

City of North Saint Paul
October 1, 2024
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 absent
Council Member Nordby
Council Member Cole
Council Member Wong
Mayor Monge

Staff: City Manager Brian Frandle, Assistant to the City Manager Jennie Kloos, Finance
Director Dan Winek, Public Works Director Ron Ritchie, Public Works
Supervisor Randy Miller and Electric Director John Wick

III. ADOPT AGENDA

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

IV. TOPICS

A. Community Center RFP Review Update

City Manager Brian Frandle stated six applications have been received, a committee will review and score them appropriately, and present them at the next City Council meeting.

B. Commission/Workshop Meetings

Mr. Frandle explained the cost of providing a live feed for the commissions and workshop meetings and discussed the savings if the meetings were not made public. He also stated staff would take minutes that would be provided to the public.

Council Member Nordby expressed his desire to continue the meetings public in order to keep transparency and allow for easier access to retrieve previous information.

Council Member Wong agreed with the desire for transparency and suggested increased accessibility of meetings for impaired individuals. She also suggested a different set up and location for the workshop meetings.

Council Member Cole stated he has witnessed it done both ways and noted the recordings may increase reluctance on behalf of members, staff, or residents. He also suggested a roundtable-style workshop.

Mayor Monge suggested workshop and City Council meetings continue to be recorded. He also suggested flexibility regarding different locations for meetings.

C. 2025 Enterprise Budgets

Finance Director Dan Winek presented this item along with Electric Director John Wick and Public Works Director Ron Ritchie.

Mr. Winek stated the six Enterprise Funds are: Water, Waste Water, Electric, Surface Water, Solid Waste, and Fiber Optic. He provided information on each of their proposed budgets, revenues, expenditures, fund balance, and changes for 2025.

Mayor Monge inquired about fiber optic leasing. Mr. Frandle stated he is looking to set up a meeting to help with fiber optic space and potential sales.

Council Member Nordby inquired about the 2.5% increase in terms of a dollar amount for an average resident. Mr. Winek stated that would be approximately \$3.40 per resident.

Electric Director John Wick stated the budget will remain similar with no increase for 2025 and noted the main driver of the budget is the City's purchased power. He noted the lead time and supply chain are the biggest difficulties. He stated the cost of equipment and materials are staying high and this will be the new normal moving forward.

Council Member Wong inquired about anticipated changes in prices or supply chains with the weather in the southern United States. Mr. Wick stated vendors plan for severe weather but could cause lead time difficulties.

Mayor Monge inquired about the most expensive piece of equipment. Mr. Wick stated the substation transformer. He added the lifespan of a substation transformer is approximately 30-35 years and the City's current transformer is getting close to the end of its life span. Mr. Wick stated the substation transformer is on a maintenance routine that looks for failure to help eliminate unexpected costs. He noted the City can hook up to Xcel Energy in the event of a catastrophic event.

Public Works Director Ron Ritchie provided a high-level overview of the Water, Waste Water, and Surface Water fund. He briefly described each fund and the associated costs. He described the Surface Water fund and the relationship it has with the Watershed District.

Council Member Wong inquired if water main breaks are related to weather. Mr. Ritchie stated water main breaks tend to happen more in the winter than in the summer.

Mr. Ritchie described the sanitary sewer system and noted the difficulty with residents putting items down the sewer that increases clogging.

Mr. Winek stated after the City Council meeting, the other two topics on the workshop agenda will be discussed.

Council Member Cole inquired about further research into the potential transfer of money to help pay down the Fiber Optic Fund

Mayor Monge suggested paying off the Fiber Optic Fund debt also.

Council Member Wong inquired about the Fiber Optic charges for service and how they are determined. She also inquired about contract ending dates. Mr. Winek stated there is an internal component for charging our departments and the only way to create more revenue is to increase the rate within the City's own departments. Mr. Winek stated he believes those contracts are up in about eight to nine years.

Council Member Nordby inquired about which fund was in debt to the Fiber Optic Fund. Mr. Winek stated the Fiber Optic Fund was in debt to the Surface and Waste Water Funds.

V. ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Council Member Wong, seconded by Council Member Cole, with all present voting aye (4-0), meeting is adjourned at 6:28 p.m.

/s/ John Monge, Mayor

Attest:

/s/ Brian Frandle, City Manager / Clerk