

**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 Thursday, May 5, 2022, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

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

Also Present: Finance Director Diana Lund
Fire Chief Matt Kohner
Administrative Services Director Colleen Lasher
City Engineer Bruce Westby
Police Chief Jeff Katers
Public Works Superintendent Grant Riemer
City Attorney Fritz Knaak

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Pro Tem Riley stated because Mayor Kuzma was attending remotely he would be running the meeting even though Mayor Kuzma would still be in charge of the meeting.

Councilmember Riley called the City Council Special Work Session to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

2.01: Discuss Finalist for the City Administrator Position

Administrative Services Director Lasher stated the purpose of this discussion was for the City Council to select the City of Ramsey's next City Administrator. She stated following second interviews Staff was directed to contact Mr. Mark Korin and Mr. Brian Hagen to participate in the Leadership Assessment. She stated both individuals participated in the same assessment with the same psychiatrist and both candidates are recommended for hire. She stated the next step in the process was for the Council to discuss and decide on which candidate they would like to advance as the City Administrator. During the May 10, 2022 meeting, the Council may give the City Attorney direction on the contract. She stated the City Attorney will then work with that individual on an employment contract and come back on May 24, 2022 with an appointment. She gave background on the application process.

Mayor Pro Tem Riley asked if there were questions from Council.

Councilmember Heineman asked what is the current pay that the prior City Administrator was receiving and what the proposed pay would be in hiring either Mr. Mark Korin or Mr. Brian Hagen. He asked what the difference would be.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied regarding the amount of savings upon the departure of City Administrator Ulrich, that step one of the hiring range is \$62.08 an hour. That amount is 80% of the full range. She stated City Administrator Ulrich was at the top of a six-step scale.

Finance Director Lund corrected that City Administrator Ulrich was on step five.

Administrative Services Director Lasher agreed, stating City Administrator Ulrich was on step five because there was a market rate adjustment.

Councilmember Heineman asked what the dollar amount was between step one and step five. He asked if it was a \$20,000 difference a year or more.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied she believed it would be \$25,825.

Mayor Pro Tem Riley asked if there were any other questions. There were none.

Staff and Council discussed the pros and cons of the two candidates.

Councilmember Heineman suggested hiring Mr. Hagen as the City Administrator and use the \$25,000 cost savings from the difference in pay from Mr. Ulrich's departure to contract Mr. Korin to be in a de-facto part-time position to use his skills to give guidance and balance the books until Mr. Hagen gets established in his new position.

Councilmember Specht asked if he meant the suggestion was to hire Mr. Korin as a consultant.

Mayor Pro Tem Riley replied that is the suggestion that can be discussed further if others want to.

Mayor Kuzma was not supportive of hiring Mr. Korin as a consultant.

Councilmember Heineman asked City Attorney Knaak whether a majority vote was needed to confirm a candidate.

City Attorney Knaak confirmed this.

Councilmember Heineman stated he was going to vote no on both candidates unless there is an amendment to Mr. Hagen as the City Administrator with Mr. Korin being hired part-time as an Operations Advisor.

Councilmember Howell asked Councilmember Heineman to explain his idea and what the Operations Advisor position would entail. She also asked if it is someone who consults with the City Administrator, gives suggestions, and implement them, or if they would attend City Council meetings.

Councilmember Heineman asked if, according to the City Charter, it was possible for an advisor, accountant or part-time advisor under the organizational chart of the City Council.

City Attorney Knaak replied the question is how to get a consultant to not be directed by the City Administrator but by the City Council. He stated there is no reason they couldn't set up the position in a manner so it would report to the City Council if that is desired or it would be someone in a real consultation role directed by Mr. Hagen to provide the information he needs.

Councilmember Heineman replied he felt Mr. Korin's benefits compliment Mr. Hagen's weaknesses. He suggested creating a part-time position that reports to the City Council and be an asset to Mr. Hagen to provide on-going mentorship but not have authority over Staff.

Mayor Pro Tem Riley stated they could come back to that.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that in the draft form of the Charter, there is a section for professional development. He noted a line item for \$10,000 towards professional development would go a long way and have a broader impact. He stated there are many organizations in town including the League of Minnesota Cities and University of Minnesota, any of the colleges, and the Dale Carnegie Institute all have resources for leadership training. He felt that would be less expensive than one person providing input once in a while. He suggested the alternative is putting an amount in the contract for professional development and if Mr. Hagen wants to contract Mr. Korin that would be up to him but he felt there were other ways to provide mentorship other than hiring one. He wasn't supportive of hiring them both.

Mayor Kuzma commented that they didn't have Mr. Hagen go through a new evaluation. He stated even though it was just six months ago, he felt that was a disservice to Mr. Hagen. He felt that in the six months Mr. Hagen has served the City, he has grown and his report may have come back differently. He suggested the Council send Mr. Hagen to have another evaluation done so it is an equal comparison. He would be in favor of supporting professional development but wasn't supportive of hiring Mr. Korin as a consultant.

Councilmember Heineman replied he understood professional development and agreed it was important. He thought Mr. Hagen was already doing some with involvement in peer groups and things of that nature. He stated what professional development organizations couldn't offer to have a former City Administrator sitting down to answer questions and applying a unique skill set and what it means to step into the role without a lot of experience. He thought they have a unique situation where there are two candidates who compliment each other.

Mayor Pro Tem Riley replied he has had a conversation with someone who knew Mr. Korin. That person felt having Mr. Hagen work under Mr. Korin would not be a learning experience.

Councilmember Howell replied she could see Councilmember Heineman's proposal as being beneficial. She felt this would fuse the business mindset with the governmental mindset. Mayor Pro Tem Riley asked if Councilmember Howell had a preference.

Councilmember Howell replied she would like to see a relationship where Mr. Hagen was in a higher position, not equal to Mr. Korin. She stated she couldn't vote for Mr. Hagen because he isn't experienced enough.

Mayor Pro Tem Riley suggested talking to Mr. Ulrich about being a consultant a day or two a week to help bridge the gap.

Councilmember Howell replied she felt there was frustration during the past year and there are policy issues that haven't been brought forward under Mr. Ulrich. She thought bringing in someone different would shift the dynamic.

Mayor Pro Tem Riley replied he didn't have that experience and understood wanting something different. He thought having Mr. Hagen move into leadership would be the change and Mr. Ulrich could offer the needed support. He asked if having someone come out of retirement for a consulting position was something that could be done.

City Attorney Knaak replied it is done all the time.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied there are complications because a statement is signed after retirement that the employee will not return to work for the City within 30 days.

Mayor Kuzma commented that by hiring another person they aren't showing trust in Mr. Hagen, which he sees as a problem with the Staff. Because of the tie in votes, he suggested going back through the hiring process and hiring a consulting firm to get a bigger applicant pool.

Councilmember Heineman commented that is an option but added the reason he suggested bringing in Mr. Korin as a consultant without authority over anyone was because of his unique experience as a business owner and former City Administrator experience. He supported going back through the hiring process or hire Mr. Hagen as the sole City Administrator with the caveat that Mr. Korin could come in part-time to be an asset. He felt if the Council was going to hire someone who isn't fully qualified it would require that they provide support for them to be successful.

Mayor Pro Tem Riley asked because of the tie in votes, if this was a viable option for the Council to move forward with.

Councilmember Musgrove stated the Council hasn't been as involved with Mr. Hagen and had concerns about communication style. She expressed concerns about the working relationship between Mr. Hagen and Mr. Korin.

Mayor Pro Tem Riley replied to her questions about communication with Mr. Hagen and gave a recent example where he demonstrated good communication.

Councilmember Woestehoff had an example of good communication between Mr. Hagen and Staff related to the Planning Commission.

Mayor Kuzma suggested sending Mr. Hagen back in for re-evaluation and potentially opening the hiring process.

Councilmember Heineman responded to Councilmember Woestehoff's example and agreed it was good communication in the moment but questioned the statement that the issue with the Staff member had occurred before and the situation could have maybe been prevented. He supported giving Mr. Hagen a new evaluation.

Councilmember Howell replied that Mr. Hagen had an advantage going into the interviews because of the relationship that was already established with him through his employment. She expressed concern with having him take the evaluation again because there would be an advantage over other applicants who haven't taken it before.

Mayor Pro Tem Riley asked if having Mr. Hagen take the evaluation again would show growth over the last six-months.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied she had asked that question of the psychologist who administered the evaluation and she had responded there wouldn't be much change in a seven-month gap but it is not an exact science.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if there was an industry standard that specifies the amount of time between administration of the evaluation.

Administrative Services Director Lasher gave an example of a firefighter candidate who retook an evaluation and took two years to show growth.

Mayor Pro Tem Riley summarized the options for moving forward.

Councilmember Specht suggested hiring Mr. Korin for three years and then hiring Mr. Hagen after that time.

Mayor Pro Tem Riley replied he wouldn't support that. He asked for a vote by show of hands for each candidate.

The Council vote was three to three, a tie vote for each candidate.

Mayor Kuzma suggested going back through the hiring process and to hire an outside consulting firm.

Councilmember Woestehoff referenced comments about Mr. Korin's ability to cut taxes. He stated that is the Council's responsibility and suggested hiring Mr. Korin to be a consultant to the Council during that time. He suggested providing professional development to Mr. Hagen.

Councilmember Heineman replied that would limit Mr. Korin to cutting taxes but he felt Mr. Korin had creative ways to do a lot of things so he wasn't supportive of Councilmember Woestehoff's suggestion. He asked Mayor Kuzma why he suggested starting the hiring process over.

Mayor Kuzma replied the Council was at an impasse and couldn't agree on a candidate so starting over was a good option.

Councilmember Heineman replied that perhaps compromise was the solution that wouldn't cost any more money, would put someone in place sooner, and would please everyone.

Mayor Kuzma replied he didn't think Mr. Korin would be a good mentor for Mr. Hagen.

Councilmember Heineman replied they should start the process over again.

Mayor Pro Tem Riley asked for a vote on hiring Mr. Hagen as the City Administrator and creating a part-time position for Mr. Korin at City Council's direction as a mentor role.

There was no support for that option.

Motion by Councilmember Heineman, second by Mayor Kuzma, to send Mr. Hagen back for a second evaluation.

Further Discussion:

Councilmember Heineman stated he would support putting the hiring process on hold until Mr. Hagen retakes the evaluation and then resume talks afterwards. Councilmember Howell and Councilmember Musgrove both stated they didn't support that option and because they didn't feel there would be a different outcome. Mayor Pro Tem Riley stated starting the process over will put the hiring further out. Councilmember Specht clarified comments that his support of Mr. Korin was not just about tax cuts by giving an example of differing responses to the interview question about improvements for the future of the City.

A roll call vote was performed:

Councilmember Howell	nay
Councilmember Musgrove	nay
Councilmember Specht	nay
Councilmember Woestehoff	aye
Councilmember Riley	aye
Mayor Kuzma	aye
Councilmember Heineman	aye

Motion carried.

Councilmember Specht asked about time frame.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied she could call immediately in the morning to inquire about an opening. She stated previously appointments have been booked five weeks in advance.

3. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Woestehoff, second by Councilmember Howell to adjourn the meeting.

A roll call vote was performed:

Councilmember Howell	aye
Councilmember Musgrove	aye
Councilmember Specht	aye
Councilmember Riley	aye
Councilmember Heineman	aye
Mayor Kuzma	aye
Councilmember Woestehoff	aye

Motion carried.

The Special Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 7:21 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.