

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, February 8, 2022, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

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

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich
Administrative Services Director Colleen Lasher
Deputy City Administrator/ Community Dev. Director Brian Hagen
City Engineer Bruce Westby

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kuzma called the City Council Work Session to order at 5:31 p.m.

2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

2.01: Discuss the Planning Manager Interview Panel

Administrative Services Director Lasher reviewed the Staff report and opened discussion regarding the vacant Planning Manager position. She explained that the interview process will involve two rounds of interviews which are suggested to be during normal business hours and include non-employee members sit on the panel. She stated first round of interviews are scheduled for Tuesday, March 1, 2022 and Wednesday, March 2, 2022 if needed. Second interviews are scheduled for Wednesday, March 9, 2022. She suggested that the normal method of recruitment be followed. She stated currently there are five applicants and the posting is open until February 21, 2022. Administrative Services Director Lasher stated if all goes as planned, this will be on the Council to be hired on March 22, 2022 with a start date between April 11, 2022 and April 25, 2022 depending on the candidate's timeline. She noted recognition of Senior Planner Chris Anderson for the additional efforts that he is going to have to put in during the timeframe between now and when the person is hired. Staff recommends a 5% extra duty pay for Mr. Anderson, a cost of approximately \$754.28. She asked for input on who Council would like to see sit on the interview panel.

Councilmember Specht commented that he understands this position is time-sensitive as it is an important role, but asked if it made sense to wait until a new City Administrator was hired.

Mayor Kuzma replied he thought it was important to get someone hired as soon as possible because they are already missing the Planning Manager and it would be too much for the Staff.

Councilmember Howell asked about bringing on another Senior Planner with the possibility of moving into a manager position and looking at restructuring once a new City Administrator is hired.

City Administrator Ulrich replied that it is a different applicant pool for the Planning Manager with a higher level of experience which is needed in the planning department.

Councilmember Woestehoff volunteered to be on the interview panel because he is a former Planning Commissioner and is the current liaison.

Councilmember Musgrove asked for Staff's feedback on hiring internally.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied there is not an internal candidate that is interested in the position.

Councilmember Musgrove stated she is supportive of the increase for Mr. Anderson, adding that previously 5% was done with the three other staff members. She asked if that would be sufficient for the role he will be taking on.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied she discussed this as a possibility with Mr. Anderson and he was supportive of taking on the extra responsibilities with a 5% increase in pay. She added that typically, an interim position would be a 10% increase. She stated that in this case it is recommended to do a 5% increase on Mr. Anderson's hourly pay because it will not be a true Interim Planning Manager role. Administrative Services Director Lasher explained that Mr. Anderson will oversee project management with supervisory responsibilities will go to City Administrator/ Community Dev. Director Hagen.

Councilmember Howell suggested that two to three Councilmembers sit on the interview panel along with those who have familiarity with planning.

Administrative Services Director Lasher asked Councilmember Howell if she is suggesting that the two or three Councilmembers be on the panel for the first interview or second interview.

Councilmember Howell replied she meant for the whole process, along with those familiar with planning.

Councilmember Specht replied that he could see how having the Chief on the panel for leadership experience would be nice but also know that he has a lot of daily duties. He asked if having those associated with planning instead of taking people from other roles.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that both Chiefs have a lot of overlap with planning because of code enforcement, and other things. He continued that he imagined that Chief Katers probably a good view of the role. He thought Chief Kohner probably does compliance and Fire Marshal type duties.

Mayor Kuzma asked if there was Council consensus on the 5% increase and two Councilmembers to sit on the panel.

Councilmember Woestehoff replied he would be comfortable doing it alone or having Councilmember Musgrove do it alone from a timing standpoint. He stated that the upcoming case load with the Planning department is coming into a busy season so he would want to stick to the proposed dates.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if it was the intention that the Councilmembers to be in both rounds of interviews and thought there would be value in being in both. She stated she could make the dates work.

Councilmember Woestehoff replied being involved in the second round seems to make sense but wasn't opposed to being at the first round but since this isn't a director role he wasn't sure it was necessary. He stated he also trusts the Staff to get the top five candidates for the second round.

Councilmember Musgrove replied for her it wasn't a matter of trusting Staff but getting a broader perspective of the candidates.

Mayor Kuzma replied if Councilmember Musgrove wanted to be on both panels that would be fine and Councilmember Woestehoff could join for the second round.

Councilmember Musgrove commented it would be valuable to at least be able to listen in.

Councilmember Riley asked about the timing.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied the first interviews would be Tuesday, March 1, 2022 and if needed Wednesday, March 2, 2022 which is probable. The next week for second interviews are Wednesday, March 9, 2022.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if there was a staffing reason to have the second round interviews on a Wednesday.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied Tuesday, March 8, 2022 is a Council meeting day and having interviews during the day and a Council meeting at night it gets to be an intense day. She stated she could make it work if Councilmember Musgrove was only available on that day.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that Chief Kohner is on one day and Chief Katers is on the other day, she thought that was the reason to not be available at certain times.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied when looking at scheduling she spoke to both Chiefs and told them about the proposed day which worked for them. She didn't ask Chief Katers if he would be available on Tuesday, March 8, 2022.

Mayor Kuzma asked if the scheduling could be worked out offline but it was settled who would be on the panel.

Administrative Services Director Lasher asked if Council wanted the Planning Commission Chair to sit in on the interviews or not.

Councilmember Woestehoff thought yes, if he is available.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if his attendance would be to participate as well. Administrative Services Director Lasher confirmed this.

The consensus of the Council was to offer Mr. Anderson a 5% extra duty pay increase with Councilmember Woestehoff and Councilmember Musgrove sitting on the panel and the Planning Commission Chair would be invited.

2.02: Update Regarding the Zoning Code Enforcement Officer Position

Administrative Services Director Lasher reviewed the proposed restructuring of the Community Development Department. She stated a portion of the restructuring, promoting the Zoning Code Enforcement Officer to Planning Manager wasn't able to happen because of a resignation. She stated that Staff recommends filling the vacant Zoning Code Enforcement Officer position instead of City Planner. She continued that retention is a consideration and the focus will be on zoning code enforcement during the day instead of presenting cases at night meetings.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if with that mentality the Zoning Code Enforcement Officer is more a career path that could be police at that point instead of planning and asked if that is the goal.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied that is not the goal but is likely the applicant pool that will be drawn upon.

Councilmember Riley commented that he is glad that retention is being considered because it sounded like it was a terrible job, especially if support wasn't given when needed. He was in favor of giving the support that is needed. He stated it seemed like when cases came to the Council with the plan of what is going to happen unless questions are asked or Council tells them not to, that seemed to be working well, so maybe that would help give support and buy-in if Council is comfortable with that.

The consensus of the Council was to fill the vacant Zoning Code Enforcement Officer position.

2.03: Discuss Intern Wages

Administrative Services Director Lasher stated that the 2022 budget allows for two engineering interns at \$15 an hour for 1,040 hours a year or six months of full-time work, with some benefits. She stated that interns are typically demanding higher wages so Staff is asking for the discretion to offer up to a maximum of \$18 an hour as long as the budget is met.

Councilmember Riley agreed that finding qualified candidates at \$15.00 an hour will be difficult to find given that McDonalds is offering that rate. He asked if an intern could be set at 90% of wage with no benefits could be offered that would keep up with inflation and market rate.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied that is a great point. She questioned which level of Engineering Tech the 90% wage would be set for, that would have to be determined. She stated that is an interesting idea. She asked if Council would be interested in tacking on the COLA because this has been revisited many times. She gave the example that this year Staff received a 3% COLA and if they were able to be factored in for temporary wages it may help with reducing the frequency of these discussions.

Councilmember Specht commented that more information would be needed as he was unfamiliar with the engineering field and details regarding pay. He added that he liked the concept of a percentage of wages but wasn't sure about what percentage.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the interns are designated for, or aspiring to, any of the specific job titles when they come in and if that could be used as a basis for 90% of the wage. She gave the permitting permission as an example. She also asked the age group of the interns.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied when recruiting for interns they require someone who is either pursuing a college degree or a recent graduate. She stated that in either case there are adult learners but typically they are around early 20's.

Councilmember Musgrove stated the point of the question is that if a salary that was offered that would go along with their desired aspect of the field and they are younger, they may already get insurance from their parents and would want a higher wage.

Administrative Services Director replied that this does not cover medical insurance.

Councilmember Specht commented that the wage offered interns should match the amount of input and expectations to avoid animosity from the staff who are full time employees.

City Administrator Ulrich asked if the concept of taking the percentage of paying a starting wage for a two-year technical worker and figured it out so that the amount is around \$18.00 an hour.

The consensus of the Council was to offer around \$18.00 an hour.

2.04: Discuss Board and Commission Interview Process

Administrative Services Director Lasher stated that this was discussed at a prior Work Session, which she was not able to attend. She stated it was her understanding that the recruitment process

was discussed and it was determined that incumbent candidates that are seeking a second term will submit a letter of interest and if there is recommendation from the Chair of the Board, they will not need be asked to appear before the City Council. She asked would be Council still like her to get Chair recommendation for incumbents seeking a third term.

Mayor Kuzma confirmed this.

Administrative Services Director Lasher stated Staff is asking for incumbents who are seeking a second term and is recommended for reappointment by the Chair that the Council would still like to have discussion, it would not be an automatic reappointment.

Mayor Kuzma replied he thought if the Chair is comfortable with the candidate it would not need Council review unless there were issues.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if Staff reviews the recommendation from the Chair. Administrative Services Director Lasher confirmed this. Councilmember Woestehoff stated he agreed that if there area any concerns that it would be discussed by Council.

Councilmember Howell asked if the Chair doesn't recommend reappointment if the candidate would have to go through the application process and interview again.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied this situation happened one time previously and it was awkward to deal with. In that situation the Chair didn't support reappointment, the Council considered the reappointment and declined it.

Mayor Kuzma stated if the Chair doesn't give an endorsement, then it comes back to the Council.

Administrative Services Director Lasher asked for Council direction for someone seeking a fourth or fifth term and if they wanted it to be an odd year term process.

Councilmember Specht replied that his big picture concern is there have been more applicants than positions and wanted to ensure that everyone has a chance. He questioned if term limits were discussed.

Councilmember Heineman replied that he liked the odd term because it gives the Chair the opportunity to reappoint effective candidates but also allows for new candidates.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if all boards and commissions were four years with the exception of the EDA.

Administrative Services Director Lasher confirmed this, adding if it is a full term. The EDA is six years. She stated if a person serves a partial term, that is still considered their first term if Council agrees.

Mayor Kuzma asked if they were looking at a four year term, if they were reappointed they would go to a second four-year term, and if there was a third term that would be an odd. Administrative Services Director Lasher confirmed this.

Councilmember Howell asked if a half-term would be considered one full term.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied if Council was agreeable, that would help her. A first partial would still be the first appointment.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that part of the discussion included an exit questionnaire and asked if there were questions on that.

Administrative Services Director Lasher stated that she could do that with the assistance of the City Attorney because exit interview data is considered confidential. If it is presented in a public meeting it has to be presented in such a way that it is considered aggregate data and not identifiable to a certain person. She stated it could be done carefully if it is helpful but it is going to be a bit of a process.

Councilmember Riley asked how known life changes are the reason for declining reappointment and how that could be handled.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied, from an HR perspective, when they reach out to board and commission members if they are interested in reappointment that is often the reason. She stated if the reason is dissatisfaction, she could do the exit evaluation or suggest they speak to their Councilmember.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that she didn't know that getting feedback is already part of the process. She stated that she wasn't sure how the Council could address issues or concerns unless they are directed to their Councilmember or the Mayor to provide additional feedback and still maintain confidentiality. She stated that she was ok with not having an exit interview and having an additional process for them to reach out to communicate concerns.

Councilmember Howell echoed Councilmember Musgrove's comments but questioned the amount of time that will be required of Staff to be able to present the information to the Council and what value is gained. She stated that directing members to contact the Council if they are unhappy instead of having a set process that will take Staff time.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied that is the most practical and the best way to learn what is on their mind. She pointed out that when a third, fifth, or seventh term incumbent is reappointed they will be given a different set of interview questions that are more conversational. She asked if she understood that correctly the answers would be sent to Council for feedback. Mayor Kuzma confirmed this.

The consensus of the Council was to accept recommendations from the Chair for incumbents seeking reappointment with an odd year term to allow opportunities for new candidates. An informational interview will be conducted with the results sent to Council for feedback. If the

member has concerns and doesn't seek reappointment as a result, Staff is to direct them to contact their Councilmembers.

2.05: Discuss Council Member Compensation

Administrative Services Director Lasher reviewed the Staff report highlighting that the last time Council compensation was adjusted was in 2005. She also stated that the Ramsey City Council ranks 29 out of 31 in terms of being the lowest paid. She stated that an increase is recommended.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if math was done in the COLAs between 2005 and now and what that would equate to if Councilmembers were compensated with the same level of COLA increases as Staff.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied she did not.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that it would be good to keep up with the times. He stated that the Mayor was paid a certain percentage of the current governor's salary, Council was also set on a percentage. He stated then it wouldn't be a set number. He also agreed with COLA increases as well.

Councilmember Howell stated she will not support an increase. She stated that the Council has to find ways to cut little amounts here and there.

Administrative Services Director Lasher commented that Columbia Heights, Fridley and Stillwater offer their Councilmembers benefits, primarily health insurance benefits, and they offer that at the same contribution rate the employees receive. She also found that Fridley offers a waiving benefit of almost \$5,000 a year, there are three cities that are considering that instead of a monthly wage.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that she thought the consensus was not to increase the Council's salary. She asked if this is a new budget year and if that is why it is coming up. She stated that she is concerned that Staff time was spent on this because the consensus was not to increase it. She stated she will not be supporting this either. She stated that as a public representative and elected official they should not be making a lot of money from it and she was happy with the current salary even though it is low.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that the reason it came up is because there is an election coming up, that Council has an opportunity every two years to consider an increase.

Councilmember Specht agreed, adding that even though it hasn't been adjusted since 2005, they are only \$1,000 below average. He stated he wanted to make sure the resident's money was used for the City.

Councilmember Heineman agreed that he isn't interested in an increase either.

The consensus of the Council was to not increase Councilmember wages.

3. TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

3.01: Review Future Topics/ Calendar

City Administrator Ulrich stated that with the next meeting coming up the County elections person will be in to talk about the process for redistricting. The Veteran's Housing Project, which is on the schedule is not coming forward, someone had a proposal but hasn't been heard from since then. The Anoka County Ice Arena issue, determining if some of the City's charitable money from the Gambling Fund was going to go to the Anoka Area Ice Arena per their request so that is coming back for discussion. The Communication's quarterly update is scheduled with a discussion of the website redesign. Megan Thorstad will give an update on the communications. He stated that the Excess Revenue Policy will also be discussed and revisions considered. He stated that is for February 22, 2022 and if Council had other items to add to let him know.

Councilmember Riley commented that he thought a consensus was reached on the Ice Arena. Council agreed.

City Administrator Ulrich stated he could go back and listen to the record, but if the consensus of the Council was no right now, he could just let them know that there is no interest in looking at this again. He stated he can convey that message. He stated they made a subsequent request asking for more money, but if there is not interest in going there, he can convey that message. He stated they contribute so much money, we take 5% as the City Administrative fee, they are asking for all that they contribute back to the Ice Area. He stated he remembered from the last discussion that it was concluded that whatever we have would have to be a policy driven item that originally asked not to collect the 5%. One of the decisions made was no, we can't do that, but we could look at some contribution back to the Ice Arena but couldn't totally forgive not take the 5% if it is being taken from all the other charitable organizations in the City. He thought it was left open that some contribution could be made after the first of the year.

Mayor Kuzma asked for a show of hands for bringing it to discussion.

The consensus of the Council was not to discuss it.

Councilmember Riley asked if the process for finding a new City Administrator was going to be discussed at a future Work Session.

City Administrator Ulrich confirmed this and suggested that it be a topic discussed at a special Work Session on February 15, 2022 because the process should be expedited and decisions made by the Council.

Councilmember Howell expressed support of having it discussed on February 15, 2022 and having it be a separate meeting to make sure there is time to do a thorough job.

The Council agreed.

Councilmember Riley asked if there was anything from the regular meeting agenda that could be moved as it is a long agenda and two weeks ago was very short.

City Administrator Ulrich replied there are a lot of ordinances and adoptions that need to come forward in that process. He stated that a lot of the cases have been discussed in the past so shouldn't need a lot of discussion. Deputy City Administrator/ Community Dev. Director Hagen is presenting them tonight and promised to be brief.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if, in the interest of time, if there would be consensus to move the item 7.1 on Support Housing and Local Decision Making Authority to the consent agenda or if there would be discussion around that.

The Council agreed.

City Administrator Ulrich asked about the Legislative Priorities and if that could go on the consent agenda.

Councilmember Musgrove stated she had a question about specifying one item and asked that it not be moved to the consent agenda.

City Administrator Ulrich stated there was also a request from Councilmember Musgrove to move 5.4 from the consent agenda.

Deputy City Administrator/ Community Dev. Director Hagen offered to give the update now. He stated the Comp Plan Update that was in essence approved by the City Council, however there was a condition to add having the Planning Commission hold an additional public hearing on it. He stated that the Planning Commission did have the public hearing and based on discussion and feedback there was one revision regarding certain criteria for when a project could fall on this new Comp Plan district. There were two sections that were very similar. The Planning Commission recommended combining those two. At this point it is essentially approved and after revisions will be ready to send off to Met Council. The update is that the Planning Commission had the public hearing and a minor revision was made which makes it more difficult for a property to utilize this new tool because the criteria was to meet two of the following and because the two were similar it was easy to check two boxes at the same time.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the case was informative but asked if Deputy City Administrator/ Community Dev. Director Hagen was clarifying that the actual case that was voted on has been changed and the changed one is the one that has gone to the Met Council for review.

Deputy City Administrator// Community Dev. Director Hagen replied the case that was presented at the last Council meeting, that was what was brought forward for the Planning Commission meeting to hold the public hearing on. In conjunction with timing, the case that the Council saw and adopted with conditions has been sent out to neighboring jurisdictions for their feedback. Five jurisdictions of 15 have yet to send their feedback. He stated so far there have been no comments or objections. With the Planning Commission public hearing and that change, once they receive all the neighboring jurisdiction's comments they will send the revised version to the Met Council.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the Council will see that again before it goes out.

Deputy City Administrator/ Community Dev. Director Hagen replied he believed it was attached to the case for the regular meeting this evening.

Councilmember Musgrove replied that she thought the case was presented as information but she didn't understand that what was approved, was changed and is now the official document. She understood the two points were combined into one statement. She thought Council would see it again.

Deputy City Administrator/ Community Dev. Director Hagen apologized stating that the Staff felt the changes were not drastic enough to require a new vote by the Council. He re-read the document and stated that because the two items were so similar that the two item requirements would be met. He stated that the Planning Commission felt that if one criteria was able to be met by a development, they would automatically meet the other as well. He stated that it may limit the number of developments that could seek out this special district.

Councilmember Musgrove replied she understood the concept behind what he is saying but wasn't sure about the Council voting on a document to move forward and it is changed and that is what is moved forward. She didn't know if there were any issues with that.

Mayor Kuzma asked if it was reviewed by the Planning Commission and approved by the Planning Commission.

Deputy City Administrator/ Community Dev. Director Hagen confirmed this and added what is in the case tonight, the updated version is what the Planning Commission recommended.

City Administrator Ulrich commented that it seemed like the question might be if the Council is wanting to accept and approve the changes prior to submitting it to the Met Council and if so, the case should be re-written and brought back to a future Council meeting. He asked if that would fit with the timeline.

Deputy City Administrator/Community Dev. Director Hagen replied it wouldn't change the timeline and if the Council wanted to pull the item tonight the case could be redrafted as an action item.

City Administrator Ulrich suggested that be done. He clarified that item 7.1 is being added to the consent agenda, making it 5.7. He reminded Council that every vote tonight will be a roll call vote.

4. MAYOR / COUNCIL / STAFF INPUT

None.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 6:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kurtis G. Ulrich
City Administrator

ATTEST:

Katie M. Schmidt
Deputy City Clerk

Drafted by Joni Helmeke
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.