

**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 14, 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
Administrative Services Director Colleen Lasher
Planning Manager Todd Larson
Police Chief Brad Bluml

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: Discuss Fire Department Restructure and Staffing

City Administrator Hagen reviewed the Staff report in regard to restructuring the Fire Department.

Administrative Services Director Lasher reviewed the suggested re-classifications of roles and their wage scales.

Councilmember Riley said that he does not see a huge difference in these new roles and their current responsibilities. He asked why this is coming forward to the Council.

Administrative Services Director Lasher explained that this would create two new positions that the City has not had in the past. She added that this is also just to loop the Council in on the restructuring of the Fire Department. She noted that this restructuring would result in overall savings and would help align duties with the right people.

Councilmember Olson shared that he is supportive of this restructuring.

Councilmember Stewart asked if this new role had already been requested through the budget process.

Administrative Services Director Lasher said no and explained that this is a request to replace a vacant position with a different, new position.

Councilmember Buscher shared that she is supportive of whatever the Fire Department is asking for to help them best serve the community.

Administrative Services Director Lasher shared that they would like to start recruitment for the Deputy Chief of Training position as soon as possible. She asked if there was support for this.

Mayor Heineman shared that he is comfortable with starting internal recruitment for this role.

The consensus of the Council was to move forward with the presented restructuring of the Fire Department.

2.02: Review Proposed Parking Restrictions on One Side of Public Streets in the Village of Sunfish Lake

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby reviewed the Staff report concerning proposed parking restrictions on one side of the public streets in the Village of Sunfish Lake. He shared some of the concerns shared by residents in the area around these parking restrictions.

A resident in this neighborhood shared that she is not opposed to parking restrictions; however, adding additional signage in this neighborhood would make things more cluttered. She added that there should be some exceptions made for those who live around the playground circle area, where the street is narrow. She noted that when they have any kind of contractors or service workers coming to work on their homes, there is nowhere that they can legally park their vehicles on the street. She said they have four cars at their house, so they do not park any of their vehicles on the street, as she got a ticket in the past for parking on the street.

Councilmember Specht asked if the roads in this neighborhood are private roads.

The resident said just Quicksilver Street.

Councilmember Specht asked if the HOA has any restrictions.

The resident noted that it is one way around the playground area since the road is so narrow.

Councilmember Stewart shared that she lives in this neighborhood and noted that she has had many of her neighbors approach her about not wanting these parking restrictions for daytime parking. She said there was a petition that went out with 38 signatures opposing the parking restrictions in this neighborhood. She noted that this neighborhood has developed and grown over the past several years and has been fine without parking restrictions. She added that this could also affect home values in this neighborhood.

Mayor Heineman asked how often people park on the street in this neighborhood.

Councilmember Stewart said cars are parked sporadically throughout the neighborhood. She noted that the neighborhood is fuller during the summer when kids are home from college.

Mayor Heineman noted that if parking is only allowed on one side of the street, there should still be plenty of room for the cars that need to park on the street, if parking on the street is currently sporadic.

Councilmember Stewart shared that the fire hydrants are on the opposite side of the street from the restriction, which limits the amount of parking allowed. She added that many of the neighbors who live on the side of the street without the parking restriction do not think that other people should be parking in front of their house.

Mayor Heineman asked why the parking restrictions were put on the side without fire hydrants.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby said it was due to mailboxes.

Councilmember Riley noted that when this was presented to Public Works, it seemed reasonable; however, he has since changed his mind due to the outcry from residents. He said that there have been very minimal instances over the last 20 years, and he does not think this is a big enough issue that it needs to be addressed. He noted that there may be a few places throughout the neighborhood where they could restrict parking, like corners.

City Administrator Hagen shared that the ability for firetrucks to get through the neighborhood if cars are parked on both sides was a concern of the Staff. He said they could restrict parking in the most critical areas; however, there could still be issues in the other non-critical areas of the neighborhood.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby reiterated that one of the main concerns is with firetrucks being able to access the area. He asked if there were any issues in the neighborhood with mail delivery.

Councilmember Stewart said she has never had an issue with mail delivery to her house in the last five years.

The resident shared that there have been a few times when they have not gotten their mail because there was a car parked too close to their mailbox.

Councilmember Buscher asked when this parking restriction was put into place.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby said it has been in force; however, there is no signage currently, so they are unable to enforce it.

Councilmember Buscher shared that she understands the need for these parking restrictions. She noted that when she was campaigning for Council, she heard parking concerns for residents who live in townhomes. She asked if they could set up a system where residents could contact the City when they are going to have a service worker out to their house, who would need to park on the street.

The President of the Village of Sunfish Lake HOA shared that the residents who attended the most recent meeting were very excited about these parking restrictions. She suggested that they create day passes for service workers to put on their cars that give them the ability to park in the street without being ticketed. She said she would be happy to facilitate this.

Police Chief Bluml shared that they do offer no tow requests with the Police Department, where people can contact the department and let them know that they will have people parking in the streets overnight, and they just ask for a cell phone number in case there is an issue where the car needs to be moved.

Councilmember Buscher stated she is supportive of the restrictions and the signage since there are other things that residents can do to park on the streets without getting tickets.

Councilmember Specht said he would be supportive of keeping this as is without signs.

Councilmember Riley said he is not supportive of the parking restrictions other than in key areas.

Councilmember Buscher noted that it may be difficult to articulate and enforce the critical areas. She shared that she is supportive of the parking restrictions throughout the entire neighborhood as recommended by the Staff.

Councilmember Stewart shared that she opposes all parking restrictions, including in critical areas.

Councilmember Peters explained that there have been two house fires in his neighborhood, where homes have either been fully or mostly burned down. He said he would be supportive of restricting parking in critical areas for fire trucks to be able to travel more safely and quickly through the neighborhood when needed.

Councilmember Olson stated he is supportive of the parking restrictions from a safety perspective. He noted that any area could become a critical area if a house were on fire and a fire truck had to get through.

Mayor Heineman said he would be supportive of minimal restrictions, with only restrictions in the critical areas.

The consensus of the Council was supportive of no parking restrictions except in critical areas.

2.03: Update on Charter Commission Annual Recruitment

City Administrator Hagen reviewed the Staff report in regard to the Charter Commission recruitment process.

Mayor Heineman asked if the judge would give preference to people who have already served on the Charter Commission.

City Administrator Hagen noted that the judge has final approval, and they do suggest that they give preference to those who know what would be expected of them in this role and would uphold the Constitution.

This item was for information only.

3. TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

3.01: Review Future Topics/Calendar

Councilmember Riley asked if they could get ongoing cannabis updates at future meetings.

Mayor Heineman suggested adding this to item 4 of the Work Session agenda.

Councilmember Riley said he would also like quarterly Fire and Police Department updates.

City Administrator Hagen said they can look towards scheduling these presentations on a quarterly basis.

Councilmember Buscher shared that she would also like updates on different items that the Council has discussed in the past, but has not received updates on.

4. MAYOR / COUNCIL / STAFF INPUT

Councilmember Riley noted that at the last meeting, the Council discussed who approves variances and asked if the Council wants to take over this role.

Planning Manager Larson said this discussion will be presented to the Planning Commission next week.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian S. Hagen
City Administrator

ATTEST:

Katie M. Schmidt
City Clerk

Drafted by Ava Major
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.