

City of North Saint Paul
November 21, 2023
Approved City Council Workshop Meeting Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Council Member Schweer absent
Council Member Nordby
Council Member Cole
Acting Mayor Wong
Mayor Monge arrived at 5:30 p.m.

Staff: City Manager Brian Frandle, Assistant to the City Manager Jennie Kloos, Finance Director Dan Winek, Chief of Police Phil Baebenroth, Community Development Director Brandy Howe, Communications Kari Erpenbach

III. ADOPT AGENDA

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

IV. TOPICS

A. Lights On!

John Harrington, CEO of Lights On, and Sherman Patterson introduced and described the Lights On Program. The program aims to partner with law enforcement agencies to help improve police-community relations and public safety. The program would replace tickets and instead allow officers to provide a voucher for a free tail light bulb, turn signal replacements, and other minor traffic violations at a participating local auto shop, turning a traffic stop into an opportunity to educate the public and provide help to residents.

Chief of Police Phil Baebenroth provided information and explained the collaboration with the Ramsey County Attorney's office, Maplewood and North St. Paul's police departments. Stating that the Ramsey County Attorney's Office has provided the funding for a Maplewood Police Department employee to complete the tracking and documentation required for this program to ensure that the program is operating efficiently. The North St. Paul Police Department will be submitting our Lights-On program documentation to the Maplewood PD employee who will be completing this work.

B. 2024 Internal Service Funds and Other Budgets

Finance Director Dan Winek presented this item. The internal service funds account for the financing of goods and services provided by one department or agency to other departments or

agencies of the City on a cost-reimbursement basis. Mr. Winek reviewed the information technology budget and noted the contractual services expense increase of 12% due to an increase in Metro INET services. He also noted they will be looking at other ways to provide information technology services. He explained the balanced insurance fund and stated the increase would not affect insurance costs. The balanced equipment fund items are included in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The building maintenance fund will require a use of the fund balance in the amount of \$137,147 to include an increase in supplies, contractual services, and a capital increase of \$108,750 for the replacement of the Police Departments' garage doors that have been moved up from 2025 to 2024.

Mr. Winek discussed other budgeted funds such as the Community Center, community events, fire relief, park, and street maintenance. He provided a brief description of each fund, where the revenue is coming from, and how much money will be used from the fund balance.

Fire Chief Jason Mallinger recommended an increase in funding of the fire relief fund for future pension contributions.

Mr. Winek explained the reasoning behind the park fund, described the 2024 projects, noting \$36,042 will be the levy dollar amount increase, and a transfer of \$65,000 will be a required payment related to the Casey Lake Pavilion.

Council Member Wong inquired about the Community Center. Mr. Winek recommended the City make a decision on the future of the Community Center and stated the lack of a revenue source could impact future levies. One option may be to reimagine the Community Center as a multicultural center. Council Member Wong inquired about end costs after operating costs are taken out. Mr. Winek estimated it would be approximately under \$100,000.

C. 2024 Municipal Fee Schedule

Community Development Director Brandy Howe noted the layout change of the fee schedule in order to make it more user friendly. She reviewed and explained the proposed changes to the administrative, animal registration, right-of-way permit, business license, auction and auctioneer, contractor license, driveway and fence, Police Department, utility changes, and service and waste water fees. She added the proposed fee increases or decreases were comparable to surrounding communities. Ms. Howe stated some fees will need to be readjusted after finalized contracts and approved by City Council at a later date.

Council Member Cole inquired about the net increase of revenue for all the proposed changes. Ms. Howe noted she will bring those numbers to the next City Council meeting.

Council Member Cole asked about the rate increase as it relates to neighboring communities. Council Member Cole also inquired about the three-tiered water consumption fee schedule and suggested a flat rate instead. Mr. Winek explained the tiered water consumption fee schedule has remained the same for many years and he would bring back numbers and statistics for City Council to review at the next meeting.

City Engineer Morgan Dawley explained the three-tiered water consumption rates and stated the tiered system promotes water conservation and is a requirement of the DNR.

Council Member Wong suggested the therapeutic massage enterprise fee decrease to \$200. Mayor Monge inquired about the initial set up cost versus the renewal cost and if that included a background check. Ms. Howe noted the staff time is approximately the same and the fee included the background check.

Council Member Wong suggested an increase in the auction license to align closer to the pawn businesses. Council Member Nordby agreed and noted small organizations and charities use these. Ms. Howe noted no auction or auctioneer licenses have been applied for as of the present date.

Council Member Cole referenced the Park and Recreation consent agenda item for the City Council meeting and inquired about the park rental fees as it relates to damage deposits. He requested surrounding municipalities and their rental and damage deposit rates. Ms. Howe noted she will provide that information at the next City Council meeting.

Council Member Cole suggested a deeper look into the consistency of building hours versus park hours and suggested an additional fee if not vacated on time. Council Member Wong suggested additional communications with the public to increase awareness of that policy. Council Member Cole noted the urgency of this item due to the opening of park facilities rentals December 1, 2023.

Council Member Cole requested statistics on total damages during the year and where the money comes from to fix damaged properties. Mr. Winek stated it comes out of the building maintenance fund or the general fund, if needed, for additional or unseen repairs. He agreed this item deserves more diligence. City Manager Brian Frandle inquired about potential consequences for damages other than the loss of the deposit.

The Council discussed the issue of subletting the parks. Ms. Howe noted it could become a part of the policy. They also discussed the potential problems of postponing the rental availability. It was suggested to allow residents to make reservations but communicate the potential changes.

Council Member Nordby inquired about the financial impact the damages have to the park fund. Mr. Frandle stated he will get that information as soon as possible.

Council Member Wong suggested a filing fee of \$15 for City Council or Mayor applications.

On motion by Council Member Cole, seconded by Council Member Mayor Monge, with all present voting aye (4-0), meeting is adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

/s/ Lisa Wong, Acting Mayor

Attest:

/s/ Brian Frandle, City Manager / Clerk