

City of North Saint Paul
March 2, 2021
Adopted City Council Workshop Meeting Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Furlong called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. The meeting was conducted at City Hall in the Council Chambers, and also via Zoom.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Council Member Scott Thorsen
Council Member Candy Petersen (via Zoom)
Council Member Lisa Wong (via Zoom)
Council Member Cole
Mayor Terry Furlong

Staff: City Manager Scott Duddeck, Deputy Clerk Jennie Kloos, City Attorney Soren Mattick, Communications Consultant Keri Erpenbach

III. ADOPT AGENDA

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

IV. TOPIC(S)

A. Training Provided by City Attorney

City Attorney Soren Mattick started the meeting giving an overview of topics that would be discussed, tailored toward the City of North St. Paul including roles and responsibilities of the Mayor and Council.

North St. Paul is a Plan B City. The difference in Plan B compared to other forms of Minnesota government is that Plan B has a City Manager vs. City Administrator. City Manager's have the capabilities to hire and fire whereas the City Administrator does not. The City Manager oversees administrative duties for the City while the mayor and council maintain traditional policy making roles. The City Council of North St. Paul / Plan B government should not micro-manage personnel and staffing issues. Managing the City Manager is in the council's purview.

Gift Law:

Elected or Public Officials are not able to accept any type of gift. Included in this is no dinners, trip or sporting events. Mr. Mattick cautioned from taking any and all gifts. This is a violation of the law, with the exception of receiving plaques / mementos, etc.

Conflict of Interest:

A public officer is prohibited from approving an item if they have a financial interest in it. The council as a whole would need to vote and approve it. However, there are exceptions to this law.

Open Meeting Law:

This law is unknowingly violated more often than we are aware. The public is allowed to attend, watch and observe any and all decisions council makes during meetings. With technology as it is today, this is sometimes an issue. Regarding emails, Public Officials should never “reply all” to an email that is sent one way to all members of the council. Minutes must be taken in some form of each meeting that is held. The minutes should be enough to inform the reader of what happened.

Data Practice Act:

Any and all data collected, created, received, maintained or disseminated by any government entity is presumed public information. The exception would be from a constituent to a council member. That is private data. The minute it gets forwarded to staff, it becomes public. Conversations do not have to be recreated and there is no such thing as “off the record” in government.

Closed Meetings:

There are limited meetings that are able to be closed to the public. Those meetings include: Labor Negotiations, Pending Litigations, Employment Issues, such as evaluations (able to be open at the employee’s request), and Certain property transactions (asking price for property, review of confidential appraisals, develop offers or counter offers). With the exception of attorney/client privilege, all closed meeting must be recorded and may be requested by anyone through a data request.

Roberts Rules of Order:

Rules are written for large bodies of government such as our Legislature or big committees where there are hundreds of people. Most communities, including North St. Paul adopt Roberts Rules. It is encouraged not to motion too quickly to approve/disapprove an item. It’s encouraged to talk up the item, gain consensus and get to the point to when a motion is made so the council doesn’t have to go through the process of many different amendments. Figure out the direction of what at least 3 votes want to do and then make the motion. Majority should govern. Mr. Mattick believes that the procedure North St. Paul is doing currently, is great.

Public Hearings:

Certain types of decisions require a Public Hearing. According to MN State Statute, the City is required to hold a Public Hearing for zoning ordinances, amendments, some zoning decisions, and conditional use permits. However, some ordinances do not require a public hearing. During public hearings under the open meeting law the public does have a right to attend the meeting and the right to participate.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business

VI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, on motion by Council Member Cole, seconded by Council Member Thorsen, with all present voting aye (5-0), Mayor Furlong adjourned the workshop meeting at 6:22 p.m.

/s/ Terrence J. Furlong, Mayor

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