

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, November 22, 2022, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

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

Also Present: City Administrator Brian Hagen
City Engineer/Interim Public Works Director Westby
Finance Director Diana Lund
Interim Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood
Administrative Services Director Colleen Lasher
City Attorney Fritz Knaak
Communications Coordinator Pat Johnson
Recreation Specialist Marla Martinez-Flynn

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: Quarterly Communications Update - Q4 2022

City Administrator Hagen introduced Pat Johnson, the new Communications Coordinator.

Communications Coordinator Johnson reviewed the Staff report and reviewed the numbers of engagement on the social media posts.

Mayor Kuzma asked if she had worked with the team on the City website.

Communications Coordinator Johnson shared that she has a meeting in December concerning the website.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that she has noticed more graphics and information in these graphics in the last few months. She thinks this is very helpful.

Councilmember Specht stated that everything looks great so far and he is excited to see more ideas moving forward.

Councilmember Heineman shared he thinks this is moving in a good direction and thanked Communications Coordinator Johnson for her work in spearheading this. He wanted to highlight the posts in regard to QCTV as they show community involvement.

Communications Coordinator Johnson stated she will be getting out into the community and will be taking a video of Public Works putting up the Christmas tree to get the community excited about the tree lighting ceremony. She shared that she is thinking about posting content to TikTok as well.

There was a consensus of the Council.

2.02: Discuss the Format and Process for the City Administrator's Performance Evaluation

Administrative Services Director Lasher reviewed the Staff report on the six month performance evaluation for City Administrator Hagen. She asked Council for clarification on a few questions in the employment contract as well as the software used to conduct the evaluation.

Mayor Kuzma asked if there was an alternative to software that has been used in the past, which is CheckPoint 360.

Administrative Services Director Lasher she reviewed what the CheckPoint 360 evaluation includes and stated that now that the CheckPoint 360 allows the ability to comment she does not recommend any other alternative.

Mayor Kuzma stated he is comfortable staying with CheckPoint 360.

Councilmember Specht asked what the cost was associated with CheckPoint 360.

Administrative Services Director Lasher stated the cost has gone down by almost \$200 and is now \$460 and her only involvement is sending in email addresses and setting a deadline and outside of that there is virtually no Staff time used.

Councilmember Howell asked about software surrounding cities' use.

Administrative Services Director Lasher stated some cities use CheckPoint 360. She stated that a performance evaluation could be developed based on the position profile and core competencies as it relates to the specific position.

Councilmember Woestehoff said it makes sense as the price is low and uses minimal Staff time.

Councilmember Musgrove agreed with Councilmember Woestehoff as the Council is already familiar with the software. She asked if they are looking at an increase in salary at the six month mark or if this is just a review.

Administrative Services Director Lasher stated that she discussed with City Administrator Hagen and it was his understanding that an increase in salary would be considered at the one year mark. She added there will be a review at the six month mark and the one year mark in June of 2023.

Councilmember Musgrove asked about the parameters for a salary increase.

Administrative Services Director Lasher shared there was recently a market study on city administrator positions and the position is priced competitively. She explained that when he hits his one year mark evaluation the only reason the salary step change would be withheld is if City Administrator Hagen's work was unsatisfactory. She added that the step change is a 4% increase.

The consensus of the Council was to keep the CheckPoint 360 software for the evaluation.

Administrative Services Director Lasher then asked about those who would complete the evaluation which would be the Council, the City Administrator and his direct reports.

The consensus of the Council was to keep with the same recipient list.

Administrative Services Director Lasher stated that a former contract stated that the City Administrator would meet with the Mayor prior to the full Council to go over the review; however, City Administrator Hagen's contract does not state this. She asked for clarification on this.

Mayor Kuzma stated he would like to meet with him prior.

City Administrator Hagen shared he was open to anything as long as there was group feedback as well.

Administrative Services Director Lasher asked for clarification that the next performance review will be at the one year mark of employment.

Councilmember Specht asked what benefit the one on one meeting with the Mayor would have.

Mayor Kuzma shared it allows him to have a good understanding of where the report is and if he has anything in particular to discuss.

Councilmember Specht questioned why this could not be done as a whole.

Mayor Kuzma added that everyone would have the ability to meet with City Administrator Hagen individually.

There was a consensus of the Council.

2.03: Acknowledge Proposed 2023 Rental Fees for the Municipal Center and Park Facilities

Interim Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood reviewed the Staff report and updated fee schedule for the park facilities use.

Councilmember Musgrove asked about the special event permit fee for all groups versus for profit groups and asked if that should be clarified.

Interim Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood stated the for profit permit is for an event where items will be sold.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the special event facility maintenance fee is enough to cover the cost of maintenance.

Interim Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood stated the special event permit fee and maintenance fee are adequate as they do not require a lot of Staff time or work. He moved on to discuss the fees associated with City Hall room rentals. He stated that most of these rates are hourly to be better managed.

Administrative Services Director Lasher requested feedback on converting these rates completely to hourly and doing away with flat rates overall. She stated there was talk of simplifying the categories and merging some together on the fee schedule. She added that they contacted many cities concerning their fees and almost every city contacted charge rental fees by the hour.

Councilmember Specht stated he likes the idea of moving to only hourly rates. He asked if some of the smaller rooms are rented out.

Administrative Services Director Lasher said yes, there are five smaller rooms that can be rented out.

Councilmember Specht asked if an individual would have the same rate as general public groups.

Administrative Services Director Lasher said yes; however the fees are too high for hourly. She stated the average rate for residents was \$45.99 an hour and for non-residents it is \$56.44 an hour.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if they have looked at having the weekend or after hours rate be 125% or 150% of the regular rate.

Administrative Services Director Lasher said that has been looked at and showed where it was addressed on the fee schedule.

Councilmember Riley shared he liked the hourly rate idea and shared that he is concerned with who will be monitoring this and suggested that this be done in two hour blocks.

Administrative Services Director Lasher stated that all reservations are a two hour minimum and thereafter by the hour.

Councilmember Howell asked if the room rentals produce any revenue.

Administrative Services Director Lasher explained that it varies but overall it is a loss.

Councilmember Howell stated that if the goal was for generating profit she would recommend to undercut the price from the closest city and if the goal is to serve the people and provide them space for meetings then she would recommend to keep the prices affordable for residents and raise the rates for people outside the community.

Mayor Kuzma recommended making sure that the costs are being covered at the very least.

Administrative Services Director Lasher added that the City used to charge for IT and now this charge is built in which definitely results in an overall loss.

Councilmember Specht stated he is torn because he wants to respect Staff's time and not create additional work but during the day he would love to see the building be utilized. He asked if the rooms are pretty well rented out.

Interim Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood said that this building is rented out sporadically. He added that whoever is accepting reservations often blocks out more time to allow time for cleaning.

Councilmember Specht stated he likes the higher rate for weekends and after hours and asked if there was a way during the week that the rates could be lower to make it more open to the public.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if the only way to reserve a room was to call the front desk.

Interim Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood said yes.

Administrative Services Director Lasher stated that City Staff uses these rooms more than the public do and it is important for Staff to be able to move things around which is why it is not on Civic Rec.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if there was a way that this could be booked through Outlook.

Administrative Services Director Lasher stated she could follow up with IT on that request.

Councilmember Woestehoff explained that this could help save Staff time on the front end if it is more self-service oriented.

Administrative Services Director Lasher apologized for misspeaking and said that the rooms can be booked through Outlook.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if Outlook could be linked to Civic Rec.

Administrative Services Director Lasher stated she will find out. She asked if general public fees should be lowered to line up with the average of other cities.

Councilmember Specht said he would like to see the non-resident fee higher.

Councilmember Musgrove stated she likes the charges as they are now but would still like to be flexible and accommodating of Staff.

Administrative Services Director Lasher explained the difference from the current fees to the newly proposed fees for a non-resident.

Councilmember Howell stated that she agreed with Councilmember Specht's point concerning lowering the cost for residents and raising it a little higher for non-residents. She recommended making the rates for non-residents slightly cheaper than that of other cities.

Administrative Services Director Lasher stated she would like to bring this back to Council again. She noted a correction on the facility use policy. The policy states that the it was amended on January 5th, 2022, which were good intentions and did not happen. She stated that Staff had started a new draft but was never adopted. She knew it was important for Council to have a note in the facility use policy that language would be added for the requirement that candidate forums and election related meetings must be open to the public. She stated this will be added.

Councilmember Heineman asked for clarification that if candidate forums were meeting at no cost they would be open to the public, but if the room was rented the forums can do what they want with it.

Administrative Services Director Lasher stated she was not aware of this.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that these meetings are generally in the chamber which does not have a rental policy.

Councilmember Heineman was not sure if this applied to the policy, he just wanted to bring it forward.

Administrative Services Director Lasher said she will prepare a marked up version of the policy and will bring it back to the Council.

The consensus of the Council was to table the discussion to be revisited at a later meeting.

2.04: Strategy Plan: Implement Recreation Program Plan - Happy Days and Recreation Overview and Analysis

Interim Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood reviewed the Staff report concerning the recreation programming for 2023. He started by looking at the cost for providing ice skating for the community.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if this is strictly for open skating or if it is also for hockey games.

Interim Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood stated that attendance is typically for open skating and the rinks are rarely reserved for hockey practices.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked about the rink rental.

Interim Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood stated that people can reserve a rink but it is at no cost. He said if there was a rink reservation fee they would likely not get anyone who was interested.

Councilmember Specht asked if the numbers recorded count duplicates if the same person comes to ice skate several days.

Interim Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood said that was correct.

Mayor Kuzma stated he does not see how the City could not offer this as it is a staple to the community.

Interim Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood explained that he is not suggesting any change in the program at this time, other than a shortage of rink attendants. He said this will also allow them to gauge the importance from the community. He said in the future they may look at closing the facility at the elementary school, understanding that Central Park is likely enough.

Councilmember Riley stated that this is really important to the community: however, this needs to be reexamined.

Councilmember Heineman asked if there are any thoughts into shutting down the ice rinks and moving them to a more premium location.

Interim Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood stated that they have tried creating ice in the downtown area several times and these areas were not well received by the public. He added that the trend seems to be leaning towards indoor skating.

Councilmember Heineman shared that Maple Grove has a nice rink that resembles a walking path and suggested looking at what other cities are doing.

Interim Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood stated that there is a quarter mile skating path at Central Park.

Councilmember Specht stated that the consolidation of the skating sites is a good idea as the next step.

Recreation Specialist Martinez-Flynn continued the presentation by discussing Happy Days and giving a review of the 2022 Happy Days. She stated the total Staff time surrounding Happy Days totaled 947 hours and the estimated cost was \$56,631.

Mayor Kuzma asked how this compared to the previous years.

Interim Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood explained that the metrics for Staff time have not been examined in previous years.

City Administrator Hagen asked if planning time is accounted for in the Staff hours.

Recreation Specialist Martinez-Flynn said no. She reviewed recommendations and changes that will help in planning Happy Days in 2023.

Councilmember Woestehoff suggested potentially adding the power to food trucks as an additional fee.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the fee that is charged to these vendors does not cover the electricity cost.

Recreation Specialist Martinez-Flynn said that is correct.

Councilmember Musgrove expressed her appreciation for Recreation Specialist Martinez-Flynn for looking into the scope of this project and figuring out ways this can be done better.

Councilmember Riley stated that he thinks a key will be to find volunteers for this event.

Councilmember Howell thanked Recreation Specialist Martinez-Flynn for her amazing work and shared how impressed she was with her work.

Interim Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood continued the presentation by discussing the specific recreation programming. He stated his appreciation for the recreation programming being mentioned in the strategic plan. He reviewed the specific programs.

Recreation Specialist Martinez-Flynn reviewed how the programs benefit local businesses.

Interim Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood discussed the model used to think about fee based programs.

Recreation Specialist Martinez-Flynn reviewed some of the programs and their cost per person. She stated that the community has received 31,489 recreation experience hours so far in 2022, which includes all programming, including concerts and Happy Days.

Interim Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood shared that at the work session on August 23rd, 2022 Council asked Staff to look at increased revenue or cost savings relative to the budget line idea for 2023 for keeping the Recreation Specialist at 40 hours per week. He reviewed the revenue forecast and savings moving forward.

Councilmember Specht added that the story book around Cottonwood Trail in 2020 was really great.

Interim Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood that they are looking at an ice story on the skating trail in Central park for this year and pair it up with Storytime with a Cop.

There was a consensus of the Council.

2.05: Discussion: Proposed Verizon Cell Tower Lease Agreement

City Administrator Hagen reviewed the Staff report concerning Verizon's request to change their lease agreement. He explained that a company called MD7 had sent a proposed lease amendment that would keep everything with the current agreement the same except extending the length of the lease and changing the monthly revenue. He asked if Council would support meeting MD7 in the middle of the amount they proposed and the current rate, requested around \$2,600 a month.

City Attorney Knaak asked if there has been any experience with this company.

City Engineer/Interim Public Works Director Westby stated it is not always smooth but they always make it work.

City Attorney Knaak suggested coming up with language surrounding the access and responsibilities that the company will have.

Councilmember Musgrove agreed.

Councilmember Riley suggested giving City Administrator Hagen the power to negotiate this.

There was a consensus of the Council.

3. TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

3.01: Review Future Topics/ Calendar

Noted.

4. MAYOR / COUNCIL / STAFF INPUT

None.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian S. Hagen

City Administrator

ATTEST:

Katie M. Schmidt
City Clerk

Drafted by Ava Rokosz
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.