

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, December 13, 2022, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor Kuzma
Councilmember Ryan Heineman
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 Bruce Westby
Finance Director Diana Lund
Police Chief Jeff Katers
Interim Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Mark Riverblood
Administrative Services Director Colleen Lasher
Community Development Director Stephanie Hanson
Planning Manager Todd Larson
Economic Development Manager Sean Sullivan
IT Manager Jason Frederickson
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: Discuss Community Service Officer Staffing

Administrative Services Director Lasher reviewed the staff report and gave an update on the current Community Service Officer (CSO) staffing situation. She shared Staff's recommendation of having one full-time CSO and one part-time, as opposed to three part-time officers. She stated the financial impact would be \$953.

Mayor Kuzma asked how this affects insurance coverage for full-time employees versus part-time.

Administrative Services Director Lasher shared that as a full-time employee, the individual would be eligible for health and life insurance, which is accounted for in the \$953 increase.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked Police Chief Katers if there is a desire for the current CSO to become a sworn in officer.

Police Chief Katers shared that is a potential as they always look to hire internally. He stated they are asking for this change due to the hiring challenges they have faced. He shared that the current CSO has helped alleviate calls from the police officers.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked about the current schedules of CSOs.

Police Chief Katers stated that with this change the schedule would be more consistent as the part-time CSOs are students and their work schedule works around their school schedule.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the full-time position counts towards the metric of the number of police officers per the number of residents.

Police Chief Katers stated that CSOs are not considered part of a licensed position so they do not count in the metric.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the part-time position being discussed is for 2023 or 2024.

Administrative Services Director Lasher stated it would be for hiring in January or February of 2023.

There was a consensus of the Council to eliminate one part-time Community Service Officer position and increase Ms. Katie McNally from 25 hours per week to 40 hours per week.

2.02: The Waterfront - Status of Community Building/Splash Pad Planning and COR Study Update

Interim Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood reviewed the staff report and gave an update on the proposed community building and splash pad. He shared that the COR public infrastructure analysis will be completed in the coming weeks. He introduced Greg Houck, the architect on the project.

Mr. Houck continued the discussion of the project by reviewing the site plan and sharing his architectural credentials.

Mayor Kuzma asked about parking.

Interim Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood shared that they will be working through the numbers with the square footage but think that most of it will be on-street parking and possibly more adjacent to the park.

Councilmember Specht asked about the capacity of the splash pad.

Interim Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood stated the purpose of the presentation is to make sure that the Council opinion is that they are heading in the right direction and other details will be worked out later. He stated that they will want to make sure it can accommodate busy summer days.

Councilmember Musgrove asked about seeing a rendering of using the green space behind the splash pad as extra splash pad space. She asked if there was another location for the yoga room that was not so close to the restaurant.

Mr. Houck stated that this project is still in the very beginnings so anything can be changed.

Interim Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood explained that the landscape elements behind the splash pad will provide shade and line of sight to the splash pad for parents or grandparents.

Councilmember Woestehoff shared that this is a great investment for the residents and economic development. He shared he had concerns of the splash pad not being large enough and asked for more information concerning the lake.

Interim Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood explained they will have to see what the grading analysis looks like. He stated they could make the front edge of the lake smaller to allow room for the splash pad. He pointed out the intention of the boardwalk and marina area. He shared that the lake would be clean water.

Councilmember Heineman echoed Councilmember Woestehoff's point that this will benefit the EDA as this is a huge draw for businesses.

Councilmember Riley shared he thinks the project is on track.

Councilmember Specht asked if the City would own the space and rent it out to a restaurant.

Interim Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood said yes, the intention is to have the restaurant rent. He added that he toured the Minneapolis Park Board's restaurants and they are all very successful and bring in lots of revenue. He noted that Mr. Houck said this is a quality project that would attract those kinds of restaurants.

Mr. Houck explained how this would be a win-win situation for the restaurant and the City.

Councilmember Specht asked if the intention is to bond for this project.

Interim Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood said this will be discussed later but there are different funding sources.

Councilmember Musgrove asked when TIF District 14 and District 2 expire.

Mr. Houck shared that for TIF 14, expenditures need to be made prior to November of 2023 and TIF 2 is decertified, essentially meaning that it is cash that was created by a previous TIF District that can be spent City wide.

There was a consensus of the Council.

2.03: 2023 Legislative Priorities

City Administrator Hagen reviewed the 2022 legislative outcomes and discussed 2023 legislative goals.

Mayor Kuzma asked if this could be extended.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan explained that there is typically a five-year role for a TIF district and the City was granted a five year extension. He said it is worth asking for an additional extension.

Councilmember Musgrove asked Economic Development Manager Sullivan if he would recommend asking for three or five additional years.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan said he would ask for an additional three in the hopes that they are at least granted one. He thinks there will be some opportunity to spend TIF reimbursable projects related to the park. He shared that the wetland situation has slowed the project down.

Councilmember Musgrove recommended adding the three year ask.

Mayor Kuzma asked if they could argue that COVID slowed down the process.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan said they could use COVID as an argument as there have been many hurdles facing the project over the years.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that she would like to ask for the Met Council to have local representatives on it.

Councilmember Riley said if there is a coalition he would definitely take part.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that currently elected officials cannot be elected to the Met Council; however, any of them can be a part of their advisory commissions. He imagines there would be the push back from the Met Council. He stated the best pitch for the projects are more aligned with infrastructure. He thinks they should ask for up to \$20,000,000 for the water treatment plant.

Mayor Kuzma stated he would lobby for \$20,000,000 for the water treatment plant.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if there are a lot of other cities in the same situation where they are needing to build water treatment plants. She also asked if they would be more successful by asking for a moderate amount.

Mayor Kuzma said they should ask for all that they need.

City Administrator Hagen stated he can look into what the league is putting together as far as Met Council representation. In regard to the bonding ask, the estimated excess budget is at \$18,000,000,000 and he hopes that there is a lot more funding available.

Councilmember Howell concurred with Councilmember Woestehoff that the likelihood of representation on the Met Council is slim.

Councilmember Woestehoff acknowledged that other cities also have needs for water treatment plants. He thinks the advantage is that they got their bill on the table last year and they have advocates.

Councilmember Musgrove stated she is in support of the \$20,000,000 ask.

City Administrator Hagen stated this can be discussed more at the next meeting, if they ask for \$20,000,000 if the State can come back with a counter offer that the City would appreciate.

Councilmember Heineman asked about the closed landfill legislation that allows the landfill to be put back on the tax rolls. He asked what that would look like and what other cities have done it.

City Administrator Hagen stated this was on last year's legislative priorities list. He said that good progress has been made on this. With the City's landfill, funding has been approved to pay off debt on the landfill. He stated they have gone through this process before with the land to the south. He added that Connexus Energy is on board with a solar farm project.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan stated that they met with MPCA and they expressed the statutory problem of selling land for this purpose. He explained how they were able to do this in the past in a way to maneuver the State statutes. He stated the City asked them to consult with their attorneys, who looked at it and they do not agree that this is okay or how it was done in the past. They were charged with doing more research. He shared that there is the potential to do something legislatively to enable the transaction. He said this could be added to the list of legislative considerations. He thinks bringing this land online for industrial purposes has proven to be a good partnership with MPCA.

Councilmember Heineman thinks this is a great idea.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan added that the tricky part is that there will be a third party that works on the Connexus project which is a lease situation not a purchase situation.

Councilmember Musgrove stated she understands the request for the release of the land development was not for the landfill itself but for the land around it. She asked if the Connexus project would go onto the land that they are asking to be released.

City Administrator Hagen said that Connexus is looking at the flat ground below the landfill and the City would be seeking land outside of what Connexus is needing.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if this is land that the City or the State owns. She stated she is not in favor of having a solar panel area here and she would rather see other development.

City Administrator Hagen stated that there would be local approvals that would be required. He added that Connexus started these discussions last legislative session, unbeknownst to the City. He said they would still need approval from the City and things will start to come forward soon. He asked Council if they wanted to have a discussion to give feedback to Connexus.

Mayor Kuzma shared that he does not have a problem with the solar panel farm.

Councilmember Howell stated she thinks it would be aesthetic pollution and asked what the suggested alternative uses would be for the property.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan reiterated that the idea of having a solar farm on landfills is either a State driven or MPCA driven initiative and this is something that they would like to happen on a lot of their sites. He said this was heavily discussed at the meeting with the MPCA.

Councilmember Riley said that they all agree that they would like to get the EDA land from the landfill. He suggested keeping this the way that it is and suggested a discussion at another time concerning the solar panels.

Councilmember Specht agreed and shared he would not be a big fan of the solar panels.

City Administrator Hagen called attention to the Northstar Commuter Rail. He stated that the riders and number of trips are down since COVID. He said there is an advisor group working with the Met Council in regard to the future of the rail and the options are that it remains as a train or goes to a bus route. He and Staff want to start discussing this and getting feedback for the State. He stated that Anoka County wants to see the cost formula. He stated that Ramsey has a very successful station along the railway.

Councilmember Musgrove stated it would be nice to have some of the metric so they can frame their thought process around the numbers. She knows that they are asking for medical metro mobility which is bussing and how this could work into that. She shared that she knows that the County has some of the metrics.

Councilmember Riley asked what they are asking for here.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated the train has an immense value for the people who ride it despite the last few years being hard. He thinks they do not have a lot of jurisdiction on this topic. He would like to understand the ask.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan added that they have been a part of the Northstar corridor coalition. He stated that the legislatures wanted to understand how the rail is doing in terms of metrics. He stated there will be a meeting tomorrow where findings will be presented. He shared that the City provided data for the reports in regard to the development around the stations. He thinks that once this data is finalized it should be shared with the Council to see what the metrics are. He stated they are looking at all of the alternatives. He said if it gets to the point where there are forces suggesting to shut the station down, this is where the City can take a position.

City Administrator Hagen reviewed the other 2023 legislative items, including the Anoka County Joint Law Enforcement Council's renewal of legislation and efficiency of State divisions.

Councilmember Musgrove shared that she agreed with the discussion of the efficiency of State divisions and asked if they are facing similar staffing challenges.

City Administrator Hagen stated that this has gotten worse over the years and now due to the staffing levels. He said that other approvals could occur like hiring other third party companies that are able to have delegations.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if this was a statutory matter or just a departmental policy matter. He thinks there should be particular asks to the State.

City Administrator Hagen said that is a good idea to bring forward particular issues that have been identified and bring forward solutions to not only benefit Ramsey, but other cities as well. He discussed the homestead exclusion with the increase in property values. He suggested asking for this exclusion to go up.

Councilmember Riley asked if the league was also doing this.

City Administrator Hagen said he can check.

Councilmember Riley asked Councilmember Musgrove if it is still important to have the hospital moratorium on the legislation.

Councilmember Musgrove said yes.

There was a consensus of the Council.

2.04: Discussion Regarding the Annual Performance Review of the City Administrator, an Individual Who is Subject to the City Council's Authority-May be Closed to the Public

Administrative Services Director Lasher began the discussion of City Administrator Hagen’s 6-month performance review.

Motion by Councilmember Woestehoff, seconded by Councilmember Musgrove, to move to Closed Session for the performance review at 6:42 p.m.

A roll call vote was performed:

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

Motion carried.

The meeting reconvened to Open Session at 6:55 p.m.

Administrative Services Director Lasher shared that City Administrator Hagen has completed his performance evaluation and a summary of the findings will be presented at the next City Council meeting in an open meeting.

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 6:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian S. Hagen
City Administrator

ATTEST:

Katie M. Schmidt
City Clerk

Drafted by Ava Rokosz
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a Closed Session on Tuesday, December 13, 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 Brian Hagen
Administrative Services Director Colleen Lasher

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kuzma called the Closed Session of the City Council to order at 6:42 p.m.

2. COUNCIL BUSINESS

2.01: Discussion Regarding the Annual Performance Review of the City Administrator, an Individual Who is Subject to the City Council's Authority (Closed to the Public)

Administrative Services Director Lasher began the discussion of City Administrator Hagen's 6-month performance review.

The City Council discussed the matter and provided staff with direction.

3. ADJOURNMENT

The Closed Session was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian S. Hagen
City Administrator

ATTEST:

Katie M. Schmidt
City Clerk

Drafted by Ava Rokosz
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.