

**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 28, 2022, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

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

Members Absent: Councilmember Ryan Heineman

Also Present: City Administrator Brian Hagen
Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Mark Riverblood
Administrative Services Director Colleen Lasher
City Engineer Bruce Westby
City Attorney Fritz Knaak

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kuzma called the City Council Work Session to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

2.01: Provide Direction on 2023 City-Led Project to Extend/Reconstruct Riverdale Drive East of Sunfish Lake Boulevard

City Engineer Westby introduced Dan Lonnes from Bolton & Menk and Jason Orcutt from the Anoka County Transportation Division. He stated they are attending to outline the purpose for having the City lead the construction and reconstruction of Riverdale Drive East of Sunfish Lake Boulevard as a 2023 improvement project. He stated the biggest benefit is that it will help shorten the duration of the project on Highway 10. He stated Council concurrence is being sought on whether they are in favor of having the City lead this as a 2023 improvement project.

Mr. Lonnes gave a presentation on the staging and why this is a critical piece. He stated they were tasked by Mr. Orcutt to put a staging plan together to get this built as fast as possible and to come up with recommendations to meet the stakeholders goals.

Mayor Kuzma asked who is doing the engineering, is that already done and they could send that out for contract if the City were to handle that, or is that something the City has to take on.

Mr. Lonnes replied the sewer and water is all being prepared with the Highway 10 contract in coordination with the City. They are working with City Engineer Westby on what those utilities would look like. The release of the contract, if it is separated, he would defer to City Engineer Westby on how that is handled. He stated the design of it now is at about a 60% stage.

Mr. Orcutt added he thought the County could step in and help City Engineer Westby. He thought it was more of the City being a player to make it eligible to happen and the County would work with the City on the utilities. He noted the abutments for the bridge was in the middle of the westbound lanes. He thought that was the highest risk item with number two being more palatable for MnDOT to get the utilities in because they are more separate. He added those are not paid for through the project because they are a City enhancement and have to be paid for separately. He stated the design team would get them ready and get it to City Engineer Westby. He stated it gives them the best opportunity to tell the public that they did everything they could within their power to keep this as short as possible. He stated otherwise it may be three years.

Mayor Kuzma commented the fastest it can be done for the Ramsey businesses, the better.

Councilmember Specht referenced a map and asked if the purple line ends up in the City of Anoka.

Mr. Orcutt replied the end of it does.

Councilmember Specht asked if Anoka would need to be involved.

Mr. Orcutt replied they would probably coordinate with Anoka but he didn't think there was any watermain or sewer that was going that far. He explained they could do two things. With the second option it would be hard to have Federal money split but if it is a secondary product that the City is leading they could have it brought up to gravel so all that needs to be done is paving. Then the City will have a long-term and better product.

Councilmember Specht asked if they could deduct the amount that was promised to be put towards the project.

Mr. Orcutt replied they can't because these are City utilities that are being extended for City use.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked about the road, if the City takes it on with either option one or option two, has this ever been a part of the \$4 million dollars that the City is contributing to the project and could the roadway be declared as that or do they have to come up with the money separately.

Mr. Orcutt replied they would want all of the Federal money to be used to build everything they could. With the first option they would have to work through the complexity of the Federal process and if they say no, then the question would be if that is where the County wants to spend the \$4 million dollars. Or if they do another option that gives the same result of getting things built and then they could utilize all the other money before using the City's money. He stated it gives flexibility for right away and other things they may be doing.

Councilmember Riley asked if there were four options.

Mr. Lonnes confirmed this.

Councilmember Riley asked if the reason they are not talking about number one as being separated out by the County is that having the City doing it separates it from the Federal project.

Mr. Orcutt confirmed this adding number two also. He added this makes sense to pull out of the project because of supply chain issues, it's a City utility and they aren't using Federal dollars on the watermain and sewer either way.

Councilmember Riley asked if they couldn't just separate that part out from the rest of the project and do it a year early for instance.

Mr. Orcutt replied this is the option that is most agreeable. He stated half of the MnDOT meeting on July 5, 2022 was spent to talk about this and that is why they wanted Council input first. He stated these are the two options that really impact the City stretch and allow things to keep operating.

Mr. Lonnes referenced the fall 2023 construction start and asked the earliest they could do this. He suggested not going much later than September 15, 2023 but hoped it could be started earlier, such as September 1, 2023. He stated with the current supply chain issues that may not be possible. He stated if issues arose it wouldn't be feasible to rely on. He thought option three was hopeful and put too much risk on an outcome that is unlikely in the current environment. He explained the temporary access plan for businesses but highlighted that a problem with putting utilities at the end of project would mean it would be right along Highway 10 in a tight area. He stated option four wasn't ideal because it would be the only access road. He thought option one or two were more advisable ways to go for acceleration of the project. He continued his presentation with cost estimates.

Mr. Lonnes asked for comments and preferences on this topic, City-led and County assisted bid package, utilities, local access for acceleration purposes. He stated next steps would include refining options and a recommended approach to proceed with.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated the area is already zoned for MUSA but asked City Engineer Westby if it actually exists there and if there is a reason why the City needs to do it at this point in time, in terms of adding sewer and water connection through there or if it could be left as is.

City Engineer Westby replied they wouldn't absolutely need to do it but he agreed with what Mr. Lonnes said that as long as they are working there, to get it set up for those businesses that have septic and wells that are aging. He stated it is preferred to have them on City septic and water, and this is the time to do it rather than waiting and doing it in a tight corridor.

Councilmember Riley asked if they couldn't use another system.

City Engineer Westby replied no, that is the forced main system for the end lots and it wouldn't work for those businesses that need larger sewer and more water.

Councilmember Riley asked if he heard correctly that the County could help with engineering.

Mr. Orcutt confirmed this but stated they needed the expertise of City Engineer Westby who knows the needs specific to Ramsey.

Councilmember Riley asked if option two was Mr. Orcutt's recommendation.

Mr. Orcutt confirmed this, adding he personally thought it is the most logical and doable and solves the majority of the problems without creating additional problems.

Councilmember Musgrove asked City Engineer Westby if he agreed that option two was the best option and does that help solve some of the problem with the hook up with regard to where the curbs and gutters hook up.

City Engineer Westby replied option two would be his preference, especially with the trench settlements.

Councilmember Musgrove asked Mr. Orcutt if they would get the most dollars from the project itself.

Mr. Orcutt replied correct, adding if it can be built correctly it will provide a long-term service to the City. He recommended option two.

Councilmember Specht asked if Council chooses number two, they would want to notify the businesses that they will be affected before the 2024 construction, even as early as the meeting tomorrow morning.

Mr. Orcutt stated there will be a temporary signal which they haven't had before, so they will have the most direct access they have ever had before.

Mayor Kuzma expressed concern about number one because that seems like a hinge point as far as getting things done too. He asked if they are saying they should be considering options one and two.

Mr. Orcutt replied option two accomplishes number one. He explained what they are trying to do is to not have a bridge and a ramp that is gravel and people look at them all winter and not be able to use them. He stated they need to be honest in the meeting tomorrow to say they will do everything they can do as designers, engineers and City Council to try to get this done in two years but nature, costs, and supply chain are fighting them. They are trying to do things ahead and make the decisions.

Councilmember Musgrove asked City Engineer Westby and Mr. Orcutt to talk about the specs and the plan coverage for dollars, if it would be covered by the project dollars or are some of the plans and specs included in the \$700-\$900 amount.

Mr. Orcutt replied there will be an increase because either way that had to get designed into the project. He stated he thought there would be an extra cost for that but as long as they can make it eligible, they will put it into the design costs because they have funds specifically for design. If they can show it was being done to benefit the public it should be eligible. He stated there will be some coordination with Mr. Lonnes and his team so there will be additional costs. He stated the City is being asked to do something so he thought it was fair that the County does something also.

Mayor Kuzma asked if there was Council consensus to go with option two.

Councilmember Musgrove asked City Engineer Westby if he had any concerns with the specs.

City Engineer Westby replied he didn't have any concerns and thought it made sense to use the second approach. He stated he had every confidence they will work through it.

Councilmember Specht referenced the map attached to the case and asked if it is going to be in Anoka or if it is just the round-about at the end or if it is the whole section.

City Administrator Hagen explained where the City boundary was.

The consensus of the Council was to go with option two.

City Engineer Westby commented they will come back with an agreement and have Council approve that.

Mr. Orcutt assured them they won't pay for any work done in Anoka, they will make sure everything gets taken care of. He stated what they should come back with is a JPA for City Engineer Westby to sign off on.

Councilmember Riley asked City Engineer Westby if Council will be talking about the utilities and how they are going in.

City Engineer Westby asked what the timeline was to have the plans approved and out for bids.

Mr. Lonnes replied he thought they were talking winter.

City Engineer Westby commented they have time. He stated if Council would be open to it they could work with Public Works to open a case and run it through the Public Works Committee to have a recommendation to Council.

Councilmember Riley commented he would prefer that.

Mr. Orcutt stated he would like to see the plan in February 2023 and approval as soon as practicable. He stated there could be some elevating costs that may be unknown in going into three years of construction so getting it done sooner is better.

2.02: Review Pavement Condition Rating Systems

City Engineer Westby explained that the current rating system that is being used to assess roads is the Pavement and Surface Evaluation Rating (PASER) system which is a subjective assessment. He explained that more cities are using the Pavement Condition Index (PCI) system which is an objective rating system that uses a number system that is more accurate and reliable. A third system that MnDOT uses where vans with cameras digitally map the street surfaces and the system rates the roads. He stated that is a fast alternative but the County uses the available trucks and they are very expensive. He stated if they went with PCI he suggested letting WSP do the ratings until staff are trained in the future. He asked for feedback and direction from Council.

Councilmember Specht asked why PASER was used initially and what benefits there are.

City Engineer Westby replied the benefit is that it is easy to do, it is quick, and was the easiest thing to implement at the time. He stated it takes the least amount of time of any of these.

Councilmember Musgrove asked City Engineer Westby which system he thought would be most valuable for inventorying the streets, consistency with carryover.

City Engineer Westby replied he preferred the PCI rating system because it forces someone to get out and actually look at the pavement versus driving by when cracks could be missed. He thought it would allow them to set the CIP up more accurately.

Councilmember Musgrove asked City Engineer Westby to explain with the PCI rating system how taking a section of a road plays into the whole road because some areas may have more damage than other areas of the same road.

City Engineer Westby replied no, that is why they have to carefully pick a representative area. If some areas have issues such as drainage, it can be noted at the time. Representative areas can be changed over time. He thought finding a representative area was pretty easy.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the representative areas are documented and if they are the same areas that are observed every year.

City Engineer Westby replied the areas are documented but can be moved if needed.

Councilmember Riley commented that PCI gives a more precise number but he wasn't sure they needed that precision, because they don't make decisions without doing more analysis on it. He stated the department is falling behind and he didn't want to do anything that is going to take time away from the Staff or spend more money on something that isn't fixing the roads. He stated he would be content to stay with PASER.

Mayor Kuzma commented the CIP is based on PASER at this point and they already know there are big problems with the roads. He wasn't in favor of moving systems at this time.

Councilmember Howell commented she would support it if City Engineer Westby thinks it is a benefit to the City.

Councilmember Specht stated he would support the change because roads and parks need to be invested in.

Councilmember Woestehoff referenced City Engineer Westby's comments in his presentation that there are companies that would do a digital survey and asked if he was able to get cost estimates on that.

City Engineer Westby replied he had not.

Councilmember Woestehoff agreed with Councilmember Musgrove that there are segments of roads that cause problems versus the full stretch of the road. He thought it would be interesting to have a visual of the entire roadway as opposed to just a section. He agreed with Councilmember Riley that there is a lot of work that needs to be done on the roads in the coming years. He thought switching systems might be nice to get more definition but he didn't know if it would influence a decision to service the road.

City Engineer Westby commented Public Works Superintendent Riemer is retiring and the plan is for him to start doing the PASER ratings which would mean they may see differences. He stated that in going through the CIP there have been differences in the PASER ratings from year to year, it could be data entry issues but he thought this may be a good time to try a different system. He agreed there was plenty to do without doing things differently.

City Administrator Hagen stated they wouldn't be rating roads that are known to need work. He stated he used PCI in his former work and found that it tracked how a road was decaying through the years and he'd set the CIP.

Mayor Kuzma asked for a show of hands to go forward with PCI. Three Councilmembers raised their hands.

The consensus of the Council was to not to move forward with PCI rating system and to keep it as is for the time being.

Councilmember Woestehoff suggested adding this discussion to budget talks and to learn more about the scanning companies.

Councilmember Riley added he would also like to hear more about how many hours it would take.

2.03: Discussion Regarding Staffing for City Communications

Administrative Services Director Lasher reviewed the role of the Communications and Events Coordinator that is currently vacant. She stated the Staff recommendation is to separate events from the Communications Coordinator role because they are different skills sets and pay scales. She reviewed the staff report and added information from a visit to the City of Elk River that in addition to their four full-time communication staff they sometimes have assistance from the Cable Commission. She stated the Parks and Rec Department handles event coordination. She stated Staff is requesting a full-time Communication Coordinator and to begin recruitment. She stated Elk River staff suggested the candidate for this position have graphic design skills. She reviewed research for pay scale for the position and found the current salary was quite low. She requested increasing the pay scale to the average pay scale rate. She reviewed the duties performed by the former Communications and Events Coordinator in answer to Council's question what would be included in the role.

City Administrator Hagen added as they were talking, they considered what else this position could do. He stated they discussed that the Deputy City Administrator role was removed from the Community Development Director role because that position was busy in itself. He stated it could become a quasi-assistant to the City Administrator role for such things as the compiling of all the policies and making them more readable and uniform and doing research on resident inquiries, tasks that would be helpful.

Councilmember Howell asked about the Elk River Communications Coordinator position that was posted and the salary, how did the Ramsey benefit package compare, or what value could be brought to this position to try to capture a good candidate.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied the benefits are very similar. She stated one competitive edge is that Ramsey has an employee telecommuting policy in draft form and allow some telecommuting. She thought this position would be important to have face-to-face conversations but could be opened up a little for telecommuting and could offer flexible work schedules.

Councilmember Howell replied those are huge assets right now. If a salary could be offered similar to Elk River but offered some benefits that would be great to draw candidates.

Administrative Services Director Lasher reported the Elk River position is an exempt position, more of a professional position that tops out at \$88,000 a year, about \$10,000 more than Ramsey's.

Councilmember Howell asked if the salary listed on the website, \$74,000, isn't right.

City Administrator Hagen explained they are two different positions. He thought the position Ramsey is looking at is more in line with the Elk River Communication Coordinator, the one they are advertising now is a senior level with some supervisory responsibilities.

Administrative Services Director Lasher added the price she gave, the \$88,000, is the Senior Communication Coordinator.

Mayor Kuzma asked if Administrative Services Director Lasher is asking to adjust the salary and for Council approval to hire.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied yes, she would like to hire a full-time Communications Coordinator at the adjusted salary she listed.

Councilmember Riley commented he has had a problem with this position for years. He stated they are talking about taking away duties, and if they are going to fill it, he wanted to make sure they have good duties assigned from it. He referenced comments mentioned from Elk River staff that they thought were important; he thought those would be good things to add to the job description as they are things that haven't been done in the past. He stated if they fill it, he would have higher expectations than what they have had. Communication is vital and despite Council asking for more, he doesn't think they have gotten it. He wanted to know how Happy Days is going to be handled if it is removed from this position. He agreed with City Administrator Hagen's suggestions of duties to be added to the role including codification of policies.

Mayor Kuzma asked if Councilmember Riley was in favor of it.

Councilmember Riley replied he would like to see a job description with the additions.

Councilmember Musgrove agreed that if some of the job duties were added and delineated more specifically she could support it. She commented that she liked the fact that they would be separated but wasn't sure there would be enough job duties. She stated she appreciated the list of duties but noted that some of the things aren't everyday tasks but once a year or quarterly. She agreed that helping with compiling policies would be helpful. She stated in one of the Staff feedback surveys there was a comment that sometimes the communications duties required Staff to do more work. She wanted to ensure that the Communication Director could make sure that the task of communicating is made easy and not impede Staff from doing their work. She pointed out in case one, there was an example of how the County does social media postings were laid out. She thought a template like that for events could be created and followed for sending messages about events. She could support it with a more robust job description and having the events with it, noting that at times with growth, that position could be split or shared with Parks and Rec.

Administrative Services Director Lasher commented right now there is a Recreation Specialist temporarily increasing hours. That person is slated to go full time for Parks and Rec. She asked if she heard Councilmember Musgrove correctly that she could support the position if events were included.

Councilmember Musgrove replied yes, she would like to see it kept because some of the job duties and tasks now are not enough to make 40 hours. She suggested keeping the events activities as a part of the position but getting support as needed.

Administrative Services Director Lasher apologized for not having time to put together a full job description and indicated she will do that for the next meeting and before beginning recruitment. She stated Staff feels they can keep the person very busy. She stated when they left Elk River they learned a lot and it was very motivating.

Councilmember Riley commented that has been the question they have been asking for, what hasn't been getting done that could be. If they feel there are a lot of things that could be added, he would like to hear it.

Councilmember Howell commented it sounded like Administrative Services Director Lasher is looking for a different skill set and suggested talking to Elk River staff about how to get what they are looking for. She agreed that the communications coming out of Elk River look great. She thought that making the job more focused by keeping events out of this position made sense and suggested moving the events to the Parks Department.

Mayor Kuzma suggested recessing the meeting and reconvening after the City Council meeting to finish the rest of the agenda items.

Councilmember Specht commented it comes down to the person hired. He agreed that hopefully they can get someone, especially at the price they can offer, that specializes and is good at digital and is experienced with social media, he thought it would be good for a full-time position.

Councilmember Woestehoff concurred, adding they get what they pay for. If they invest in a good job description and focus the position by keeping the roles separate. He thought there was plenty to do for a City in terms of communications. He stated he supported any increase.

The consensus of the Council was to have a job description be brought back for the Communications Coordinator for Council review.

RECESS AND RECONVENE

Mayor Kuzma recessed the meeting at 6:55 p.m.

Mayor Kuzma reconvened the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

2.04: Discuss Park & Recreation Commission Council Liaison Appointment

City Administrator Hagen stated Councilmember Heineman's attendance for the remainder of the year and his term will be via remote attendance due to other complications; however, he will be able to attend the meetings. He stated Councilmember Heineman had suggested another Councilmember be set for the Parks and Recreation Commission Liaison. He stated Councilmember Musgrove indicated she currently serves as the alternate and would be willing to be the Council Liaison. He asked for discussion on that appointment along with an alternate.

Mayor Kuzma thanked Councilmember Musgrove for stepping up and offering to take on the role, which he supported.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if any others were interested or if they wanted to be an alternate.

Councilmember Riley offered to be the alternate if no one else was interested.

The consensus of the Council was to appoint Councilmember Musgrove as Park & Recreation Commission Council Liaison and Councilmember Riley as the alternate.

2.05: Organizational Culture-Roles and Responsibilities

City Attorney Knaak stated this case is to discuss Council roles and Council culture, what that means and for discussion. He stated the bottom line to begin discussion is to define the roles and responsibilities of a Councilmember. He stated there are certain roles and responsibilities that Councilmembers are all aware of and others that may not be known. He highlighted resources they can get from the League of Minnesota Cities and asked that they review the roles and responsibilities of the Staff, Councilmembers, and Mayor. He stated the relationship of Council with Staff is a critical relationship that he thinks is part of the concern that they have been having and thinks that should be looked at some. He stated the bottom line was the Council has a key responsibility in the management, overall, the direction of the City. He stated they don't have a responsibility over the day-to-day operations of the Staff or can they as an individual Councilmember direct Staff. He stated that is done through the delegation in the hiring of the City Administrator. He stated there may be some need to reinforce what Councilmembers should be doing which can be done by the whole Council through trainings by the League of Minnesota Cities.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that when she was a new Councilmember she went to the League and attended meetings for new Councilmembers. She stated she found some of the information helpful but a lot of it was really high level and didn't get into the specifics. She stated she thought it was more helpful to learn on the job and have a resource in the City Administrator. She asked if any of the Councilmembers had feedback on the League's advanced trainings.

City Attorney Knaak replied they come very highly recommended but he didn't want to suggest that anyone was doing anything wrong.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if any of the Councilmembers thought the training would be of value.

City Attorney Knaak commented that any of the Councilmembers can use him as a resource by asking questions confidentially and he will give answers or advise confidentially. He understood Councilmember Musgrove's question about the training and stated it is a good idea. He stated another benefit is meeting other Councilmembers from around the State to network with and learn from.

Councilmember Howell agreed the League has really good resources.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented he attended the Elected Leaders Institute when he first started on the Council. He stated it was all remote so he didn't get the neighboring cities experience but agreed the League has a lot of good publications and information. He thought the course he attended was helpful. He asked if it is a part of membership to send people to trainings or if there is an additional cost.

City Administrator Hagen replied it is an additional cost. He thought it was around \$200 to \$300 per person.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if it was correct that there is a budget for training.

City Administrator Hagen replied he would have to check on that.

City Attorney Knaak commented he wasn't saying there is a lack of experience, quite the opposite, he has attended Ramsey Council meetings that are run well despite disagreements. He thought the League training and participation is a wonderful resource and recommended.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if there are other resources he would recommend, such as the Humphrey Institute.

City Attorney Knaak replied if he saw anything at the Humphrey Institute that is directed at elected officials he will make sure Council sees it. He stated what he likes about the League is about elected officials and they have wonderful resources online also. He stated some of the issues this Council has are difficult but overall the way people are here is positive. He stated one of the reasons he wanted to work with Ramsey was because of the difficult issues and because they weren't a dysfunctional Council.

Councilmember Specht commented he enjoyed the training when he went through it and would be willing to go through another. He asked if meetings are supposed to follow *Robert's Rules* and if there was an ordinance or something that is generally accepted.

City Attorney Knaak replied in their Charter they have the right to establish their own rules and procedures. He stated he has not seen the word *Robert's Rules of Order* anywhere in the ordinances or anywhere in the Charter. He stated that is a good thing. He stated the League recommends if they don't have to, they don't use it. He stated he has his own, there is an updated version of general procedural rules and he has others available. He stated if he were asked a question he would never revert to *Robert's Rules*. He stated they don't follow *Robert's Rules*.

Councilmember Specht asked how they know what they do follow.

Councilmember Howell replied they have Section 2-50 in the City Code that talks about the presiding officer that has a lot of content that she assumes, if they expect residents to follow the City Code, Council should too and that has a lot that covers conduct, point of orders being called, meeting to be followed, and similar items. She suggested he look that up.

City Attorney Knaak agreed and by raising the issue of point of order, which happened at the Council meeting before last, that is appropriate.

Councilmember Specht asked if there was something that gives specifics. He knew there was a motion and discussion or discussion before a motion.

City Attorney Knaak replied he has a PowerPoint package he could give about Council procedure, how it is done, and not done. It has the new standard rules of procedure.

Councilmember Riley asked if that could be sent to the whole Council.

City Attorney Knaak confirmed this or he could do it as a presentation to Council. He stated Council could just as easily read it.

Councilmember Specht stated he has looked at other city's agendas and asked if the way they do agendas is something that should be looked at or if it is pretty standard.

City Attorney Knaak replied there is a general right way of doing things. He offered to put together the presentation. He added there is a separate organization for Mayor Kuzma under the Minnesota League of Cities and the *Mayor's Handbook* is one of the most useful things they have put together as a good resource on procedures and such.

Councilmember Musgrove stated the Charter has some direction for Council, Mayor, and City Administrator. She stated she has gone back to that several time as a reference.

City Attorney Knaak stated the issue came up when they were talking about what kind of approvals were required for the hiring or firing of an individual and the Charter puts the Council in charge of that as the final decision makers or could be delegate to the City Administrator. He stated usually the City Administrator will seek approval for a major hire but that is an additional control Council has.

Councilmember Musgrove asked about direction about the statement that Council is not to direct Staff and if the point of contact is the City Administrator or the department heads. She stated she generally never speaks to any Staff but lately there have been comments that Council has been directing or demeaning Staff. She asked if the administration hears that, would it be brought forward to Council because she thought there was a disconnect between that communication and her reality of her not communicating with Staff. She is looking for understanding that is not the case or if it is, can it be brought to Council attention.

City Attorney Knaak stated no one is pointing fingers in any part of this discussion.

Councilmember Musgrove repeated the question that if that were happening if Council would hear about it because it is her understanding that Work Sessions are where Council has discussion, decision making, and communication as to direction for Staff as a Council.

City Attorney Knaak replied if there was a question about a Councilmember communicating with Staff or intimidating Staff, it should go to the City Administrator. It is the City Administrator's responsibility to go to the Councilmember and say that is outside the chain on command and that could bring some trouble. He stated that is not to say that the Council should be insulated from the administration. He encouraged ride-alongs with the Police to see what they are doing and similar things that help in learning what it is they are administering. He encouraged Council to get to know the employees but thought it was important for administrative efficiency and potential

legal issues that leave the direction, their job-related stuff, with the administration. He added the other key thing, that hasn't been a problem here at all, is that there aren't individual Councilmembers trying to run departments. He stated maybe there is a misunderstanding on the part of the Staff but that kind of thing shouldn't be happening.

Councilmember Specht asked if Councilmembers hear from residents about an issue, such as a park, if communication should go to the Mayor or if communication should go directly to the City Administrator.

City Administrator Hagen replied that is something that can be worked out as time goes on. He stated some Staff are far more comfortable talking directly to Council than others. Not that they are mean or directing work but some Staff can be intimidated simply by the title of Councilmember. He stated shifting things going forward will depend on the individual Staff member. He stated as issues come up, such as mowing at a park, an email could go to the department head and he would appreciate being copied on it to keep him in the loop. He stated he has asked the Staff to do the same if they are sending a message to Council so he has an idea of what was said.

Councilmember Howell commented that just because people say things, it doesn't mean it is accurate. She stated they aren't going to be able to control the media. They have to look at their own interactions and decide if they are reasonable or not.

City Attorney Knaak commented if they are getting those kinds of rumors, it is something that needs to be addressed. He suggested at a Council meeting they address that this is in the media and say categorically that is not the case, that is not a part of the culture, instead of letting it fester.

Councilmember Howell agreed, adding they are going to have to change the direction. If it doesn't come from the presiding officer's seat, it is not going to change. There can be disagreements but the way things have been handled lately and assigning intense malignant to every decision or poor question, is really unhelpful and is creating the Council culture. It creates content for the papers and reflects poorly on the City. She stated the City Attorney has had good advice and the League does have helpful resources but it is going to take all of the Councilmembers. She suggested there is a stop to putting Councilmembers in Political categories.

City Attorney Knaak stated he has gotten the sense that that is going on but from his perspective, it isn't as apparent as they might think. He stated one thing that you can never get rid of, especially with growth and the issues Ramsey has, is politics. He stated they are going to be raised at City Council meetings but it doesn't have to be taken personally. He stated disagreements are going to happen and have happened. He stated this Council has gotten through them just fine and he expected that will continue. He thought the reason why the Mayor raised the topic is to continue to get through this without it becoming dysfunctional.

Councilmember Specht referenced the examples given and asked if there were parliamentarian, when a member says point of order, how can that kind of thing be handled better.

City Attorney Knaak replied the idea behind a good set of procedures is they don't get wrapped up in them. It is supposed to be functional and conducts business. He stated he will happily supply information and provide the Mayor with his own copy that is recommended by the League. He stated with something like that, he would expect to be included.

Mayor Kuzma stated his goal with bringing up this issue was to try to bring some civility back because he felt like they were getting a little out of control.

City Attorney Knaak stated he could see that but from his perspective it isn't that bad. He stated whatever issues they think they have, they are still at a level functionally and personally that are still doable, with a little bit of effort, to continue the civility. He stated he would have been happy to see the behavior of the Council last night in comparison to other councils.

Councilmember Musgrove agreed with Councilmember Howell that sometimes things get said and it maligns Ramsey; that is what she brought up as a concern. That it was spoken at the podium that the Council is harassing Staff and that is what was published in the newspaper. She stated that isn't true as far as she is concerned. She asked if that isn't happening how do they, as a Council, counter that message.

City Attorney Knaak agreed with Councilmember Howell's statement that they can't control what gets written, but in some cities the Communications Director has the added role, to put out a corrective press release to proactively respond to negative comments that are questionable. He stated that has never been done in Ramsey but he thought there is value in that. He stated he had experience with negative press in a local newspaper and the response he got from the editor was that it wasn't personal, they were selling newspapers. He stated what they can do is to make sure whatever message gets sent out from the City reflects accurately the position of the City.

Councilmember Howell commented she thought part of the problem started here. She recounted events from the May 24, 2022 meeting which created a narrative about her from a fellow Councilmember which she felt was untrue and for which she was attacked in the paper. She asked how she was supposed to get past that narrative. She stated Councilmember Riley has been unhappy with the Communications Department and somehow that got put on her in the *Star Tribune* also. She stated she understood that the paper writes its own articles but pointed out it is something to intensely disagree but being factually accurate based on the meetings would be helpful.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated Councilmembers Howell and Musgrove brought the case forward.

Councilmember Howell replied Councilmember Musgrove brought the case forward.

Councilmember Woestehoff replied it takes two people to bring a case forward.

Councilmember Howell countered Councilmember Musgrove brought the case forward on her own.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked how the case got on the agenda at the next meeting.

Councilmember Howell replied that was not the same case. She stated she was very specific.

Councilmember Woestehoff replied he saw what she was saying and was misunderstanding.

Councilmember Howell stated she brought forward fact finding, that was not her case, but a different one. She suggested they look at the information, some of it was surprising to her, and then make decisions based on the information. She suggested taking a step back and knowing they may not agree on things, but asked that things someone else brought forward not be assigned to her because it's not helpful and ends up in the paper. She stated it is frustrating and not helpful to the City.

Councilmember Woestehoff agreed. He stated most of his comments during the meeting were directed to Councilmember Musgrove. He stated Councilmember Howell happened to be sitting next to him and being combative, therefore he was talking to her.

Councilmember Howell replied she didn't think she was being combative.

City Attorney Knaak commented it sounds like there is something to be learned from all this in terms of what can be interpreted and what can't be interpreted. He thought it was worthwhile and they are still talking to each other, which is important. He hoped they could get past it. He asked Mayor Kuzma what else he should talk about.

Mayor Kuzma replied he thought they had touched on things that were important and they could all better themselves by taking a look at some of the League information.

City Attorney Knaak stated he will follow up with the email with some links. He encouraged Council to look at them because it is useful information from the League. He added, for those that might be interested, there is both an advanced and not advanced course where they get a chance to network with other City Councilmembers.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if City Attorney Knaak was also going to provide a list for procedures.

Councilmember Specht added the PowerPoint.

City Attorney Knaak replied he will give the PowerPoint, do the presentation, or both. He stated he will send the PowerPoint and they can decide if they have heard enough on this topic or if they want more.

3. TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

3.01: Review Future Topics/Calendar

City Administrator Hagen stated the budget will consume the vast majority of meetings moving forward. He stated at the July 12, 2022 meeting they will have the first budget meeting along with some additional Staffing discussions. He stated other topics coming up included the water treatment facility, the funding tied to budget, and some of the “to be determined items.” He asked if Council had any suggestions.

Councilmember Howell asked for future topics if they could discuss asking QCTV not to feature anyone running for Council. She stated then the City would look and act neutral in the election.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if she was meaning to ask QCTV to not include them in their special stories.

Councilmember Howell replied she meant any candidates, so if they are on boards or anything like that they will be filmed but no special features unless every candidate were to be allotted the same time.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated in his experience from being on QCTV, they had intentionally stopped doing features during the election.

Councilmember Musgrove commented every Councilmember, twice a year, used to do an interview and highlight things going on in the City. She stated they stopped that format and are doing the post. She stated she is not getting any feedback about how each Councilmember is getting a role in that, which she thought was important in being a representative for the community. She asked to know where that is at because they used to be assigned a month in the year so they knew it was coming, now it is more random. She suggested there should be more format to it.

Councilmember Riley asked if she was suggesting telling QCTV to change.

Councilmember Musgrove replied no, but some people have been featured in the post and others haven't.

Councilmembers Specht asked if she was asking because he had done one and they used to do those.

Councilmember Musgrove replied no, Winter Kucharski with QCTV asked and said that different people were featured in the post and she talked about that.

Councilmember Riley commented he hasn't been on TV in two years.

Mayor Kuzma agreed.

Councilmember Musgrove stated maybe Councilmembers aren't on anymore.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented he thought the post was mostly about Chamber things.

Councilmember Specht commented maybe it wasn't the post because he knew what she meant. He stated he had gone in the studio.

Councilmember Musgrove commented the community saw them in that and that they represented Ramsey. She thought that was a part of their communication.

Councilmember Specht asked if she was suggesting bringing that item back.

Councilmember Musgrove replied that was one of the ways they fulfilled their communication goals about featuring different activities.

Councilmember Riley suggested she talk to the QCTV board member.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated he can bring it up at the next meeting, but there isn't a meeting in July so it will be another two to three months.

Councilmember Specht asked if Councilmember Woestehoff wanted to bring up the election thing or if an email should be sent.

Councilmember Woestehoff replied he could send an email. He stated he didn't see it being a big issue.

Councilmember Specht stated he had been interviewed on radio by Public Works because no one else wanted to speak but stated he would be conscience of it too.

Councilmember Musgrove asked to add the rental property ordinance to the list of topics to discuss.

Councilmember Riley asked if it is still planned for July 12, 2022 to talk about PACT planning. He requested Council get a lot more information because there has been a lot of things going on. After watching the last couple Planning Commission meetings, he thought it seemed there are a lot of moving parts, more than what would make sense for a typical case.

City Administrator Hagen asked if there was a specific item Councilmember Riley heard.

Councilmember Riley replied the water and drainage are big issues and is being debated.

Councilmember Woestehoff suggested the Council look at the last Planning Commission case because there are 15 attachments with a lot of data for that case. He stated the Planning Commission has seen it a number of times. He stated the last Planning Commission case has a lot of good detail. He didn't think the Lower Rum River Water Management Organization had seen it yet. He thought the watershed issue was a big concern for residents.

Councilmember Musgrove stated she thought they missed the deadline for the next meeting.

City Administrator Hagen corrected Ramsey Staff said it wasn't good enough to go forward.

Councilmember Musgrove agreed they needed to provide more information, which they didn't.

City Administrator Hagen thought the key message to send to the public is that Ramsey Staff is reviewing it and have said the plans aren't good enough.

Councilmember Riley replied that is important information to include because he didn't know that. He stated he is asking for more information and maybe the attachments are what he is asking for.

Councilmember Woestehoff added he had asked City Engineer Westby at the last Planning meeting to talk about 161st and he got generalities which he understood that is all they could do. He thought the reconstruction next year could have a lot of issues with that development in terms of turn lanes and things because there are a lot of questions about it still. He agreed there is a lot of information with the case and he planned to send his concerns to City Administrator Hagen so he would have time to prepare.

Councilmember Howell stated that some residents had reached out and said they had a Zoom meeting with JB Vang and asked what the outcomes were from that, were there any positives.

City Administrator Hagen replied not really. He stated the big talking points have been the storm water, traffic and noise. What did come out of it was that the engineer for JB Vang looked at some culverts size and came to the meeting and said one idea was to reduce the culvert size to match the other one. He stated they also talked about adding about four inches to the berm height to hold more water and help with control. He stated another bigger item was the turn lane on Variolite to get on to 161st northbound and questioning if that is long enough for the busses. Also looking at the internal traffic patterns and ensuring they know how much staging area there is.

Councilmember Musgrove asked what the decision was regarding the road onto Variolite.

City Administrator Hagen replied not at Staff's recommendation or the traffic study, largely because the direction of the Planning Commission was looking at it from a bus standpoint, right-in, right-out, when not all of the busses come from the north. He didn't think it made sense for the road.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if that would add more impervious surface for more water runoff.

City Administrator Hagen replied they would just make a bigger pond. He stated there were some good talking points but unfortunately they didn't put it in memo form to make an addendum to the traffic study but were talking about acceleration of busses if they go on to Variolite as opposed to people driving the speed limit coming over a hill and the safety issues there. He stated he asked for a traffic memo because it is easier to understand.

Councilmember Specht asked about the feelings on both sides and if PACT seemed frustrated.

City Administrator Hagen replied he thought they were mostly concerned about financing and what interest rates are doing and project costs.

4. MAYOR / COUNCIL / STAFF INPUT

None.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian S. Hagen
City Administrator

ATTEST:

Katie M. Schmidt
Deputy City Clerk

Drafted by Joni Helmeke
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.