

City of North Saint Paul
August 24, 2023
Approved Special Workshop Meeting Minutes

The City Council Special Workshop Meeting was conducted on August 24, 2023 immediately following the Special City Council meeting in the Sandberg Room at City Hall, located at 2400 Margaret St., North St. Paul.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Acting Mayor Wong called the meeting to order at 5:06 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Council Member Schweer
Council Member Cole
Acting Mayor Wong

Absent: Council Member Nordby
Mayor Monge

Staff: City Manager Brian Frandle, Assistant to City Manager Jennie Kloos, Finance Director Dan Winek, Accountant Mary Kay Heinen, Community Development Director Brandy Howe, Police Chief Phil Baebenroth

III. ADOPT AGENDA

On motion by Council Member Cole, seconded by Council Member Schweer, with all present voting aye (3-0), motion carried to approve the agenda as submitted.

IV. TOPICS

A. 2024 – Department Head Presentations

Community Development Director Brandy Howe detailed the community development budget which includes budgets for the EDA, Planning Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, and the Arts and Culture Commission.

Ms. Howe explained the Community Development budget has decreased 14% due to new job expectations and some contractual costs being eliminated. The budgets cover personnel, supplies, and contract services.

The Arts and Culture Commission has requested an increase in their budget. The Council discussed the option of the Arts and Culture Commission establishing its own budget. Council Member Wong inquired about the dollar amount required to move its budget from the General Fund to its own budget. Mr. Winek stated the Arts and Culture Commission would need \$25,000 in donations or revenue to create and maintain its own budget.

Ms. Howe discussed the additional funding that grants would provide. She stated she can apply and write some grants but would look at contracting with outside agencies for help if needed.

Chief of Police Phil Baebenroth presented his budget for 2024. He stated the initial requests included three positions (Captain, Investigator, and Community Engagement Officer), Opportunities to improve organizational efficiency and success, retention, recruitment, officer wellness, and enhance public safety in the community. The current and greatest need is an additional investigator. He provided justification for this request and used data and statistics to show the increase in crimes from 2019 to 2022 that would warrant an additional investigator. He provided a staffing review, NSPPD revenue sources, possible contract grant writer position to help write law enforcement specific grants and overtime costs due to major crimes investigations and reviewed the “road ahead” to service needs to meet the community needs and expectations.

Mr. Baebenroth is hoping to focus his attention in 2024 on health, wellness, and use of allowed vacation time. He stated he is also looking at requesting an architectural study to inquire about a holding cell and possible sleeping quarters inside the police department.

Mr. Baebenroth described the additional investigator position, why it is necessary and how it would be filled. He noted the burnout rate of only having one investigator on the department is high. Mr. Baebenroth also added the creation of the K-9 program as another high priority budget request.

Mr. Winek provided a summary of the information presented and briefly discussed tax levy percentages and what each percentage point means in terms of cost. Mr. Winek reviewed the tax levy percentages and suggested agreeing on a fair tax levy. This will allow his staff to create options for budget additions and deletions while maintaining an equitable tax levy for residents. He stated in order to make North St. Paul financially sound moving forward, there needs to be an approximate increase of at least 2% for each subsequent year for approximately 10 years. He added home values have not come out yet and will have more information on that at the September 5th workshop meeting and noted any additional information can be discussed at that meeting as well. He also mentioned future budget impacts that would include a 2% levy increase for street improvements, impact of union negotiations, community center and park funding.

The maximum tax levy will be set at the September 19th City Council meeting.

V. ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Council Member Cole, seconded by Council Member Schweer, with all present voting aye (3-0), meeting is adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

/s/ John Monge, Mayor

Attest:

/s/ Brian Frandle, City Manager / Clerk