

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, January 10, 2023, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

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

Also Present: City Administrator Brian Hagen
City Engineer/Interim Public Works Director Bruce Westby
City Clerk Katie Schmidt
Community Development Director Stephanie Hanson
Street Supervisor Shane Turner
Police Chief Jeff Katers

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kuzma called the City Council Work Session to order at 5:33 p.m.

2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

2.01: Review Proposal to Order Two Single-Axle Plow Trucks in 2023 in Lieu of Replacing Motor Grader in 2026

City Engineer/Interim Public Works Director Westby reviewed the proposal and began the discussion around ordering two new plows to replace the 1999 John Deere plow. The two plows would help maintain the 8-hour snow removal schedule as well as keep up with all new roads and development. He reviewed the cost in 2023 dollars for both new trucks.

Mayor Kuzma asked if both trucks would fall under the 2023 budget or would the costs be staggered.

City Engineer/Interim Public Works Director Westby shared that payments do not have to be made until 30 days after delivery and when it would fall in the budget would depend on when the trucks were delivered.

Street Supervisor Turner explained that the rolling chassis would come first and the delivery times keep extending. He stated that there has been one ordered since January 13, 2022 that the City is

still waiting on delivery. He added that these trucks would likely be in service by the time the service roads for Highway 10 are ready.

Councilmember Riley asked what will happen in 2026 when the grader is scheduled for replacement.

City Engineer/Interim Public Works Director Westby stated that the plan is to maintain the grader by reducing its use from plowing to just gravel road maintenance.

Councilmember Musgrove asked about budgeting in 2023 or pulling it to 2024 when likely delivery would happen.

City Engineer/Interim Public Works Director Westby stated that if Council would feel more comfortable they can push this to the 2024 budget and work with the vendor on delivery. He added that this would cause the grader to still be used for a plow route and the City would likely continue to exceed the 8-hour snow removal goal.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if they are getting a deal because they are ordering two trucks.

City Engineer/Interim Public Works Director Westby explained that there is no discount for multiple trucks.

Councilmember Musgrove asked what percentage of the general levy budget for one or both of the trucks or asked if there is any baseline for that budget at this point.

City Engineer/Interim Public Works Director Westby said there is no baseline for the budget.

Councilmember Specht asked if this would be from the budget or if this could be bonded for.

City Administrator Hagen explained that there is an option for bonding these capital improvements. He stated that at the end of 2023 the cash in the bank will be gone as there was not any extra money levied to rebuild the fund balance. He stated that the 2024 budget will need to be discussed.

Councilmember Specht added his thoughts to order the trucks and get them as soon as possible and address the budget when they arrive.

Street Supervisor Turner shared that since receiving prices in September of 2023, the price of each truck has gone up \$47,000.

Councilmember Musgrove asked what the explanation has been for the sharp increase in cost.

Street Supervisor Turner stated it is due to inflation, cost of labor, and cost of steel.

Councilmember Olson asked if adding two trucks would add one snow removal to the rotation. He asked if this would significantly reduce the time it takes to clear the snow.

Street Supervisor Turner explained that this would mainly just keep up with all the new roads. He added that by taking the grader off of the plow routes would save time and money.

The consensus of the Council was to move forward with ordering the two trucks.

2.02: Discuss Council Organization

City Clerk Schmidt reviewed the report and explained that this discussion will decide which committees, boards, authorities or other groups to which Councilmembers will be appointed, as well as other contracts.

Mayor Kuzma stated that he would like to see Councilmember Riley continue as Acting Mayor.

Councilmember Howell shared her thoughts on switching things up a little and shared she is also an at-large councilmember. She said she would like the opportunity of the Acting Mayor role.

Councilmember Olson added that he was interested in the role as it would give him an opportunity to demonstrate to the residents his leadership.

Mayor Kuzma stated that policy in the past has been to keep the most senior councilmember in the role and he would prefer to stay with this process.

Councilmember Specht stated he would be in support of allowing Councilmember Howell to give the role a try.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if it typically goes to the most senior councilmember out of respect.

Mayor Kuzma stated that it has been handled that way in the last ten years since he has been with the City. He shared his support for Councilmember Riley to keep the role.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if there is an alternate for this position.

City Clerk Schmidt stated there has not been an alternate for this position. She stated there is nothing in policy concerning who serves as acting mayor but since 2009, the senior most at-large member has served as acting mayor.

Councilmember Howell asked how long Councilmember Riley has served as acting mayor.

Councilmember Riley shared that he has been acting mayor for three years.

Councilmember Howell added that it would be nice to have the opportunity since Councilmember Riley has served in the role for so long.

Councilmember Riley stated that he does want to keep this role.

Councilmember Musgrove added that she is the second most senior on the Council and would be willing to give Councilmember Howell a try at the role.

Councilmember Olson stated he will back out of his desire to be the acting mayor and thinks that Councilmembers Howell and Riley are both good candidates.

Councilmember Woestehoff expressed his appreciation for Councilmember Riley's attendance at events that are not Council meetings, when Mayor Kuzma cannot attend. He stated he has no reservations with Councilmember Howell being acting mayor, but he fully supports Councilmember Riley to retain the role.

Councilmember Olson shared his support for Councilmember Riley to retain the role.

Mayor Kuzma stated that Councilmember Riley will retain his role as acting mayor.

Mayor Kuzma moved on to the position on the Environmental Policy Board, stating that it would go to Councilmember Howell with Councilmember Woestehoff as the alternate. He asked if the Council had any concerns.

There were no concerns.

Mayor Kuzma discussed the position on the Happy Days Committee for either Councilmembers Riley and Specht with the other as the alternate.

Councilmember Riley volunteered to be the alternate and give the role to Councilmember Specht.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the scope of work and the purpose of the Happy Days Committee would come up on future topics discussion.

Mayor Kuzma stated this will be put down as a future discussion topic. He stated that Councilmember Specht will serve as the chair and Councilmember Riley will be the alternate. He moved on to discuss the Highway 10 Committee. He stated that City Administrator Hagen and himself will serve on the committee, and two of either Councilmembers Olson, Riley, or Specht.

City Administrator Hagen added that the Highway 10 Committee has not met in quite some time.

Mayor Kuzma stated that part of this topic could revolve around the Armstrong bridge.

Councilmember Olson shared he has not had any personal involvement with this and would be coming in with a learning curve and would defer to someone who has more experience.

Councilmember Specht stated he would enjoy being in this role as he has met with Elk River concerning Highway 10.

Councilmember Riley would also like to be in this role.

Mayor Kuzma stated that himself, Councilmembers Riley and Specht, and City Administrator Hagen will serve on the committee. He moved on to the Park and Recreation Commission and shared that Councilmember Musgrove had volunteered for the role. He asked if there was a volunteer for the alternate position.

Councilmember Olson volunteered as an alternate.

Mayor Kuzma stated that the role will be held by Councilmember Musgrove with Councilmember Olson as the alternate. He moved onto the discussion on the Planning Commission. He stated that the role will be held by Councilmember Woestehoff with Councilmember Olson as the alternate.

Councilmember Olson stated serving as the alternate will be a good learning opportunity for him in his first term.

Mayor Kuzma discussed the Public Works Committee with Councilmembers Musgrove, Riley, and Woestehoff and Councilmember Howell as the alternate.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated if there is a limit on positions held, he is no longer on the QCTV Board and would much rather stay on that board rather than the Public Works Commission.

Councilmember Howell suggested that two councilmembers serve on the QCTV Board which had happened in the past.

Councilmember Woestehoff agreed.

Mayor Kuzma stated that Councilmembers Musgrove, Riley, and Woestehoff will serve on the Public Works Commission with Councilmember Howell as an alternate. He moved on to discuss the Anoka County Fire Protection Council stating Councilmember Musgrove will serve on that council. He asked Councilmember Specht if he would be the alternate again.

Councilmember Specht said yes.

Mayor Kuzma stated that for the Anoka County Joint Law Enforcement Council (JLEC), Police Chief Katers and Councilmember Howell with Councilmember Olson as an alternate.

Councilmember Howell stated that she can be the alternate for the JLEC and allow Councilmember Olson the main spot and she would become the alternate.

Mayor Kuzma stated that for the Anoka County Solid Waste Abatement Advisory Team, Anoka County Housing and Redevelopment Authority, Fire Relief Association, Health Authority, and LOGIS Board of Directors, all of the appointments will stay the same as the previous term. He stated that for the Lower Rum River Watershed Management Organization (LRRWMO), Councilmember Musgrove will serve. He asked Councilmember Riley if he would like to still be the alternate.

Councilmember Riley stated he would like to.

Mayor Kuzma stated that Councilmember Riley will serve as the alternate. He stated that the appointments for North Metro Mayors Association: Operating Committee and Management Committee, will stay the same. He discussed the Quad Cities Cable Communications Commission, stating that Councilmember Specht and Woestehoff will serve.

Councilmember Musgrove asked how the roles on the Quad Cities Cable Communications Commission works and if they vote.

Councilmember Woestehoff said yes and that he is on the executive board as the secretary.

Mayor Kuzma discussed Youth First and asked Councilmembers Specht if he wished to stay on the committee and asked Councilmember Olson if he would be open to being on the committee.

Councilmember Specht said yes.

Councilmember Olson said that the meeting would conflict with him being the alternate on the Economic Development Authority.

Mayor Kuzma asked Councilmember Woestehoff if he would continue being the alternate.

Councilmember Woestehoff said yes. He asked why Cory Gardner swapped with Kyle Brotkowski as alternate from Staff.

Police Chief Katers stated that Mr. Gardner is going on the rotation as Community Resource Officer.

Mayor Kuzma stated that Councilmembers Howell and Riley will serve on the Economic Development Authority with Councilmember Olson as the alternate.

City Administrator Hagen stated that this will move to be adopted later in the evening at the City Council meeting. He asked if Council wanted to adjust ordinances to follow the Council term for the Economic Development Authority positions.

Councilmember Musgrove stated she would love to have a discussion around this for more boards than just the EDA.

Councilmember Riley agreed.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated he is not in favor of changing anything on the ordinance.

Councilmember Riley asked Councilmember Olson if he is comfortable with the appointments given to him.

Councilmember Olson said yes and asked for feedback from others if his appointments will over or under-extend him in his first term.

Mayor Kuzma said that with most of the positions being alternates he does not think he will be over-extended. He recommended that Councilmember Olson take time and visit each commission to get familiarized with them.

2.03: 2023 Legislative Priorities

City Administrator Hagen reviewed the draft 2023 legislative priorities and noted the items that were added. He stated that Representative Niska was invited to this evening's meeting but could not attend. He added that Senator Bahr was present.

Senator Bahr shared that he started the drafting for bonding requests for the water treatment plant and shared he will be asking for 100% of the amount.

City Administrator Hagen stated that the project is estimated at \$49,000,000 and the City is asking for \$20,000,000 and the City will make up the rest.

Senator Bahr said they can ask for \$25,000,000 in hopes to get \$20,000,000. He added that there are rumors that they will have an early bonding bill that will be cash only.

City Administrator Hagen asked if they should contact Representative Niska to make sure that he submits the same request for the bonding.

Senator Bahr stated that the draft will be for the House and the Senate and they will be the same.

City Administrator Hagen explained the second part of the water treatment plan would be the sales tax exemption. He asked when this would occur in the session.

Senator Bahr stated he would put it in with the other request.

City Administrator Hagen discussed the local TIF District 14 and request for a three year extension. He also discussed the funding for the Ramsey/Dayton Mississippi River bridge project.

Senator Bahr asked where this bridge would be going across the river.

Mayor Kuzma stated that it would go across Armstrong on the Ramsey side over into Dayton. He said they would have to work closely with Dayton on this project. He suggested a two lane bridge in this area with a bike path, while limiting big trucks. He added that this area is also a National Park that could produce some funding.

Councilmember Specht agreed that this bridge would be nice; however, there was a meeting in the past with Dayton in which they said they would likely never support this bridge.

Senator Bahr asked if this would have any benefits for the first responders or if this was just for practical reasons.

Councilmember Specht stated that the study went over the need for the bridge.

Senator Bahr asked for a copy of the study.

City Administrator Hagen stated this has been a discussion since the 1980s. He discussed adding Ramsey to the Metro Mobility Service Area and stated that Ramsey residents are currently paying into the taxing district. He also discussed possible legislation to put the closed landfill back on the tax role for private development opportunities.

Senator Bahr asked if they would be looking for residential development or industrial development.

City Administrator Hagen said just industrial. He moved to the discussion of the State-wide priorities, including the exemption of residential gardens from water emergency restrictions. He also discussed having the State take over licensure of massage therapy.

Senator Bahr asked if this is a requirement.

Councilmember Riley stated that it is required by the City.

Senator Bahr asked what the City ordinance says concerning massage therapists.

City Administrator Hagen stated that the City requires them to obtain a license complete with background checks. He next addressed the open meeting law statute.

Councilmember Musgrove stated this was on last year's legislative priorities and there may already be language surrounding the statute.

City Administrator Hagen introduced the item to lift the hospital moratorium.

Councilmember Musgrove explained the State moratorium on hospitals which deters private industry from building hospitals. She would like to see more freedom in this area.

City Administrator Hagen stated that Ramsey does not benefit from local government aid. He stated that he would like the formula updated so that Ramsey can benefit from this. He also mentioned the MET Council board make-up.

Senator Bahr asked for input for the MET Council board make-up.

Councilmember Musgrove explained that in the past there have been local politicians that have expressed interest in representation on the MET Council. She would like to pursue local, elected representation on the MET Council to be more cognizant of resident feedback and input.

Senator Bahr explained that, by federal law, every Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in the country should be made up of a majority of elected officials. He stated that this MET Council is the only one, nationwide, that does not conform to these laws. He asked for feedback on how many people should be on the board.

Councilmember Musgrove asked how many districts there are.

Senator Bahr said there are 16 currently.

Councilmember Riley stated that the Council wants to see reform and to figure out the best way to get elected representation.

Councilmember Woestehoff shared that currently, none of the councilmembers can even apply for the MET Council. He would like to see this restriction removed.

City Administrator Hagen stated the last item was concerning the homestead market value exclusion with the current maximum value of \$418,000.

Senator Bahr asked if they were looking to index the homestead exclusion for inflation.

City Administrator Hagen said yes.

The Council thanked Senator Bahr for coming.

3. TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

3.01: Review Future Topics/ Calendar

City Administrator Hagen reviewed the updated topics calendar over the next few months, including updates for the strategic plan. He asked if the Council would like to hold a special meeting in February to review the strategic plan and if they would like to bring in a third party moderator or keep it in house.

Mayor Kuzma stated he would like to keep it in house.

Councilmember Specht liked the idea of the special meeting.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if this would put them a quarter behind if they review the plan in late February.

City Administrator Hagen stated this is a similar timeline to last year.

Councilmember Woestehoff recommended a special work session to address City Code reviews.

4. MAYOR / COUNCIL / STAFF INPUT

Councilmember Musgrove thanked Staff for addressing the email from a resident concerning Highway 10.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 6:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian S. Hagen
City Administrator

ATTEST:

Katie M. Schmidt
City Clerk

Drafted by Ava Rokosz
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.