

**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 24, 2025, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor Ryan Heineman  
Councilmember Kirsten Buscher  
Councilmember Michael Olson  
Councilmember Eric Peters  
Councilmember Chris Riley  
Councilmember Dan Specht  
Councilmember Shanna Stewart

Also Present: City Administrator Brian Hagen  
City Engineer/Public Works Director Bruce Westby  
Finance Director Diana Lund  
City Attorney Fritz Knaak

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Heineman called the City Council Work Session to order at 5:30 p.m.

**2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

**2.01: Review Gravel Road Elimination Program Funding Options**

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby reviewed the Staff report in regard to the gravel road elimination program funding options.

City Administrator Hagen shared that they will be requesting to increase engineering Staff and decrease contracted work in the future so they may be able to utilize Staff for the design and work of these projects.

Councilmember Specht asked how much it would cost if they tried to get one of these roads done in 2026, with outsourcing the work.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby explained that going with a contractor would add around 10% to the project costs.

Mayor Heineman asked which road the Staff considers the highest priority.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby said they would recommend starting with area A, then area F, then area E, then area D, then area C, and lastly, area B. He said this order is based on the number of calls they receive and the maintenance required on the roads.

Councilmember Buscher asked what kind of calls they are receiving about these roads and how many calls they are receiving. She asked what other projects they would be giving up so they could complete these roads.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby explained that gravel roads can wash out easily and can also have large potholes. He noted they do not get a lot of complaints about the dust. He said if they only paved one of these roads every few years, then it would have a minimal impact on their ability to complete other jobs. He added that if they wanted to complete all of these segments in one year, then this would interfere with the number of pavement management projects they could get to. He explained that they typically receive a call about area A every two to three weeks, about area F a few times a month, and about area E once a month. He noted that the other areas get random calls.

Councilmember Stewart asked how many houses are on the segments in areas A and F. She asked if the homes on these roads are on private wells and septic or City sewer.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby said all of these homes are on private wells and septic systems. He stated there are about eight or nine homes on these segments.

Councilmember Stewart asked if they are considering putting in City sewer in these areas. She said she is afraid that they will pave these areas, then a few years down the line, they will have to tear up the roads to install sewer lines.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby stated that sewer and water are nowhere near most of these areas. He noted some of them may be within the MUSA.

Councilmember Olson asked if the priority list for these segments ties in with any other road projects in the area.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby said there is no correlation between these projects and other road projects.

Councilmember Specht shared that he hears from residents about these gravel roads. He said he is looking forward to getting these done.

Councilmember Buscher asked how the number of calls they receive about area A compares to the number of calls that they receive about other roads throughout the City.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby explained that when he started working with the City, they were getting constant calls about the roads. He said they are at a much better place with the bituminous roads, and they receive very few calls. He shared that they receive more calls about the gravel roads than they do for all of the paved roads combined.

Mayor Heineman noted that the residents who live on the segments are paying the same taxes as everyone else for road maintenance.

Councilmember Stewart asked which segments are in the MUSA.

City Administrator Hagen said areas F, E, D, and B are all within the MUSA; however, the likelihood of any of these redeveloping and needing water and sewer is relatively low.

Councilmember Buscher asked if they would be able to send out letters to the residents on the segments and ask if paving the road would still be a priority if the City were to assess them.

City Administrator Hagen asked if they wanted to look at assessing these property owners.

Councilmember Specht stated it would be in the City's best interest to pave all of the gravel roads for maintenance purposes. He noted that these residents who live on these segments are already paying taxes into the pavement management fund, and he does not think they should be treated differently and assessed to have their road paved. He added that the special assessment process can be very cumbersome and costly.

Councilmember Riley noted that, considering the low number of houses in these areas, they would not be able to assess a lot of the costs.

Finance Director Lund added that they assessed the last gravel road that they paved.

Councilmember Buscher shared that they still care about the residents who live on these roads; however, they need to make decisions on what is best for the greatest number of residents. She suggested working these roads into the existing pavement management system rather than prioritizing these and putting the other roads behind schedule. She said she is in favor of assessing these roads, as this is what they have historically done.

Councilmember Stewart agreed with Councilmember Buscher and shared her support for doing a special assessment.

Mayor Heineman shared that he moved into his home in 2019, and his road will be redone, and he will not have to pay a special assessment on it. He asked when they stopped using assessments for all road projects.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby said it was December of 2014.

Mayor Heineman noted that they are using a policy that was created during a time when assessments were used across the board for everyone. He added that they do not make decisions on what is best for the most people, but rather what protects the rights of individuals.

Councilmember Specht explained that when the Council discussed special assessments in the past, no residents were supportive of this.

Councilmember Buscher suggested they update their gravel road policy before they begin these projects.

City Administrator Hagen shared that if it is the Council's direction that they do not want special assessments for these roads, then Staff would work on the policy and come back with changes.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby reviewed the current assessment policy and shared that the amount of the assessment must not exceed the special benefit to the property. He noted that in the past, all assessments have been less than \$10,000. He added that subgrade corrections are not assessable.

City Administrator Hagen asked if they could do a pre-project assessment to get a general idea of how much the assessments would be.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby said they have done that in the past, and they would hire an appraiser to complete a project report that would give a range of realistic assessments that would hold up in court if someone were to petition their assessment.

Councilmember Specht stated that he would like to see these projects spread out every few years.

Councilmember Peters said he lived in a city that charged assessments and other fees for all road projects, and he does not like the idea of having to assess these property owners.

Finance Director Lund reviewed the potential funding sources for these projects, including TIF 1 and 2 for segments E and F, and the general levy, the PIR fund, or bonds for the other segments.

Mayor Heineman asked about their current fund balance to do the TIF area projects.

City Administrator Hagen said the 2026 year-end fund balance is projected to be \$516,000.

Councilmember Riley stated he would be supportive of spreading these projects out over a number of years. He noted that a few of the first projects could be funded through TIF.

Councilmember Specht noted that if they already have enough dedicated funds to cover the first few segments, then he would like to see them move forward with the higher priority segments.

Councilmember Buscher asked how frequently they would be paving these segments.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby said he does not want to jeopardize the existing pavement management program, so these projects would need to be spread out. He noted they could probably do one of these areas a year.

Mayor Heineman asked if they were able to do the TIF fund projects first, and which area they would want to start with.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby said they would start with area F, then E.

Councilmember Riley asked when they will have some money freed up through TIF 14.

Finance Director Lund said this fund currently holds land sales that they have done and the transfers of the value.

City Administrator Hagen asked if they could choose how quickly they could back internal loans.

Finance Director Lund said yes.

Councilmember Riley asked when they will be able to put more money in the PIR fund.

City Administrator Hagen explained that there is a certain amount of the money they take in that has to go to other places; however, with the remaining balance, they have the ability to look at all ideal repayment amounts and shift things around.

Councilmember Stewart asked if there is a benefit to waiting a year to start the area F and E projects.

City Administrator Hagen said they would be able to do the work in-house and could save around \$30,000.

The consensus of the Council was to direct Staff to not pursue assessments for these projects, to start with areas F and E using TIF funds, but to wait until engineering has Staff in place to handle this in-house, and to look at alternative funding sources for the other project areas.

## **2.02: Consider Request for Proposals - Civil Legal Services**

City Administrator Hagen reviewed the Staff report concerning civil legal services and whether they want to renew the existing contract or consider requests for proposals.

Councilmember Riley said it never hurts to find out what else is out there.

Councilmember Buscher agreed.

Councilmember Specht said he is happy with the current services being provided by City Attorney Knaak; however, he is not opposed to a request for proposals.

Mayor Heineman asked what kind of Staff time would be involved in a request for proposals.

City Administrator Hagen said they would do a three-week proposal period and then have a Staff review period before presenting the candidates to Council and interviewing them. He stated it would not be a huge time commitment for Staff.

The consensus of the Council was to move forward with requests for proposals for civil legal services.

**2.03: 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 his annual performance review as City Administrator. He requested to move to a closed meeting.

Motion by Councilmember Riley, seconded by Councilmember Stewart, to recess to Closed Session at 6:40 p.m.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor Heineman, Councilmembers Riley, Stewart, Buscher, Olson, Peters, and Specht. Voting No: None.

The meeting reconvened to Open Session at 6:53 p.m.

**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,

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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, June 24, 2025, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor Ryan Heineman  
Councilmember Kirsten Buscher  
Councilmember Michael Olson  
Councilmember Eric Peters  
Councilmember Chris Riley  
Councilmember Dan Specht  
Councilmember Shanna Stewart

Also Present: City Administrator Brian Hagen  
City Attorney Fritz Knaak

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Heineman called the Closed Session of the City Council to order at 6:40 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 concerning the performance review for the City Administrator.

**3. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Councilmember Stewart, seconded by Councilmember Peters, to adjourn the Closed Session

Motion carried.

The Closed Session was adjourned at 6:53 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 Rokosz  
*TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*