

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, June 25, 2024, 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
Finance Director Diana Lund
City Attorney Fritz Knaak
Community Development Director Stephanie Hanson

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: Building Official Recruitment

City Administrator Hagen reviewed the Staff report in regard to recruiting a new Building Official. He shared that they are proposing to promote Thomas Knight, a current building inspector, to this position.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the fees listed in the packet for the in-house costs equals the total compensation including benefits, or just wages.

City Administrator Hagen said it includes total compensation.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the contracting fees are less than the total compensation, and if they would be able to continue with contracting out this work rather than a direct hire.

City Administrator Hagen explained that long term, it would be more expensive to continue to use the consultant.

Councilmember Musgrove noted that the date range on the action plan is dated incorrectly. She asked about virtual inspections and if this is something that the City plans to start doing in house.

Community Development Director Hanson explained that this is something relatively new but is currently being done by a lot of building departments. She noted that more complicated inspections would require a site visit. She said they would start doing these virtual inspections if they would free up a lot of time for the building inspectors.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked what other cities timelines are for their building departments. He asked if it is common for other cities to be two weeks out for building permits and a couple of days for inspections. He asked how Ramsey compares to these other cities.

Community Development Director Hanson said two-week reviews are typical.

City Administrator Hagen said it is a little longer of a timeline for commercial projects.

Councilmember Woestehoff said this plan makes sense; however, he asked if they are still anticipating using Rum River Consulting to keep the timelines tighter.

City Administrator Hagen explained that they hope that they do not have to keep utilizing Rum River Consulting. He shared he has discussed with other similar sized cities, and they are able to keep up on their own so he anticipates they will be able to as well. He added that at this time last year they were six weeks behind on plan reviews, and at this point they are working with a two-to-three-week window.

Community Development Director Hanson added that it is common for cities to supplement with contract inspectors during the busy season to keep up with inspections.

The consensus of the Council was to move forward with the timeline suggested by Staff and to promote Thomas Knight to the Assistant Building Official position.

2.02: Review Community Survey

City Administrator Hagen reviewed the Staff report concerning the Community Survey.

Councilmember Musgrove said she was surprised to see this item on the agenda as she was under the impression that they were not doing anything else with this. She stated it would be good to know how many surveys this accounts for.

City Administrator Hagen stated this provides the opinions of a sample of 471 residents. He added that Polco anticipated a margin for error of 5%. He noted there was a 16% response rate, which is similar to past years.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if this includes anything from the open survey online.

City Administrator Hagen noted that the online open survey is an attachment of this; however, it is not incorporated into the report.

This item was for informational purposes only.

2.03: Participation in State Performance Measurement Program

Finance Director Lund reviewed the Staff report in regard to the City's participation in the State Performance Measurement Program.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the 2024 survey will be put in now that they have some data.

Finance Director Lund stated this is through the 2023 results and the 2024 results would not be a part of this program.

Councilmember Musgrove suggested making it a part of their legislative agenda to see if the cities could be compensated more for their data in regard to this.

The consensus of the Council was to move forward with participation in the State Performance Measure Program.

2.04: Discuss Agenda Layout - Please Note: this case was moved from Case 2.5 to case 2.4.

City Administrator Hagen reviewed the Staff report concerning Councilmember Musgrove's request to review the agenda layout.

Councilmember Musgrove shared concern with the minutes being a part of the Consent Agenda. She explained that if they look at all of the minutes taken for the City, five out of the six groups have their approval of minutes as a separate agenda item. She noted that having the minutes as their own separate item is helpful for corrections and abstaining votes.

Councilmember Howell said she would be in agreement with this as it would be easier to make corrections if the minutes were separate from the rest of the Consent Agenda items.

Mayor Kuzma stated they are still able to make corrections to the minutes with them in the Consent Agenda and it has never been a problem in the past.

Councilmember Musgrove said that a Councilmember could not abstain from voting on the approval of minutes unless they abstain from voting on all Consent Agenda items.

Councilmember Specht said he is neutral on this topic and does not see it as a big deal.

Councilmember Woestehoff agreed; however, when they have a change in Councilmembers, there will be a meeting where the old Councilmembers were present for the meeting where the minutes were recording, and that same Councilmember may no longer be on the Council when it is time to approve the minutes which could present an issue. He noted that Councilmembers who are not able to attend a meeting are still able to read the minutes and verify that they are truthful.

City Attorney Knaak said there is no legal requirement for abstaining from voting to approve the minutes at a meeting that a Councilmember was not present at.

Councilmember Olson stated he does not feel strongly for or against this change. He noted that if they did make it a separate agenda item then it would just be another quick vote and would not be a huge deal. He said he would support making it a separate agenda item for this reason.

Councilmember Riley noted that he does not see it as a huge deal so he would like it to be left as is since the approval of the minutes is rarely an issue.

Councilmember Musgrove continued to discuss her ideas with changing the agenda. She shared that Anoka has a section of their agenda that defines what their open forum is and gives instructions to those who would like to speak. She added that Champlin also has a statement in their Consent Agenda item that explains what Consent Agenda items are and why they are considered as such. She noted that adding these statements and definitions could be helpful for residents who are unfamiliar with how agendas work.

Councilmember Woestehoff said he likes the idea of adding these statements. He asked if it is possible to add generic copies of this text as sub-headers to agenda items.

City Administrator Hagen said he believes so.

Councilmember Howell agreed and shared she likes the idea of adding these statements. She suggested also putting a time limit in place for the resident forum, so the Council is consistent to people who come in to speak so they know how long they have to speak.

Mayor Kuzma shared that he typically lets people speak for as long as they need to, as long as they are staying on the point, when they come forward to resident forum.

Councilmember Howell stated if they have a specific time limit then it makes them very neutral and they do not cut someone off before they have had a chance to be heard but also does not allow them to speak for too much time.

Councilmember Olson suggested that Mayor Kuzma should reassert the time limit before people speak during the resident forum.

Councilmember Musgrove suggested that during the resident forum people should only be asked to give their name and their city of residence and not their whole address. She noted that some people may not feel comfortable giving out their home address.

Councilmember Riley asked if they are required to get resident's addresses when they come forward to address the Council.

City Attorney Knaak said no. He explained that this is usually done because it can cause issues if people want to come forward and speak that are not Ramsey residents.

Councilmember Musgrove said she would like to know if the people who are coming forward are Ramsey residents, but she does not need their home address.

City Attorney Knaak noted that during Public Hearings there would be a need for the speakers coming forward to provide their actual address.

Councilmember Howell said she sees both sides of this discussion. She noted that there are people who do not want their addresses out there; however, they do have meetings where people from out of town come forward to share their opinions.

Mayor Kuzma said he would prefer to keep this simple and continue the practice of asking residents for their address when they come forward to address the Council.

City Attorney Knaak explained that during Public Hearings they are making a record and require addresses to be shared.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if residents coming forward during the resident forum is not considered on record.

City Attorney Knaak said it is not for the purpose of making a record. He noted that these residents would be coming forward to make a statement rather than making a statement that could be reviewed as a part of a Public Hearing.

Councilmember Musgrove said she is okay with keeping things as is and still requesting addresses when residents come forward to address the Council. She added that she would also like to see the City responses to Citizen Input comments posted on the next agenda to show residents what actions were taken on their comments. She shared that in another City, before the resident forum takes place, a member of Staff discusses the concerns or comments from the last meeting and what has been done since then.

Councilmember Woestehoff suggested including these updates as a part of Staff Input at the end of the agenda. He explained that there are many times where residents come forward to speak and it is not about an issue that needs to be addressed. He noted a lot of the comments made during Citizens Input do not require a follow up.

Councilmember Olson shared that he believes it would be good to have some sort of feedback to the residents that indicates that they are listening to residents when they come forward to address the Council and that they are acting on these items.

City Administrator Hagen explained that one way to gauge whether Staff followed up on a resident's comments is if they do not come back to address the Council. He said if their problem has been addressed, then Staff has likely addressed it with the resident.

Councilmember Howell said she agrees with the sentiment of giving an update on these items; however, she is concerned that it will create more work for Staff.

Councilmember Specht suggested if there is ever a time where they do not have any items on the agenda, for them to add something to discuss. He added that he does not understand why the approval of the agenda is so far down on the agenda and there are two items that are discussed, Presentations and Citizen Input, that are discussed before the agenda. He suggested moving the approval of the agenda to item 2.

Councilmember Woestehoff explained that Anoka does not even have agenda approval on their agenda.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that Elk River has an agenda similar to what Councilmember Specht is suggesting where they approve the agenda before they have any public comment or presentations.

Councilmember Olson said that does seem to make sense to approve the agenda earlier on in the meeting.

Mayor Kuzma shared concern with moving the agenda approval above the presentations in the case that the Council decides they do not want to hear a presentation that has already been posted and someone is present to give the presentation.

Councilmember Specht said he is not sure if this would ever happen; however, the presentations are a part of the agenda, so it makes more sense to approve the whole agenda before getting to other items for presentation or discussion.

Councilmember Woestehoff explained that this was designed this way as presentations are not meant to have input but are meant to only be received and no action needs to be taken. He noted that the agenda items are the actual items that require action to be taken.

Mayor Kuzma said he is not in favor of moving the agenda approval above Presentations and Citizen Input.

The consensus of the Council was to make the approval of minutes its own agenda item and remove it from the Consent Agenda and to direct Staff to add language to the agenda before the Citizen Input and Consent Agenda items with statements about these items.

2.05: Review 2023 Annual Comprehensive Finance Report, Management Report and Special Purpose Report - Please Note: this case was moved from case 2.4 to case 2.5.

Finance Director Lund reviewed the Staff report in regard to the 2023 annual Comprehensive Finance Report, Management Report, and Special Purpose Report. She introduced Aaron Nielson from Malloy, Montague, Karnowski, Radosevich & Company (MMKR).

Mr. Nielson reviewed the results of the financial audit with the Council.

Councilmember Riley asked what happened with the sewer fund last year that the fund balance went up, but it had an operating loss.

Finance Director Lund explained that it was due to the investment earnings as the water and sewer took a majority of the loss down to market value.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if she could email any questions she has once she is able to review the whole report. She asked how the pavement management fund had decreased last year.

Finance Director Lund explained that the bond money from a few years ago went into this fund as they constructed a lot of roads in 2023.

Councilmember Musgrove asked about the COVID-19 dollars that were received in 2023 as she thought they were done receiving these dollars.

Finance Director Lund explained that they had \$750,000 left that was used for the roads. She shared that when they use these dollars they get recorded as revenue.

Councilmember Musgrove asked for an example of what a material weakness would be.

Mr. Nielson shared that a common weakness that some smaller cities have is that they do not have enough individuals involved in the financial reporting process. He added a weakness could also be the auditor discovering something that was not recorded properly on accounts receivable. He asked that all communication and questions be sent to Finance Director Lund and she can distribute the responses back to all Councilmembers.

Councilmember Woestehoff noted that according to the report, the City has \$104,000,000 in investment accounts. He asked if this automatically gets reinvested every time something matures.

Finance Director Lund explained that they have a pool investment schedule and at the end of the year, they see what is in each balance and they adjust the investments accordingly.

City Administrator Hagen added that for the water treatment plant they have been collecting money through the years and saving up for this project. He noted that the City is not over taxing just to invest more dollars, they are saving up for something.

The consensus of the Council was to accept the audit report and allow Mr. Nielson to briefly present the findings at the Council Meeting.

2.06: 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

City Administrator Hagen reviewed the Staff report in regard to the City Administrator annual performance review and requested to move to Closed Session to discuss the City Administrator annual performance review.

The meeting was recessed to Closed Session at 6:39 p.m.

The meeting reconvened to Open Session at 6:48 p.m.

3. TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

3.01: Review Future Topics/ Calendar

Noted.

Councilmember Howell stated she would like to have a discussion at the next Work Session to discuss the State Flag.

4. MAYOR / COUNCIL / STAFF INPUT

None.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian S. Hagen
City Administrator

ATTEST:

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, June 25, 2024, 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
City Attorney Fritz Knaak

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kuzma called the Closed Session of the City Council to order at 6:39 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 - May be Closed to the Public

City Administrator Hagen reviewed the Staff report in regard to the City Administrator annual performance review.

The Council discussed the performance review for City Administrator Hagen and provided direction to staff.

3. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Musgrove, seconded by Councilmember Howell, to adjourn the Closed Session

Motion carried.

The Closed Session was adjourned at 6:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian S. Hagen
City Administrator

ATTEST:

Katie M. Schmidt
City Clerk

Drafted by Ava Major
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.