

City of North Saint Paul
November 16, 2021
Approved City Council Workshop Meeting Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Furlong called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. The meeting was conducted at City Hall in the Council Chambers, and also via Zoom.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Council Member Petersen
Council Member Wong
Council Member Cole
Mayor Furlong

Absent: Council Member Thorsen
Interim City Manager Brian Frandle

Staff: Deputy Clerk Jennie Kloos, Finance Director Dan Winek, Communications Consultant Kari Erpenbach, Public Works Director Ron Ritchie, Public Works Supervisor Randy Miller, City Engineer Morgan Dawley

III. ADOPT AGENDA

On motion by Council Member Petersen, seconded by Council Member Cole, with all present voting aye (4-0), motion carried to approve the agenda as presented.

IV. TOPIC(S)

A. Civic Ready Discussion

Communications Consultant Kari Erpenbach presented the council with information on CivicReady, which is an easy-to-use, reliable, mass notification tool that offers many applications to enhance communications with our residents. It allows City staff to communicate via email, text, landline, social media, and geo-targeting. In addition to the wide variety of communication channels, CivicReady also allows residents to select their language preferences so they can receive notifications from the City in their preferred language. Staff from all departments participated in a product demonstration where several different scenarios were presented, including:

- Power outage
- Hydrant flushing
- Garbage delays
- Community Policing
- Public emergencies
- Missing persons

The current technology the City uses only has 68 subscribers. The technology is unable to be updated and it also doesn't interact with the Park and Recreation software or OpenGov. This

tool was presented at a substantial discount (half price for the first year) and has multiple uses for the city.

B. Finance Department Overview

Finance Director Dan Winek updated City Council on the resignation of Accountant Kyle Staisca, which will leave a vacancy in the department. Mr. Winek stated he would like to hire a consultant to review the structure, ways of efficiencies and what other functions could be provided to the Finance Department. As part of a preliminary plan he would like to move forward getting proposals from a consultant on job titles, appropriate structure and succession planning. Mr. Winek stated that he has been very impressed on the dedication and professionalism with the Finance team, which includes Jackie, Barb, Taylor and Angie.

In the interim period prior to rehiring for the vacant Accountant position, Mr. Winek is going to look at reallocating some of the work load with current staff, and hiring a temporary employee to fill the Accountant position with someone who has experience, knowledge and an individual he can trust. Mr. Winek's spouse is qualified and he would like to hire her with limited hours and for a limited duration. This would help bridge the gap to get through the consultant's overview and getting a City Manager on board. After City Council discussion, Mr. Winek has the support from the City Council and should work closely with Interim City Manager Frandle on details.

Mr. Winek gave an update on the software program that the City Council had approved on June 2020. A contract was executed with OpenGov. Three of the four components have been up and running and have been successful. The Financial Suite component was to be in place by the end of 2021, which will not happen. Mr. Winek has concerns with issues he has encountered for implementation and communications. The City Attorney has reviewed the contract with OpenGov to find out what can be done and what the recourses are on discontinuing the Financial Suite component of OpenGov. There is a clause within the contract that gives us a one time out of the financials and expires on December 31, 2021 with a 10-day notice. He is recommending at this time to not move forward with OpenGov Financials component. The item will be brought back to council at the next meeting for final determination.

C. 2022 Budget Details

On December 7, 2022, the City will hold the Truth and Taxation Hearing and on December 21, 2022, the City will approve the 2022 budget. To date, all budgets have been presented to the City Council. Staff is still reviewing the Electric Fund due to rate increases. Staff has prepared a brief summary of the general fund budget development process and attached line item details for all budgets. Highlights to mention include the 2022 levy is at 5.99%, the general fund has increased 5.86%, personnel and benefits components have increased 10.35%, and all other line items in the general fund, a .19% increase.

D. 7th Avenue Improvements (2022) – 1st Street to Helen Street On-Street Parking Configuration

City Engineer Morgan Dawley stated in a recent review meeting between Engineering and Public Works staff, questioning the design standpoint of what to do between Helen and 1st St with regards to parking. In summary there are a few items of concern. Currently, parking is parallel and there have been some discussions in the past to change the configuration from parallel to diagonal parking. Using preliminary schematics, parallel parking allows for approximately 44 parking spots and for diagonal, approximately 56. Other impacts to consider is the 2011 investment by the City for the corridor beautification. If we were to change the parking

stalls to diagonal, we would need to remove all of that. There would also be increase in the project if changing the parking to diagonal with an estimate of approximately \$350,000-\$400,00. Mr. Dawley and Public Works Director Ron Ritchie are looking for feedback from the City Council on this project.

Council member Petersen inquired on handicap parking. Mr. Dawley stated they are being conscientious of that and that the standard is 1 stall per 25.

The general consensus from the City Council would be to keep the on-street parking configuration as parallel.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, on motion by Council Member Wong, seconded by Council Member Petersen, with all present voting aye (4-0), Mayor Furlong adjourned the workshop meeting at 6:35 p.m.

/s/ Terrence J. Furlong, Mayor

Attest:

/s/ Jennie Kloos, Deputy Clerk