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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF RAMSEY
ANOKA COUNTY
STATE OF MINNESOTA

The Ramsey City Council conducted a regular meeting on Tuesday, December 8, 2020, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor John LeTourneau
Councilmember Mark Kuzma
Councilmember Jeff Menth
Councilmember Debra Musgrove
Councilmember Chris Riley
Councilmember Dan Specht

Members Absent: None

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich
Finance Director Diana Lund
Police Chief Jeff Katers
Public Works Superintendent Grant Riemer
Administrative Services Director Colleen Lasher
Deputy City Administrator Timothy Gladhill

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor LeTourneau called the regular meeting of the Ramsey City Council to order at 7:05 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mayor LeTourneau.

2. PRESENTATION

2.01: Recognize Mayor John LeTourneau and Councilmember Jeff Menth for their Service to the City of Ramsey

City Administrator Ulrich recognized Councilmember Jeff Menth for his service on the City Council and also presented him with a plaque thanking him for his service on the Quad Cities Cable Communications Commission. He recognized Mayor John LeTourneau for his service as Mayor, on the City Council, and as a member of the Economic Development Authority noting that his contributions total over 20 years of service.

The City Council and staff thanked both Mayor LeTourneau and Councilmember Menth for their service and wish them both well in their future endeavors.

3. CITIZEN INPUT

Justin Okeson, 14361 Potassium Street NW, stated that he is present tonight as a citizen of Ramsey. He stated that he has ran his business in Ramsey for the past eight years and is now raising his family in Ramsey. He stated that his concerns are with the future of Ramsey and where the community goes from here. He asked what the City will do with COVID regulations that continue to be passed down from Governor Walz. He provided background information on himself and his experience in the Marines. He commented that upon returning home from the Marines he found that his skills did not apply to regular life and therefore tried college, which he also found was not for him. He stated that because of the struggles he faced in finding a job, he started his own businesses which was also a struggle to get going. He stated that by 2018/2019 his business was successful, and he was at a point where he could sell the business, but then COVID hit and hurt his business substantially. He stated that he is expressing the concerns of a vast number of people in Ramsey which is what the future will be for the children in the community. He referenced an article in a local newspaper which stated that 96.67 percent of infections could not be prevented. He stated that it then puts the question on the impacts that are being made to the economy, education, and children in order to protect the other 3.24 percent of the population. He stated that he has seen this situation before with mandates of who can thrive and who cannot and who can gather and who cannot. He asked the Council what line in the sand the City will draw and when it will be drawn. He recognized that local government is by far the most important and asked when the City of Ramsey will stand up for its citizens. He stated that just because something is a law does not mean it is a just law and just because something is an institution, does not mean it is a just institution. He stated that he does not expect the Council to agree with him, but the public deserves an answer as to when the Council will make that decision and when the line will be drawn. He asked when the City would petition the Governor or tell the Governor that it will not enforce further mandates. He stated that he does not expect the answer tonight but does want the answer.

Mayor LeTourneau thanked the resident for the thought he put into his comments and his real and emotional message. He appreciated the input and recognized that the answer cannot be made today. He stated that the voice of the resident is heard, and the Council will work to understand the voice of the community when working under the guidelines it is given. He stated that to some point the voice of the Council can echo those concerns. He stated that the City is doing the best it can in a lot of ways but will continue to determine what else can be done and share the concerns of residents when speaking with legislators. He commented that this is an ongoing process that is not easy or predictable and has been a challenge.

Councilmember Specht thanked the resident for his service to the country. He stated that he agrees with many of the comments from the resident and would be happy to meet with him to discuss ideas on some of these mandates that he considers unconstitutional.

Councilmember Menth thanked the resident for his service. He asked what the business is.

Mr. Okeson replied that his business is called Yorfit and is located on Highway 10.

Mayor LeTourneau thanked Mr. Okeson for sharing his comments with the Council.

Mr. Okeson stated that more people have died earning the civil liberties than those that have died as those civil liberties are taken away. He stated that he will want an answer as to when the line

in the sand will be drawn. He stated that it feels that the comments going to higher levels of government are not being heard and will not be heard until the people say no more.

4. APPROVE AGENDA

Motion by Councilmember Riley, seconded by Councilmember Kuzma, to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor LeTourneau, Councilmembers Riley, Kuzma, Menth, Musgrove, and Specht. Voting No: None.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Councilmember Menth, seconded by Councilmember Riley, to approve the following items on the Consent Agenda:

5.01: Receive October Financial Reports – General Fund and Enterprise Funds
5.02: Receive Cash and Investments for Period Ending October 31, 2020
5.03: Approve the following Meeting Minutes:
1) City Council Work Session dated November 10, 2020
2) City Council Regular dated November 10, 2020
3) City Council Canvassing Board dated November 12, 2020
4) City Council Special Work Session dated November 17, 2020
5) City Council Work Session dated November 24, 2020
6) City Council Regular dated November 24, 2020
5.04: Approve Business Licenses (includes 2021 renewals)
5.05: Approve Rental Licenses
5.06: Approve Request to Declare Surplus Property
5.07: Adopt Policies and Procedures for Federal Awards Administration
5.08: Adopt Resolution #20-287 Approving Cash Disbursements Made and Authorizing Payment of Accounts Payable Invoicing Received During the Period of November 19, 2020 through December 2, 2020
5.09: Adopt Resolution #20-312 Amending the Allocation of CARES Act Funds for Economic Recovery Activities and Resolution #20-313 Amending the Allocation of CARES Act Funds to Local Government Activities
5.10: Adopt Resolution #20-225 Curbside Recycling Contract with ACE Solid Waste
5.11: Adopt Resolution #20-241 Authorizing Final Payment to Omann Contracting Companies, Inc. for Improvement Project #19-03, Wood Pond Hills and Chestnut Ridge Street Reconstructions
5.12: Adopt Resolution #20-266 Providing Direction to Lennar Related to Rivenwick 4th Concept Plan (Project #20-134)
5.13: Adopt Resolution #20-284 Establishing Precinct and Polling Locations for the 2021 Election Year
5.14: Adopt Resolution #20-286 Approving Release of Right of Re-Entry Agreement; Case of PSD LLC

5.15: Adopt Resolution #20-288 Authorizing Final Payment to Dryden Excavating for Improvement Project #19-10, Hedgehog Street Drainage Improvement
5.16: Adopt Resolution #20-289 Approving Donation Agreement and Acquisition of Lot 1, Block 1, Pineview Estates 2nd Addition
5.17: Adopt Resolution #20-294 Accepting Municipal Testing Proposals for 2021 Pavement Management Program Projects
5.18: Adopt Resolution #20-298 Authorizing Partial Payment #5 to Park Construction for Improvement Project #20-01, Variolite Street Reconstruction Project
5.19: Adopt Resolution #20-299 Authorizing Partial Payment #2 to Hakanson Anderson Associates for Improvement Project #20-07, New Public Works Facility
5.20: Adopt Resolution #20-300 Authorizing Partial Payment #2 to Northland Concrete and Masonry Company, LLC for Improvement Project #20-07, New Public Works Facility
5.21: Adopt Resolution #20-301 Authorizing Partial Payment #2 to Minnesota Utilities and Excavating, LLC for Improvement Project #20-07, New Public Works Facility
5.22: Adopt Resolution #20-302 Authorizing Partial Payment #1 to Herzog Coatings for Improvement Project #20-07, New Public Works Facility
5.23: Adopt Resolution #20-303 Authorizing Partial Payment #1 to Thornberg Steel for Improvement Project #20-07, New Public Works Facility
5.24: Adopt Resolution #20-304 Authorizing Partial Payment #2 to Thornberg Steel for Improvement Project #20-07, New Public Works Facility
5.25: Adopt Resolution #20-305 Authorizing Partial Payment #1 to Jacon LLC for Improvement Project #20-07, New Public Works Facility
5.26: Adopt Resolution #20-306 Authorizing Partial Payment #3 to RJM Construction for Improvement Project #20-07, New Public Works Facility
5.27: Adopt Resolution #20-308 Authorizing Local Road Improvement Program Grant Application for Riverdale Drive Extension – Llama Street to Bowers Drive, Improvement Project #20-05
5.28: Adopt Resolution #20-309 Extending Towing Services Agreement with Northstar Towing Services
5.29: Adopt Resolution #20-310 Extending Animal Impound Services Contract with North Metro Animal Care and Control
5.30: Adopt Resolution #20-311 to Approve a Position Reclassification
5.31: Adopt Resolution #20-296 Hiring Temporary Ice Rink Attendants

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor LeTourneau, Councilmembers Menth, Riley, Kuzma, Musgrove, and Specht. Voting No: None.

6. PUBLIC HEARING

6.01: Public Hearing: Adopt Resolution #20-290 Adopting the City's 2021-2030 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

Presentation

Finance Director Lund reviewed the staff report and recommendation to adopt the 2021-2030 Capital Improvement Plan as outlined, noting that this is a forecasting tool and not actual, committed projects and expenditures.

Public Hearing

Mayor LeTourneau called the public hearing to order at 7:28 p.m.

Citizen Input

A resident asked if this item is related to property taxes.

Mayor LeTourneau noted that this case is related to the CIP and the next case will deal with the proposed 2021 budget and levy.

Motion by Councilmember Kuzma, seconded by Councilmember Specht, to close the public hearing.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor LeTourneau, Councilmembers Kuzma, Specht, Menth, Musgrove, and Riley. Voting No: None.

The public hearing was closed at 7:30 p.m.

Council Business

Councilmember Musgrove commented that she was glad to see the Highway 10 improvements moved from priority five to priority two. She recognized that this is a working document that does not authorize funding but stated that it is nice to see the project changed to a higher priority.

Motion by Councilmember Kuzma, seconded by Councilmember Menth, to Adopt Resolution #20-290 Adopting the 2021-2030 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor LeTourneau, Councilmembers Kuzma, Menth, Musgrove, Riley, and Specht. Voting No: None.

6.02: Public Hearing on 2021 Tax Levies and General Fund Budget

- **Adopt Resolution #20-291 Adopting the 2020, Payable 2021 Municipal Tax Levy**
- **Adopt Resolution #20-292 Adopting the 2021 General Fund Budget**
- **Adopt Resolution #20-293 Adopting the 2021 Economic Development Authority (EDA) Budget**

Presentation

Finance Director Lund reviewed the staff report and recommendation to adopt Resolution #20-291 adopting the 2020 payable 2021 municipal tax levies in the amount of $13,051,074; adopt Resolution #20-292 adopting the 2021 general fund budget in the amount of $14,383,348; and adopt Resolution #20-293 adopting the 2021 EDA budget in the amount of $85,360.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that there were both eight and four percent increases mentioned in the presentation and asked for clarification.

Finance Director Lund replied that the eight percent increase was related to the general fund budget while the four percent increase was related to the property tax levy.

Councilmember Musgrove referenced the slide in the presentation related to other funding sources and asked if the franchise fee was included.

Finance Director Lund replied that the franchise fee was not included as that is not part of the general fund budget. She reviewed the other funding sources which were included in the presentation.

Public Hearing

Mayor LeTourneau called the public hearing to order at 7:50 p.m.

Citizen Input

Jeriann Palmer, 8251 154th Lane NW, referenced the franchise fee which she feels is more of a hostage fee that will actually cost her more annually. She stated that people are having difficulties because of the impacts of COVID and does not like that her taxes are increasing to support a cost-of-living increase for staff. She noted that she has not received a cost-of-living increase in five years. She referenced the new equipment and public works facility and asked if the expenditures could be spread over more years. She asked how many households the cost is being shared across. She referenced the new properties that have been developed and how that is spread across the years. She stated that perhaps equipment purchases are pushed out until those homes are brought into the tax base to offset the cost.

Mayor LeTourneau thanked Ms. Palmer for her comments. He noted that the Council has discussed this topic on multiple occasions and has discussed the questions that Ms. Palmer brought forward.

Ms. Palmer recognized that additional personnel are necessary to keep up with the additional households that have been added but did not believe it appropriate to receive a cost-of-living increase when many residents have not been receiving cost of living increases and many have actually lost jobs.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that the Council spent much of the worksession discussion tonight related to staff compensation and there was much debate on that topic. He stated that he cannot say the City is doing it right or wrong, but the Council is attempting to make the best decisions.

Ms. Palmer stated that she moved to Ramsey because it was a small and sleepy community but over the years the noise level has changed because of the increasing growth. She stated that she is concerned that the City has perhaps lost what it was in the process.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that he hears the comments of Ms. Palmer and acknowledged that the Council continues to have discussions on those topics in order to determine the right mix.

Ms. Palmer commented that perhaps the City could share information related to growth with residents.

Finance Director Lund commented that the capital expenditures, such as equipment purchases, are not funded through the general levy.

Ms. Palmer stated that she would be interested to know what happens with equipment that is replaced, whether it is sold and how those funds are used.

Mayor LeTourneau commented that staff attempts to reclaim what can be reclaimed on the equipment that has been replaced and/or trade in that equipment or sell it.

Motion by Councilmember Kuzma, seconded by Councilmember Menth, to close the public hearing.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor LeTourneau, Councilmembers Kuzma, Menth, Musgrove, Riley, and Specht. Voting No: None.

The public hearing was closed at 7:59 p.m.

Council Business

Mayor LeTourneau asked whether the motion could be taken in one action or needs to be separate motions.

Finance Director Lund confirmed that the actions could be completed in one motion.

Councilmember Riley commented that the preliminary levy was proposed at an increase of five percent and since that time staff and the Council worked to lower that increase to four percent.

Councilmember Musgrove received the fund balances dated September 30th and October 31st, referencing the balance in the pavement management fund. She asked how much of that funding has been used this year and whether it would carry forward to the next cycle for use or could be used to offset the levy.

Finance Director Lund stated that when the franchise fee was established the balance in the pavement management account was used to determine the necessary funding that would be needed through the franchise fee. She confirmed that the funds are slated to be used in a future road improvement project. She explained that is a restricted fund that can only be used for pavement management. She stated that only the crackseal funds will remain in the general fund budget.

Mayor LeTourneau referenced the statement that the pavement management account is restricted and clarified that means that the funds in that account can only be used for pavement management purposes.

Councilmember Musgrove thanked Ms. Palmer for coming forward tonight. She stated that she attempted to share similar concerns during the budget discussions and commented that she believed that Ms. Palmer's comments will help to provide additional context for future discussions.

Motion by Councilmember Kuzma, seconded by Councilmember Menth, to Adopt Resolution #20-291 Adopting the 2020, Payable 2021, Municipal Tax Levy; Adopt Resolution #20-292 Adopting the 2021 City of Ramsey General Fund Operating Budget; and Adopt Resolution #20-293 Adopting the 2021 City of Ramsey Economic Development Authority Fund Budget.

Further discussion: Councilmember Specht thanked staff and the members of the Council for the work to develop the budget. He thanked the resident for sharing her comments as he shared similar concerns. He referenced the tax capacity rate, which allows the City to spread the taxes over a larger population. Mayor LeTourneau stated that the City monitors the tax capacity rate, as that reflects the value of the growth of the community. Councilmember Musgrove stated that she will not be supporting this budget, even though staff did a great job. She stated that they are living within a pandemic but is spending as though it is not. She commented that citizens have been burdened with the franchise fee which does not even result in a decrease to the levy. She felt that the Council should do better for its residents. Mayor LeTourneau recognized that the franchise fees are a new aspect but will fund the repair of roads, which continues to be a high priority of the City and the residents. He stated that this method of funding will provide the best rate of return for the investment of the residents.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor LeTourneau, Councilmembers Kuzma, Menth, Riley, and Specht. Voting No: Councilmember Musgrove.

7. COUNCIL BUSINESS

7.01: Adopt Resolution #20-297 Providing for the Issuance and Sale of $9,065,000 General Obligation Capital Improvement Plan Bonds, Series 2020A and Levying a Tax for the Payment Thereof

Finance Director Lund reviewed the staff report and recommendation to adopt Resolution #20-297 authorizing approval of the sale of $9,065,000 of GO Capital Improvement Plan Bonds, Series 2020A as bonding was one of the recommended funding sources identified in the Capital Improvement Plan for the Public Works Campus and agreed upon after much discussion by the City Council.

Stacy Kvilvang, Ehlers, reported that the sale occurred this morning with four bidders and provided details on the sale and lowest responsible bidder.

Councilmember Riley commented that this comes in under the amount planned which decreased the levy and is a win for the City.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that when the different funding sources were discussed, the available balance was not included. She referenced the streetlight utility fund and asked if more funds could have come from that fund to support this project.

Finance Director Lund replied that $250,000 was taken from that fund. She explained that when pulling from different funds, staff attempted to determine the respective portion of the project that could be allocated to that fund. She noted that each fund has its own CIP needs to be funded in the future.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that she was pleased to see the figures come in lower than expected. She asked and received confirmation that the decrease to the debt service levy was included in the previously approved case.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that in the funding discussions there were conscious discussions and decisions in order to determine the amount of funding that would be appropriate from each fund.

Finance Director Lund explained that she used calculations specific to the staffing and equipment at the public works facility that could be legally attributed to each fund.

Motion by Councilmember Riley, seconded by Councilmember Kuzma, to Adopt Resolution #20-297 Providing for the Issuance and Sale of $9,065,000 General Obligation Capital Improvement Plan Bonds, Series 2020A and Levying a Tax for the Payment Thereof.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor LeTourneau, Councilmembers Riley, Kuzma, Menth, Musgrove, and Specht. Voting No: None.

7.02: Consider Action Reduce Interest Charged on Deferred Assessments Due Upon Sale of Tract A, RLS No. 119

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the staff report and recommendation to deny this request for the reasons stated in the staff report. The City Council is able to consider this request and recommend a different approach if desired, however, if it is the decision to reduce the interest payments, consideration should be given to a policy that would cover similar situations in the future.

Mayor LeTourneau invited any residents to provide input.

Joe Krekelberg, Lino Lakes resident, spoke in representation of the Hamilton/Holasek family. He stated that their family sold the land to Connections Church in September as that would be a land use that aligns with the shared faith and beliefs of the family. He noted that when selling to a church it is not as profitable as other types of development would have been. He stated that in the process of selling the property, the family learned of an $89,000 bill owed to the City for a $25,000 assessment issued in 1989. He stated that the family was shocked to see that interest had been collected, especially that amount of interest. He stated that the primary landowners, Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Holasek, have passed away and the family was unaware that interest had been charged. He thanked City staff for their assistance and consideration on this matter. He stated that they

agree that the property benefited from the road improvement and the $25,000 assessment is their responsibility. He stated that they understand that the assessment is due at closing, as outlined in statute. He stated that the only document that specifies interest was included in a resolution that was completed prior to the use of the internet. He stated that the family and staff looked for correspondence related to the interest that would be charged and neither side could find such correspondence. He stated that the resolution specified that the assessment would be paid within the ten-year period, with equal installments and interest charged over that ten-year period. He did not see how that resolution applied to this deferment. He stated that there is a lack of documentation supporting this interest and they disagree that it would be appropriate for the City to follow this so-called process. He did not believe it an appropriate process to continue to charge interest for this number of years without correspondence. He stated that if the family would have been aware that interest was accruing at that percent, they would have paid it off. He referenced the rate at which the City just bonded for debt, at almost seven percent lower than the interest rate his family has been charged for the past 30 years. He stated that a financial institution could not get away with charging interest at that rate and duration without it being well documented. He stated that the family is offering a fair offer to pay the assessment with ten years of interest, which would be consistent with the resolution and bond term. He asked the Council not to accept the recommendation of staff and instead accept the offer from the family. He suggested that after this situation, it would be helpful for the City to review its records and reach out to any residents that have deferred assessments in order to prevent a situation of this type in the future.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that as she reviewed the case, she noticed the certificate of deferred assessment and did not see any mention of interest. She stated that the document referenced the deferment and amount but did not show interest. She asked for input from staff.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that document is dated 2007 by the City Clerk, and the property owner had requested at that time whether there were deferments on the property, which was certified noting that the request stands on its own to identify the green acres classification and deferred assessments but would not include interest as that type of document does not include that level of detail.

Finance Director Lund stated that in 2007 the County requested an updated certificate for all green acres properties and deferments, which is why that data was provided. She stated that the County only requests the principal amount and not interest. She stated that the resolution from 1989 does include the interest rate and noted that Mr. Hamilton attended that meeting as he was listed as an attendee in the minutes.

Mr. Krekelberg asked if the minutes from that meeting mentioned a discussion related to the interest rate.

Finance Director Lund replied that the resolution included the project name, number, and interest rate. She confirmed that the resolution was adopted at that meeting.

Councilmember Kuzma asked why someone from the family would not call and ask for details about the deferred assessment. He recognized that a deferred assessment would come with interest.

Mr. Krekelberg stated that there has been movement between the different generations. He stated that he was unaware of the deferred assessment until the closing on the property. He stated that with his mortgage he is aware of the payment and interest that is due each month. He asked for this compromise.

Councilmember Specht thanked the resident for providing input and believed that the family's proposal is a good compromise that both takes ownership for their responsibility. He stated that he supports this compromise.

Motion by Councilmember Specht, seconded by Councilmember Musgrove, to approve the request of the Hamilton and Holasek families to reduce the interest charged on deferred assessments due upon their recent sale of Tract A, RLS No. 119, 2020.

Further discussion: Mayor LeTourneau asked staff for input on precedent that could be set by accepting this proposal, as the process follows State Statute and City process. City Administrator Ulrich confirmed that this would set a precedent that deferred assessments can be negotiated. He stated that the City still can negotiate this as a potential settlement, if desired. He noted that if the Council would like to follow this process moving forward there should be information within City policy as such. Councilmember Musgrove asked if it would help for the Council to add language to the motion specifying that this was due to green acres and generational changes, which would then make this a specific action and not set precedent. City Administrator Ulrich stated that the more specific they can be about this situation, the more helpful. He stated that there are fewer green acres parcels left in Ramsey, the additional rational could help to limit the scope of precedent being set. Mayor LeTourneau stated that perhaps these comments are contained as part of the record, so it is clear as to what informed this decision. He stated that part of the decision in this case is the lack of documentation. City Administrator Ulrich confirmed that could be sufficient. He stated that staff could work with the City Attorney to develop language and findings of fact, depending upon the timeline of the Holasek/Hamilton family. He confirmed that the motion could stand as is. Mayor LeTourneau asked if this could move forward with staff bringing back that formal language for the Council to approve. City Administrator Ulrich confirmed that staff could work with the City Attorney and bring that language back at the December 15th meeting. Councilmember Riley appreciated the situation of the family and the family making a reasonable offer. He stated that he would be inclined to support this negotiation rather than moving forward with a formal resolution tonight. Councilmember Musgrove commented that staff should seek out any other deferred assessments to ensure that this situation does not repeat itself. City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the language of the motion as stated. He commented that additional details would be helpful to make it specific to the offer made by the family. Councilmember Riley suggested that this motion not be followed and instead the direction be provided to staff to continue negotiation with the family with the same outcome. City Administrator Ulrich stated that he would prefer to draft a formal settlement agreement that could come forward to the Council on December 15th for acceptance. Councilmember Specht asked if Council approval is needed for this activity, or whether the Council could simply provide that direction to staff. City Administrator Ulrich stated that this would be a deviation from the policy and therefore approval from the Council would be needed, or authorization would need to be given to staff to complete the settlement as agreed. Councilmember Kuzma stated that he disagrees with the other members of the Council and believes that the Council should stay consistent with the policy in this matter noting that he does

not want to set precedent of this nature. Councilmember Menth commented that he also disagrees with the majority of the Council. He stated that he was married in 1987 and borrowed money from his father at a rate of eight percent. He stated that in 1979 the interest rate was 19 percent. He stated that the City deferred the payment for 30 years and therefore charged interest on that service. He stated that any place someone borrows money or defers payments will charge interest. He believed that this would set a bad precedent moving forward. He stated that he would not support this action. Councilmember Specht asked for input on the timeline of the family. Mr. Krekelberg replied that there are funds in escrow being held for this purpose. He stated that if additional interest is being charged, he would not want to postpone this decision, but would be okay with the postponement until December 15th if additional interest would not accrue. Lisa Hamilton, 6825 Riverdale Drive, stated that she understands the comments and positions of the Council. She stated that there was an assessment but through the research of their records and the understanding of her mother, the understanding was that there was not interest accruing on the deferred assessment. She stated that is why questions were not asked about the deferred assessment. She stated that in good faith they are coming back and taking ownership on the 8.1 percent interest for the ten-year period. She stated that they would have gladly paid the assessment off within the ten years if the terms had been communicated and if there was documentation supporting that. She stated that City staff could not provide any documentation showing the 8.1 percent interest was being charged to them. She asked the Council to meet them part way. She stated that they connected with Connections Church because staff reached out and made that connection. She stated that the family will gladly pay the interest for the ten-year period as proposed. Councilmember Menth asked what type of documentation the City would have related to the deferred assessment and interest rate. City Administrator Ulrich commented that the adopted resolution would be the primary documentation related to the interest rate. He stated that if the Council is inclined to support this proposal, it could authorize staff to enter into a settlement agreement subject to the approval of the City Attorney. Councilmember Specht stated that he would be amenable to amending the motion as such or tabling it to the first meeting in January.

Councilmember Specht withdrew his motion.

Motion by Councilmember Specht to table consideration of this request to the first Council meeting in January 2021.

Motion failed for lack of second.

Motion by Councilmember Musgrove, seconded by Councilmember Specht, to authorize staff to enter into a settlement agreement with the Hamilton/Holasek family consistent with their proposal in the letter dated October 26, 2020, subject to approval of the City Attorney.

Further discussion: Councilmember Kuzma stated that he cannot support the proposed action as he feels that this would set precedent. Councilmember Menth noted that he also cannot support the action for the reasons stated by Councilmember Kuzma.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor LeTourneau, Councilmembers Musgrove, Specht, and Riley. Voting No: Councilmembers Kuzma and Menth.

7.03: Adopt Resolution #20-307 to Approve Acceptance of a Grant for Dedicated DWI Enforcement and Authorize an Additional Police Officer Hire in 2021

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the staff report and recommendation to authorize the police department's participation in the grant program and to authorize an additional Police Officer hire starting April 1, 2021.

Police Chief Katers stated that the Police Department followed the direction of the Council to look into alternate funding sources and did that by applying for this grant to dedicate an Officer to traffic enforcement, specifically to impaired driving. He stated that the department applied for the grant three times and most recently was awarded in this third round. He stated that this action would dedicate an Officer, beginning January 1, 2021, to traffic safety and impaired driving. He stated that in previous budget discussions there was a need identified to hire an Officer, which was approved tonight. He stated that there is another Officer proposed to be added in 2022, noting that this would allow the position to begin in 2021 as a budget neutral position and alternatives could be discussed for 2022. He stated that the number of deaths on the roadways has not fallen during COVID and has in fact increased from the previous year.

Bill Hammes, Law Enforcement Liaison for the eight-county metro area, noting that he assists with traffic enforcement education and the TZD grants. He stated that he lives in Anoka County and has worked in the County, noting that a traffic accident is an extremely violent way to lose a life. He stated that in Minnesota in 2019, 364 people lost their lives to traffic accidents, noting that 2020 has already seen 372 deaths. He stated that in Anoka County last year, 18 people lost their lives and already in 2020, 17 people have lost their lives due to traffic accidents. He noted that is the second highest in the eight county area. He also noted that 25 to 30 percent of those fatalities are the result of an impaired driver. He estimated that about 5,000 lives have been saved because of everything that has come forward during that time from public works, engineering, and traffic safety.

Duane Siedschlag, Office of Traffic Safety, provided background information on this grant program which continues to grow and provide value. He stated that the 15 or 16 Officers and Deputies involved in this project have arrested six percent of the impaired drivers in the State. He stated that Anoka County has the second highest fatality rate in the State. He stated that if one life is saved, then the funds provided by this program are worth it.

Police Chief Katers appreciated the input from the representatives of the Office of Traffic Safety. He stated that the calls for service have increased during COVID, noting that he has been cognizant to ensure there can be proper staffing levels. He stated that the benefit of this position is that they are out on the road looking for impaired drivers but are also able to address other traffic issues. He stated that some of the other agencies that received awards from the grant received funding in subsequent years but noted that is not a guarantee.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that a comment was made to add an Officer in 2022 and asked for details on the budget impact.

Police Chief Katers replied that the 2021 budget would not be impacted because of the costs savings provided by the grant. He stated that his request would be to commit to that 2022 position but adding that in 2021 because of this opportunity. He stated that there will be retirements in the department and other areas that could be looked upon for savings if financial difficulties come forward in 2021 and 2022. He stated that he will ask for additions in the budget based upon growth and calls for service. He noted that based on the projected growth he has anticipated adding an Officer each year.

Councilmember Musgrove asked for clarity on the period September through December.

Police Chief Katers confirmed that this grant would run from January through September. He stated that nine months of the wages of that Officer would be reimbursed through the grant. He stated that the 2021 budget included the hiring of a new Officer, which could be delayed from January to April in order to provide the three months of cost savings needed to make this position budget neutral.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that she appreciates this funding opportunity as the City is not eligible for local government aid. She thanked the police department and Police Chief Katers for putting in the effort to receive this grant award and taking the direction of the Council. She stated that the department will continue to need personnel in order to provide service to the growing community. She stated that she would support the 2022 budget request.

Councilmember echoed the comments of appreciation to staff for pursuing and receiving this grant award.

Motion by Councilmember Specht, seconded by Councilmember Riley, to Adopt Resolution #20-307 to Approve Acceptance of a Grant for Dedicated DWI Enforcement.

Further discussion: Mayor LeTourneau commented that these investments made in safety provide benefit to the City and residents and help to improve the corridor.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor LeTourneau, Councilmembers Specht, Riley, Kuzma, Menth, and Musgrove. Voting No: None.

7.04: Adopt Resolution #20-295 to Hire a Part-Time Police Records Technician

Administrative Services Director Lasher reviewed the staff report and recommendation to hire Ms. Nicole Cramston as the City's new Police Records Technician, effective on or near January 4, 2021, with a credit of three vacation days and at the 2020 step one rate; after the 2021 contract is settled, the wage shall be adjusted based on the AFSCME contract.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if this position would be done remote or in office.

Administrative Services Director Lasher stated that there are some instances when Police Technicians have worked remotely, but typically most work their schedule on site at the Police Department.

Motion by Councilmember Musgrove, seconded by Councilmember Specht, to Adopt Resolution #20-295 to Hire a Part-Time Police Technician

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor LeTourneau, Councilmembers Musgrove, Specht, Kuzma, Menth, and Riley. Voting No: None.

7.05: Review Current Legislative Priorities

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the staff report and stated that the purpose of the case is to confirm current legislative priorities and identify any missing priorities and/or remove any outdated priorities. A case will be brought forward in January to adopt the platform and review with area representatives.

Councilmember Specht asked when this would come before the Council for approval.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that typically that occurs in January.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that she agrees that the LGA needs to move to a lower priority. She stated that she would like to keep the funding for non-State aid roads on the list. She stated that a lot of the issues are financial and would propose to add a priority that would relate to policy/governance. She stated that she does not feel that the Governor's Executive Orders reflect those that are intended to be represented and therefore would like to see a priority which would address the reform of that authority. She stated that she would like to see Ramsey be a sanctuary for businesses. She stated that Ramsey businesses are hurting, and the City is having a hard time attracting more business. She stated that the mandates are impacting certain businesses, mainly small businesses. She also referenced fitness businesses which have had an incredibly low rate of transmission but are forced to be closed.

Mayor LeTourneau appreciated those comments. He stated that a very powerful statement was made tonight by a resident and this action would be proof that the City is listening to its residents and hearing their concerns. He stated that if there is anything the City could do to influence policy on a State level, this would be a great start. He challenged the Council to learn about the nuisances and challenges that local businesses are facing, acknowledging that his time on the Council is almost up.

Councilmember Riley stated that he would like to discuss the issue of governance related to the Metropolitan Council as this moves forward.

Councilmember Specht agreed with the comments of his colleagues. He stated that he would want to take efforts to protect the freedoms of the Ramsey businesses and citizens. He referenced the administration of the absentee ballots and stated that he would disagree with option A, noting that he voted early and did not find the process cumbersome.

Mayor LeTourneau noted that staff will take this input and bring a draft forward for the Council to continue to discuss.

8. MAYOR, COUNCIL AND STAFF INPUT

8.01: Confirm December 15th Special City Council Meeting

City Administrator Ulrich announced upcoming meetings and events.

City Administrator Ulrich confirmed the date of the December 15, 2020 Special City Council meeting.

Councilmember Musgrove encouraged Ramsey residents to support local Ramsey businesses as they continue to struggle. She stated that the City website has been updated with lists of Ramsey restaurants that provide take-out or delivery. She thanked Councilmember Menth for being a very intuitive member of the Council, willing to listen and respectful of difference in opinion. She thanked Mayor LeTourneau for assisting her when she joined the Council and wished them both well.

The Council echoed comments of thanks to Councilmember Menth and Mayor LeTourneau.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Riley, seconded by Councilmember Musgrove, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried.

The regular meeting of the City Council adjourned at 9:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kurtis G. Ulrich
City Administrator

ATTEST:

Katie M. Schmidt
Administrative Assistant

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.

A recording of this meeting is available for viewing online at www.qctv.org <http://www.qctv.org>. Recordings are available for 36 months after the date of the meeting.