

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Special Work Session on Tuesday, February 16, 2021, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor Mark Kuzma
Councilmember Chelsee Howell
Councilmember Debra Musgrove
Councilmember Chris Riley
Councilmember Dan Specht
Councilmember Matt Woestehoff

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
Communications and Events Coordinator Megan Thorstad
Councilmember Elect Ryan Heineman
Planning Commission Chairperson Randy Bauer
Planning Commissioner Gary VanScoy
Planning Commissioner Bruce Anderson

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kuzma called the City Council Work Session to order at 6:15 p.m.

Councilmember Musgrove expressed concern with beginning the meeting early.

Mayor Kuzma confirmed that the meeting was noticed for a 6:15 p.m. start.

Councilmember Musgrove provided input on the process noting that perhaps it is understood that the information in the case was reviewed prior to the meeting with the meeting time more focused on discussion in order to allow the Council to move through topics more quickly.

2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

2.01: Discussion Regarding Duty Officer On-Call Pay

Administrative Services Director Lasher reviewed the staff report.

Fire Chief Kohner stated that the case provides a great explanation on the value of the duty officer. He noted that this responsibility has been in place for ten years, but times have changed, and other cities are paying, therefore it is important and the right thing to do to compensate those that are waiting at home for the pager to go off. He stated that there is a big value to having an officer that can respond from their home.

Councilmember Riley asked if people volunteer to be the duty officer.

Fire Chief Kohner replied that they are not volunteers but a group of officers that are designated as duty on-call. He stated that there are seven officers that choose different weeks of availability to be on-call.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that she appreciates the restructuring that occurred for the duty officer wages, which resulted in a savings for the City. She asked for more detail on the readiness for the on-call position, specifically whether they are just waiting at home.

Fire Chief Kohner stated that during the specific timeframe they have to be at home and ready to respond to any calls, should the pager go off.

Councilmember Musgrove asked for input on the two options for pay.

Fire Chief Kohner explained that these were examples from neighboring cities. He stated that although the purpose of a duty officer is the same, the hours could be slightly different. He stated that Ramsey would be paying two hours per day, which would equate to 14 hours per week whereas Andover pays 24 hours in one week. He confirmed that officers would still receive compensation when responding to a call.

Councilmember Musgrove referenced the comments that these funds would come from the 2021 budget and asked for further details on how this could have been included in the budget.

Administrative Services Director Lasher stated that the funding listed within the case is the amount that would be required based on the current employee hourly wages and hours staffed. She stated that this has been on the to do list for staff for multiple years and therefore believed that the dollars were built into the budget in anticipation of this action and therefore this would not cause wages to go over budget.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that she would want to know more about how this was budgeted and the funding available.

Mayor Kuzma stated that the question would be whether duty officers are compensated for taking time out of their lives to commit to an on-call shift. He stated that other cities are paying their duty officers and therefore it would be fair to compensate these employees.

Fire Chief Kohner stated that although the pay structure is different, this would mirror the on-call public works staff compensation.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if firefighters received a cost of living increase each year.

Fire Chief Kohner stated that the pay scale was restructured last year and provided additional details. He noted that officers can increase their wages through years of service and additional training initiatives.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that she would want to ensure that the City is competitive in its wages for firefighters.

Fire Chief Kohner stated that Ramsey is probably a little lower than neighboring communities.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that she would like to see additional budget information as to the available funds.

Fire Chief Kohner stated that he makes his best guess on what the on-call pay will be for a year but that varies based on the number of calls.

City Administrator Ulrich recognized the desire to have additional information, noting that staff can bring that information forward in the formal Council case to consider this item on a regular Council agenda.

Mayor Kuzma confirmed the consensus of the Council to bring this forward for formal consideration.

Councilmember Riley asked if there are other policy decisions that have been built into the budget.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that he is unsure and is not sure this was built in as a policy, or whether it simply fell within the on-call budget for the year. He confirmed that he could bring that information back to the Council.

2.04: Review Current Multifamily Housing Policies and Receive Update on Current Requests for Interest by Multifamily Housing Developers

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill noted that there were requests from members of the Planning Commission to move up cases 2.04 and 2.03 because of time constraints and confirmed the consensus of the Council to move this case up to this position with case 2.03 to follow.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill reviewed the staff report.

Mayor Kuzma commented that there are 552 businesses in Ramsey that employ over 7,000 people. He noted that not all of those employees are able to afford \$500,000 homes and typically begin in apartment living and move through different housing levels during their lives. He commented that Ramsey needs to provide housing options for all of its residents. He stated that he was approached by a business that would like to locate in Ramsey offering assisted living to seniors, which would provide jobs as well. He stated that he does not want Ramsey to have the reputation of not being open to options and at least consider projects developers bring forward.