

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, June 8, 2021, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

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

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich
Finance Director Diana Lund
Police Chief Jeff Katers
Public Works Superintendent Grant Riemer
Administrative Services Director Colleen Lasher
Deputy City Administrator Timothy Gladhill
City Engineer Bruce Westby
Senior Planner Chloe McGuire Brigl
Economic Development Manager Sean Sullivan
Mark Lenz, North Risk Partners

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kuzma called the City Council Work Session to order at 5:32 p.m.

2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

2.01: Liability Coverage Update

Finance Director Lund reviewed the staff report.

Mark Lenz provided additional details related to liability coverage noting that many recent claims to municipalities have been in excess of the tort limits and if a case proceeds to federal courts there are no limits. He commented that each community has a different budget and therefore related risk comfort.

Mayor Kuzma commented that development and redevelopment cases would go through a federal court jurisdiction. He noted that a resident would not typically have the funds to take a municipality to court, but a developer could have the means to pursue litigation. He provided examples of recent cases between developers and municipalities.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if cyber liability is also included.

Mr. Lenz replied that cyber liability is separate and provided details on the coverage for that as well as data breach coverage.

Mayor Kuzma asked for details on the different options.

Mr. Lenz reviewed the different coverage options.

Councilmember Heineman asked if the City currently has \$2,000,000 in coverage and an additional \$1,000,000 would have a cost of \$28,000.

Mr. Lenz confirmed that to be true.

Councilmember Riley asked if it could be said that the higher the liability limits, the higher a settlement could most likely be.

Mr. Lenz replied that he would be unsure as he does not have the type of background needed to provide that type of opinion.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the premium would be monthly or annually.

Mr. Lenz replied that would be an annual premium. He noted that would be the amount as of today and the premium cost could vary dependent on the conditions.

Mayor Kuzma asked if other municipalities are purchasing additional insurance coverage.

Mr. Lenz replied that about 20 to 25 percent of entities choose to purchase extra coverage. He stated that for a small community with a police department he would suggest additional coverage. He noted that Ramsey falls in the middle, whereas Minneapolis can write the check.

Councilmember Heineman asked if the amount paid by Minneapolis to the Floyd family is impacting the decision of other metro communities to purchase additional coverage.

Mr. Lenz stated that this discussion is occurring in other communities but is unsure of whether they have made the decision to purchase additional coverage.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the City Attorney could provide feedback related to the question from Councilmember Riley as to whether higher coverage would most likely result in higher settlement amounts.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that he could follow up with the League of Minnesota Cities in attempt to gather that information.

Councilmember Heineman asked for input from the Police Chief as to whether there has been discussion on this topic among other departments.

Police Chief Katers commented that he has not talked specifically with his colleagues about risk management and increasing premiums. He stated that there has been one claim against the police department before he became Chief, at a nominal amount of perhaps \$7,500. He stated that he will again submit a request for body cameras in the budget discussion as his officers want to have body cameras. He noted that he is attempting to find available funding assistance. He noted that the officers do great work, and he would want the body cameras available as another tool of protection.

Finance Director Lund noted that staff brought this forward to provide a clearer picture of what is available ahead of the upcoming budget discussions.

Mayor Kuzma asked if it would be possible that the League of Minnesota Cities would reduce the amount of available coverage a municipality could purchase.

Mr. Lenz replied that there would be additional coverage options, the difference would be the cost for the service.

2.02: Discussion Regarding the Pending Deputy City Administrator/Community Development Director Vacancy and the Process to Fill the Position

Administrative Services Director Lasher reviewed the staff report.

City Administrator Ulrich asked for input from the Council on the process recommended by staff.

Councilmember Riley stated that he would support the internal search. He asked how all corners of the area would be reached for the search. He commented that there are two distinct titles in the current job and while Deputy City Administrator Gladhill is suited to complete both of those jobs, he would be concerned that not all candidates could do such.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that he would also share that concern. He would advise the City to be flexible in terms of the skills that would be appropriate for the position. He noted that the position was setup to be his successor and would encourage that to continue to be a goal for the position. He stated that there is very talented support staff in the division directors of that department and therefore he would hope to find a very good manager that would bring some economic development and planning skills to the table but recognized it would most likely not be of the same caliber of Deputy City Administrator Gladhill. He stated that the intention would be for the position to help to build and grow the talented staff already in place within that department.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill commented that there are not as many candidates available for community development and therefore would recommend the expanded search.

Councilmember Specht commented that it would make sense to try to fill the position of Community Development Director at this time and perhaps it could be seen in the future as to who could best grow into the Deputy City Administrator position.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that she would agree that the City should look towards the Community Development Director role first and the decision could be made at a later date as to who would be the best fit for the Deputy City Administrator position. She was unsure that they would find a candidate that would fit both roles.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if there would be potential to post both positions as separate openings and then finding the best fit out of those candidates.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that it would be unusual to market in that way and would most likely result in confusion for this small market area. He stated that if the City does not intend to hire both positions, he would not recommend that path.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that perhaps the City is at a position where both positions are needed separately.

City Administrator Ulrich commented that ultimately the City may get to that point and that would be a future decision the Council would need to make. He commented on the high level of interaction with the Council for this position and noted that there are certain skills that are helpful and that can be seen during interviews.

Administrative Services Director Lasher provided input on the pay scale noting that she would not recommend changing the pay scale in an attempt to solicit the highest number of candidates.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the person coming in would be on salary or on a stepped system.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied that the position has steps one through six but commented that it would be highly unlikely that a qualified candidate could be found below steps five or even six. She noted that the full pay scale is listed with the job posting and the final offer would be part of the negotiation process.

Councilmember Howell asked the number of hours that would be needed to recruit for this position using staff and the internal process.

Administrative Services Director Lasher commented that she is unsure of the exact time but noted that using an outside firm would perhaps save her five hours per week at most.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that there was a process within the case for the Council to consider. She stated that the proposed process seems to use a bottom-up review system and would suggest more of a top-down process with more Council involvement.

Administrative Services Director Lasher reviewed the interview policy set in 2013 which states that members of the Council would be a part of the interview process.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that perhaps the resolution enacting that policy should be repealed in order to have more Council involvement rather than having direction provided to the Council from those under the Council on the organizational chart.

Mayor Kuzma stated that he would not support that action. He stated that he does not consider the Council as experts in running the City, whereas there are employees that are educated and paid to do those jobs. He stated that in the time he has been with the City, staff has done a good job of sorting through the candidates to present the most qualified to the Council. He commented that he would not be in favor of micromanaging that process.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill commented that one or two members of the Council could be involved in the earlier interview boards but noted that he would not encourage large interview panels for the first rounds of interviews.

Councilmember Howell stated that she would agree with Councilmember Musgrove that this is one of the responsibilities of the Council.

Mayor Kuzma commented that while the Council makes the ultimate decisions on cases presented, the actual day to day operations of the City fall to City staff and did not believe the Council should micromanage that work.

Councilmember Specht commented that for the School Board, there were a few members of the Board as part of the interview panel along with staff members. He suggested having a few members of the Council involved in the earlier rounds of interviews as mentioned by Deputy City Administrator Gladhill.

Councilmember Heineman agreed that the Council would not want to micromanage but believed it would be a good compromise to have a few members of the Council involved in the first rounds of interviews.

Councilmember Riley asked if adding two Councilmembers would be appropriate.

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the members that are typically involved in the different interview rounds.

Councilmember Howell stated that she would not support including a developer or business owner as it would seem biased as to whom is selected to represent that market.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that she would feel two or three Councilmembers would be sufficient for the first round of interviews, but most likely three members. She stated that she also wonders why business owners or developers would be included and how they would be selected.

Mayor Kuzma asked for details on the past practice.

Administrative Services Director Lasher stated that the most recent recruitment process would have been for the Fire Chief. She noted that position is not involved in economic development and therefore no members of the business community were involved but the Fire Chief from Elk River did participate. She stated that prior to that would have been recruitment for the City Engineer and did not believe anyone from the community was involved in that interview process.

Councilmember Heineman stated that he also agrees that including three Councilmembers would make sense for the first round of interviews. He also agreed that business or development members should not be included as they could provide a bias opinion.

Councilmember Specht stated that if that type of input is desired, perhaps the invitation be provided to that community in a Zoom format with staff taking notes on the concerns and questions that may come forward from that portion of the community. He agreed that those members should not be involved in the interview process.

City Administrator Ulrich asked for input on whether members of the Planning Commission and EDA should be included in the interview panel.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that she would prefer to have the department heads involved rather than members of the Boards or Commissions. She stated that if Commission members are involved, she would want three in order to break a tie opinion.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that he believes the Planning Commission should have some input because this position would be involved in community development. He suggested using the Chair and Vice Chair. He commented that having Councilmembers in the initial interview process would be valid. He stated that in his experience he has hired about 300 people and typically the CEO is not involved in every round of interviews or hiring. He stated that while it is nice to have early involvement, that a top-down process is not common in the business world. He stated that if opinions from the business community are sought, it should be an open meeting. He referenced the statement that the opinion could be biased but noted that some people are chosen for the EDA simply because they are business owners in Ramsey. He stated that he believes the process should be outlined and begin quickly in order to hire someone as soon as possible, as the tentative schedule outlines October to possibly bring someone on board.

Administrative Services Director Lasher estimated that 25 to 50 qualified applicants would be received.

Councilmember Heineman commented that if someone were appointed to the EDA strictly because they are a business owner would have been the wrong decision. He stated that while the CEO would not interview every position, they would interview the Vice President and therefore believes the Council should be involved.

Councilmember Howell agreed with the comments of Councilmember Heineman. She stated that her goal is not to micromanage, but believes it is important for the Council to be involved.

It was the consensus of the Council to recruit for this position using the City staff for that process and to include three members of the Council in the first round of interviews and no business owners or developers should be included.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that staff will amend the process using the comments of the Council and would begin to advertise the position.

Administrative Services Director Lasher confirmed the consensus of the Council to post the job within the next 24 to 48 hours. She reviewed how the posting would be advertised.

2.03: Review 2020 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, Management Report and Special Purpose Audit Reports

Finance Director Lund reviewed the staff report and introduced Aaron Nielsen of MMKR.

Aaron Nielsen, MMKR, highlighted the different reports that were completed as a part of this process. He reported a clean or unmodified opinion on the financial statements. He noted that there were no findings related to internal controls, governmental or legal compliance. He provided a summary of the governmental funds for the past year along with comparisons to previous years. He also provided more detailed information on the general fund.

Councilmember Heineman asked where the franchise fees would be found.

Finance Director Lund noted that is not included in the general fund but would be included in the governmental fund section of the report.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if it would be appropriate to note with asterisk for the years in which the additional funds were received by the City from the State and Federal government to explain those increases from the CARES Act.

Mr. Nielsen confirmed that could be included. He also provided a brief overview of the enterprise funds.

Councilmember Riley acknowledged the work that goes into this process. He stated that he appreciated that the management report answered any questions he had as he went. He asked if the work was done in person or remotely.

Mr. Nielsen replied that it was a combination of remote and in person work.

Mayor Kuzma asked the length of time Mr. Nielsen has been working with Ramsey.

Mr. Nielsen replied that he himself has probably worked with Ramsey for about 25 years although noted that he has not always been the partner at the firm.

2.04: Review Union Contract Negotiations Schedule and Process

No comments.

2.05: Discussion Regarding Updating the Employee Telecommuting Policy

No comments.

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 6:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kurtis G. Ulrich
City Administrator

ATTEST:

Katie M. Schmidt
Deputy City Clerk

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.