

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, September 22, 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
Administrative Services Director Colleen Lasher
Community Development Director Stephanie Hanson
Economic Development Manager Sean Sullivan
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: Closed Session Pursuant to Minnesota Statute Section 13D.05, Subdivision 3(b) to Discuss Murray v. City of Ramsey and the Appeal of the Determination by City of Ramsey

City Administrator Hagen introduced the item. The purpose of the closed session was to meet with assigned counsel to discuss Murray v. City of Ramsey and the appeal concerning the City's determination regarding certain data about Karen Murray.

The Council approved moving into Closed Session pursuant to Minnesota Statute section 13D.05, subdivision 3(b). The Closed Session began at approximately 5:30 p.m.

The Council returned to Open Session at approximately 6:08 p.m.

2.02: Responsible Contractor Acknowledgment for TIF Projects

Economic Development Manager Sullivan reviewed prior Council discussions regarding responsible contractors under Minnesota Statute 16C.285 and proposed adding an acknowledgment to the City's Business Assistance Application. He explained that the application

language would notify applicants that responsible-contractor requirements apply. In contrast, enforceable provisions, reporting requirements, remedies, and any project-specific clawback language would be incorporated into the applicable TIF agreement, development agreement, loan agreement, or other financing document.

City Attorney Amanda Johnson explained that the proposed acknowledgment would require an applicant seeking City financial assistance to affirm that it meets the minimum criteria to be a responsible contractor under Minnesota Statute 16C.285, subdivision 3, and will comply with reporting requirements for itself and its subcontractors. She clarified that the application itself is not the enforcement document; enforceability would come through the subsequent agreement governing the financial assistance.

The Council discussed which City assistance programs should be covered. Examples included tax increment financing, tax abatement, revolving loan funds, land write-downs, HRA-related assistance, LAHA funding, and other City or EDA assistance. Smaller programs, including the awning program and SAC/WAC deferments, were discussed as examples that generally would not reach the proposed dollar threshold.

Councilmembers discussed whether the requirement should apply only to TIF projects or more broadly whenever the City contributes significant financial assistance. Several members favored a threshold-based approach so smaller projects would not face unnecessary administrative requirements. In comparison, larger projects receiving substantial public assistance would be subject to the responsible-contractor provisions.

The Council also discussed whether loans should be included. Concerns were raised that a conventional loan differs from a grant or forgivable assistance because the City expects repayment. Other members noted that loans still place public funds at risk and argued that responsible-contractor requirements could help protect the City's financial interest.

City Attorney Johnson explained that remedies would depend on the type of assistance and the specific agreement, and could include default provisions, letters of credit, repayment remedies, or, in a land transaction, a reverter provision.

Staff and representatives familiar with responsible-contractor requirements clarified that the proposed policy would not automatically impose prevailing-wage reporting. Contractors would generally submit an affidavit or acknowledgment confirming that they satisfy the statutory responsible-contractor criteria. The documentation could be retained electronically, with project agreements establishing consequences if an affidavit were falsified or the requirements were violated.

After discussion, the Council reached consensus to have staff prepare a policy and resolution requiring responsible-contractor provisions for projects receiving more than \$50,000 in City financial assistance, regardless of the form of assistance. The applicable contract or financial agreement would contain provisions related to the responsible-contractor requirements under Minnesota Statute 16C.285. The Council requested that the proposed resolution and final language return to a future Work Session for review before formal action.

Staff noted that previously approved projects may be too far along to add the new requirements retroactively. Staff will apply the policy prospectively and tailor enforcement provisions to the circumstances of each future project.

2.03: 2026 Candidate Forums

City Administrator Hagen reviewed the City-coordinated candidate forum held in 2024 and asked whether the Council wanted the City to host a similar forum for the November 2026 General Election. The 2024 event allowed in-person public attendance and real-time question submissions, with the City providing staff support and about \$200 for an audio/visual operator while the moderator volunteered their time.

The Council discussed the value of allowing residents to attend in person and submit questions. Members also acknowledged that the actual City cost includes staff time and other operational support in addition to the audio/visual operator expense.

The Council agreed to coordinate and host a candidate forum for the 2026 General Election using a format similar to the 2024 event.

The Work Session recessed at 6:55 p.m. so that the Council could conduct the regular City Council meeting.

The Work Session reconvened at 8:35 p.m.

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

Administrative Services Director Colleen Lasher introduced the item and explained that the Council would discuss the status of union negotiations, with the closed-session discussion focusing on the LELS Sergeants group. Staff indicated that other contracts were either at tentative agreement or otherwise not ready for discussion.

At 8:35 p.m., the Council closed the meeting pursuant to Minnesota Statute section 13D.03 to consider labor-negotiation strategy and developments.

The meeting reconvened in Open Session at 9:04 p.m.

Administrative Services Director Lasher reported that Council directed staff to move forward with closing the contracts. Staff will present redlined contract documents at the next regular City Council meeting for Council consideration and approval.

3. TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

3.01: Review Future Topics/ Calendar

City Administrator Hagen reviewed upcoming Work Session topics. Staff will bring back the responsible-contractor policy language for further review. Staff will also gather additional information regarding cannabis sales and the City's regulatory options before returning with a possible ordinance discussion.

The Council discussed whether cannabis-related penalties could eventually mirror the City's tobacco or alcohol enforcement provisions.

City Attorney Johnson explained that statutory authority for local cannabis fines remains unclear and that additional guidance from the Minnesota Office of Cannabis Management would be helpful before the City changes its ordinance.

The Council agreed that staff should continue investigating the issue and return once the available local authority is clearer.

Staff will also gather additional information regarding a utility-bill issue previously raised by the Council. Members were invited to identify specific questions they would like staff to research.

The Council reviewed the upcoming calendar. The 2050 Comprehensive Plan update is expected to begin soon. The Capital Improvement Plan review is anticipated for October 27, 2026, and the final budget review is expected at the first Work Session in November.

Councilmember Riley requested that staff quantify the budget impact of the new GIS position, including the effect of the planned August start date on the following year's budget.

Staff indicated that similar calculations could also be provided for union-contract changes.

Councilmember Buscher requested information quantifying the taxpayer impact of not assessing the remaining gravel-road improvements.

Staff recalled that most remaining improvements were expected to be funded through existing TIF resources, with a smaller portion supported by the general levy, and agreed to locate the prior analysis.

4. MAYOR / COUNCIL / STAFF INPUT

4.01: Update on Outside Committees

No updates were provided from outside committees.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The City Council Work Session adjourned at 9:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian S. Hagen
City Administrator

ATTEST:

Katie M. Schmidt
City Clerk

Drafted by Sue Osbeck
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.