

City of Ramsey
Agenda
City Council Work Session
Tuesday, February 11, 2025

5:30 pm
Lake Itasca Room, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW

Remote Attendance available at www.cityoframsey.com/meetings.
Those joining remotely and requesting to speak are asked to use a webcam when speaking.

1. **Call to Order**

2. **Topics for Discussion**
 1. Discuss Engineering Staffing and Future Public Works Structure
 2. Discussion Regarding Fire Department Staffing
 3. Councilmember Request for Agenda Items
 4. Councilmember Meals
 5. Minnesota State Flag on Ramsey Owned Public Property

3. **Topics for Future Discussion**
 1. Review Future Topics/Calendar

4. **Mayor/Council/Staff Input**

5. **Adjournment***

***Note: the City Council may motion to recess this Work Session meeting and reconvene after the regular City Council meeting if items on the agenda are not completed.**

CC Work Session**Meeting Date:** 02/11/2025**Primary Strategic Plan Initiative:** Not Applicable**Information****Title:**

Discuss Engineering Staffing and Future Public Works Structure

Purpose/Background:

The purpose of this case is to discuss three Engineering/Public Works matters, including the immediate staffing needs in the Engineering Division, to provide a brief recount of the changes that occurred in 2022 and to discuss the planned 2026 reorganization in the Public Works Department.

Part 1:

Recently, the City received a letter of resignation from Mr. Len Linton, Civil Engineer IV. Mr. Linton is retiring after 21 years of service with the City. Following Mr. Linton's departure, staff recommends eliminating the Civil Engineer IV position and creating a new Storm Water Specialist role. A Storm Water Specialist role, as compared to the Civil Engineer IV role, has a budget impact of approximately an 18-percent savings.

The new Storm Water Specialist position is needed to effectively perform the duties which were previously done by the Civil Engineer IV, and to assume several new duties. As noted in this evening's consent case to Adopt Resolution #25-039 Approving Proposal for Interim Stormwater Management and Water Resources Engineering Services, approximately 70-percent of the Civil Engineer IV's time is spent reviewing stormwater management design calculations/models/reports, administering permit applications for the Lower Rum River Watershed Management Organization (LRRWMO), serving as staff liaison to the LRRWMO and attending the monthly Board meetings, managing the City of Ramsey's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) program, inspecting stormwater infrastructure, addressing public inquiries related to stormwater management and wetlands, managing and programming stormwater capital improvement projects, and other various duties pertaining to stormwater management and water resources.

The new Storm Water Specialist will play a vital role in protecting and improving the City's surface and stormwater resources. The position will ensure compliance with local, state, and federal water resource regulations while fostering community engagement and environmental stewardship. Key responsibilities include management of the City's Local Surface Water Management Plan, Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Program, staff liaison to the LRRWMO, and related initiatives designed to enhance water quality and sustainability.

The role demands expertise in stormwater and water resources management, strong communication and analytical skills, and a commitment to both technical excellence and public education. Collaboration with internal staff, external agencies, and community stakeholders is essential to achieve the City's water resource goals.

Essential duties and responsibilities will include, but may not be limited to:

1. Stormwater and Water Resource Management
2. MS4 Erosion Control Program Oversight
3. Customer Service and Internal Support
4. Staff Training
5. Public Engagement and Education

6. Regulatory Compliance and Collaboration

The individual hired for this position must possess:

- Considerable knowledge in surface and stormwater management practices, including erosion control, water quality monitoring, nutrient mitigation, and stormwater infrastructure maintenance
- Advance knowledge of environmental regulations, MS4 permitting, NPDES standards, and TMDL implantation
- Familiarity with GIS tools, GPS technology, and water quality modeling software
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills for effective interaction with residents, businesses, contractors, and regulatory agencies
- Analytical skills to assess complex water resource challenges and propose practical, sustainable solutions
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office programs; experience with GIS and hydrological modeling tools preferred
- Ability to manage multiple projects simultaneously, work independently, and contribute to collaborative teams
- Ability to effectively communicate both written and verbally
- Regular and reliable attendance during regular business hours, and after hours as needed
- Ability to work under tight deadlines and pressure
- Ability to perform duties with tact, diplomacy and discretion
- Ability to be detail oriented and follow through with tasks
- Ability to maintain a team and service-oriented approach to work
- Ability to accept criticism or discipline
- Must exhibit a positive attitude

As such, the 2025 wage scale for this position is recommended to be set at an amount not to exceed \$36.18 to \$45.23. This wage will need to be negotiated with the AFSMCE (American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees) union.

Note, the remaining 30-percent of the Civil Engineer IV's role will be delegated to current Engineering staff for the remainder of 2025.

This evening, staff is asking for a consensus of the City Council to negotiate the wage scale with AFSCME and begin recruitment for a Storm Water Specialist. The anticipated start date for the new position will be approximately late May or June.

Part 2:

Previously, in 2022, the City Council approved a restructure within Public Works which included eliminating the Public Works Superintendent position and returning to a Public Works Director/City Engineer structure to oversee all of Public Works and Engineering. The process in 2022 included steps that would set the City up well for growth, having a well-defined staffing succession plan in place, allowing staff to grow their knowledge and potentially advance within the department. This included:

- Promoting the City Engineer to Public Works Director while retaining City Engineer status
- Promoting the Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent to Assistant Public Works Director
- Promoting Civil Engineer II to Assistant City Engineer
- Promoting Engineering Technician II to Engineering Technician III
- Backfilling the Engineering Technician II position

The following reorganization above occurred prior to establishing an aggressive road maintenance plan. Following the plan changes, additional inspection staff were added, bringing the Engineering Department to its current staffing level of 7.5 FTEs.

Part 3:

2026/Planned restructure, as part of the succession planning discussion and general city growth, it was thought that the dual role of Public Works Director/City Engineer would be effective for about three years. The

three-year mark is nearing an end, and Staff proposes a final restructuring, effective January 1, 2026. More information regarding this will be discussed at the meeting and through the 2026 budget discussions. In summary, staff recommends the restructure to include the following changes:

1. Eliminate the dual role of Public Works Director/City Engineer and create a Public Works Director position to serve as department head over Public Works. This adds .5 FTE to the Public Works Department.
2. Re-establish City Engineer to serve as department head over Engineering. This adds .5 FTE to the Engineering Department.
3. Maintain three support positions to the City Engineer to complete office related tasks like plan design, reporting requirements, plan review and general customer service. This may include some position title changes/reclassifications.
4. Hire an additional Engineering Tech II or similar to assist with field inspections. This adds 1 FTE to the Engineering Department.

If implemented, the Engineering Department would move to 9 FTEs. The increase in FTEs would be supported through the influx of road funding established in 2023, increasing our stormwater duties to better meet requirements and the continued private development that is occurring and expected to continue to occur over the next at least five years. The work load for the increase is already present, but levy constraints and needs in other departments in recent years have limited the request. To meet the work load requirements, the city utilizes contracted support from private engineering firms.

Funding Source:

There is no funding required at this time for the purposes of eliminating the Civil Engineer IV and hiring a Storm Water Specialist.

Recommendation:

To provide general consensus direction to negotiate the wage scale with AFSCME and begin a recruitment for a Storm Water Specialist.

Outcome/Action:

To provide general consensus direction to negotiate the wage scale with AFSCME and begin a recruitment for a Storm Water Specialist, or based on discussion.

Attachments

No file(s) attached.

Form Review

Inbox	Reviewed By	Date
Bruce Westby	Bruce Westby	02/06/2025 11:13 AM
Brian Hagen	Brian Hagen	02/06/2025 03:44 PM
Brian Hagen	Brian Hagen	02/06/2025 03:44 PM
Form Started By: Colleen Lasher		Started On: 02/05/2025 10:53 AM
Final Approval Date: 02/06/2025		

CC Work Session**Meeting Date:** 02/11/2025**Primary Strategic Plan Initiative:** Strive for high organizational morale and employee retention.**Information****Title:**

Discussion Regarding Fire Department Staffing

Purpose/Background:

The purpose of this case is to provide the City Council with a brief update regarding a daytime staffing shortage in the Fire Department and a high priority request for authorization to immediately begin the internal hiring process for the new Fire Inspector, which was proposed to start in July.

The Fire Department's daytime staff normally includes four full-time employees, including the Fire Chief/Emergency Management Director, the Assistant Fire Chief, the Captain of Fire Administration and the Fire Marshal. All four of these employees have their normal full-time duties, as well as responsibilities to respond to fire and emergency calls that occur within the work day.

Currently, the department is down by one full-time employee, which is 25% of the currently authorized regular staffing. This staffing shortage has created a hardship in the department by not only shifting high priority extra work, normally handed by the employee who is absent onto others, but also by having one less firefighter on standby to respond to fire calls.

The staffing shortage, which is anticipated to last until around July 1st, could be partially remedied by hiring the new full-time Fire Inspector now. The potential start date is estimated to be mid-March through April 1st.

The Fire Chief/Emergency Management Director sought additional coverage from paid-on-call firefighters who are able to commit extra time, but this coverage is limited due to scheduling limitations of the firefighter's daytime employment and other factors outside the City's control.

It should be noted, as per the City's personnel policy, one employee will receive interim pay for taking on duties outside his normal scope of work; per policy, interim pay shall not exceed six months.

Funding Source:

The additional funding required to hire the fulltime Fire Inspector three months early is estimated to be \$25,750 to \$28,000, depending on the starting wage. Funding is available due to other positions within the City that are unexpectedly vacant, creating savings in those departments, as well as other funds.

Recommendation:

To provide consensus direction to begin the hiring process for a full-time Fire Inspector.

Outcome/Action:

To provide consensus direction to begin the hiring process for a full-time Fire Inspector, or based on discussion.

Attachments

No file(s) attached.

Form Review

Inbox

Brian Hagen

Form Started By: Colleen Lasher

Final Approval Date: 02/06/2025

Reviewed By

Brian Hagen

Date

02/06/2025 02:25 PM

Started On: 01/27/2025 02:55 PM

CC Work Session**Meeting Date:** 02/11/2025**Primary Strategic Plan Initiative:** Enhance City's communication through transparency and accountability.**Information****Title:**

Councilmember Request for Agenda Items

Purpose/Background:

Staff is largely responsible for setting agenda items and preparing the council cases. Staff brings forward items throughout the year that are time sensitive to meet reporting deadlines, payment requirements, land use applications, etc. Beyond the routine items, the City Council will discuss other items that are unique or non-routine. These topics will present themselves through different avenues like citizen inquiries, topics presented at various events, the strategic planning session, or other initiatives. Staff will attempt to prioritize timing based on various factors like desired deadlines or guest attendance availability. Packets for city council are completed and available to the public on Thursdays prior to the meeting. In rare instances, staff may need to finish preparing the case or add additional information in the days leading up to the meeting.

The purpose of this case is to establish an understanding of how items are added to the agenda and when those can be expected to be placed on an upcoming agenda. Over the past several years, it has been a general practice that either the mayor themselves or two Councilmembers may request items be added to the agenda. Though this generally is fine, timing of such notice can present challenges. Depending on what the topic is, the level of understanding plays a large impact on how quickly staff can prepare a quality case with pertinent details where council is making a well informed decision. Based on the level of research needed, the need to communicate with people outside our own organization and then prepare the case in a concise manner with supporting documents, a case can take hours to days to prepare. Like in all work settings, other duties, deadline obligations and meetings schedule well in advance impact the time available for staff to prepare a last minute case. Outside the time needed for staff to prepare the information for council, council needs time to adequately review the packets and ask any clarifying questions. The shorter the time period to do so, the less prepared council and staff are.

The city does not have a formal established policy on this matter, but a clear understanding of expectations between the city council and staff is beneficial for everyone. Though items may be time sensitive, the majority of items are not emergencies. In fact, there is an established process for emergencies and how cities can respond. In most cases, the week between a council meeting and when the next packet is prepared should allow for sufficient time to prepare a proposed case.

The other challenge to adding cases at the direction of minimal councilmembers is the unknown of the support to discuss a topic more in depth by the majority of the council. It is the best use of staff's time to know the effort put forth in preparing information will not be received by lack of support by the majority of council. This is not to say that if a topic is discussed, that the end result is approval in some form. It simply means, staff's time is being used in a manner that is supported by the majority of council.

Recommendation:

Develop a consensus understanding of how and when items are added to agendas by city councilmembers. This will aid staff in understanding council expectations and support adjusting schedules as needed to meet these expectations.

Outcome/Action:

Develop a consensus understanding of how and when items are added to agendas by city councilmembers.

Attachments

No file(s) attached.

Form Review

Inbox

Brian Hagen

Form Started By: Brian Hagen

Final Approval Date: 02/06/2025

Reviewed By

Brian Hagen

Date

02/06/2025 04:26 PM

Started On: 02/05/2025 02:03 PM

CC Work Session

Meeting Date: 02/11/2025

Primary Strategic Plan Initiative: Not Applicable

Information

Title:

Councilmember Meals

Purpose/Background:

Meals during the work session have historically been provided. This is generally considered an allowed use of public funds because the meeting is falling over a typical meal time in the day. Prior to mid 2022, staff would order upwards of 15 meals for Councilmembers and staff. In 2022, staff were surveyed on the desire to have a meal provided, and consensus was it was not needed and we would plan accordingly. From mid 2022 through 2024, meals would be ordered for Councilmembers known to be present for the meeting. During 2025 budget discussions, staff and council reviewed budget items that could be considered to cut in order to reduce the levy increase impact. A number of items were identified, including councilmember meals of approximately \$4,000.

Funding Source:

There is no established funding available in 2025 for meals like there was in years past.

Recommendation:

Staff has no recommendation.

Outcome/Action:

Provide consensus direction on whether meals should be provided in 2025 and in the future for the purpose of preparing future budgets.

Attachments

No file(s) attached.

Form Review

Inbox

Brian Hagen

Form Started By: Brian Hagen

Final Approval Date: 02/06/2025

Reviewed By

Brian Hagen

Date

02/06/2025 04:26 PM

Started On: 02/05/2025 02:04 PM

CC Work Session

Meeting Date: 02/11/2025

Primary Strategic Plan Initiative: Not Applicable

Information

Title:

Minnesota State Flag on Ramsey Owned Public Property

Purpose/Background:

Minnesota Legislators passed a law in 2023 to design a new State Flag. That new flag was adopted and went into effect May 2024. At that time, staff replaced five State Flags throughout the city with the new flag. Following the change, City Council provided consensus direction to staff at their July 9, 2024 work session to replace the new State Flag with the old State Flag. Staff did need to order some replacement flags of the old design due to the condition and them being weathered.

For context, State Statute does not require a county or city to fly the State Flag.

In addition to the U.S. Flag and State Flag, we fly a POW/MIA and a Tree City USA Flag at City Hall.

Time Frame/Observations/Alternatives:

Options other than flying the State Flag include either not flying a State Flag or flying a different flag like adopting a City Flag.

Recommendation:

Staff has no recommendation.

Outcome/Action:

Provide direction on what, if any, State Flag should be flown on Ramsey owned public property.

Attachments

No file(s) attached.

Form Review

Inbox

Brian Hagen

Form Started By: Brian Hagen

Final Approval Date: 02/06/2025

Reviewed By

Brian Hagen

Date

02/06/2025 04:26 PM

Started On: 02/05/2025 02:07 PM

CC Work Session

Meeting Date: 02/11/2025

Primary Strategic Plan Initiative: Enhance City’s communication through transparency and accountability.

Information

Title:

Review Future Topics/Calendar

Purpose/Background:

Attached is the current list of future topics for work session discussions. Items are drawn from Council requests at meetings, or are related to topics that have been identified in the City's strategic plan. Tentative dates have been assigned.

Recommendation:

For Council review - no formal action necessary.

Outcome/Action:

For Council review.

Attachments

Future Topics List

Form Review

Inbox

Brian Hagen

Form Started By: Katie Schmidt

Final Approval Date: 02/06/2025

Reviewed By

Brian Hagen

Date

02/06/2025 12:39 PM

Started On: 02/06/2025 09:36 AM

	<u><i>Tentative City Council Future Work Session Topics</i></u>	
Proposed Date	Topic	Minutes (Estimate)
2025		
2/25	Continued Discussion on Draft Rental Housing Inspection Program Policy	20
TBD	Discuss Council and B/C Remote Meetings Policy - Staff	
TBD	Eckberg Lammers Expungement Follow-up	
3/18	Board and Commission Interviews	60-90
Mar/April	Discuss Recycling Contract	
April/May	Pollpad Update	
TBD	Subdivision Code	
TBD	Hwy 10 Pedestrian Overpass	
TBD	City Facility Safety Improvements	