

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, May 12, 2026, 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
Community Development Director Stephanie Hanson
Police Chief Brad Bluml
Administrative Services Director Colleen Lasher
Planning Manager Todd Larson
City Attorney Amanda Johnson

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 Draft Local Affordable Housing Aid (LAHA) Policy

Planning Manager Larson introduced the concept of the Local Affordable Housing Assistance (LAHA) program, aimed at Ramsey residents. He explained the draft policy, emphasizing the need for homeowner-based programs to help residents with financial constraints. The program included eligible participants, eligible expenses, and matching contributions, with a focus on ensuring residents contribute some money to the program.

Planning Manager Larson detailed the eligible participants, giving preference to seniors and households with a median income of 80% or less. The program included both exterior and interior improvements, with building permits required for most projects.

Matching contributions were discussed, with the idea that residents should contribute to the program to ensure they stay in their homes. The program would pay contractors directly, similar to Anoka County's approach, to avoid issues with homeowners receiving kickbacks.

Councilmember Stewart inquired about the financial interests in other homes, clarifying that the program should prioritize homeowners with no other properties.

Planning Manager Larson confirmed that the program would not penalize those with financial interests in other homes if they were likely heirs.

Councilmember Stewart questioned the identification requirements for preferred participants.

Planning Manager Larson explained that it would apply to seniors living in the home. The program would consider the combined finances of all residents in the home to determine eligibility.

Councilmember Riley expressed concerns about the complexity of the matching contributions and repayment plan.

Planning Manager Larson suggested simplifying the repayment plan by stating the percentage repaid if the house was sold within a certain period.

Mayor Heineman confirmed that the title company would identify the lien, making the administrative work easier.

Planning Manager Larson indicated that staff would revise the language to reflect the Council's preference that homeowners contribute to the program.

2.02: Discussion Regarding a Police Department Staffing Change

Administrative Services Director Lasher introduced the discussion on Police Department staffing changes. She explained the long-term internship program for Community Service Officers (CSOs) and the challenges of retaining them.

Administrative Services Director Lasher explained the Council was asked to consider retaining a current CSO who was likely to be hired by another agency if not retained by Ramsey.

Administrative Services Director Lasher and Police Chief Bluml discussed the savings from the CSO position and the potential need to add a patrol officer in 2027.

Police Chief Bluml emphasized the importance of retaining talented CSOs, noting the challenges of finding good police officers.

The Council discussed the potential impact of retaining the CSO on the 2027 budget and the department's staffing needs.

Mayor Heineman highlighted the importance of making decisions to avoid future vacancies in the Police department.

The Council reached a consensus to add a Patrol Officer position to the budget in 2026.

2.03: Review the Findings of the 2026 All-Staff Employee Survey

Administrative Services Director Lasher presented the findings of the 2026 all-staff employee survey. The survey had an 85% response rate, with 69% of employees recommending the City as a place to work. Employee morale was rated at 3.81 on a 5-point scale, with a slight drop from the previous survey. It was noted that the survey results would be used for strategic, staff, budgeting, and benefits planning.

Councilmember Stewart raised concerns about interdepartmental collaboration, noting that a low percentage of employees agreed that collaboration was good.

City Administrator Hagen explained the plan to solicit employee solutions to improve collaboration and communication.

The Council discussed the importance of department identification in the follow-up survey to address specific issues.

Councilmember Riley and Mayor Heineman emphasized the need for transparency and education to address misunderstandings about the Council’s role and responsibilities.

2.04: Discussion Regarding Union Contract Negotiations (Discussion Closed to the Public)

Mayor Heineman announced the closure of the public meeting for union contract negotiations. The meeting transitioned to a closed session for further discussion on union contract negotiations.

ADJOURNMENT

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned to a closed session at 6:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian S. Hagen
City Administrator

ATTEST:

Katie M. Schmidt
City Clerk

Drafted by Sue Osbeck
TimeSaver Off-Site Secretarial, Inc.

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Closed Session on Tuesday, May 12, 2026, 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
Police Chief Brad Bluml
Administrative Services Director Colleen Lasher
City Attorney Amanda Johnson

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Heineman called the City Council Closed Session to order at 6:18 p.m.

2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

2.04: Discussion Regarding Union Contract Negotiations (Discussion Closed to the Public)

Administrative Services Director Lasher stated staff and Council discussed the contract negotiations for the LELS Patrol group and received direction from Council on how to proceed with negotiations.

3. TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

3.01: Review Future Topics/ Calendar

Noted.

4. MAYOR / COUNCIL / STAFF INPUT

None.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The Closed Session was adjourned at 6:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian S. Hagen
City Administrator

ATTEST:

Kathy Schmitz
Administrative Clerk

Drafted by Katie Schmidt