

**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 28, 2023, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor Mark 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
Police Chief Jeff Katers
Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood
Administrative Services Director Colleen Lasher
Planning Manager Todd Larson
City Attorney Fritz Knaak
Code Enforcement Officer Craig Swalchick
Recreation Coordinator Abby Proulx

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kuzma called the City Council Work Session to order at 5:31 p.m.

2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

2.01: Discuss 2024 Memorandum of Agreements with the City's Unions (Portion Closed to the Public)

Administrator Services Director Lasher reviewed the Staff report concerning the memorandums of agreement for the City's union. She suggested closing the meeting for this discussion.

Motion by Councilmember Riley, seconded by Councilmember Woestehoff, to recess the meeting to Closed Session at 5:33 p.m.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor Kuzma, Councilmembers Riley, Woestehoff, Howell, Musgrove, Olson, and Specht. Voting No: None.

The Work Session reconvened to Open Session at 5:45 p.m.

Administrative Services Director Lasher shared that the Council discussed the memorandums of agreement with the City's four unions. She noted that Staff has received direction on how to proceed.

2.02: Begin Discussions Regarding Proposed Updates to the Personnel Policy

Administrative Services Director Lasher reviewed the Staff report concerning the proposed updates to the City's personnel policy. She reviewed the sections of the current policy and the updates suggested for each section.

Councilmember Specht asked what is affected by the Councilmembers being considered City Staff.

Administrative Services Director Lasher noted that it has a data practices implication if there is a data practices request. She added that if someone is an employee then the data that the City has on that individual is personnel data.

City Attorney Knaak shared that public officials have a separate category for this.

Administrative Services Director Lasher stated that Councilmembers being considered Staff also affects benefits. She shared that Councilmembers would be eligible to enroll in the City's health plan. She noted that she would like feedback on whether Councilmembers should be eligible for this and considered City employees.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if there is also a desire to discuss this in regard to City Committee, Commission, and Board members.

Administrative Services Director Lasher said those Committee, Commission, and Board members are not City employees.

Mayor Kuzma shared that he would like this to stay in the policy.

Councilmember Musgrove said she does not consider herself an employee of the City and does not feel strongly about having the health policy offered.

Mayor Kuzma shared that when he started on the Council he was self-employed and it was cheaper for him to get health insurance through the City than getting it on his own. He stated that he did not consider himself an employee of the City but it was helpful to be able to get health insurance through the City.

Councilmember Howell asked if it costs the City anything extra to offer health insurance to Councilmembers.

Administrative Services Director Lasher explained that the only cost to the City is the administrative paperwork to get the individual set up with the plan.

Councilmember Howell stated that she does not have a problem keeping this in the policy as there could be someone who would benefit from this.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that elected officials should all be subject to the personnel policy.

Administrative Services Lasher explained that there are things in the personnel policy, such as the Code of Conduct, that would apply to all public officials. She noted that there will also be sections of the personnel policy that would not apply to public officials, such as vacation time. She asked Council if there were any big issues that they would like Staff to focus on in regards to this policy.

City Administrator Hagen asked if there are any topics in the policy that Staff is looking for direction on.

Councilmember Howell stated that they should discuss pronouns.

City Administrator Hagen explained that there are a number of organizations that have implemented pronouns and others that make them optional. He stated that there have been some Staff inquiries about this. He shared the suggestion of leaving this optional and would not require employees to list their pronouns; however, if they wanted to have them listed then this would be allowed.

Councilmember Howell stated that she would recommend sticking with proper nouns as pronouns could complicate things.

Councilmember Specht agreed that it would be simpler to not include this as there is not a need for it.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that the Council is representing the taxpayers and their money and trying to balance that with employees being happy. She noted that they recently sent an email that stated that all Staff would have the same looking email signature, and this would change things so that Staff had different looking signatures. She suggested keeping things simple and not adding this. She noted that this is not a high priority or concern with residents.

Mayor Kuzma shared that he does not have an opinion on this as he does not see it as a big deal. He noted that if it is important that an employee has this then he does not see that as a concern.

Administrative Services Director Lasher shared that there was a request for this and that it was recommended to honor employee requests. She noted that this could be interpreted as a problem on gender and gender identity. She shared that it was the League of Minnesota Cities opinion to allow this. She stated that this may not be a good decision to not allow pronouns when looking at employment law.

City Attorney Knaak explained that this could also create a hostile work environment. He noted that this is anticipatory. He added that if there is only one situation of this in the City then he does not see it being a big issue. He stated that they should be aware of this situation and respect the

individual's and their requests on how to be identified; however, he does not see a compelling reason to immediately change anything. He added that if someone asks for this accommodation then it would be proper for the City to do something.

Administrative Services Director Lasher read some of the technical guidance from the EOC concerning pronouns. She explained that this is a gender identity issue. She suggested granting the current request from an employee and not calling it out in the personnel policy directly.

Councilmember Specht stated that it is fine for someone to ask that they be addressed in a certain way; however, he does not think that this needs to be something on documentation or signatures as there are other ways that they can share this information.

Councilmember Howell said she does not understand how it could be considered harassment if the City chooses not to put pronouns on documentation or nametags. She noted that there are plenty of things that are true about an individual that are not listed.

City Administrator Hagen asked if this is something that they want formally recognized in a policy in some fashion and if they want to continue to allow employees to list their pronouns if they so choose. He explained that the uniform email signatures for all employees were created on the backend by IT and the employees do not have to do anything for this. He stated that the idea right now to add pronouns would affect email signatures and business cards.

Mayor Kuzma stated that he is okay with allowing this.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that he is in favor of using pronouns.

Councilmember Riley stated he does not have an opinion on the matter.

Councilmember Olson added that he also does not have an opinion on this matter.

Councilmembers Howell, Musgrove, and Specht were not in favor of allowing this.

Councilmember Musgrove noted that it is difficult to have one side of people that they are trying to protect while not protecting the others and their wants.

Councilmember Howell suggested allowing people to also list nouns that are important to them.

The consensus of the Council was to direct Staff to keep the personnel policy as is to not include Council, Commission, Committee, and Board members as City Staff and to allow the use of pronouns.

2.03: Review of Happy Days 2023 and forecast for 2024

Recreation Coordinator Proulx reviewed the Staff report and gave a recap of the 2023 Happy Days event. She shared feedback that was received by Staff, Council, and the public. She discussed the 5k race and the expo.

Councilmember Musgrove asked why the runners did not get t-shirts for the race.

Recreation Coordinator Proulx stated that this was cut for costs in previous years. She noted that they are looking at doing t-shirts next year for the runners who register at least 30 days in advance.

Councilmember Specht noted that next year will be an election year and there will be a lot of booths at the event for the election. He asked if there has been any feedback in the past for where the political booths should be.

Recreation Coordinator Proulx stated that the set up for the expo this year was first come-first serve. She noted that they did not see any issues with this and having them in the mix with other booths.

Councilmember Specht stated that he has heard feedback that the City could have put certain political booths in bad areas.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if there is a way to have the farmer's market closer to where a majority of the vehicles would be.

Recreation Coordinator Proulx stated that they can look into this for more visibility for the farmer's market. She discussed the chili cook-off and shared the recommendation for it to be a part of a different event to not compete with the food trucks that are at the Happy Days event.

Councilmember Specht noted that residents expect the chili cook-off at Happy Days as it is a tradition. He added that it is a very small amount of food and does not see it competing with the food trucks.

Recreation Coordinator Proulx discussed the dog show and its success.

Councilmember Musgrove shared that in years past the dog show had been on the tall stage and this year it was on the main stage, which made it harder for people to see. She added that there were not enough voting slips for the event.

Recreation Coordinator Proulx shared that she is going to be looking into simplifying voting next year for both the dog show and the parade. She asked if having five judges this year for the dog show was beneficial.

Councilmember Musgrove noted that having five judges made this more difficult. She added that the timing of the show could also be improved as there was a lot of waiting this year.

Recreation Coordinator Proulx reviewed the success of the bean bag tournament. She also discussed the car show, kids activities, and food trucks.

Councilmember Howell asked if the food trucks come to the City to request a space or if the City reaches out to food trucks to participate in the event.

Recreation Coordinator Proulx shared that it was some of both. She noted that they were going to wait to decide on the food trucks until later as there were more food trucks coming in and requesting space.

Councilmember Howell asked if there were any gluten free or vegetarian options with the food trucks.

Recreation Coordinator Proulx stated that she is not sure if they did have any gluten free or vegetarian options. She added that the food trucks were very competitive this year so they did raise the price for being at the event.

Mayor Kuzma asked if the food truck vendors had to be licensed.

Recreation Coordinator Proulx explained that they do have licenses for food trucks and she assumes that they all had their license beforehand.

City Administrator Hagen said the food truck vendors were licensed.

Recreation Coordinator Proulx noted that there was some conflicting music at times through the event. She noted that they will be looking at some alternatives for next year.

Councilmember Specht stated that he heard that a lot of families were wanting the fireworks to be earlier. He suggested having a band perform, then doing fireworks, then having another band perform afterwards.

Recreation Coordinator Proulx explained that the fireworks groups are specific about when they want to start fireworks. She stated that she can look into this. She shared that they learned a lot from Lucent Blue Event Management who helped with the event this year. She noted that they were a huge asset for this year; however, moving forward this event can be housed under Parks and Recreation and Lucent Blue will not be necessary.

The consensus of the Council was to direct Staff to move forward with the planning of the 2024 Happy Days event with the discussed and suggested changes.

2.04: Nuisance Code Update

Code Enforcement Officer Swalchick reviewed the Staff report in regard to the nuisance code updates.

Councilmember Howell asked if a property owner has relatives or a friend come to visit them and they stay in their camper if they are covered under the exemption to the nuisance code.

Code Enforcement Officer Swalchick explained that as long as the person is not a permanent resident in the camper then it is allowed. He stated that this part of the code is trying to prohibit someone from living full time in a camper on someone's property. He noted that there are certain

protections in the code for the residents. He discussed trucks and street parking during the day and the updates needed for this part of the code.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if these vehicles being parked in the street is not already a part of City code and needs to be in the nuisance code.

Code Enforcement Officer Swalchick explained that with the nuisance code update they are also touching the animal and traffic codes as there are items that need to be moved to different codes. He stated that overnight parking is prohibited; however, daytime parking is not prohibited, and this day time parking is more problematic for paved roads and heavy vehicles.

The consensus of the Council was to bring this discussion back to an upcoming meeting to finish reviewing the updates.

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 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian 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, November 28, 2023, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor Mark 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
Administrative Services Director Colleen Lasher
City Attorney Fritz Knaak

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. COUNCIL BUSINESS

2.01: Discuss 2024 Memorandum of Agreements with the City's Unions - Closed to the Public

Administrative Services Director Lasher reviewed the Staff report concerning the memorandums of agreement for the City's union.

Staff received direction from the Council.

3. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Woestehoff, seconded by Councilmember Olson, to adjourn the Closed Session

Motion carried.

The Closed Session was adjourned at 5:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian S. Hagen
City Administrator

ATTEST:

Katie M. Schmidt
City Clerk

Drafted by Ava Rokosz
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.