

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Monday, November 10, 2025, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor Ryan Heineman (arrived at 5:51 p.m.)  
Councilmember Kirsten Buscher  
Councilmember Eric Peters  
Councilmember Chris Riley  
Councilmember Dan Specht  
Councilmember Shanna Stewart

Members Absent: Councilmember Michael Olson

Also Present: City Administrator Brian Hagen  
City Engineer/Public Works Director Bruce Westby  
Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Mark Riverblood  
Finance Director Diana Lund  
Deputy Fire Chief of Operations and Logistics Jason Sufka

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

**2.01: Review 2026 Budget and Levy Before Final Adoption**

Finance Director Lund reviewed the Staff report in regard to the 2026 budget and levy ahead of final adoption on December 9.

Councilmember Buscher asked if they could give information on the money that other cities receive as local government aid and collected through franchise fees.

Finance Director Lund shared that the local government aid can be found through the State. She added that she can gather the information on what other cities collect in franchise fees and report back to the Council.

The consensus of the Council was reached to move forward with the 2026 budget and levy as proposed.

**2.02: 2026 Proposed Sewer & Water Charges**

Finance Director Lund reviewed the Staff report concerning the 2026 proposed sewer and water charges.

Acting Mayor Riley asked if they had essentially been undercharging multi-unit users but overcharging single-homeowner users to make up for it.

Finance Director Lund said yes and explained that they had to reach the required number to pay the Met Council. She shared that she is recommending lowering the sewer rates from 9% to 6% for single-family homeowners.

Councilmember Stewart asked if the sewer charges for townhomes or apartment units will be increasing by \$100 per unit.

Finance Director Lund said that the average increase is \$100. She noted that it would amount to around a \$20 increase per unit per quarter.

City Administrator Hagen added that this will only impact buildings with multiple units that are on one meter.

Acting Mayor Riley said he thinks this change makes a lot of sense.

Councilmember Peters asked how they pay the Met Council.

Finance Director Lund shared that the Met Council bills them monthly based on the volume of transactions that flow through the system. She noted that they had a smaller increase last year and are looking at a 9% increase this year.

Councilmember Peters asked if the rates that they have set in the past cover this amount billed to the City.

Finance Director Lund said yes. She noted that these rates will be introduced at the next Council meeting.

The consensus of the Council was to move forward with the proposed 2026 sewer and water charges.

### **2.03: Review of Amending City Fund Ordinance**

Finance Director Lund reviewed the Staff report in regard to amending the City fund ordinance.

The consensus of the Council was to move forward with the amendments to the City fund ordinance.

### **2.04: Policy for the Reimbursement of Land Proceeds and Tax Increment for TIF Area #14 (COR) Amended**

Finance Director Lund reviewed the Staff report concerning the policy for reimbursement of land proceeds and tax increment for the COR.

Acting Mayor Riley asked why they are going to be pushing back on paying back TIF.

Finance Director Lund explained that TIF #1 and #2 are not like the current TIF districts, as they allow spending outside of the TIF areas. She noted that these are not as restrictive as other TIF districts; however, they are more restrictive than other City funds that she would prefer to make whole through these reimbursements.

Acting Mayor Riley asked why they needed to reimburse these funds at all.

Finance Director Lund said that if they do not use these funds as reimbursement, then they have to give them back to the County.

City Administrator Hagen explained that if TIF #14 does not generate enough revenue by 2040, then these are the funds that would make the most sense not to pay back over something like the water and utility funds.

The consensus of the Council was to move forward with the amendments to the policy for reimbursement of land proceeds and tax increment for the COR.

## **2.05: Review of 2026-2035 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)**

Finance Director Lund reviewed the Staff report in regard to the 2026-2035 Capital Improvement Plan.

City Administrator Hagen added that a majority of the requests on this list are existing infrastructure and equipment. He noted that there should not be any major surprises in this plan. He explained that they review the CIP for the following year ahead of budget season to build in the items requested for the following year.

Councilmember Riley noted that there are a number of wells on the list. He asked if they are currently allowed to build wells.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby said he is not sure; however, they need to start planning for these wells regardless. He noted that he is not aware of any current restrictions on building wells. He said the Met Council has been doing a lot of studies on groundwater, but he is not aware of any kind of restrictions on wells.

Finance Director Lund shared that well #9 has been in the CIP since 2016, and well #10 has been in the CIP since 2024.

Councilmember Specht asked if they had discussed a better system to determine when vehicles need to be replaced.

Finance Director Lund explained that the way they place vehicles in the CIP is based on the standard replacement timeframe for that vehicle. She added that Public Works has a different system for determining when vehicles need to be replaced.

Mayor Heineman noted that the CIP acts as a guide to help them project when they should anticipate needing these items.

Councilmember Specht asked if they will have the capacity to replace another park this year, on top of the work that they are doing at The Waterfront.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood explained that the playground replacement policy calls for the lawful gambling fund to fund playground replacements. He shared that they increased their project this year from \$100,000 to \$125,000, and he thinks they may have a little difficulty meeting this. He said they anticipate being able to do a playground replacement at Riverdale Park in 2026.

Councilmember Stewart asked if they would need to set aside additional funds in the event that something goes wrong at the water park.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood shared that any urgent repairs needed for the waterpark that was caused by something going wrong would come from the park's operation budget in the general fund. He said they do not anticipate that anything major will go wrong; however, they have a warranty period on the waterpark materials and pipes for the first season and winterization period.

Councilmember Stewart noted that this waterpark will be a lot more intricate when it comes to maintenance than other parks throughout the City. She asked if they should be budgeting more for the potential maintenance needs of this park after the warranty period has ended.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood said they may want to make some adjustments in the future; however, they can base these on the first year in service costs.

The consensus of the Council was to move forward with the proposed 2026-2035 CIP.

## **2.06: Review Staff's modified parking restrictions proposed for public streets in the Village of Sunfish Lake residential development.**

City Administrator Hagen reviewed the Staff report concerning the updates to the parking restrictions in the Village of Sunfish Lake.

Councilmember Stewart asked how far apart the parking restriction signs will be.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby said they will likely have a sign at the start of the no-parking zone and at the end of the no-parking zone to define the area. He added that they may add a third sign on the west end of 146th Avenue in the longer stretch of road. He noted they would likely have six or seven signs around the circle area.

Deputy Fire Chief of Operations and Logistics Sufka explained that the pump trucks are eight feet wide, and they need around nine to ten feet of space to comfortably operate these vehicles.

Councilmember Buscher shared that she feels the same about this as the last time they discussed it, that Staff knows best what is needed to safely navigate these roads in case of an emergency. She said she is supportive of the changes presented since the Fire Department is supportive of them.

Councilmember Stewart stated there were 38 people in this neighborhood who signed a petition against any parking restrictions. She noted that while she can understand why they would want to have these restrictions, more than half of the homeowners in the neighborhood do not want any parking restrictions. She said she is not supportive of these parking restrictions.

Councilmember Specht said he thinks this is a good balance between what the residents want and keeping safety at the top of mind. He noted that he does not like putting restrictions on residents; however, these restrictions are minimal and are for safety purposes.

Mayor Heineman noted that there were supposed to be parking restrictions in this area from the beginning, so really, they are taking away some of the restrictions. He said that when it comes to fire safety, this is important to do.

The consensus of the Council was to move forward with the updated parking restrictions for the Village of Sunfish Lake neighborhood as proposed.

### **3. TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION**

#### **3.01: Review Future Topics/ Calendar**

Noted.

Councilmember Specht asked if there had been any updates to the pollpad agreements.

City Administrator Hagen shared that they have been monitoring what the County has been doing in regards to pollpads. He said the County has been holding firm that they get to choose when pollpads are used and the cities do not get a lot of say in this. He noted that the County has discussed adjusting its stance on this; however, he does not know if they have officially done this yet. He said that if they are given the opportunity to decide if pollpads will be used, then Staff will bring this back to the Council.

Councilmember Specht asked if they need a new pollpad agreement since the agreement was terminated.

City Administrator Hagen said they technically do not need an agreement as the County just holds and preps the pollpads ahead of elections. He shared that the pedestrian overpass to the south side of Highway 10, which is listed in the Future Topics, is going to be directly impacted by the discontinuation of the Northstar Rail. He said he has not received much new information about the

discontinuation of the Northstar Rail. He explained that the Staff has been discussing what costs would be if the City were to take over the existing overpass over Veterans and extend it. He said they are trying to determine operating costs as well as insurance premiums if they were to take over this infrastructure.

Councilmember Buscher shared that she has been asked by residents why the Northstar Rail is going away, and she has had to share that it does not have anything to do with the City, but rather the Met Council not wanting to fund this service due to its lack of use.

City Administrator Hagen added that they will be adding bus services in place of the commuter rail, which will expand route options for residents. He noted that the cities did not have any say in this decision.

#### **4. MAYOR / COUNCIL / STAFF INPUT**

##### **4.01: Updates on Items of Interest**

City Administrator Hagen reviewed an update on phase 2 of The Waterfront, which centers around the building of this project.

Councilmember Riley asked how things are going with the water treatment plant project.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby noted that the site improvements are wrapping up, and they are currently working on installing all of the electronics inside the building itself. He said the piping is finished, and they are just working on the finishing touches. He stated they do not have a firm date yet on when they anticipate final completion.

Councilmember Specht asked if the contractors are doing a good job.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby said yes and noted that they are not cutting any corners and are completing all the work as needed. He noted that they have tested many of the systems and everything seems to be working well.

#### **5. ADJOURNMENT**

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 6:30 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.*