



City of Northfield

City Hall
801 Washington Street
Northfield, MN 55057
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Meeting Minutes - Draft City Council

Tuesday, August 10, 2021

6:00 PM

Police Department

6:00 PM - REGULAR AGENDA CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Pownell called meeting to order at 6:06PM.

Present: 5 - Council Member Clarice Grabau, Council Member Brad Ness, Mayor Rhonda Pownell, Council Member Jami Reister, and Council Member George Zuccolotto

Absent: 2 - Council Member Suzie Nakasian, and Council Member Jessica Peterson White

REGULAR AGENDA

1. [21-456](#) 2022-2023 Budget Worksession.

City Administrator Martig introduced the slides and clarified the differences between the two supplements. Martig emphasized the key points and goals of the presentation: (1) Key Milestones, (2) NAFRS Operating Budget, (3) Complete Utility & Enterprise Fund Review, (4) Complete Liquor Store Fund Review, (5) Complete HRA and EDA Maximum Levy Review, (6) Staffing Review, (7) Capital Equipment Plan (CEP), (8) Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), and (9) Department Operating Budgets.

Martig discussed key milestones in the budget process. August 25th closed meeting regarding labor negotiations. September 14th meeting to focus on preliminary levy target, tax impacts, and prioritization of budget items. September 21st is deadline for preliminary maximum property tax levy, budget and utility rate adoption. October 12th is a budget work session. November 2nd will be motion to approve budget and levy resolutions for December public hearing. End of November tax statements will be mailed. December 7th will be final property tax levy and final budget adoption.

Martig discussed NAFRS 2022 Budget. Council was offered the chance to discuss and ask questions on this topic. Mayor Pownell requested clarification on budget approval process across all NAFRS stakeholders. Martig explained the process to the Council. The Council had no further questions or discussion on this topic.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Dave Bennett discussed utility fund rate structure, including rate increases for water, wastewater, storm water, garbage, and utility. A drinking water study is pending. Bennett briefly discussed detailed budgets for public works, including current projects and proposed projects. Council was offered the chance to discuss and ask questions on this topic. Mayor Pownell asked for each subtopic be discussed separately. Councilor Ness asked for some clarification on the budget slides and the prioritization of items. Bennett explained the slides and the use or non-use of prioritization. Mayor Pownell asked about the purchase of property for a water tower and the impact. Bennett explained the infrastructure needed outside of land acquisition would lead to the largest impact from the water tower. Councilor Grabau asked about garbage fees remaining static and if they should be raised going forward. Bennett explained that there is not a clear lifespan for the Rice County landfill but that would give more

indications of impact to garbage fees. Program Coordinator Beth Kallestad added that she believed Rice County had plans to update their landfill but did not have details. Councilor Ness questioned if they could provide data on lifespan of solar energy. Bennett and Kallestad stated there was some information on the sustainability page. Kallestad referenced an upcoming agenda item on sustainability but stated it would likely impact the 2023 budget more than 2022. Mayor Pownell asked for clarification on fund balance, which Bennett clarified. Councilor Ness asked about franchise fees in the CIP. Bennett explained the numbers from the file. Martig discussed upcoming franchise fee items to be discussed at upcoming meetings. The Council had no further questions or discussion on this topic.

Martig began discussion on the liquor store budget by stating that the numbers are usually static. Martig also discussed transfer to the general funds and looking at options for new site acquisition. He expanded on the plan to look into a new property for the liquor store including priorities for any future locations and discussed some current areas the city has looked at. He reiterated that they are very early in the process and no specific properties has been identified. The Council had no further questions or discussion on this topic.

Martig began the HRA/EDA presentation. Martig noted some specifics on the budget but stated a presentation would be planned for October with more details. Councilor Ness asked for clarification on some of the data in one of the slides. The Council had no further questions or discussion on this topic.

City Council took a break at 6:56PM. The meeting resumed at 7:04PM.

Martig introduced the staffing section of the agenda. Discussed wages and benefits. A 2021 Employee Benefit Analysis is underway looking at how the city compares with other municipalities regarding various benefits and wages. A wage market analysis is underway, which is done every 5-6 years. Martig explained the internal position/wage analysis of the city and what is done to reevaluate positions from year to year. He also discussed the step process for employment, the levy impact, and details of the wages and benefits forecast. Communications & Human Resources Director Michelle Mahowald clarified some details. Martig transitioned to a presentation/discussion on staffing requests. He briefly introduced the 7 staffing requests for 2022, including (1) a public works horticulturist, (2) a public works engineer, (3) a police officer, (4) a community development planner (5) an additional community development position, (6) moving the NPB Manager from part-time to full-time, and (7) an increase from part-time Spanish Translator to a full-time Spanish Communications Associate. The Council was given the opportunity for discussion and questions. They asked for more background from each department head. Bennett, Community Development Director Mitzi Baker, Chief of Police Mark Elliott, and Mahowald explained their requested positions in more detail and answered Council questions. The Council was asked to rank their choices and to list any other positions they feel should be looked into for addition. Members of the council then discussed their rankings and asked any additional questions.

Bennett began discussion on the vehicle and equipment fund. Elliott discussed the police department's plan to replace one of their vehicles with an electric car. This would provide them with the chance to test out how electric vehicles withstand the needs of the police department. Bennett explained that a fleet study identified what vehicles could be replaced with electric vehicles, which ones could be hybrid, and which ones should remain gas. They are looking at best fit for the needs of each vehicle. Kallestad added information about charging stations. The Council had no further questions or discussion on this topic.

Bennett introduced the CIP slides and pointed out that CIP is always one year ahead. Three maps were provided to the Council. Mayor Pownell asked for a street rating map, like the trail rating map, and would like to know what level of equity there is with street conditions and asked about the rating for Odd Fellows Road. Bennett responded to her inquiries. Bennett stated that high priority gaps are where they focus regarding sidewalks. The Council had no further questions or discussion on this topic.

Bennett reviewed the parks funding and noted that money is currently set aside to look at current park infrastructure and to work with the community on future development. Mayor Pownell inquired about ADA bathrooms and how many shelters need to be updated and if they should be updated yearly. Bennett responded which parks need updating and laid out other options for updating one park each year taking into account long term plans. Mayor Pownell questioned the hockey rink addition since future plans are unclear. Councilor Ness questioned the mobility of hockey rinks which Bennett stated are technically mobile but not easily moved. The Council had no further questions or discussion on this topic.

Martig focused on a few select slides before opening up discussion on department budgets. Included levy if all projects were approved as is. Finance Director Brenda Anglestad added more details on City-wide levy slides. Martig discussed general fund balance and how there is not excess general funds available due to city hall project. Martig also briefly referenced American Rescue Plan Act Funding and how the funds could be used as well as the Riverfront Enhancement Action Plan Implementation. Baker stated that they are working on other funding opportunities. Bennett discussed the impacts of Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) and the funding to deal with it. Kallestad further explained grants and if additional funding could be made available.

Martig opened up discussion and questions on Department Budgets. Mayor Pownell stated that at the September work session the budget will be tied closer to the strategic plan. Councilor Grabau asked what the plan with the Archer House is and what the Council/City's role is. Baker stated that they have talked with ownership and the City is waiting for further information. The HPC would be involved and hold a hearing if the Archer House needs to be torn down due to damage. Martig stated that they hope to have more information in the coming weeks. Councilor Grabau asked for clarification on the Archer House being deemed a total loss and the building having to be torn down. Baker explained the differences between insurance terminology and the actions taken. Martig explained further provisions surrounding the project. Martig expressed thanks to the staff for their work on the budgets. Staff members had no further comments. The Council had no further questions.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned 8:48PM.