



City of Blaine

City Council Workshop

February 5, 2024 | 5:30 PM
Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Square Drive NE
Blaine, MN 55449

MINUTES

NOTICE OF WORKSHOP MEETING

In accordance with the provisions of Section 3.01 of the Blaine City Charter, a Council Workshop meeting is scheduled for the following purpose:

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Sanders at 5:30PM.

2. Roll Call

PRESENT: Mayor Tim Sanders, Councilmembers Terra Fleming, Leslie Larson, Chris Massoglia, Tom Newland, Jess Robertson, and Lori Saroya.

ABSENT: None.

Quorum Present.

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Michelle Wolfe; Community Development Director Erik Thorvig; City Planner Sheila Sellman; Safety Services Director/Police Chief Brian Podany; Police Captain Russ Clark; Finance Director Jason Zimmerman; Director of Engineering Dan Schluender; Senior Parks and Recreation Manager Jerome Krieger; City Attorney Kevin Sandstrom; Communications Manager Ben Hayle; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

3. New Business

- 3.1.** 2024-019 Recommendations and Follow Up to City Crime Stats and Considerations for Police Department Area 4
Sponsors: Brian Podany, Safety Services Manager/Police Chief

Safety Services Manager/Police Chief Podany stated based on feedback received in 2023 at a Council meeting pertaining to a potential sober home in the southern part of Blaine, the Police Department conducted research on crime data and trends as they relate to the city as

a whole. At the January 3, 2024, council workshop, crime information was presented relative to the Police Department's Patrol Districts and the three City Council wards. He presented possible initiatives to implement in Police Patrol District 4. He requested the Council provide feedback for consideration on measures that were considered, including those recommended for implementation, those recommended if resources allow, and those not being recommended.

Councilmember Larson stated she would support the police chief in the measures designated Recommended.

Councilmember Robertson agreed, noting the police chief knows what he needs in order to be effective in the community. She believed the council's role was to give support.

Police Chief Podany asked if the council supported the list of items designated Proceed.

Councilmember Massoglia stated this list had a lot of good ideas but questioned why the focus was only on Area 4 in the city. He was of the opinion these items should be incorporated city-wide. He indicated he did not support additional mailings for Area 4 or specific patrol areas. He did not want it to seem that resources or concern had been taken away from other areas of the city.

Councilmember Newland asked if there was a specific timeframe for the measures, or would there be concentrated efforts over the next three months. Police Chief Podany stated he was planning to complete the outreach in the spring. He indicated he could conduct neighborhood meetings at any time. He reported he would not have to complete the mailings, but could work on putting more information out on social media. He understood some residents want to see a strong public safety presence in the community but that can make others feel anxious.

Councilmember Massoglia stated he believed all Blaine residents wanted their neighborhood to feel special and that the police cared about them. He cautioned the police department from doing targeted mailings to certain patrol areas or specific neighborhoods.

Councilmember Newland questioned how the trailer camera was monitored by the police department. Police Chief Podany explained the video feed is monitored offsite and was saved for up to 30 days.

Councilmember Newland asked if the police department has had any successes because of the trailer. Police Chief Podany stated there have been a number of successes at the beach and the National Sports Center but noted the most important thing about the trailer was that it served as a deterrent.

Councilmember Newland inquired when the license plate reader would be put into use. Police Chief Podany anticipated this would occur in the next five or six weeks.

Councilmember Robertson stated she did not believe mailers would be effective but suggested targeted social media efforts be pursued along with neighborhood watch campaigns. Communications Manager Hayle described the kinds of targeted posts the city could do on NextDoor. He reported the city was not a member of any of the neighborhood

pages on Facebook for legal retention purposes. He indicated the city could work to make connections with people who are in those groups in order to share information.

Councilmember Robertson recommended councilmembers also be used as a conduit to share information. Police Chief Podany commented on how important it would be for information to be targeted when shared with the community.

Councilmember Saroya commented in her neighborhood a lot of residents were not on social media or NextDoor. She stated in order to make her neighbors aware of the city's efforts, signs would have to be posted or mailers would have to be sent. She believed it was important for the city to do something outside of social media in order to reach all residents. Overall, she supported the Police Chief's recommendations and trusted the department to move forward. She indicated she looked forward to neighborhood meetings being held in Ward 1.

Further discussion ensued regarding the police department's efforts to create a camera registry database for all of the surveillance cameras in the community.

Mr. Hayle explained the city newsletter was printed six times per year and would be a good way to share information with residents from the police department. For informational purposes, he reported a two-sided postcard would cost approximately \$10,000 to mail to all residents.

Police Chief Podany indicated he could work with communications staff on several different initiatives in order to conserve resources.

Councilmember Saroya recommended the Blaine Police Department address the situation that recently occurred with a former Blaine officer as the incident was creating distrust in the community. Chief Podany explained staff had shared as much information as legally allowed.

Council supported bringing forward a median safety ordinance for workshop consideration and supported the other recommendations as presented, including focus on concerning properties throughout the city and to expand outside Area 4 as resources become available. There was discussion regarding other ways to engage than mailers to be more effective while still engaging those without social media access and re-engage neighborhood groups and other residents.

3.2. 2024-020 Council Code of Conduct, Rules of Order and Procedure
Sponsors: Michelle Wolfe, City Manager

City Manager Wolfe stated council requested further review of the council code of conduct and rules of order and procedure. At the January 3 meeting, Councilmembers Massoglia and Fleming requested the topic of code of conduct and rules of order and procedure be added to a workshop for further consideration. Amended rules of order and procedure were adopted in October 2023 and confirmed in January with no additional amendments. The code of conduct was last presented in April 2023, including the staff recommendations

shown in yellow highlights. Councilmember Massoglia has shared the following additions for possible inclusion and a starting point for council discussion. Most of the suggestions would likely be included in the Rules of Order and Procedure, as they relate to meetings and workshops. Some suggestions would be included in the Code of Conduct. Once the Council has provided direction on the suggestions they would like included, staff will prepare revised drafts.

Councilmember Robertson questioned why Councilmember Massoglia wanted to bring this item back for council review.

Councilmember Massoglia explained the council had an extensive discussion regarding rules of order last year then reviewed his recommendations and believed they were very close to staff's recommendations. He wanted to make sure if staff was spending time on matters that there was council consensus to do so. He stated with respect to remarks and debate, it was important for the council to stay on topic, that the council not interrupt one another, and that council was not making insinuations or accusations. He commented on how important it was to maintain order and decorum in the council chambers and to properly recognize councilmembers before speaking. He supported having the rules in place to ensure the council had something to govern themselves by.

Councilmember Saroya indicated her concerns were the revised rules were too subjective and allowed too much authority to one individual to determine what is or isn't proper. She stated the consensus of the council could change over time and rules were being proposed that would dictate the future of the council. She explained these rules would do away with debate and dissent which she believed was healthy to have. She appreciated the rules for order when trying to speak, but she did not support the mayor having the right to suspend somebody from speaking. She indicated she reviewed the draft with councilmembers from other cities who felt the proposal was extreme and supported the council review how other cities manage rules of order. She stated the proposed recommendations were going too far in an effort to silent dissent. She explained she would continue to bring up concerns regarding ethics and conflicts of interest for full transparency purposes. She reported she would not be supporting the proposed changes.

Councilmember Massoglia indicated all of this was subject to the council's right to overrule. He explained power was not being given to just one person. He noted any councilmember could challenge the rule of the chair and if four people support this a change could be made to the rules. He reiterated that each councilmember has one vote, the same rights and were subject to the same rules. He explained he did review many other cities rules of order when suggesting these changes.

Councilmember Robertson discussed how the presiding officer in any meeting can gavel at any time or ask for a motion to recess. She reported she read the rules of order and understood no one councilmember has total authority over anything. She explained someone has to run the meeting and she believed the proposed language was in alignment with the policy discussion that consensus rules. She stated rules exist for a reason and were necessary. She understood that some of the rules were common sense, but she still supported them being written down.

Councilmember Newland stated the proposed language was very well done and adds to the

existing document.

Councilmember Fleming supported the proposed changes as well.

Councilmember Saroya did not support this item moving forward until further discussion could be held at a worksession meeting, especially issues surrounding first amendment rights. Ms. Wolfe reported several attorneys reviewed the proposed language noting the original language was drafted by former City Attorney Nelson. She urged the council to pass along specific concerns to her. City Attorney Sandstrom reported his office had taken a close look at first amendment rights when reviewing this language.

Councilmember Saroya questioned if she would be able to bring up issues regarding Mayor Sanders' interest in a Blaine business or other issues residents bring to her or would this be a first amendment issue. She feared she would not be able to properly advocate for her residents if this language were put in place. Mr. Sandstrom stated this would depend on the manner in which the matter was brought up, but noted conflicts of interest would be addressed under the current language.

Councilmember Newland stated he would like the open forum portion of the meeting to be reserved for Blaine residents or business owners whenever possible. Ms. Wolfe explained the city could not limit public input to Blaine residents only but there were ways the mayor could manage open forum to focus on Blaine topics.

Councilmember Robertson asked what parameters could be put in place. Ms. Wolfe indicated a comment card could be created for those wishing to speak and provided to the mayor. She understood that not everyone may be comfortable completing a form with their name and address on but said the forms would allow the mayor to manage and maximize the time for public input.

Councilmember Larson questioned how often the rules of order are reviewed.

Mayor Sanders reported this document was reviewed and approved each year.

Councilmember Robertson thanked Councilmember Massoglia for his efforts on the rules of order.

Councilmember Larson asked how many other cities rules of order were reviewed for these changes.

Councilmember Massoglia estimated he looked at five different cities documents, noting some cities were language was quite extensive.

Councilmember Fleming stated she understood conflict of interest concerns could be brought up at public meetings but asked if a conflict of interest issue could be brought up repeatedly if staff has proven no conflict of interest existed. Mr. Sandstrom explained if an issue had been vetted and responded to he would recommend the issue not be repeated.

Council consensus was to support the changes as presented. Staff was directed to present draft documents for Council review prior to including on an agenda for formal

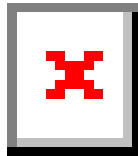
consideration.

4. Other Business

Ms. Wolfe requested council inform staff of meetings they intend to be absent for or if they will be attending remotely in March, then explained an email would be sent soon regarding new council devices.

Ms. Sorensen reminded council to submit their statement of economic interest forms and board/commission applicant rankings.

5. Adjournment

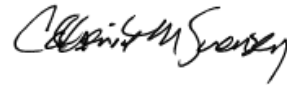


Signed by



Tim Sanders, Mayor

Signed by



Catherine M. Sorensen, CMC, City Clerk

The workshop was adjourned at 6:45PM.