

City of North Saint Paul
October 3, 2023
Approved City Council Workshop Meeting Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Monge called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Council Member Schweer
Council Member Nordby arrived at 5:22 p.m.
Council Member Cole
Council Member Wong
Mayor Monge

Staff: City Manager Brian Frandle, Assistant to the City Manager Jennie Kloos, Finance Director Dan Winek, Mary Kay Heinen, Communications Kari Erpenbach

III. ADOPT AGENDA

On motion by Council Member Schweer, seconded by Council Member Wong, with all present voting aye (5-0), motion carried to approve the agenda as submitted.

IV. TOPICS

A. Tobacco Ordinance

Ms. Katie Engman, Program Director – Policy & Compliance Association for Nonsmokers-MN reviewed the federal and state updates to the Tobacco Ordinance. She outlined the main topics for discussion as alignment with state and federal laws, use of flavored tobacco, limiting the number of shops that can sell tobacco and the proximity of stores to youth related facilities.

The Council discussed the sale of flavored tobacco products. Council Member Schweer noted her concern for residents buying it elsewhere and a potential loss of revenue for North St. Paul. Council Member Nordby inquired about the process of eliminating flavored tobacco products through attrition. The Council agreed that hearing from current businesses and how this would affect their profit would be very beneficial. Ms. Engman stated a 30-day notice would be given before public notice or a public hearing. After much discussion, the Council agreed to table this part and wait to hear from local businesses.

The Council had a robust conversation on limiting the number of licenses granted. The City currently allows seven. Council Member Nordby noted the possible decrease of new retail developments if there are restrictions regarding the limit of stores selling tobacco products. Ms. Engman stated a cap number is required and provided multiple options that cities around the Metro are currently testing. The Council agreed to keep the cap at its current level of seven with the ability to transfer a license upon Council approval.

The Council also discussed the proximity of stores selling tobacco products to youth related facilities. It was clarified this would only apply to new businesses. Council Member Wong inquired about more information and providing a map or a visual of where the youth related facilities are in relation to the tobacco retail stores. Ms. Engman stated the buffer zone is currently between 500-1000 feet from any youth related facility. Ms. Engman clarified this would only apply to new tobacco retail stores. Council Member Schweer is not in favor of a buffer zone but the remaining Council members agreed on a 750-foot buffer for youth related facilities.

Council Member Wong requested clarification on the fines. Ms. Engman reviewed the state violations and the recommendations from Public Safety Director Fadden. Council Member Wong suggested a visual for the current and recommended fines and violations.

B. 2024 Budget Discussion – The Big Picture

Finance Director Dan Winek provided information on the financial plan overview, assumptions in financial plans, a review of strategies in developing financial plans, unknowns and future considerations regarding the Capital Improvement Plan. He noted the need for a plan moving forward in order to keep up the City's good financial standing.

Accountant Mary Kay Heinen provided a brief overview of the expenses and how the City will fund future projects. She stated the City uses three ways to fund projects. They can increase rates over the next 10 years, issue bonds, and use of current cash available. She also explained the process of the available cash, how it's used and the amount to keep for emergencies.

Council Member Schweer expressed her concern regarding a lower available cash amount. Ms. Heinen stated it remains high enough to cover approximately 1 year of expenses.

Mr. Winek stated the Capital Improvement Plan requires more details and suggested an additional special meeting to go over those details and to meet with department heads to address questions or concerns. Assistant to City Manager Jennie Kloos will schedule this additional meeting.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

There were no presentations.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Council Member Wong, seconded by Council Member Cole, with all present voting aye (5-0), meeting is adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

/s/ John Monge, Mayor

Attest:

/s/ Brian Frandle, City Manager / Clerk