

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, July 9, 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 (attended remotely)
Community Development Director Stephanie Hanson (attended remotely)
Planning Manager Todd Larson (attended remotely)
Police Chief Jeff Katers
Fire Chief Matt Kohner
Street Supervisor Shane Turner
City Engineer/Public Works Director Bruce Westby

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: 2025 General Fund/Enterprise Fund - Capital Equipment Requests

Finance Director Lund reviewed the Staff report in regard to the capital equipment requests for 2025.

Councilmember Riley asked if the City Hall security system updates are coming as a result of the Staff survey.

City Administrator Hagen stated there was some feedback that came in through the Staff survey as well as from the internal Safety Committee.

Councilmember Riley said he is not in support of this. He noted that if they need to add some locking doors or doors for separation then he would understand that; however, he does not see the

need for bulletproof windows or some of the other proposed safety features. He noted that this would not be a good look.

Councilmember Specht noted that Staff safety is very important. He asked if any incidents have happened that prompted these requests or if it is just preventative.

City Administrator Hagen said it is mostly preventative. He noted that there are certain times where voices will escalate but never any physical altercations.

Councilmember Specht added that for the price of these safety related items they could afford to employ another police officer for City Hall.

Councilmember Howell agreed with Councilmember Riley. She noted that there are solutions that would be reasonable, like putting in doors; however, the current proposal seems excessive for Ramsey.

Councilmember Musgrove noted that they may need to have a deeper discussion on some of the safety items that are being proposed rather than the all-in plan, as it seems to be a lot.

Mayor Kuzma added that he is not in favor of these safety upgrades at this time.

Police Chief Katers reviewed the capital requests for the Police Department.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if there is any way that the drone can be mutual aid with the County.

Police Chief Katers shared that if they request a drone from the County then they would send it out for Ramsey; however, he is not aware of any mutual aid as far as funding goes. He noted that each agency is just purchasing these on their own.

Mayor Kuzma asked if this is also a request for timing purposes, so they have access to the drone right away rather than having to wait for one from another entity.

Police Chief Katers said yes and noted that the drone would be kept in the supervisor vehicles so it would always be out in the field when it needed to be launched.

Councilmember Musgrove asked how many cities in the area have their own drones rather than using the County's drone or another city's drone.

Police Chief Katers shared that he knows that Anoka County Emergency Management, Anoka County Sheriff's Office, and Coon Rapids all have their own drones.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if they would have to certify people through the FAA for using the drone. He asked how many people would need to get this certification.

Police Chief Katers stated that they would need to certify people with the FAA to use the drone as it is for commercial use which requests licensure. He noted they can certify a few drone pilots.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the public safety dollars will be going towards the workout equipment. She asked if they will potentially be able to resell any of the existing equipment.

Police Chief Katers said this will use the remainder of the public safety dollars as the rest has already been allocated. He noted that there is some existing equipment that they may be able to sell; however, some has been donated or are very old.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if they were able to sell any of the existing equipment, what these dollars would be used for.

Finance Director Lund explained when they sell used capital, the dollars typically go into the fleet management fund.

Councilmember Musgrove shared that she is in support of replacing the Panasonic audio and video equipment.

Councilmember Olson asked if there is a lead time from the FAA on when they will be able to launch the drone.

Police Chief Katers shared that he is not sure of any lead time for being allowed to launch the drone.

Fire Chief Kohner reviewed the Fire Department capital requests.

Councilmember Musgrove shared that she noticed that a lot of the fire vehicles do not have high mileage on them. She asked what year vehicle they can no longer get parts for due to age.

Fire Chief Kohner said he is not sure.

Councilmember Riley asked what kind of issue they are having with the current fire engine.

Fire Chief Kohner stated that they need to replace the pump and the engine.

Councilmember Riley asked about replacing these items rather than replacing the whole vehicle.

Fire Chief Kohner said that they could just do repairs to the vehicle but those would be costly, and the vehicle would still need to be replaced eventually.

Mayor Kuzma asked if there is a resale value to the fire engine.

Fire Chief Kohner said yes and noted that when they traded in their fire engine in 2011, they received around \$40,000 for it.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if some of the money for this vehicle will be coming from State safety funds.

Fire Chief Kohner said they will not be receiving any State funds, and it will all be from the levy.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if they do get this new engine, how the fleet will look for the coming years and if there will be any more large expenditures that they anticipate in the next five years.

Fire Chief Kohner said the aerial truck will be needed in the next few years; however, other than that they will be pretty caught up on replacements for the next 10 years.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked how many more years of siren replacements they have.

Fire Chief Kohner said he can get this information; however, he believes they have six or seven years left.

Street Supervisor Turner reviewed the Public Works Department capital requests.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if there are rules on how to dispose of emerald ash borer trees.

Street Supervisor Turner explained that they can put the trees through woodchippers if they are chipping them as they are being cut down. He noted that if they are storing them, they have to be covered with a tarp so bugs cannot escape them.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if they had explored the idea of renting one of these chippers rather than purchasing one.

Street Supervisor Turner said he has looked into this; however, he has not been able to find one large enough.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if they would be able to contract this work out.

Street Supervisor Turner explained that it could cost over \$3,000 per tree and they did 303 emerald ash borer trees last year.

Councilmember Riley asked if there were to wait another year for the street sweeper what the downside would be.

Street Supervisor Turner said there would be no huge downside of this as they would still be able to get through the next year without a new one. He noted that if they push this to next year, he will come back asking for the street sweeper and other requests next year.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if they would want to keep the 2016 street sweeper around for a few years even if they did get a new one so they could do twice as much sweeping as they would be able to do with one vehicle.

Street Supervisor Turner noted that he would prefer to get the trade in value for the vehicle rather than continue to use it.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if they would have enough crew members to run two street sweepers.

Street Supervisor Turner said they would need another full crew of three to run a second street sweeper.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the funding for this would come from the enterprise funds rather than the general levy.

Finance Director Lund said yes.

Councilmember Riley asked if it will take more than two years to get the fire engine if they would be able to split the cost over three years.

Finance Director Lund explained that it will depend on how payment for the vehicle is requested.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the dollar amount for the new copiers includes the discount for buying them in bulk.

Finance Director Lund said this includes the discount.

Councilmember Musgrove noted that she would like to see what the prices for the copiers would be individually rather than purchasing them all at one time.

Councilmember Howell asked if there is a service plan for the copiers that takes care of any issues.

Finance Director Lund explained that they have a maintenance contract for this. She shared that she believes this would be the same with the new machines.

Councilmember Howell said she would recommend holding off on replacing the copiers for now.

Mayor Kuzma noted that they also pushed these out last year when they were requested. He said that this is a purchase that they should probably make. He added that he would like all three purchased together as it will be easier to maintain them rather than if they were spread out.

Councilmember Riley suggested removing the drone from this year's equipment requests.

Councilmember Woestehoff said he would support keeping the drone on for 2025. He noted that there is a bill at the Federal level that will ban certain drone vehicle brands and if they have to wait for a competitor that could take many years. He added that he also sees the value in being able to save time by having one of these drones when they are needed for emergencies.

Councilmember Musgrove said she would like to see if Anoka County is purchasing any more of these drones that the City would be able to use. She shared that she would support removing this from the budget since they do have mutual aid and would be able to use one from a surrounding entity when needed.

Mayor Kuzma asked if they want to keep the replacement of all three copiers in the equipment budget.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that she would support replacing the main copier and staggering the purchase of the other copiers.

Finance Director Lund shared that the request is that they replace all of the copiers at the same time for ease of maintenance and replacement parts.

Councilmember Woestehoff explained that Staff time is taken up every time they get a new machine that has to be set up and connected. He noted that if they do stagger them out, it will not only cost more because they will no longer get the discount, but also it will cost Staff time every time someone has to set a new machine up. He asked if they have ever looked at leasing these machines rather than buying them.

Finance Director Lund said they looked into this years ago; however, she does not remember the cost associated with leasing them.

The consensus of the Council was to direct Staff to bring back more information on the discussed requests and to remove the security upgrades and the police drone from the list of capital equipment for 2025.

2.02: Anoka County License Center Lease Amendment

City Administrator Hagen reviewed the Staff report concerning the Anoka County License Center lease.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the County is questioning whether or not they will even have license centers open.

City Administrator Hagen said yes and explained that the revenue that the County brings in for license and tab fees are not keeping up with the costs of operating a center. He noted that they are already having to supplement operational costs.

Councilmember Riley shared that he thinks the County's counteroffer is close enough as it gives them part of what they wanted. He added that the City also benefits from having the license center in the City.

The consensus of the Council was to accept the County's counteroffer for the Anoka County License Center lease agreement.

2.03: State Flag

City Administrator Hagen reviewed the Staff report in regard to the new State flag.

Councilmember Howell shared that she does not believe that the new State flag was properly vetted and only an elitist group made the decision. She explained that the old flag has a lot of excellent references to the State. She said she would like to see them continue to fly the old flag.

Mayor Kuzma asked if they still had the old State flags.

City Administrator Hagen said they may still have some of them, but not all of them.

Councilmember Musgrove shared that she heard from residents who were not happy that the City was flying the new flag as they are not happy with how this process was and that they were not able to voice their opinions. She added that there are a lot of places in the community that have not switched over to using the new flags. She said she would like the City to stay with the old flag as it has a lot more meaning to residents.

Councilmember Woestehoff shared that he has heard from residents that they are very pleased that the City is already flying the new flag.

Mayor Kuzma asked what it would cost to buy new flags if they have already discarded some of the old ones.

City Administrator Hagen explained that they only fly a handful of flags around town.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby shared that there are 16 flags that they fly around town and they are around \$200 each. He noted that they still have about half of the old ones.

Councilmember Specht said he would be happy to go back to the old flags.

Councilmember Riley said he would prefer to see a Happy Days flag flown in place of a State flag.

Councilmember Olson shared that he prefers the old flags.

The consensus of the Council was to replace all of the new State flags with the old State flags.

3. TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

3.01: Review Future Topics/ Calendar

Noted.

4. MAYOR / COUNCIL / STAFF INPUT

Councilmember Specht shared that he would like to discuss Code Enforcement in the future about proactive enforcement.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian S. Hagen
City Administrator

ATTEST:

Katie M. Schmidt
City Clerk

Drafted by Ava Major
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.