

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, May 14, 2024, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor Mark Kuzma  
Councilmember Chelsee Howell (attended remotely)  
Councilmember Debra Musgrove  
Councilmember Michael Olson  
Councilmember Chris Riley  
Councilmember Dan Specht

Members Absent: Councilmember Woestehoff

Also Present: City Administrator Brian Hagen  
Police Chief Jeff Katers  
Administrative Services Director Colleen Lasher  
Economic Development Manager Sean Sullivan  
City Attorney Fritz Knaak  
Community Development Director Stephanie Hanson  
City Clerk Katie Schmidt

**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: Discussion Regarding Union Contract Negotiations for AFSCME, LELS-Patrol, LELS-Sergeants & LELS-Captains (Discussion Closed to the Public)**

Administrative Services Director Lasher introduced this item and asked the Council to move to Closed Session.

Motion by Councilmember Riley, seconded by Councilmember Musgrove, to recess the meeting to Closed Session at 5:35 p.m.

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

The meeting reconvened to Open Session at 6:25 p.m.

Administrative Services Director Lasher shared that Council and Staff discussed union negotiation strategies for the upcoming contract which will begin January 1, 2025. She stated Staff has received Council's direction and they will proceed accordingly.

## **2.02: Anoka County License Center Lease Amendment**

City Administrator Hagen reviewed the Staff report in regard to the Anoka County License Center leasing agreement. He shared that the Anoka County License Center is requesting to amend the lease and add additional terms. He reviewed the requested amendments with the Council.

Councilmember Riley asked for the reason why the Anoka County License Center does not want to pay CAM.

City Administrator Hagen said the Anoka County License Center is just looking at how to reduce the expense of operating the center and they are looking to save some money. He noted this is the justification for most of their requests.

Councilmember Riley said he is fine with most of the amendments given that this is a government entity; however, the request to not pay CAM does not make sense to him.

Councilmember Musgrove shared that she is glad that they pulled their initial ask to change the rent amount. She added that she is okay with the change to a three-year term. She agreed with Councilmember Riley that it does not make sense to have them not pay the CAM.

Councilmember Specht said the Anoka County License Center has been a great asset to the community and he likes having them here. He noted they are asking for a lot of amendments and thinks they should push back a little on some of these requests, including the request to not pay the CAM.

Mayor Kuzma asked how the CAM charge is calculated.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan explained that they have a formula that is based off of the Consumer Price Index of urban and clerical workers. He noted that when the Consumer Price Index comes out every April, they plug this into the formula to calculate the current rate. He added that their charge for CAM is under the going rate for this service; however, they are tax exempt, which puts them right where they should be with the market.

Councilmember Riley said he is okay with the \$14 per square foot rent; however, he said he would not want to approve this without the CAM charge as he would not want to burden the taxpayers by having to cover this extra amount.

Councilmember Howell agreed.

City Administrator Hagen explained that the request to lower rent to \$14 a square foot was rescinded when the Anoka County License Center submitted their new request. He noted the current cost is \$16.81 per square foot.

Councilmember Howell asked if there were any space in Anoka County that would compete with this space.

City Administrator Hagen said he does not believe so. He explained that there has to be a certain amount of distance between locations which limits where they can rent.

Councilmember Howell noted that with this in mind they should limit what breaks they give them because they are the best option for this location.

Councilmember Olson asked if they were requesting to change the annual increase from 2% to \$0.25.

City Administrator Hagen said yes.

Mayor Kuzma shared that he would be in support of bringing down the base rent a little bit while keeping the CAM charges.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan explained that there are areas of the building that the Anoka County License Center is not using so they are wanting to remove the CAM charges in these areas only. He added that it is his understanding that they are asking to keep the base rent the same but are wanting a smaller square footage for their CAM calculation by removing the bathroom square footage.

Councilmember Musgrove said she is not in favor of changing the increase to \$0.25 per square foot as this does not account for any kind of market adjustment. She asked if they are wanting to remove the CAM charges for the bathrooms because people do not use them. She said she is in favor of keeping the CAM charge and making the annual increase 1.75%.

Councilmember Specht explained that every dollar is important; however, he would not want to lose the Anoka County License Center over a small percentage. He noted he would be okay with some kind of reduction of the CAM charge and going to the \$0.25 per square foot annual increase.

Councilmember Olson noted that the bathrooms for this facility will be cleaned on the same schedule as City Hall and that he does not see this adding a huge cost to the City. He said he would be okay with reducing the CAM for this area.

Mayor Kuzma shared that he would support reducing the CAM for the bathroom square footage.

Councilmember Musgrove said she supports keeping the CAM as is.

Councilmember Howell agreed that she would like to keep the CAM as is. She noted this cost will have to be absorbed by the taxpayers.

Councilmember Riley added that he would also like to keep the CAM charges as is.

Councilmember Specht asked what the price difference is between the current CAM charges and reducing it to not increase the bathroom square footage.

City Administrator Hagen said if they reduced the CAM in this area they would be losing \$4,600 annually.

Councilmember Specht suggested decreasing the CAM square footage but not by the whole amount they requested. He reiterated that the Anoka County License Center adds value to the City and it is important to keep them there.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if they would be able to find out what the Anoka County License Center is paying for their other locations. She said she would hate for them to give in to a lot of these requests if this is the Anoka County License Center's best contract.

City Administrator Hagen said it is public data so he can look into this.

The consensus of the Council was to direct Staff to extend the options terms, leave the CAM charges as is, and change the annual increase amount to \$0.25.

### **2.03: Discuss the Transient Merchant license approval process for Game Fair**

Economic Development Manager Sullivan reviewed the Staff report concerning transient merchant licenses at Game Fair. He reviewed the suggested changes of how they could improve this process moving forward.

Councilmember Specht asked if this would supersede the garage sale ordinance.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan explained that this applies to non-residents selling on another resident's property.

Councilmember Howell asked if the section of the garage sale ordinance that addresses multi-family garage sales being permitted if the residence in which the sale is taking place is participating do not also apply to this. She said she does not think that they should be striking part of their ordinances to accommodate Game Fair.

City Attorney Knaak explained that what they have with the Game Fair ordinance is that it is more specific and regulates a more limited period of time, which would supersede any conflicting requirements that may exist elsewhere in the City Code.

Councilmember Howell asked if there is a way that they can accommodate people who choose to have multi-family garage sales. She noted that these residents are already sacrificing their neighborhood for Game Fairs, and it is an inconvenience to them so she would not like to see them be restricted further to accommodate Game Fair.

Councilmember Riley asked if there has ever been an issue with multi-family garage sales.

Police Chief Katers shared that as far as he knows, the Police Department has never reported anything related to multi-family garage sales. He noted that the primary issue is with outside vendors coming in and setting up a booth on someone's property right before the weekend expecting a permit.

## **RECESS AND RECONVENE**

The meeting recessed at 6:59 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 9:15 p.m.

### **2.03: Discuss the Transient Merchant license approval process for Game Fair (continued)**

Community Development Director Hanson shared the communications that the City sends to educate the public on the licensing requirements.

City Administrator Hagen shared that in previous years they have sent emails; however, this year they will be sending mailed letters to both the license holder and the property owner where they set up their booth. He added that Staff will also be making sure that all departments are on the same page.

Councilmember Olson asked if the communication will be sent through email and regular mail.

City Administrator Hagen said yes.

Councilmember Specht asked if this will also apply to homeowners wanting to have a garage sale.

City Administrator Hagen said that homeowners are still allowed to have a garage sale.

Councilmember Specht asked how this would work for enforcement to prove that a homeowner is having a garage sale at their own home.

Community Development Director Hanson said she is not sure as this is the first time they have even talked about this because they have never had any actual issues come up at Game Fair.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the need for the transient license is only within the Game Fair mapped area.

City Administrator Hagen said that it is for all through the City. He added that they will be willing to work with transient merchants who initially sign up for Game Fair then want to move and set up to other areas of the City as well.

Councilmember Musgrove noted that the JPA has a set price for police officers. She said this needs to be updated to reflect the current rate. She noted they can look at this at a later time to make sure it has all the current info.

City Administrator Hagen noted that 2006 was the last time they went through this. He explained that the Police Department is sending an invoice to Game Fair showing the number of hours worked, then Game Fair reimburses 50% of that.

Police Chief Katers added that they bill Game Fair at whatever their current rate is for the officers. He noted they have been following the JPA the same way since 2006 without any updates or modifications.

Councilmember Musgrove noted that this would be helpful to have it updated and clarified to residents so that they can have accurate information.

Councilmember Riley agreed.

Councilmember Howell agreed. She asked if they will be selectively choosing what to enforce depending on what is irritating to the people at Game Fair. She said she does not like the idea of this.

Councilmember Riley explained that if someone is having a garage sale or selling things on their own property then no license will be needed; however, if someone who does not live at the residence is trying to sell things on the property then they will be required to have a license.

Councilmember Howell asked if no multi-family garage sales will be allowed for the two weekends of Game Fair.

Councilmember Specht said it will likely come down to enforcement.

Police Chief Katers explained that Police Department enforcement is complaint driven. He shared that the complaint often comes from other vendors who went through the correct process to get their transient merchant license who then see other vendors who did not follow the correct process to get their license. He said the Police Department does not go out and do any proactive inspections. He added that they would not get involved with a garage sale being multi-family.

Councilmember Olson noted that with clear communication to the residents who live in this area they will be responsible for who comes to participate in selling on their property. He said he does not see any complaints coming in from multi-family garage sales.

Councilmember Howell stated that she does not understand why someone would be able to capitalize on the traffic in this neighborhood by having a multi-family garage sale with a resident in the neighborhood but cannot capitalize on the traffic to sell other items. She added that she understands the issue with vendors wanting to set up in someone's yard to sell merchandise for this event; however, she does not understand why people would not be able to take advantage of property that a friend or family member may have that could allow them to make some extra money without a license.

Councilmember Specht asked Councilmember Howell what change she would like to see be made with this.

Councilmember Howell explained that if a property owner is renting space to a vendor then it would be a different situation than if someone's friend wanted to set up a booth on their property.

Mayor Kuzma stated that he believes the Police Department has a good handle on this.

Councilmember Specht asked if they allow organizations to rent out parking spaces in Central Park. He said he received feedback last year that residents were trying to use the playground and did not want to pay to park.

Police Chief Katers shared that it is his understanding that the Lions group takes over the park and shuttles people over to the Game Fair.

Councilmember Riley said you do not have to pay to park, but people have to pay to ride the shuttle.

City Administrator Hagen suggested that they could set aside a number of spots for the playground.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if selling puppies was one of the items listed on the permitted and non-permitted list for Game Fair vendors.

City Administrator Hagen stated that the City will allow neighboring property owners to operate parking or refreshment concessions in their private yards. He added that transient merchants will be required to be properly licensed through the City.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the letter they sent out to the vendors addresses more of what is and is not allowed to be sold.

City Administrator Hagen shared that the letter that they will be sending to residents within the Game Fair mapped area will outline what they are allowed to do with their property. He added that this letter will also tell them that if they plan on having someone out at their property to sell merchandise for the event that this merchant will need to get a license from the City.

Councilmember Musgrove suggested putting a reminder in *The Ramsey Resident* about transient merchant licenses.

The consensus of the Council was to update the JPA with current information and to send out letters and emails to both the vendors and the property owners in the Game Fair area.

#### **2.04: Discuss Resolution for Post Election Review and Paper Rosters**

City Administrator Hagen reviewed the Staff report concerning the resolution for post-election reviews and paper rosters for election.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that based on their last discussion of this, they should have a post-election review based on their Congressional district. She said they will need to have one in

the newly formed District 3 and can address other ones randomly. She added that they have a good template for this with the Oak Grove resolution.

Councilmember Howell agreed that it is always a great idea to randomly check work. She suggested doing a post-election review for two-thirds of Ramsey's precincts. She added that she likes the idea of this being a resolution as it will send the message to the County about what the cities like and hope that the County will get on board with this also.

Councilmember Riley asked what doing the post-election reviews would mean to the City. He added that he suggested pushing the paper rosters forward; however, they are required to use the electronic ballots if the County is involved.

City Clerk Schmidt explained that the County has the authority to do the post-election reviews and the City does not have the authority to take this from the County, the authority would have to be granted to them. She noted they can request this authority; however, it does not mean that the County has to grant it. She added that the County's standpoint seems to be that they would like to keep this in-house so this may not be an option for the City. She shared that the hand-counting of ballots does take time and human error does come into play. She noted that this can prolong things and make them harder from an administrative perspective. She said she would recommend waiting to hear from the County Board on their decision for post-election reviews. She explained that if this authority is granted to them, it would be a learning experience to all who are involved.

Mayor Kuzma asked if the only authority the City has over post-election reviews is if it were a City special election.

City Clerk Schmidt said the County would still have the authority over the special election. She noted that they could recount the votes; however, unless the threshold is low enough which would automatically trigger a recount.

Councilmember Specht suggested they could put a resolution together like Oak Grove did to show the County what they would like to see done with elections.

Councilmember Howell agreed with Councilmember Specht. She said that she has spoken with people from other cities who feel like this is something that residents want not only in Ramsey but these other cities as well. She stated this is the City's opportunity to take a stand and show the County what the residents want.

Councilmember Musgrove noted that if the County does have to do one post-election review per Congressional District they would have to do one in Ramsey's District 3. She added that she is sure there are election judges who would volunteer to go help at the County level. She asked if the County pays for automatic recounts when the threshold is low enough.

City Clerk Schmidt said if it is low enough that it requires a recount then the City pays for it if it is a City race, and the County pays for it if it is a County race. She explained that the candidates would only have to pay for a recount if it was above the threshold.

Councilmember Olson noted that Congressional District lines cross city lines so they would not necessarily be guaranteed to have any post-election reviews in the City.

Councilmember Specht added that District 3 hits other cities than just Ramsey.

City Clerk Schmidt asked what the Council would like to do about the paper rosters.

Councilmember Riley asked if it is a City only election if they can do paper rosters, but if the County is involved then they have to do an electronic roster.

City Clerk Schmidt said this is correct. She said the County does allow paper rosters as a backup if the electronics were to not be working. She shared that paper rosters can be a concern with early voting as it would be hard to keep track of early voting and alert polling locations when someone voted early. She added that the electronic ballots are helpful as there is no way that someone could vote twice on an electronic roster as the system logs the voter's information to ensure they cannot vote twice.

City Attorney Knaak noted that the electronic rosters are great for fraud prevention. He explained that there has been ongoing progress with technology and the accuracy of voting. He said there are a lot of people who do not feel very comfortable about the voting process so the more the City can do to increase the comfort level the better even though it will cost more money and be more work.

Councilmember Riley asked if they are granted authority for post-election reviews from the County what a cost estimate would be for this additional work.

City Clerk Schmidt said if the County allows them to do more post-election reviews, then it will still take place at the County and they would only need to pay the election judges that would go to the County to count the ballots. She added that it would also depend on how many races they were counting.

City Administrator Hagen asked if they would only want to do this for City Council races or all races.

Councilmember Riley said they should do them on all races.

Councilmember Musgrove asked what would happen if someone arrived to vote and they were told that they already voted when they actually had not voted already.

City Attorney Knaak explained that when a situation like this happens, the election judges are supposed to take this person's ballot and set it aside as a provisional vote and they will then have to make the determination on whether or not this person has already voted.

City Administrator Hagen said they would not be able to pull the original vote; however, when a ballot goes in, there is information recorded on who cast a ballot. He explained that they can go back and see if a ballot was applied incorrectly. He said there would be a way to correct this.

Councilmember Olson shared that he would be in favor of using the paper rosters if it is a local City election.

The consensus of the Council was to direct Staff to draft a resolution supporting more post-renewal reviews with two-thirds of their precincts.

**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 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Brian S. Hagen  
City Administrator

ATTEST:

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Katie M. Schmidt  
City Clerk

Drafted by Ava Major  
*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, May 14, 2024, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor Mark Kuzma  
Councilmember Chelsee Howell (attended remotely)  
Councilmember Debra Musgrove  
Councilmember Michael Olson  
Councilmember Chris Riley  
Councilmember Dan Specht

Members Absent: Councilmember 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 5:35 p.m.

**2. COUNCIL BUSINESS**

**2.01: Discussion Regarding Union Contract Negotiations for AFSCME, LELS-Patrol, LELS-Sergeants & LELS-Captains (Discussion Closed to the Public)**

Administrative Services Director Lasher reviewed the Staff report in regard to union contract negotiations for AFSCME, LELS-Patrol, LELS-Sergeants, and LELS-Captains.

Staff received direction from the Council

**3. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Councilmember Musgrove, seconded by Councilmember Olson, to adjourn the Closed Session.

Motion carried.

The Closed Session was adjourned at 6:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Brian S. Hagen  
City Administrator

ATTEST:

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Katie M. Schmidt  
City Clerk

Drafted by Ava Major  
*TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*