

**City of North Saint Paul
December 5, 2023
Approved Regular City Council Meeting Minutes**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Monge called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. ROLL CALL

Present: Council Member Nordby
Council Member Schweer
Council Member Cole
Council Member Wong
Mayor Monge

Staff: City Manager Brian Frandle, Assistant to City Manager Jennie Kloos, City Engineer Morgan Dawley, Finance Director Daniel Winek, Accountant Mary Kay Heinen, Community Development Director Brandy Howe, Public Works Director Ron Ritchie, Public Works Supervisor Randy Miller, City Attorney Soren Mattick.

IV. ADOPT AGENDA

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

V. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Council Member Wong requested that Consent Agenda Items H, I, and J, respectively, be removed and addressed under City Business.

On motion by Council Member Schweer, seconded by Council Member Cole, with all present voting aye (5-0), motion carried to approve the consent agenda, Resolution No. 2023-063 consisting of:

- A. November 21, 2023 workshop meeting minutes
- B. November 21, 2023 regular meeting minutes
- C. General Claims \$617,359.03
- D. HRA Claims \$493.68
- E. Target Corporation Gift Card Donation – Shop with a Cop ***Resolution No. 2023-064***
- F. 2024 City Council Meeting Calendar ***Resolution No. 2023-065***
- G. 2024 Annual Polling Place Designations (location change in P1) ***Resolution No. 2023-066***

- H. Authorize Application for Metropolitan Council Environmental Services 2024 Private Property 1/1 Grant Program **Moved to City Business**
- I. 2024 Pavement Management Project Professional Services Proposal (City Project No. 24-01) – WSB **Moved to City Business**
- J. 11th Avenue Sidewalk Improvements Project (City Project No. 24-02) Professional Services Proposal – WSB **Moved to City Business**

VI. MEETING OPEN TO PUBLIC

John Schmahl expressed his concern regarding water conservation.

VII. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Truth-in-Taxation Hearing – 2024 Tax Levy and Budget

Finance Director Dan Winek presented this item and discussed the 2024 budget process. He explained that property owners should have received a truth in taxation notice. He presented the breakdown of total taxes and provided the 2024 levy highlights. He reviewed the revenue and expenditures by category and summarized the 2023 and 2024 debt levy and potential property tax impacts. He also stated residents can contact Ramsey County for more information.

Mayor Monge opened the public hearing at 6:35.

John Schmahl inquired about the transfer of \$1.1 million from the electric fund into the street maintenance fund. Mr. Winek explained the Truth-in-Taxation hearing is about the levy and budgets will be approved at the next City Council meeting.

Mayor Monge closed the public hearing at 7:01 p.m.

VIII. CITY BUSINESS ACTION ITEMS & RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Building Official Contract with Rum River Consulting

Community Development Director Brandy Howe presented this item, noting staff issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for inspection services in September of 2023 and received two bids; MNSPECT and Rum River Consulting. The contract process was reviewed and evaluated by staff members. City staff recommended Rum River Consulting with a renewal process each year.

Carri Levitski, Program Administrator with Rum River Consulting added there are no additional fees for the inspection and are part of the building permit fees.

On motion by Council Member Schweer, seconded by Council Member Wong, with all present voting aye (5-0), motion carried to approve the building inspection services contract with Rum River Consulting.

B. Discussion – Park Rental Policy

Community Development Director Brandy Howe presented this item. The Parks and Recreation Commission recommended updates to the Park Policy. The updates included items prohibited,

deposit increase for events with alcohol, key code access for buildings, and fees for after-hours usage. She compiled all of the information from the last meeting and explained the rate changes.

Ms. Howe provided statistics for Casey Lake rentals and noted instances of damage, withholding deposits, and extra clean up.

The Council discussed the issues of damages, cleaning maintenance, park hours, and deposits.

Mayor Monge suggested putting money back into the parks to keep up with maintenance and equipment. Council Member Wong inquired about specific deposit value withheld and net revenue. Ms. Howe noted there was not specific details on that and the methodology on determining the amount of deposit withheld has not yet been defined.

Council Member Nordby inquired about the status of Casey Lake Park reservations. Ms. Howe stated almost all weekend reservations are filled. Council Member Wong inquired about different ways to promote week day reservations. Ms. Howe suggested a lower week day rate.

The Council held a lengthy discussion on rental fees for residents versus non-residents

The Council offered price recommendations and options for rental fees. Council Member Wong suggested keeping the rates low to protect the customer service component for residents who have already reserved dates.

Council consensus was reached to update the Park Policy with the changes discussed and keep the current renter's agreement. The agreed upon rates are as follows:

Casey Lake pavilion rental – weekday	Resident: \$250.00 +\$300 deposit Nonresident: \$400.00 +\$350.00 deposit	Per day
Casey Lake pavilion rental – weekend and holidays	Resident: \$400.00 + \$350.00 deposit Nonresident: \$550.00 +\$350.00 deposit	Per day
Hause Park pavilion rental – weekday	Resident: \$175.00 +\$300 deposit Nonresident: \$250.00 +\$350.00 deposit	Per day
Hause Park pavilion rental - weekend	Resident: \$200.00 + \$150.00 deposit Nonresident: \$275.00 + \$150.00 deposit	Per day

Public Works Director Ron Ritchie briefly explained the communication between the cleaners and renters if they violate the park hours. It was suggested a percentage of the renter's deposit be withheld for each specified amount of time a renter exceeds the park hours. Council Member Wong recommended more education and more accessibility for people who use the parks. Mayor Monge expressed his concern over the cleaner's policing the time violations regarding park hours.

Council Member Wong inquired about the number of food trucks allowed for private events at either park and suggested increasing it to three or four food trucks per private event. Council Member Nordby noted the generator noise is up if four food trucks were allowed and suggested leaving the policy at two and adding a clause stating an increase in food trucks could be allowed upon review by City staff for special requests. Ms. Howe noted she would check with staff if there have been requests for more than two food trucks.

On motion by Council Member Nordby, seconded by Council Member Cole, with all present voting aye (5-0), motion carried to approve the Park Rental Policy as discussed and approve recommended rates.

C. Discussion – 2024 Fee Schedule

Ms. Howe presented this item and modifications to the fee schedule per the last meeting's discussion points. Ms. Levitski, Program Administrator with Rum River Consulting, clarified their inspections do not require an extra fee. She also noted Rum River Consulting are able to do Saturday inspections and have emergency inspections upon request.

Council Member Wong inquired about waiving or changing the event permit fee for National Night Out. The Council agreed the City would waive the event permit fee for National Night Out.

Council Member Nordby requested clarification regarding the 65% plan review fee. Ms. Howe stated 65% of the building permit fee would go to the plan review. It is not an additional cost but rather part of the entire building permit fee.

Ms. Howe clarified the zoning permit and planning application fees, noting that design review was eliminated from the proposed 2024 fee schedule and would be reviewed during the site plan review. The Planning Commission will review any exterior design or site design requirements.

Council Member Wong inquired about the Arts and Culture programming and the recreational programming that varies per event. Ms. Howe stated the original recreation fee was used to categorize various events. Events that are newly created would fall under the "recreation fee" until the fee schedule was updated with the proper information. Council Member Wong agreed to include the paint along event under the recreational.

On motion by Council Member Schweer, seconded by Council Member Wong, with all present voting aye (5-0), motion carried to approve the changes to the 2024 Fee Schedule.

D. Discussion – Health and Dental Insurance Savings Options

Mr. Winek presented this item and explained the Health / Dental change from PEIP to United Healthcare resulted in a savings of \$125,000 in the general fund and \$45,000 in the enterprise fund budget, HRA budget and EDA budget. He briefly described five options on how to allocate the savings.

Mr. Winek presented the options as follows:

- Reduce levy by full savings - levy to decrease from 8.5% to 6.59%

- Transfer savings to insurance fund and no levy reduction.
- Reduce the one-time transfer from the electric fund to the street maintenance fund by the \$125,000 amount and instead transfer \$975,000 while maintaining the current levy
- Transfer partial savings of \$59,000 to insurance fund and reduce annual electric transfer of \$300,000 by \$65,531. No levy change.
- Transfer partial savings to insurance fund and reduce annual electric transfer of 65,000 while maintaining the current levy

Mr. Winek recommended option three. There was discussion regarding the purpose of the insurance fund, concerns regarding the transfer of \$1.1 million out of the electric fund and knowing the electric fund will be requesting increases in future years. After discussion, the Council agreed to move forward with option two; transfer the \$125,000 in savings to the insurance fund.

On motion by Council Member Schweer, seconded by Council Member Wong, with Council Member Cole, Schweer, Wong and Nordby voting aye, and Mayor Monge voting nay, (4-1), motion carried to approve the transfer of \$125,000 in healthcare savings to the insurance fund.

E. Authorize Application for Metropolitan Council Environmental Services 2024 Private Property I/I Grant Program (formerly Consent Agenda Item H)

Council Member Wong requested this item be pulled for discussion and clarification on the grant language regarding private property owners' meeting their municipality's equity criteria. City Engineer Morgan Dawley stated it is a newer program and noted the Metropolitan Council has not determined that criteria yet nor has it been shared with the City. Mr. Dawley added once the City is provided clarity on this component, the information will go out on all of the City's media sites. City staff will research the equity component and find out on later in December how much money has been awarded.

Council Member Nordby requested clarification on how this applies to a typical resident. Mr. Dawley stated underground pipes are old and made with clay tiles which are not water tight. The goal is to provide homeowners with a new water tight underground pipe. Mr. Dawley noted there is a separate grant program for public properties that will be discussed in January or February of 2024.

On motion by Council Member Schweer, seconded by Council Member Wong, with all present voting aye (5-0), motion carried to adopt Resolution No. 2023-062, Authorizing the Department of Public Works to Apply for the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services 2023 Private Property I/I Grant.

F. 2024 Pavement Management Project Professional Services Proposal (City Project No. 24-01) – WSB (formerly Consent Agenda Item I)

Council Member Wong requested this item be pulled for clarification on whether sidewalks and bike lanes are part of this proposal. City Engineer Morgan Dawley stated specific streets are chosen by quantified pavement ratings. He also noted Public Works is trying to repair streets that do not have underground utilities but are still in high need of repair. He stated sidewalks are not

included in the scope but added bike lanes would be an easier issue to address and he can report back to City Council on other recommendations.

Public Works Director Ron Ritchie stated he can look at restriping and bike lane modifications and bring back the details and cost to City Council.

Motion by Council Member Schweer, seconded by Council Member Nordby, with all present voting aye (5-0), motion carried to accept the 2024 Pavement Management Project Professional Services Proposal by WSB in the amount of \$69,554.

G. 11th Avenue Sidewalk Improvements Project (City Project No. 24-02) Professional Services Proposal (formerly Consent Agenda Item J)

Council Member Wong requested this item be pulled to thank Mr. Ritchie and Mr. Dawley for their work on this project. She inquired about the specific dimensions and details of the sidewalk. Mr. Dawley stated it has not been designed yet but the design criteria would include dimensions wide enough for City snow removal, six-foot setback from curb, and would be coordinated with Met Transit. Mr. Dawley noted the amount of money dedicated by MnDOT is substantial and he will look to see if it can fit within the budget.

Mayor Monge expressed his concern about pedestrians crossing four lanes of traffic. Mr. Dawley stated the City has already purchased solar powered signs to be placed in two separate locations to be in line with intersections and the bus stop and would be coordinated after the construction is complete. Council Member Nordby suggested identifying and removing dead trees along the sidewalk.

On motion by Council Member Wong, seconded by Council Member Schweer, with all present voting aye (5-0), motion carried to accept the 11th Avenue Sidewalk Improvements Project Professional Services Proposal by WSB in the amount of \$36,188.00.

IX. REPORTS OF CITY MANAGER AND DEPARTMENTS

Mr. Frandle noted the Police Department completed interviews today. Public Works had a watermain break, finished street sweeping, and is still looking for a City Mechanic. The Department of Health will conduct their yearly well inspection. The Fire Department will have yearly testing on the mechanicals of their trucks. The Electric Department will start inventory in preparation for the arrival of auditors.

X. REPORTS OF COUNCIL, COMMISSIONS & COMMITTEES

Council Member Cole noted the December EDA meeting was cancelled and there will be a recognition of outgoing members at the meeting in January.

Council Member Wong stated the Arts and Culture Commission will meet tomorrow at 6:30 p.m.

Council Member Nordby noted the Planning Commisison will meet in two days and offered his thanks and appreciation to Commission Member Eric Brenna for his years of service.

Council Member Schweer stated the Park and Recreation Commission met last month to discuss the community garden location and next year's planning ideas. The next meeting will be in January. Council Member Schweer thanked Artie Alvarez for his service on the Commission.

Mr. Frandle noted Commissions will be giving their 2024 presentations to City Council during City Council meetings in January.

XI. GENERAL BUSINESS

Council Member Nordby thanked Rachel for her work with the Christmas tree project, noting they are still accepting donations.

Council Member Wong commented on the need for accountability regarding traffic safety and stated she will continue to ask for clarification.

Council Member Schweer attended the Holiday Hop and encouraged everyone to attend next year.

Council Member Cole commented on the positive conversations he had with various business owners.

Mayor Monge noted ringing the bell for Salvation Army was a great event.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, on motion by Council Member Wong, seconded by Council Member Schweer, with all present voting aye (5-0), Mayor Monge adjourned the meeting at 9:14 p.m.

/s/ John Monge, Mayor

Attest:

/s/ Brian Frandle, City Manager / Clerk