

City of North Saint Paul
January 5, 2021
Approved Regular City Council Meeting Minutes

North St. Paul City Hall – Council Chambers
2400 Margaret Street

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Furlong called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. The meeting was conducted via Zoom and also at City Hall.

II. OATH OF OFFICE FOR NEWLY ELECTED OFFICIALS

Mayor Furlong administered to Oath of Office to new Council Members Tim Cole and Lisa Wong.

III. THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. ROLL CALL

Present: Council Member Thorsen
Council Member Petersen
Council Member Cole
Council Member Wong
Mayor Furlong

Staff: City Manager Scott Duddeck, Finance Director Jason Zimmerman, City Attorney Soren Mattick, Deputy Clerk Jennie Kloos.

V. ADOPT AGENDA

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

VI. PRESENTATIONS

Dan Fisher – Legacy Award

Mayor Furlong introduced Dan Fisher, and invited him to join him at the dais. He stated Mr. Fisher has served as a Co-Chair of the Veterans Park Committee, with primary responsibility for design, planning and development of the park project. He added Mr. Fisher has worked tirelessly to build a unique memorial for local veterans and military service men and women. He noted this was a team effort, but Mr. Fisher provided strong leadership, and the City of North St. Paul is grateful for his contributions and dedication to this project. He presented the Legacy Award to Mr. Fisher.

Mr. Fisher thanked Mayor Furlong and the City Council for the award and accepted it on behalf of the Committee team. He stated it has been an honor to accomplish the memorial in honor of men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces for their service and sacrifice. He thanked Mayor Furlong, who served as the Committee's City Council Liaison. He thanked his wife, Gerri, for her support.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

On motion by Council Member Thorsen, seconded by Council Member Wong, with all present voting aye (5-0), motion carried to approve the consent agenda, Resolution No. 2021-001 consisting of:

- A. December 15, 2020 workshop meeting minutes.
- B. December 15, 2020 regular meeting minutes.
- C. General accounts payable: \$799,393.32.
- D. HRA accounts payable: \$5,158.50.

VIII. MEETING OPEN TO PUBLIC

John Schmahl stated he lives on Chisholm Avenue, which was not plowed after a recent snowfall, but Radatz Avenue was plowed. He added he called Ron Ritchie (Public Works Supervisor), who indicated citizens do not like it when the roads are plowed too often.

Mr. Schmahl stated the next day he was driving downtown and was unable to stop at the Margaret Street intersection, as the road was so icy. He added he called Mr. Ritchie, who indicated Public Works is aware of the icy condition of the intersection and had plans to address it. He noted Mr. Ritchie indicated that the City Manager will not allow salt to be put down on the new concrete. He expressed frustration that the condition of new concrete is more important than driver safety.

Mr. Schmahl asked whether Public Works are instructed not to plow the road all the way down to the pavement.

Mayor Furlong thanked Mr. Schmahl for his comments.

Mr. Duddeck stated City Staff have discussed concerns about snow removal in the downtown area. He added Public Works will not be spreading salt on the new concrete pavement, which was recently poured as part of a \$1 million project. He noted sand is being used, and other options are being reviewed.

Mr. Duddeck stated the City of North St. Paul does not plow unless there is 2 or more inches of snow. He added communities are starting to expect streets that are completely clear of snow throughout the winter. He stressed the importance of balancing safety with environmental sustainability efforts. He noted Watershed District best practices requires a reduction in the amount of salt that is entering the City's wetlands must be reduced.

Mr. Duddeck stated the City's Public Works Department takes pride in doing a great job of snow removal and has done so for years. He added that will not change.

IX. PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were no scheduled hearings.

X. CITY BUSINESS ACTION ITEMS & RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Joint Powers Agreement – Metro I-NET

Mr. Duddeck reviewed a proposed Joint Powers Agreement with Metro I-Net for IT support staff services currently maintained by the City of Roseville. Metro I-Net provides IT services to 43 neighboring cities and municipalities. The existing organization, with IT staff employed by the City of Roseville, has been in place for 20 years. The group has expressed concern that the organization should be a jointly run infrastructure with a governing Board, rather than under the aegis of one City. The existing infrastructure that has been built over the years is unreplaceable in the public sector.

Mr. Duddeck stated the Agreement has been reviewed by City Attorney Soren Mattick and other cities' attorneys. He added City Staff recommends approval of the JPA with Metro I-Net Group. He noted, if approved, a governing Board would be formed within the new JPA with Board members from member cities.

Council Member Petersen asked whether costs and services will remain the same. Mr. Duddeck stated there will be no change in cost now, but there would be a cost increase in 2022. He added that would be a decision for the governing Board, based on use of the system.

Council Member Thorsen asked how member cities would be represented. Mr. Duddeck stated the governing Board would be selected from the 43 member cities and would meet regularly to conduct business.

Council Member Thorsen asked how much of a say North St. Paul will have in the governing Board's decisions. He added cities with higher population and more usage may have more voting power.

Council Member Thorsen asked whether there will be a City Council Liaison or other representative of North St. Paul on the governing Board. Mr. Duddeck stated representation will be at a staff level, and the governing Board will have approximately 9 elected Board officials making final determinations.

Council Member Thorsen asked whether meetings would fall under Open Meeting Laws. Mr. Duddeck confirmed this.

Council Member Thorsen asked whether there will be a contractual obligation. Mr. Duddeck stated costs will be shared and distributed over all members.

Council Member Thorsen stated some larger cities may want to expand and may require additional services that would not be a benefit to North St. Paul. He added it sounds like the City would be able to review such issues. Mr. Duddeck confirmed this.

Council Member Thorsen asked the group could grow past the current 43 municipalities. Mr. Duddeck stated that is a possibility, as the organization has grown in recent years, enhanced by fiber optic internet connectivity.

Mayor Furlong asked whether larger cities have more voting capacity. Mr. Duddeck stated votes are weighted based on utilization of the network, and cost is distributed based on use.

Mayor Furlong asked whether the agreement has been vetted by the City Attorney. Mr. Duddeck confirmed this.

Mr. Mattick stated his office has reviewed the agreement and incorporated their comments. He added the representation and cost sharing are in line with what is normal in the broadest sense.

Mr. Duddeck stated he intends to be very involved in the organization and he has always attended all meetings related to Metro I-Net. He added he hopes to be able to be a member of the governing Board.

On motion by Council Member Thorsen, seconded by Council Member Petersen, with all present voting aye (5-0), motion carried to adopt Resolution No. 2021-002 approving Joint Powers Agreement for the establishment of the Northeast Metropolitan Area Municipal Internet Working Collaborative, to be known as Metro-INET.

B. 2021 Council Appointments

Mr. Duddeck reviewed the 2021 City Council appointments to Committees and Commissions. He added citizen appointments to Commissions will be reviewed at the January 19, 2021 City Council meeting.

Mayor Furlong – City Council representative to the Economic Development Authority (EDA); Chair of Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA)

Council Member Thorsen – City Council representative to the EDA, HRA and North St. Paul Business Association

Council Member Petersen – City Council representative to the HRA, Metro Cities, and Ramsey County League of Local Government; Acting Mayor

Council Member Cole – City Council representative to Parks & Recreation Commission, Silver Lake Improvement Association, HRA, Ramsey Washington Metro Watershed District Board, and Silver Lake Improvement Association's Technical Advisory Committee

Council Member Wong – City Council representative to the Planning Commission and HRA

On motion by Council Member Thorsen, seconded by Council Member Wong, with all present voting aye (5-0), motion carried to adopt Resolution No. 2021-003 approving 2021 Council Appointments.

Council Member Thorsen stated a City Council member is typically assigned as Liaison to each of the Commissions, but there is currently no Environmental Advisory Commission or Design and Historical Review Board.

Mr. Duddeck stated those Commissions were put on hiatus last year and will continue in that status. He added the City Council can decide whether to leave them in that status or formally disband them.

Council Member Thorsen stated the Environmental Advisory Commission has not met since December 2017, and the Design Commission held one meeting in August 2020 and one meeting in 2019. He added he understands the roles have changed, but, in his opinion, the commissions should not be kept on hiatus indefinitely. Mayor Furlong agreed, stating this would be a good topic for a Council workshop.

C. 2021 Annual Resolutions

Finance Director Jason Zimmerman reviewed proposed Resolutions related to the City's Investment Committee and recommended depository banks. He stated Premier Bank is the City's main bank for checking and savings accounts, with investments held at other institutions including U.S. Bank. He added City Staff recommends City Council approval of these Resolutions.

Mr. Duddeck stated the Investment Committee is comprised of Mr. Zimmerman, Mayor Furlong, Council Member Thorsen, and himself. He added City Staff requests City Council approval for these Resolutions.

Investment Committee

On motion by Council Member Petersen, seconded by Council Member Cole, with all present voting aye (5-0), motion carried to adopt Resolution No. 2021-004 appointing the Investment Committee for 2021.

Depository Bank for City Funds and Securities

On motion by Council Member Cole, seconded by Council Member Thorsen, with Council Members Petersen, Thorsen, Cole and Wong voting aye (Mayor Furlong abstained), motion carried to adopt Resolution No. 2021-005 designating official and supplemental depositories for investment purposes.

City Attorney Retainer

On motion by Council Member Petersen, seconded by Council Member Thorsen, with all present voting aye (5-0), motion carried to adopt Resolution No. 2021-006 designating Campbell Knutson as the City Attorney for 2021, with primary contract as Soren Mattick.

Legal Newspaper for Publications

Mayor Furlong requested the following correction within the Resolution:
-replace "2019" with "2020"

Council Member Thorsen asked whether the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* was chosen rather than the *Pioneer Press*, and whether it was due to circulation and costs. Mr. Duddeck confirmed the *Star Tribune*'s circulation exceeds the *Pioneer Press*.

Council Member Thorsen asked whether there has been any resident feedback about the use of the Minneapolis paper, and whether any local newspapers were considered, to get more local coverage. He added notices can be done online, as web-based formation is used more than published newspapers. Mr. Duddeck agreed, stating the City has its own publication and website, as well as direct mailings, but the official newspaper is for legal publication and notices.

Mr. Mattick stated the law has certain requirements for circulation, and although there was some discussion about using the *Pioneer Press* since it is the St. Paul paper, it was decided that the *Star Tribune* was the better choice in terms of circulation and price differential. He added, from his perspective, publications are not the most effective form of communication, but the law still requires that notice is published. He noted other local newspapers could be reviewed to determine whether they would be suitable for covering North St. Paul notices.

Council Member Thorsen stated it is an archaic legal requirement that the legislature might want to address at some point. He added most cities use their own websites for notification. He noted the City Council may want to revisit this issue at an upcoming workshop.

On motion by Council Member Cole, seconded by Council Member Wong, with all present voting aye (5-0), motion carried to Resolution No. 2021-007 approving Minneapolis Star Tribune as the Official Newspaper for 2021.

XI. REPORTS OF CITY MANAGER AND DEPARTMENTS

Mr. Duddeck reviewed ongoing development at the Anchor North site, including the storage facility construction, as well as closing on the Kwik Trip property, on which construction will begin in early spring 2021. The close date for Anchor View Apartments was extended to the end of January 2021 due to issues related to financing and appraisals.

Mr. Duddeck stated development at the old City Hall site is taking shape, as work continues on groundwork, plumbing, and preparation of the lower-level parking garage floor. He added the contractor will begin framing the structure on January 11, 2021, which will take approximately 11 weeks.

Mr. Duddeck stated the downtown area traffic signal components will be delivered on January 11, 2021, and installation will be completed by Collins Electric.

Mr. Duddeck stressed the importance of promoting and supporting the downtown area businesses with so many contractors coming into town.

Mr. Duddeck requested City Council consideration of a discussion related to addressing parking needs in the downtown area. He added parking restrictions have been relaxed due to construction, as many cars are parked on the street regularly throughout the night which causes problems related to snow removal and street cleaning.

Mayor Furlong stated the City Council can give it some thought and review this issue at an upcoming workshop.

Mr. Duddeck stated work has been progressing on the townhome development on 7th Street, that has been progressing. He added the developer plans to submit building permit applications for construction on the first twin home to begin in late January or early February 2021.

XII. REPORTS OF COUNCIL, COMMISSIONS & COMMITTEES

Council Member Thorsen stated the Business Association's monthly meeting is held every second Tuesday at 11:30 a.m. at the American Legion. He added meetings have been postponed due to the coronavirus.

Council Member Thorsen stated the Economic Development Authority is scheduled to meet January 12, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. via Zoom.

Councilmember Petersen stated the League of Minnesota Cities held its annual year-end meeting and presented plaques to retiring members. She added there will be no increase in League fees due to the coronavirus.

Council Member Petersen urged the new Council Members to attend the League's 6-week virtual workshop program. Mayor Furlong stated they are already registered. Council Member Petersen stated it is very informative. She added she will be an instructor for the upcoming workshop.

Council Member Cole stated he looks forward to all his liaison appointments and working with all the groups. He added he is excited to retain his connection with the Parks & Recreation Commission after 4 or 5 years of working with them. He noted the Parks & Recreation Commission's next meeting will be January 27, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom, and hopefully the Commission will be able to have socially distanced meetings in the parks again soon.

Council Member Wong stated she looks forward to working with the Planning Commission, especially with all the changes going on in North St. Paul. She added the Planning Commission's January 6, 2021 meeting has been cancelled and will be rescheduled. She noted she looks forward to working with the two new Planning Commissioners that have been appointed.

XIII. GENERAL BUSINESS

Council Member Thorsen asked whether Mr. Duddeck knows how much the City spends on publication of notices in the local paper. Mr. Duddeck stated he does not have that information, but he assumes it would be less than \$5,000.

Council Member Thorsen stated the City's legislative representatives could be contacted about bringing up this issue in the next legislative session, to try to eliminate the publication notice requirement. Mr. Duddeck agreed the legislators could be contacted regarding this issue.

Council Member Thorsen, with regard to comments made earlier regarding snow plowing, encouraged residents to have patience and understanding, as Public Works staff are out there doing their best in what is not an easy job. He added Public Works ride-alongs could be

considered for residents so they can see first-hand the hard work of the City's Public Works employees. He stressed the importance of beginning the new year with positivity.

Council Member Petersen stated she appreciated receiving the crime statistics report from Chief Robb. She added she hopes the City Council can receive the report on a regular basis.

Council Member Petersen stated she recently learned that City Planner Erin Perdu has taken a new job and will no longer be working for WSB. She wished Ms. Perdu good luck and best wishes.

Council Member Petersen thanked Cal's Pizza Factory for their recent collection of 648 pounds of food and \$258 to be donated to the local food shelf.

Council Member Petersen welcomed the new Council Members.

Council Member Cole stated he is grateful for the opportunity to serve the City of North St. Paul as a new Council Member.

Council Member Wong stated she echoes Council Member Cole's comments. She added it is a privilege to join the City Council. She noted she looks forward to working with the City Council for the next four years on behalf of the City and the community.

Mayor Furlong welcomed the new City Council Members. He added 2020 was a difficult year, and it is hoped that 2021 will be a much better year for all of us.

Council Member Thorsen welcomed and congratulated the new Council Members. He added he looks forward to working with them.

XIV. CLOSED SESSION

There was no closed session.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, on motion by Council Member Cole, Seconded by Council Member Wong, with all present voting aye (5-0), Mayor Furlong adjourned the meeting at 8:03 p.m.

/s/ Terrence J. Furlong, Mayor

Attest:

/s/ Scott A. Duddeck, City Manager/ Clerk