

**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 22, 2022, 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
Administrative Services Director Colleen Lasher
Deputy City Administrator/ Community Dev. Director Brian Hagen
City Engineer Bruce Westby
Public Works Superintendent Grant Riemer
IT Manager Jason Frederickson
Communications and Events Coordinator Megan Thorstad
City Attorney Fritz Knaak

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: Update Regarding Redistricting

Anoka County Elections Manager Paul Linnell gave a presentation on redistricting, starting with an overview of the redistricting process at a high level. He then went over the responsibilities for the Council regarding restricting ward and precinct boundaries and establishing polling places for the 2022 cycle. He stated the deadline for cities to redraw boundaries is March 29, 2022 and Anoka County will be sending out a postcard to all registered voters with updated election districts and their polling place locations.

Administrative Services Director Lasher referenced the staff report and asked for confirmation reading “under no circumstances that this must be its own precinct.”

Anoka County Elections Manager Linnell explained that with the Congressional district boundaries, and the State legislative boundaries, a precinct cannot cross that line. Because it is a small portion combining those two with a combined population of 1,300, that is in Congressional

District 3, and needs to be its own precinct. It can be combined with other areas to be a ward boundary, which it will need to be to be balanced with the other three, but as far as precincts, it will need to be its own precinct and will be on the smaller side of registered voters.

Mayor Kuzma asked if there are any restrictions for voting, can they cross the line.

Anoka County Elections Manager Linnell replied there is an allowance of up to a mile outside of that precinct boundary. If there is not a location within the area south of Hwy. 10 or in the small section there, they could go up to a mile out to establish a polling place. He indicated the current polling places on the map and thought there would be at least one polling place that would fit.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked for confirmation that various wards do not need to have the same number of precincts.

Anoka County Elections Manager Linnell confirmed this adding, there is not a requirement to have the same number of precincts within a ward, although currently there are two. He stated in 2012, despite the imbalance, the decision was made to have just that one small precinct in Ward 1 and the much larger one. It could easily be made into three precincts. He stated he knew Coon Rapids, for example, has five wards and varying numbers of precincts within those wards.

Councilmember Specht asked if he understood it correctly, the process is that Staff and Council will come up with suggestions that are voted on to decide how things are done.

Administrative Services Director Lasher asked if Councilmember Specht's question was if the Council and Staff come up with the decision, adopt a resolution and ordinance, and then lets the County know or they need to get the County's okay before passing the resolution and ordinance.

Councilmember Specht replied he was asking for specifics related to the next steps and if they are for the Council to come up with suggestions for what the new wards would look like.

Administrative Services Director Lasher confirmed this, adding that Staff and Council have to come to a decision of how they want to modify the wards. They have to do a new precinct in Ward 3, whether that is called 3-3 and leave 3-2 and 3-1 alone, that would be the Council's decision. The next decision, she thought, was about shifting the line between Councilmember Woestehoff's and Councilmember Heineman's areas. She also raised a concern regarding Ward 2, precinct 2, which is a very large precinct with very poor in and out access with one door into a lower area. She thought the election judges and staff would like it if the people in and out of that polling place was reduced. She suggested adding a third precinct to Ward 2 to distribute the numbers.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if there is another building that could be used in that area.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied she was going to ask the group if they were aware of one because she was not aware of one in that area.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if it has to be within one mile of the precinct boundary.

Administrative Services Director Lasher confirmed this.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if Brookside was currently a polling place.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied Brookside is not a polling place. She thought that polling places in schools could be problematic.

Anoka County Elections Manager Linnell replied there is a clause and statute that allows for the use of school buildings as polling places. He added they must make them available. He stated there have been some conversations with the school districts that, as much as possible, try to not use school buildings, especially elementary school buildings due to increasing security concerns and other questions about access. There are a number of school buildings across the county that are used as polling places so it would be something that could be considered if other options are exhausted.

Councilmember Musgrove referenced the staff reported titled “Suggested Form” and noted that Ward 4 is higher than some of the others but she noticed that off Sunfish, that corner by Casey’s, was not Ward 2. Sunwood and over was Ward 3 so she wasn’t sure if Ward 3 could continue to have the former boundary to balance out the number between Ward 3 and Ward 4.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied that is a decision that would be made by the Council.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if a change doesn’t need to be made would be better for residents.

Councilmember Specht agreed.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented he didn’t think that is where it was but that it was close to that.

Anoka County Elections Manager Linnell stated that the main take away would be about balancing the ward populations and making sure those are as close to even as possible. When looking at where lines are established, that should be that starting point as what is defined as what is equal, practicable, compact and contiguous. If there is a claim that they are not as close to balance, that is where issues can arise, but to balance the wards is the goal so the Councilmembers are representing roughly the same number of residents.

Administrative Services Director Lasher asked if 5% was the margin.

Anoka County Elections Manager Linnell replied with municipal redistricting the statute language says it is as close as practicable but doesn’t reference a specific percent threshold. Within the language, to get closer it would have to be justified if larger variations were found between the ward populations.

Mayor Kuzma asked what the next steps are for determining that.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied an email was sent from City Administrator Ulrich proposing that the Council consider a Special Session to work out the details. She suggested March 1, 2022. She stated the reason for a Special Session is because an ordinance would have to be adopted, which would require that decisions would have to be made prior to the March 8, 2022 meeting and final adoption at the March 22, 2022 meeting.

Mayor Kuzma asked if that would work for the Council. There was consensus.

Deputy City Administrator/Community Dev. Director Brian Hagen referenced case notes and stated that the white sheet represents a hybrid between the current boundaries and a map that was provided to staff by several Councilmembers. He stated that he attempted to replicate what was shown so that the suggestions that came in from Councilmembers. He stated in Ward 1, the boundary changed. Previously the boundary between Precinct 1, Precinct 2 followed 47 all the way out of the City. Per the suggestion, it has been modified to follow Green Valley Road. He stated that the boundaries have tried to be the major highways. He stated that the work around is looking at a possibility for another precinct in Ward 2, Precinct 2 that is following neighborhood streets, that is something that can be discussed. He stated between Ward 3 and Ward 4, the map from the Council shows shifting the boundaries and this sheet reflects the population shifts that result from that. He stated it is easy to go back the other way.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated the map he sent was designed to divide the wards as evenly as possible but it includes a bunch of shifts between every ward. In looking at the map, the section above Alpine goes away, and the section by Ward 2 is extended down to the river. A triangle in the middle would go back to Ward 1.

Councilmember Specht asked if there was a copy they could all see.

Councilmember Woestehoff replied that he could have Staff send it out. He stated the purpose of it was to keep the population within 1% so there isn't a big shift and the big roads are dividers.

Councilmember Heineman asked where the numbers came from

Councilmember Woestehoff replied he used the census.

Administrative Services Director Lasher asked if there were any additional questions for Anoka County Elections Manager Linnell or if he was free to go.

Anoka County Elections Manager Linnell offered to field any questions that come up and help in anyway he could.

The Council thanked Anoka County Elections Manager Linnell for his time.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if was possible to have the older line between Ward 3 and Ward 4 and the number shifts to see how the balance works for March 1, 2022.

Councilmember Woestehoff confirmed this.

The consensus of the Council was to hold a Special Work Session on March 1, 2022.

2.02: Communications Update and Website Redesign Discussion

Communications and Events Coordinator Thorstad presented the staff report with comparative statistics from other years. She reviewed Facebook, the website and newsletter and gave information on the City's affiliates including QCTV and the *Anoka County Union Herald*. She highlighted a Facebook post about a road closed that had 13,500 views.

Councilmember Specht asked if that was because posts are being forwarded to the community website.

Communications and Events Coordinator Thorstad confirmed this and stated the website has seen 130,000 visits.

Councilmember Specht asked if these were distinct.

Communications and Events Coordinator Thorstad replied it represents the number of website visits but wasn't sure if they were new visitors.

Councilmember Riley referenced the newspaper and the statistic that there are 4,000 plus subscribers out of the 11,000 households and asked if that was correct because that seems high.

Communications and Events Coordinator Thorstad replied there are 4,233 subscribers to the *Anoka County Union Herald* but they cover more than just Ramsey.

Councilmember Heineman referenced the statistics about the reach of Facebook and asked if there was any other metadata about engagement such as reposting, clicks, or sharing.

Communications and Events Coordinator Thorstad replied she didn't have that information but could get it.

Councilmember Heineman commented it would be good to see if it was being implemented as more of a marketing tool or if it is driving business to the website.

Communications and Events Coordinator Thorstad replied that the City's general approach to social media is that the communications plan and policy drives how they treat that tool. She stated it was the goal to have everything on the website first as the informational hub. Then anything externally that comes to social media tries to drive people back to the website for information.

Administrative Services Director Lasher asked if Councilmember Heineman was comfortable receiving the information he requested at the next communications update or if he would like it sooner via email.

Councilmember Heineman replied it was fine waiting for the information, he was just curious if when a post is created there is reach meaning how many people saw it, then there is engagement meaning how many people clicked on it, then click rate for embedded links, then there is sharing. He stated his question was if the reach was being increased and everything else was staying stagnant or if there were other benefits being seen such as sharing or driving business back to the website.

Communications and Events Coordinator Thorstad stated she would include that in her next report. She started the next subject which is the website redesign which is a part of the contract with CivicPlus. She stated she and IT Manager Fredrickson met with a representative to get training on what it might look like.

IT Manager Fredrickson stated the redesign process is about a six month process but may go faster. The representative from CivicPlus recommended training for the Staff, and looking at Google Analytics for the site to identify what is being visited on the page. CivicPlus will come back with suggestions for changes and additions.

Communications and Events Coordinator Thorstad asked informationally nothing would be changing on website but it may be moved.

IT Manager Frederickson confirmed this adding the structure and visuals are what is going to change. He added that changes to navigation and content of the website are offered at an additional cost but that the redesign would be more cosmetic.

Councilmember Heineman asked who the provider is.

IT Manager Fredrickson replied CivicPlus.

Councilmember Heineman asked if it was correct that they do most of the other cities around.

IT Manger Fredrickson confirmed this.

Councilmember Heineman asked if there are websites for other cities that could be previewed to see what it is going to look like.

IT Manager Fredrickson replied he believed so, that there are other cities close by that have gone through a redesign recently. He didn't have that information but could get it.

Councilmember Howell commented that several people have told her they struggle with the navigation of the website. She stated she knows it is extra but wondered if that could be improved for people

Mayor Kuzma stated there had been discussion about putting a committee together with staff and Councilmembers to work on problem areas based on feedback they have gotten.

Councilmember Heineman stated that Anoka looks like their website was just updated and may be a good one to look at.

Communications and Events Coordinator Thorstad commented that the thought to get this discussion going was to let the Council lead to see if there was anything immediate that needed addressing. If not, Staff can work with the representative to see the types of things they suggest to improve and bring things back. Examples of other clients can also be brought to determine what is liked and not liked.

City Administrator Ulrich suggested if Councilmembers were interested as Staff comments are coming in, a subcommittee of two Councilmembers and the company could also get Council feedback. When they come back with their recommendations and Google Analytics, it could either be the subcommittee or bring it back to the whole Council.

Mayor Kuzma asked if Councilmember Woestehoff and Councilmember Specht wanted to be a part of it.

Councilmember Specht asked if Councilmember Heineman was interested.

Councilmember Heineman replied he would if no one else was interested.

Mayor Kuzma stated there are a couple people interested.

City Administrator Ulrich stated Councilmember Woestehoff and Councilmember Heineman would be on the committee.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if was correct that they had their own Google Analytics, that it is not a subset of CivicPlus where Staff logs in as City of Ramsey employees.

Communications and Events Coordinator Thorstad replied they don't have Google Analytics as a part of their packages now but they are making the switch.

Councilmember Woestehoff replied that when a website is done it is a chance for everything to break on the backend from a recording standpoint. He would rather see them using Google Analytics. He stated for the Council's benefit that when looking at stats from the last few years they are not going to match because they are being looked at differently.

The consensus of the Council was to create a subcommittee including Councilmember Woestehoff and Councilmember Heineman to join staff to work on the website redesign.

2.03: Review of Current Policy Allocating Excess/ Deficient General Fund Revenues

City Administrator Ulrich stated Finance Director Lund has requested that this item will be postponed until March 8, 2022. He stated if there are comments, questions, or requests for additional research regarding this item, to let him know and it will be added before the next meeting.

2.04: Building Access Discussion and Follow-up

IT Manager Fredrickson reviewed the staff report regarding updating the City Hall, Police Station and Fire Station 2 to all be on the same system as the Public Works and Fire Station 1 using the PDK door system.

Mayor Kuzma asked what the advantages are to having them all on the same system versus what is currently being done.

IT Manager Fredrickson replied some of the differences and advantages of the new system is that it is a new web-based system so it is accessible to Staff managing the system from anywhere. He stated he could use his phone to unlock a door at the Public Works building to let someone in while he is sitting here. He continued it is very user friendly as opposed to the current system where someone would have to be sitting at one of three computers at City Hall to access the system. He saw this as being the biggest advantage.

Mayor Kuzma asked if they were to move to this where the funding would come from.

IT Manager Fredrickson replied when it was brought up last year, City Administrator Ulrich had said the Facility Funds could be used to finance the City Hall and Fire Station conversion.

Councilmember Musgrove asked what changes would need to happen physical knowing the system went into the Fire Station or if it was more of an electronic system that needed to be put on.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer replied it was built right into the Public Works building when it was put in, that was the only system they ever had.

Councilmember Musgrove asked about the Fire Station.

IT Manager Fredrickson replied the Fire Station 1 had been using keys so it was a new system.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if there are any downsides to this.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer commented that when a delivery comes in he can open door 6 from his phone and can close it automatically when they are done. He stated it is very user friendly.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that he sees that a lot of these are going to be physical new access panels that are going on the doors, like readers, and asked if they are going to be more generic so they could use other software platforms if it was decided to switch at some point in time or if they are locked into the providers.

IT Manager Fredrickson replied three door readers will be added, one being the Itasca room door which doesn't have a reader, they will be re-using all the same door hardware to save money, it is the back and controllers that are being changed out.

Mayor Kuzma stated this is on tonight's consent agenda and asked if there was consensus.

The consensus of the Council was to approve proceeding with the changeover to allow the City IT Manager to work with the PDK vendor (EPS) to begin work at Fire Station 2, followed by City Hall and the Police Department. This item will be put on the regular City Council meeting consent agenda.

2.05: Discuss Building Maintenance Staffing

Administrative Services Director Lasher reviewed the staff report and request to increase the part-time Building Maintenance Worker from 20 to 25 hours per week. This change is requested to be effective on April 14, 2022. The current 20 hour per week Building Maintenance Worker submitted his letter of retirement, effective April 28, 2022. Prior to posting for the position HR is requesting this change to increase capacity for the staff and improve safety on Fridays when one building maintenance worker is scheduled alone.

Councilmember Riley commented that it sounds like a good idea. He asked why it is coming to City Council when it is only five hours a week and \$1,500 and if someone else doesn't have authority to make this decision.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied when this position was approved it was very specific to be 20 hours a week. She stated it is a policy discussion that she would be interested in having.

City Administrator Ulrich replied they don't typically change job structures from full time to part time or increase hours without Council approval because of the budget. Those approvals come back to Council if they are going to be permanent and advertised. He stated sometimes temporary adjustments will be done without approval.

Councilmember Riley stated if this is a policy decision that the City Administrator could make a \$1,500 decision for five hours a week. He stated that seemed fair.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if there was enough work for both to do on Fridays.

Administrative Services Director Lasher confirmed this.

Councilmember Musgrove continued that the vacation requests were concerning, that they don't have enough coverage to have vacation. She stated they will end up with one person being there at times and didn't know if there was a way to still work with the safety concern. She wondered if there was someone they could call if there was an issue.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied they have cell phones but she didn't know that there has ever been an issue on a Friday evening when staff are alone.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer replied everyone carries a cell phone so he didn't think that was an issue. The one concern he had was if there was an accidental fall. He thought they could work with having two people on most of the time even if it isn't all the time.

The consensus of the Council was to approve the request to increase the part-time Building Maintenance Worker from 20 to 25 hours per week.

2.06: Discussion Regarding the City Administrator's Position Description and Community Profile

Administrative Services Director Lasher reviewed staff report to review the current position description and sample Community Profile (used previously for the Deputy City Administrator/Community Development Director recruitment) and provide staff with any recommended revisions to either the position description or the profile, prior to posting the opening.

Councilmember Howell suggested striking the word "minimum" qualifications from the job descriptions to be able to state what they are looking for. She also suggested opening it up to people who have business experience because they would be looking for someone who is a good manager and could encourage employees to develop their skills. Whether this person comes from city governance or business field, she thought it would be nice to have a broader pool of people be included. She stated that regarding requiring a degree is that the reason to get a degree is to gain experience and say they are proficient in something. She thought being more open-minded and inclusive of people who have gotten their education practically speaking if they have the skills and capability to manage a large corporation such as a city. She handed out a sheet that outlined her thoughts to the Council. Regarding the sentence regarding software, she suggested changing it to say they wanted someone with a general working knowledge rather than expecting them to be able to do all of the accounting or financing things that Finance Director Lund could do, or be proficient at managing software for a City, she felt that felt out of place. She asked for feedback.

Councilmember Specht replied he liked the idea of equating experience as being as important as a degree. He stated that actual experience and abilities are more important than a degree.

Councilmember Heineman replied he liked it. He asked if there is a methodology behind putting "minimum qualifications" versus "desired qualifications," and if it was just to help applicants to eliminate themselves. He also asked Deputy City Administrator/Community Dev. Director Hagen, because this was the job description for his position, if there was anything that stood out that needed to be changed. He stated he liked Councilmember Howell's suggested qualifications.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied they use the software and when an applicant goes to the website to apply for a position, there are minimum qualifications listed meaning if they don't meet the minimum qualifications listed, they are not going to be looked at for scoring. She stated this position is unique and different. She stated the methodology normally is the minimum

qualifications they have to have and the desired qualifications are what they are really looking for and the applicant is scored on. In situations it can be revised however Council would like.

Deputy City Administrator/Community Dev. Director Hagen replied he has a different job description than what is in the packet. The position profile that is in the packet is for his position. He stated the focus of the position will change based on what Council picks for the job description.

Councilmember Riley commented that he liked some of the language in Councilmember Howell's handout. He would like to see someone with some business experience but it seemed to him that the way it is worded they are looking for something else but would accept someone with traditional city experience. He liked the idea of opening it up and using business as something they are looking for.

Councilmember Howell asked if it read "Master's degree in Public Administration, Business, Finance or related field and seven to ten years of executive leadership experience or a combination of education and broad work experience acceptable to the City Council," and if that would satisfy that to say it is important but it would be equivalent.

Councilmember Riley replied that is exactly what he would have done.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented he liked the change, that it reads better. He suggested adjusting it from a block of text to bullet points so it read more like two separate qualifications. He suggested removing the working general knowledge and software section because he felt it was vague and didn't get into the specifics that he would want. He thought the current City Administrator probably had to know how to find Municode as a part of his job. He suggested not going overly broad but agreed that having a working knowledge was ok instead of requiring that they have to know the software. He thought generically it makes sense and he didn't oppose someone coming in that is outside of the city world if it is the right candidate. He liked the idea of leading with the civic experience first.

City Administrator Ulrich agreed with the software that if someone has been successful in business either as an executive or CEO and they have a working knowledge of software needed to conduct business, that it wasn't something that would be needed.

Councilmember Howell agreed with striking that sentence and flipping the two items at the top and putting an or between them.

Mayor Kuzma asked if there were any other areas.

Administrative Services Director Lasher asked for more explanation on the sentence that reads "proven experience as either a City administrator" and if that should be quantified at all or if that falls into the seven to ten years' experience. If that should be one year or five years.

Councilmember Howell replied she thought to look at the person as a whole package. She hoped the applicant wouldn't be really young and have just done something for a short time. She

suggested looking at their whole work history. She wanted someone broad who could help everyone work together.

Councilmember Woestehoff suggested tying that sentence to the timeframe listed above would make sense because other than a Master's degree he stated he would meet all of the requirements but didn't feel qualified to do that job.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that she appreciated the discussion because she felt that more companies are looking for candidates who have more experience versus just a degree. It is becoming more acceptable to have experience and be successful and not have to have a college degree. She thought getting an education was a good thing and didn't want to discriminate against that. She noted that not everyone has taken that route over the years. She asked with the quantifiers, like the Master's degree and years of experience, but how to not exclude people who were interested.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied she needed time to think about it. Her first impression was that a wide range of qualified candidates would want to be attracted but she wasn't sure how she was going to gauge that without more specifics.

Councilmember Woestehoff made a counter point to keep in mind that the applicant would understand the expectations appropriately so that their time isn't wasted if they are under qualified. He stated that finding someone who is civic minded and has business experience that has led them down that path would be wonderful but their true metrics are going to be needed.

Councilmember Howell stated that the Deputy City Administrator position that Brian Hagen got included a profile that was written up saying what the position expectations would be. She thought if they had that it would help weed people out.

Mayor Kuzma asked if Administrative Services Director Lasher had enough direction.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied she believed she could develop a pointing system that will be logical and understandable for the Council to review. She asked for clarification based on this if she is able to post it if they are able or if the Council wanted to see it in the final form.

Councilmember Howell asked if it could be emailed out to see what was put together based on tonight's discussion.

Administrative Services Director Lasher confirmed this.

Councilmember Howell referenced the questionnaire that is asked of the candidates and asked if at the beginning of that, they could tell about themselves so everyone gets asked the same question but the Council could get a feel for someone as a person, to gauge their personality and how they engage with people.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied she liked that idea. She stated in her years of experience she has heard things she wished she hadn't. She stated she would like to ask the City Attorney for feedback.

City Attorney Knaak replied if they volunteer information it isn't a problem.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that he liked that idea as well because it helps the applicant explain their resume in a more personal way.

3. TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

3.01: Review Future Topics/ Calendar

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the topics for topics for the March 8, 2022 Work Session and asked the Council to let him know if there are other topics they would to discuss or priorities they have that they would like to move forward.

4. MAYOR / COUNCIL / STAFF INPUT

None.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 6:50 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.