specht asked if there is an expectation that park trust funds be used for new parks rather than improvement of existing infrastructure.

Finance Director Lund explained that the park trust can only be used for capital improvements and cannot be used for general fund obligations.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood explained that the intent of those funds is that they be used for new capital improvements. He noted that the capital maintenance fund is used for maintenance of existing park elements.

Councilmember Specht stated that if additional parks and/or features can be maintained.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood confirmed that staff plans to ensure that the pace does not exceed the ability to maintain. He noted that the increased tax base should generate the funds needed to maintain and provide services to the increasing number of residents.

Councilmember Riley referenced well construction and pumphouse five and asked if that still fits within the scope of the City.

Finance Director Lund replied that \$50,000 was shown in 2021 and the remainder in 2025. She stated that the funds allocated in 2021 were designated for a study to determine if that is an appropriate site.

City Engineer Westby confirmed that planning aligns with the study.

Councilmember Musgrove asked for details on the Riversbend shelter replacement.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood confirmed that the roof was replaced on the north shelter along with refurbishing the remainder of the shelter. He stated that the south shelter was donated around 1989 or 1990 and looks similar to a hay shelter. He commented that there is not a way to improve that shelter and therefore it has been recommended to replace that shelter.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that she would like additional time to review and discuss this topic.

Finance Director Lund reviewed the available time at which this could come back as a worksession prior to the required public hearing.

Councilmember Kuzma commented that the items included in the CIP are shown for planning purposes and this is a fluid document. He noted that each individual project would need to come before the Council for consideration.

It was the consensus of the Council that this topic will come back to the Council worksession on November 24th and will appear on the consent agenda at that regular meeting to call for a public hearing on December 8th.

3. TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

3.01: Review Future Topics/ Calendar

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the future topics calendar and topics for upcoming worksessions. He also provided an update on the fire services agreement with Nowthen, noting that Nowthen appears to be moving at a quicker pace than estimated and therefore there is a possibility that the agreement could be dissolved sooner than anticipated.

Fire Chief Kohner noted that within the next month additional details should be known on when the contract could be terminated but agreed that it is anticipated to occur sooner than originally believed.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that staff will provide a survey to the Councilmembers and Council-elect related to communication.

4. MAYOR / COUNCIL / STAFF INPUT

None.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kurtis G. Ulrich
City Administrator

ATTEST:

Katie M. Schmidt
Administrative Assistant

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.