

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, October 8, 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 Engineer/Public Works Director Bruce Westby
Administrative Services Director Colleen Lasher
Planning Manager Todd Larson
City Attorney Fritz Knaak
Police Chief Jeff Katers

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: Review Proposed Amendments to Lower Rum River Watershed Management Organization Joint Powers Agreement

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby reviewed the Staff report in regard to the proposed amendments to the 2025-2034 Lower Rum River Watershed Management Organization JPA.

Councilmember Musgrove noted that for the amendment to the Commissioner's right to vote being suspended if the member city is delinquent in making payments could be an issue as it is dependent on when cities get their tax levy funds.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby shared that they have excess funds that would allow them to still make payments while they wait for the tax levy funds to come through.

Mayor Kuzma said he was on the Board for seven years and he cannot remember a time where there was an issue with a city not making their payments.

Councilmember Riley stated he is concerned with it saying all invoices and all past due amounts as sometimes things are questioned and payments are delayed.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby explained that this would just be for the annual assessment.

Councilmember Riley said he would like this language to be clarified.

Councilmember Musgrove shared that she does not think they have ever had an increase as high as 20%.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby stated that there was a year in the past where the fees did go up significantly which was due to trying to get more funds in a plan.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked who sets the assessment amount.

Mayor Kuzma said it was set by the Board Members of the WMO.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that having a cap makes sense and he does not have an issue with the cap being set at 120% of the previous year's assessment.

Councilmember Musgrove shared that in the Board's yearly budget, they set aside money in reserves ahead of time. She said this will help keep increases to a level where it is manageable for every city and this acts as a safeguard.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked what the City's current assessment amount is.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby stated it is around \$65,000 and it comes from the stormwater funds.

Councilmember Musgrove added that it is based on a formula of how many projects a city does.

Mayor Kuzma noted that Ramsey has a majority of the frontage of the Lower Mississippi River.

Councilmember Riley asked if there is a calculation that takes into account the amount of river frontage in a city.

Mayor Kuzma said it is calculated by population.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if one-half of 1% of their net tax capacity will meet the needs of the district.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby said he does not know.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated they should figure this out before agreeing to it.

City Administrator Hagen shared that the annual contribution by each member city is based 50% on the net tax capacity and 50% on the basis of the total area within the boundaries of the watershed.

Councilmember Musgrove shared that the individual who wrote up this new JPA only works on watersheds, so he is able to look at this with an eye to protect the members.

Councilmember Woestehoff reiterated his desire to make sure the assessment amounts align with what the Board needs to be successful.

Councilmember Musgrove suggested adding permits to Section 1.4(m), under definitions.

City Administrator Hagen stated permits are tied to projects and this section references projects which will have permits tied to them.

Councilmember Musgrove asked how remote attendance at meetings affects Section 3.2. She asked if language would need to be added to address remote attendance.

City Attorney Knaak said it would be a good idea to expressly authorize remote attendance for these meetings.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that Section 3.5 states that checks must be signed by the Chair, which is not done currently. She said the treasurer and the appointed finance person sign the checks. She added that the way it is done currently works well. She shared that Section 3.7 addresses calling Special Meetings but does not specify who pays for the meeting. She suggested adding language that if a Special Meeting is called by a permittee, they need to pay for the cost of this. She noted that Section 4.1(a) 20, it discusses the auditor's report going to the member cities at least once a year. She asked if this is provided to the City.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby said he is not sure.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if they wanted this to come to the City every year and have someone look over the audit.

City Attorney Knaak shared that this may be to the benefit of the City to have the availability to the City auditor.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if they send the Local Water Plans to the Met Council as referenced under Section 4.3(b).

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby said he would need to refer to this statute; however, they submit this plan to whoever requests it.

Councilmember Riley asked if they are required to submit this whenever it is requested if it also needs to be a part of this agreement.

City Administrator Hagen said this section essentially states that the Board will follow State law.

Councilmember Woestehoff said he would be in favor of keeping this section as it would help keep the other cities accountable for doing their job as well.

Councilmember Musgrove shared that they do not have the authority to levy anything and the paragraph in Section 5.6(d) says they do. She added that this section also talks about the County and the WMO does not really do any work with the County.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby stated watershed districts have levying authority but not watershed management organizations.

Councilmember Musgrove suggested removing this whole paragraph and replacing it with the old language. She added that the WMO does not do much with CIPs and Sections 7.2 and 7.3 have a lot of language about the CIP. She noted that they are regulated by BWSR and not the County. She thanked City Attorney Knaak for reviewing this and providing his feedback.

The consensus of the Council was to move forward with the discussed amendments to the JPA and direct Staff to gather more information to bring back to Council.

2.02: Discussion of Ordinance #24-12, Regulating Cannabis Businesses

Planning Manager Larson reviewed the Staff report concerning the ordinance for regulating cannabis businesses.

Mayor Kuzma said he is not in support of allowing temporary cannabis events.

Councilmember Woestehoff agreed.

Councilmember Musgrove agreed.

The consensus of the Council was to move forward with the proposed ordinance and not allow temporary cannabis events.

2.03: Discuss Potential Amendments to Rental Housing Code

Planning Manager Larson reviewed the Staff report in regard to amendments to the Rental Housing Code.

Councilmember Musgrove noted that in the first paragraph of the Rental Code, it lists the responsibilities of the licensee but does not list any responsibility for the tenant. She asked why this was.

Planning Manager Larson explained that the rental licensing program does not involve the tenants as they are not responsible for getting a license.

Councilmember Musgrove shared that under the definitions section of the code, the definition of occupant is different from the definition of tenant. She asked if they would be able to put restrictions on the definition of occupants to help protect the property owners from squatters. She suggested only allowing people who are on the lease to occupy the unit.

Planning Manager Larson explained that a tenant may meet someone and have them move in the middle of the lease, which would make this person an occupant, not a tenant.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that under the rental dwelling license section, it states the license will be issued by the City Administrator or designee. She asked if this should say it is issued by the City of Ramsey.

City Attorney Knaak noted that this is a part of the Ramsey City Code. He said there is no harm to being more specific in this section; however, he does not think it is necessary.

Councilmember Musgrove shared that in Section 26.645, subsections 4 and 5 are written in paragraph form and may be easier read if they were put in a bulleted format. She asked if the requirement for the list of tenants will be something that the City keeps on hand or the landlord will have.

Planning Manager Larson explained that the list of tenants is something that the leasing office will need to have on hand so that if there is an issue, the Police Department can figure out who lives in what unit if needed.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if this is a new requirement of the City.

Planning Manager Larson said he is not aware of what this requirement was previously. He noted that the City does not want to maintain a list that has to be updated anytime tenants are changing.

Councilmember Howell asked if the Crime Free Housing program went away, if they would still be able to require a Minnesota Crime Free Housing Lease Addendum to be added to leases.

City Attorney Knaak stated if they remove the Crime Free Housing program, there would be no reason to have this in their ordinance.

Councilmember Howell said she would like the Crime Free Housing Lease Addendum to continue even if they do away with the Crime Free Housing program.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated he liked the idea of keeping the Crime Free Housing Lease Addendum in the leases.

Councilmember Musgrove agreed. She asked if there should be a designated time frame for when a property manager or leasing agent is replaced that the City needs to be notified.

Planning Manager Larson shared that there is an apartment complex in the City that has a high turnover rate for their leasing agents and it would be hard to regulate this as they would not know when the person first left the role and was replaced.

Councilmember Musgrove suggested changing the language to immediately notifying the City when there is a change in leasing agent or property manager. She added that she would like some clarification on what is satisfactory to the City that the licensee is maintaining the documents required, as referenced in Section 26.645 Subsection 5.

Councilmember Riley suggested removing the language around being satisfactory to the City.

Councilmember Musgrove agreed.

City Attorney Knaak stated they will want to have some kind of discretionary standard so that it is up to the City to decide if the proof they are being provided is sufficient. He said they could tighten up this language; however, he thinks they would want to create a reasonable standard where it is the City who gets to decide if the information provided to them is sufficient.

Councilmember Musgrove asked where this standard is written.

City Attorney Knaak said it would not be in this language and explained that it would likely be someone calling the City and asking how they want this information.

Councilmember Musgrove suggested having the standards written on the application.

City Attorney Knaak said that would be a good idea; however, he does not believe they need this kind of language in the code.

Councilmember Howell noted that the landlords should know what kind of documents they have to have on hand to provide to the City.

Councilmember Musgrove shared that she does not want this to be a varying standard. She said she would like the standard to be the same for everyone and clearly written out.

City Attorney Knaak said this is a valid concern and noted that the way this is addressed would be to show the landlords the kinds of things the City is looking for with this documentation.

Planning Manager Larson added that this section refers to how the landlord keeps their information in the event that the City needs access to it. He said they do not want to dictate the way that these landlords keep their records organized.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked why they are removing the Crime Free Housing program.

Police Chief Katers explained that they have officers that are trained in Crime Free Housing and this program has licensing and fees associated with being a part of this nation-wide program. He

said this program is currently being reworked and eventually the Minnesota Crime Prevention Association will be creating their own program for this.

The consensus of the Council was to move forward with the discussed amendments to the rental housing code.

2.04: Discuss Changes to the Earned Sick and Safe Time Policy

Administrative Services Director Lasher reviewed the Staff report concerning the changes to the Earned Sick and Safe Time policy.

Councilmember Woestehoff said this seems like it will be far easier on an administrative level to manage. He stated he is fully supportive of this.

Councilmember Riley asked if the City gives more sick days than required by law.

Administrative Services Director Lasher said yes and noted they give 12 days a year, which is double the State requirement.

City Administrator Hagen explained that State legislation passed laws that went into effect on January 1, 2024, which required up to 48 hours of Earned Sick and Safe Time. He noted that every hour beyond this, the City could be more restrictive with eligible uses; however, this law now changed in the current legislation and now states that any time off that is related to sick time that is given by employers need to meet the Earned Sick and Safe Time eligible uses. He said they could carry a bank for all employees that were with the City last year and keep the old sick time policy; however, this will be more involved on the administrative level.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if they were to put all sick time into a bank for the employee to use if there would still be a cap at 48 hours per year.

Administrative Services Director Lasher said it would be capped at 96 hours a year. She explained that it would be the same accrual, it just changes the usage of the time.

Councilmember Riley asked if there are more discussions around changing this in the future as this has already been changed twice in two years.

City Administrator Hagen said he is not sure if more changes will be coming from the legislation.

Administrative Services Director Lasher shared that on average Ramsey employees use around 54% of their accrued sick time. She said she does not feel that changing this policy will change the use.

Councilmember Specht said he is in favor of the change.

Councilmember Riley stated he does not like the idea of the law itself as he is concerned that it will change again in the near future.

Councilmember Woestehoff noted that this could change again in the future; however, he does not see it becoming more restrictive. He added that they already have to make this change for 2024.

Councilmember Musgrove said she is in support of this as it is a law they have to follow; however, she is not supportive of the law change as she sees it as being detrimental to small businesses.

Councilmember Howell stated she is not in support of this change.

Councilmember Olson said he was in support.

The consensus of the Council was to move forward with the proposed changes to the Earned Sick and Safe Time policy.

2.05: Attorney-Client Privileged Discussion of Litigation: Murray v. City of Ramsey (Conciliation Court Appeal) - Closed to the Public

City Attorney Knaak reviewed the Staff report and requested the meeting move to Closed Session.

Motion by Councilmember Riley, seconded by Councilmember Musgrove, to recess the meeting to Closed Session at 6:47 p.m.

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

The meeting reconvened to Open Session at 6:57 p.m.

City Administrator Hagen shared that Staff received direction from the Council.

3. TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

3.01: Review Future Topics/ Calendar

Noted.

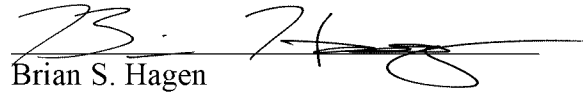
4. MAYOR / COUNCIL / STAFF INPUT

None.

5. ADJOURNMENT

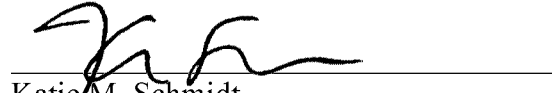
The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Brian S. Hagen
City Administrator

ATTEST:



Katie M. Schmidt
City Clerk

Drafted by Ava Major
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.