



City of Blaine

City Council Workshop

June 10, 2024 | 5:30 PM
Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Square Drive NE
Blaine, MN 55449

AGENDA

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**
- 2. Roll Call**
- 3. New Business**
 - 3.1.** 2024-221 State Lobbyist Update
Sponsors: Michelle Wolfe, City Manager
 - 3.2.** 2024-219 Council Requested Items for Discussion - Pavement Management
Sponsors: Michelle Wolfe, City Manager
 - 3.3.** 2024-220 Council Requested Items for Discussion - Staffing/Vacancies
Sponsors: Michelle Wolfe, City Manager
 - 3.4.** 2024-218 SBM Fire Department: SAFER Grant II
Sponsors: Michelle Wolfe, City Manager, Jason Zimmerman, Finance Director
 - 3.5.** 2024-190 Wetland Bank Credit EDA Reimbursement
Sponsors: Jason Zimmerman, Finance Director
 - 3.6.** 2024-195 Boards and Commissions - Work Plans and Appointment Process
Sponsors: Cathy Sorensen, City Clerk
 - 3.7.** 2024-222 North Metro TV (NMTV) - Merger Discussion Update
Sponsors: Michelle Wolfe, City Manager
 - 3.8.** 2024-223 City Manager's Update and Preliminary Financial Report Follow-UP

Sponsors: Michelle Wolfe, City Manager

- 4. Other Business**
- 5. Adjournment**



City of Blaine Staff Report

File Number: 2024-221

Agenda Date	Status
June 10, 2024	
In Control	File Type
City Council	Workshop Item

New Business - Michelle Wolfe, City Manager

Agenda Item # 3.1

State Lobbyist Update

Background

The Lockridge Grindual Nauen team will provide an update on lobbying efforts. The lobbying team will cover the additional \$1 million in funding for TH65, cannabis, numerous city housing issues related to low-income tax credits, senior caps, housing aid, zoning preemption issues and more. The team will also talk about local option sales taxes, hospitality taxes, tax increment financing, prevailing wage requirements, open meeting law, council district wards, social districts (liquor) and related issues. In addition, they will summarize the specific lobbying work they did on behalf of the City and will request preliminary input on legislative strategy moving forward.

Staff Recommendation

Questions for Council

Attachment List

None



City of Blaine Staff Report

File Number: 2024-219

Agenda Date	Status
June 10, 2024	
In Control	File Type
City Council	Workshop Item

New Business - Michelle Wolfe, City Manager

Agenda Item # 3.2

Council Requested Items for Discussion - Pavement Management

Background

Request From Councilmember Massoglia

Councilmember Massoglia has proposed a topic on city road reconstructions vs. mill and overlay with a refresher on the city's current capital planning philosophy.

Councilmember Massoglia wrote: "During the last budget cycle we discussed how we're now investing in roads in a way prior councils have not. I want to understand this more and understand the data behind these decisions. I also would like to understand when and how the council's direction was given for the current road reconstruction path that we seem to be on."

Strategic Plan Alignment

This item is consistent with the strategic priority of infrastructure management and with the three desired outcomes associated with that priority.

Urgency Level

Low - hold for an open spot

Staff Recommendation

Per policy, this discussion will be limited to whether or not the council wishes to direct staff to prepare a future workshop agenda item for council discussion. Staff can answer questions about the nature of the work and timeline during the workshop.

Questions for Council

Is there council consensus to place this topic on a future workshop agenda?

Attachment List

None



City of Blaine Staff Report

File Number: 2024-220

Agenda Date	Status
June 10, 2024	
In Control	File Type
City Council	Workshop Item

New Business - Michelle Wolfe, City Manager

Agenda Item # 3.3

Council Requested Items for Discussion - Staffing/Vacancies

Background

Request From Councilmember Massoglia

Councilmember Massoglia has proposed a topic on city staffing/position vacancies.

Councilmember Massoglia wrote: "Instead of waiting until budget discussions to have conversations around staffing, it may be beneficial to discuss staffing before new key staff are hired. I am interested in looking at our org chart and seeing where we can save money by not back-filling certain positions."

Strategic Plan Alignment

This item is consistent with the strategic priority of Financial Sustainability and the outcome of "structurally balanced financial system", as well as the Organizational Health priority and the outcome of "adequate staff to meet core services and demands".

Urgency Level

The urgency is medium to high since hiring processes are in place currently.

Staff Recommendation

Per policy, this discussion will be limited to whether or not the council wishes to direct staff to prepare a future workshop agenda item for council discussion. Staff can answer questions about the nature of the work and timeline during the workshop.

Questions for Council

Is there council consensus to place this topic on a future workshop agenda?

Attachment List

None



City of Blaine Staff Report

File Number: 2024-218

Agenda Date	Status
June 10, 2024	
In Control	File Type
City Council	Workshop Item

New Business - Michelle Wolfe, City Manager, Jason Zimmerman, Finance Director

Agenda Item # 3.4

SBM Fire Department: SAFER Grant II

Background

At the May 20 workshop, SBM Chief Dan Retka presented the background information in support of his request to submit for a SAFER grant. As outlined, the SBM application requests funding for 12 full-time positions: six (6) captains and (6) firefighters. The next step is to briefly outline the financial impact of this request.

SAFER Grant - Financial Estimates:

SBM staff provided the following estimates for the first three years:

Year 1: \$1,375,619

Year 2: \$1,452,625

Year 3:\$ 1,534,718

Beginning in Year 4, which would be 2028, the partner cities would begin covering the costs of the 12 additional positions. The City of Blaine's share is 76%. Based on a high-level assumption of 5.6% increase, the Year 4 costs would be \$1,620,662, of which Blaine would be responsible for \$1,231,703. For illustrative purposes, this would represent an approximate 2.9% levy increase based on the 2024 budget.

Future Public Safety Costs:

As public safety needs continue to evolve, so do the needs of the physical facilities used to support their efforts. With increases to staffing, more specialized equipment, and evolving service delivery models, investment in facilities will need to be planned for in future budgets and considered when developing long-term financial plans pending Council support:

1. Fire Station 6 - Construction of a new Fire Station

2. Fire Stations 1 and 3 - Remodel to establish sleeping quarters
3. Parking and Storage for BPD - Construction of a new structure to support the equipment needs of the Police Department

Future Police Department Staffing Study:

On September 14, 2020 the Police Department presented the City Council with a staff analysis that resulted in funding for two additional police officers annually based on a four percent annual increase in calls for service. Recent data has shown that call data has significantly outpaced prior trends, and when combined with increasingly complex criminal activity, a more robust analysis of Police Department staffing may be desired.

Regional Collaboration:

In September 2021, SBM and Centennial Fire, serving the communities of Circle Pines and Centerville, entered into an agreement that calls for SBM to provide administrative oversight and support to Centennial Fire. This partnership serves as the third-largest population in the state under one fire administration. As part of the collaboration, SBM was tasked with helping Centennial Fire improve training, daytime staffing, equipment, and response times to calls for service. With the initial three-year contract set to expire, additional conversations between member cities may need to take place to discuss the terms of the agreement and desired outcomes.

Staff Recommendation

Discuss and provide feedback.

Questions for Council

This is an information item. As noted in previous communications, the SAFER grant application has been submitted. The deadline for withdrawing the application is late July. The information presented will serve as a foundation for future budget discussions as well as long-term financial planning for the city.

City Council may be asked to provide direction regarding a BPD staffing study.

Attachment List

None



City of Blaine Staff Report

File Number: 2024-190

Agenda Date	Status
June 10, 2024	
In Control	File Type
City Council	Workshop Item

New Business - Jason Zimmerman, Finance Director

Agenda Item # 3.5

Wetland Bank Credit EDA Reimbursement

Background

Minnesota's wetland banking program includes both private and state-sponsored wetland banks which have "credits" that are used to offset (mitigate) authorized wetland impacts.

In 2015, the Blaine Economic Development Authority (EDA) established a wetland bank through the restoration of the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary. Concurrently, the City of Blaine also established a separate wetland bank. Each bank was independently operated and had different purposes for the use of proceeds generated from the sale of credits.

Wetland banking is a way to offset the ecological loss of development projects by mitigating wetland losses through the creation, preservation and restoration of wetlands elsewhere. The goal is to protect and restore the ecological functions of the landscape, reduce the impact of development, and account for inevitable wetland losses resulting from development. Like a commercial banker has cash as an asset that it can loan to customers, a wetland bank creates wetland mitigation credits that it can eventually sell to developers who need to purchase credits to offset wetland fill that occurs with development. Generally, these purchasers of mitigation credits are individuals or entities undertaking development projects.

The EDA has sold credits to assist in 23 different development projects in the City where developers needed to fill wetland areas on their site. The overall value for projects that the EDA has sold credits for exceeds \$100M. The sale of credits has generated over \$2,500,000 for the EDA, and those revenues have been used for general economic development activities.

On [January 18, 2018, the EDA Board authorized the loan of 14 credits](#) to the City to facilitate a request from the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) acting as the agent for the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) to purchase wetland credits for mitigation of various state roadway projects in the region. The terms of the purchase included each credit being valued at \$1.25

per square foot of wetland fill or \$54,450 per credit for a total of or \$762,300, which was lower than the standard market rate at the time of \$1.80-\$2.00 per square foot. The money from the sale to BWSR was transferred to the City's Open Space Development Fund to offset maintenance and future improvement costs within the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary. At the time of the sale, there were approximately 42 credits remaining in the EDA Wetland Bank.

The EDA entered into the agreement to sell the wetland credits based on the understanding that the City would hold 14 acres of credits created from the Site 7 wetland bank, located in the Wetland Sanctuary, and those credits would be allocated to the EDA once the City's wetland bank was permitted.

Since the transfer of credits in 2018, the EDA board has authorized multiple sales, including one on August 7, 2023, which sold the final 8.0716 acres of EDA wetland credits to Park Construction to aid in the relocation of their corporate headquarters to Blaine at 10101 Naples Street. Funds generated by the sale of credits have been used for various initiatives, including property acquisition to support the 105th Avenue Redevelopment project and to provide financial assistance to Pinpoint Development for extraordinary development costs associated with the Southside Entertainment District at the southwest corner of 105th Avenue and Raddison Road.

The Site 7 wetland bank has partially materialized, with 33.78 credits having been sold. The restoration project was structured to release relatively small credits as initial restoration milestones are met, with the final deposit of 20 credits provided in a lump sum, which was intended to satisfy the loan with the EDA. City staff, in conjunction with the Natural Resources and Conservation Board are currently working through solicitations to a Request for Proposals for services to continue the restoration process and extend the City's trail system from the boardwalk at the Wetland Sanctuary to North Oaks West Park and the North Meadows development. While Site 7 has 5.95 credits available for sale, current estimates indicate a potential for 47.28 additional wetland credits, pending the level of success of future restoration efforts.

The sale of Site 7 wetland credits, as well as the proceeds from the 2018 sale have been deposited into the City's Open Space Development Fund. The Open Space Development Fund also receives 35% of all Park Dedication fees, with the other 65% directed to the Park Development Fund. The Open Space Development Fund's year-end cash and fund balance for the three most recently completed fiscal periods is:

Open Space Development Fund		
Year	Cash	Fund Balance
2023	\$5,672,733	\$5,681,644
2022	\$5,158,690	\$5,151,720
2021	\$3,999,982	\$3,917,841

As of May 30, 2024, the EDA operating and capital funds have a negative cash balance of approximately \$(14,000). Significant factors and considerations impacting the financial position of the EDA include:

- On [May 20, 2024, the EDA board approved \\$708,111 for the purchase of 2190 106th Lane](#). While obligated, this payment has not been completed or accounted for in the above referenced cash position of the EDA. Additional land acquisition within the 105th Avenue redevelopment area is anticipated.
- On [June 5, 2023, the EDA board approved a development agreement that provided PinPoint Community Development, LLC](#) with up to \$1,499,000 of funding for extraordinary costs associated with the development of the South Side Entertainment District. To date, \$1,275,000 of assistance has been provided, leaving \$224,000 of remaining funding committed to the developer.
- On [December 12, 2022, the EDA board approved a development agreement with Elevage Development Group, LLC](#) that requires the EDA to fund design/development costs incurred prior to site control being conveyed to the developer, at which time the EDA will be reimbursed for these costs. As of May 30, 2024, \$570,539 of reimbursable costs have been incurred, which has drawn down the EDA cash position. It's possible that a portion of these costs will be reimbursed in 2024 triggered by development of the west portion of the redevelopment district.
- The [2024 EDA tax levy](#) is expected to be settled in two relatively equal distributions in June and December, totaling \$1 million. This will be used to fund the ongoing operating costs of the EDA, which are anticipated to be \$1,141,916 as appropriated in the 2024 budget.

To fund the existing obligations of the EDA, the existing loan of wetland credits the City owes could be amended and satisfied by conveying funding in lieu of the physical credits. The current market rate for wetland credits is approximately \$2.50 per square foot of wetland fill, or \$108,900 per credit. Using existing market conditions, \$1,524,600 is the estimated total value of the 14 credits.

Staff Recommendation

Discuss the Questions for Council and provide direction to staff.

Questions for Council

Does the City Council support the Open Space Fund paying back the EDA for the 14 Wetland credits it received in 2018 in lieu of transferring the physical credits should they become available?

If the Council supports the repayment, what should the credits be valued at?

Attachment List

None



City of Blaine Staff Report

File Number: 2024-195

Agenda Date	Status
June 10, 2024	
In Control	File Type
City Council	Workshop Item

New Business -

Agenda Item # 3.6

Boards and Commissions - Work Plans and Appointment Process

Background

Structure/Work Plans

The current council policy for the board/commission process and structure outlines that boards/commissions meet quarterly or as needed and based on a calendar and work plan created and approved by council and implemented by staff. Below are the draft work plans for each group for council review and input:

Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB)

Established by resolution in 2001

The NRCB reviews and makes recommendations on the following:

- 2025 – 2029 Open Space Capital Improvement Budget
- Blaine Wetland Sanctuary Wetland Bank (Site 7)
- Blaine Wetland Sanctuary Trail Development
- Review and Updates to Open Space Management Plan
- Inspections and Tours of each Open Space
- Volunteer Opportunities and Eagle Scout Projects

Park Advisory Board

Established in code in 1963

- 2025 – 2029 Parks Development Capital Improvement Budget
- 2025 – 2029 Parks & Trails Improvement Budget
- 2025 – 2029 Playground Replacement
- Blaine Parks & Trails Maintenance and Development

- Review and Updates to items within the Parks Master Plan
- Tours of the Parks and Projects
- Volunteer Opportunities and Eagle Scout Projects
- Court Maintenance and Development
- Park Dedication Fee recommendations

Planning Commission

Allowed by statute

The planning commission is an advisory board comprised of 7 people that are appointed by the city council. The planning commission holds public hearings and reviews planning applications and makes recommendations to the city council. The planning commission reviews proposals using criteria outlined in the zoning code and considers the following applications:

- Rezoning
- Comprehensive Land Use Amendment
- Conditional Use Permit
- Conditional Use Permit Amendment
- Variance
- Preliminary Plat/Subdivision
- Zoning code amendments
- Interim Use Permits
- Site Plans -when required by zoning code

Public hearings held by the planning commission shall be held within such time and upon such notice to interested parties as required by the zoning code. The planning commission is scheduled to meet on the second Tuesday of each month at 7pm in the Council Chambers. If no applications are received, the meeting may be canceled. The planning commission is also the board of appeals and adjustment for the city and is advisory to the city council as outlined in Section 27.02. On occasion, the planning commission may have a joint workshop meeting with the city council. This is typically done with a master planning process or required comprehensive plan updates.

Traffic Commission

Established in code in 2019

The traffic commission is an advisory board to the city council. The traffic commission shall review neighborhood traffic concerns on local streets, define issues, review alternatives, look at costs, hold public hearings, and make recommendations to the city council. The traffic commission considers items as needed relating to traffic, such as:

- Take neighborhood traffic input through a public hearing process or open forum
- Consider and make recommendations on traffic control devices such as stop signs, yield signs, parking restrictions, speed humps and pedestrian crosswalks.

Composition

The council has had discussions in the past about possibly amending some of the current board/commission structure, such as combining and/or redirecting. The council is asked to continue those discussions and provide staff direction prior to the next appointment cycle:

Since January 2022, the traffic commission has met a total of four times. Two of the meetings were held to issue oaths of office to new commissioners and included no new neighborhood traffic issues on the agenda. The other two meetings each had one agenda item relating to a traffic issue that a resident brought to staff. The traffic commission has not had a full contingent of seven members since 2021. Staff from Engineering and Police are able to satisfactorily address the vast majority of traffic issues that are submitted by residents, and as a result, the majority of scheduled traffic commission meetings have not been necessary to formally consider specific items. One alternative for council to consider is that the city and its residents may be better served by forming a traffic committee composed of professional staff from Police, Engineering, Public Works and any other department the council would like to include. This committee would provide an informal panel for residents to discuss their traffic concerns in a more flexible and timely manner than holding a quarterly traffic commission meeting and may be a more appropriate way to address such items.

NRCB/Park Board

In 2022 and 2023, council discussed the possibility of combining the Park Board and NRCB to form a proposed Parks and Open Space Commission due to the significant overlap of scope between both boards. The council held a joint workshop with the NRCB and Park Board on January 24, 2023, to allow for discussion and input on the concept. The item and minutes from that meeting are attached. There are currently two vacancies on the NRCB and no vacancies on the Park Board.

Appointments

Council requested the adopted council policy for board/commission process and structure be reviewed for possible amendments regarding appointments. Currently, appointments are made annually for up to two 3-year terms based on balanced ward representation where possible. The policy also states that council will determine the candidate review/interview process each cycle in order to take into consideration the number of vacancies, reappointment, and applications received. The council is asked to share input on alternatives to the current process and provide staff direction prior to the next appointment cycle.

Staff Recommendation

Staff requests council direction on any potential amendments to the current council policy regarding boards and commissions.

Questions for Council

Council is asked to provide input on the board/commission composition, including structure and work plans, and the current appointment process.

Attachment List

1. Board and Commission Appointment Policy - Adopted April 2024

2. Park Board/NRCB Joint Workshop - 01-24-23
3. 01-24-23 Joint Workshop Minutes

City of Blaine_Council Policy

Board/Commission Appointment Process and Structure

Purpose: Boardmembers and commissioners are vital to the community and provide input and guidance on the many opportunities and issues Blaine faces as a growing community. Requirements for these volunteer positions include being a resident of Blaine, attending meetings, and having a community interest. In order to be most responsive to residents interested in serving on boards and commissions and to be able to be flexible during the recruitment, the appointment process previously outlined by ordinance was moved and included instead as a Council policy.

Boards/Commissions: The City's advisory boards and commissions include the Natural Resources Conversation Board, Park Advisory Board, Planning Commission and Traffic Commission. There are other ad hoc boards and commissions whose members are appointed but do not directly report to the City Council including the Charter Commission, Fire Board, and Senior Advisory Board, as well as community boards such as the Blaine Historical Society. Boards and commissions meet quarterly or as needed, based on a calendar and work plan created and approved by Council and implemented by staff. The exception to quarterly meetings is the Planning Commission who meets more frequently to act on land use applications and hold public hearings as required by Statute.

Appointments: Board/commission appointments are made annually by City Council based on each term's ending, typically March of each year. Appointments are made based on balanced ward representation where possible for up to two 3-year terms per member. The Council can by consensus deviate from these criteria and allow for differing ward representation and/or additional term(s). Council will determine the candidate review and interview process each appointment cycle based on the number of vacancies, reappointments, and applications received.

Member Removal: Members may be removed by the mayor if the removal is confirmed by a majority vote of the City Council. Current members who move from the council election ward they were appointed to will be allowed to complete their term with the approval of the mayor and the two councilmembers from the council election ward they moved from. Terms of current members who move outside the City shall end immediately.

Board/Commission Structure: Most boards/commissions are comprised of 7

members. Each board/commission will appoint their chair/vice chair and adopt rules for the transaction of its business which may include provisions for conducting public hearings and the filing of written testimony by the public if needed. With the assistance of staff, each board/commission will provide a public record of its proceedings which include the minutes of its meetings, its findings, and action taken on each matter heard by it, including the final recommendation.

Stipend: Board and commission members will be compensated at the rate of \$60 per meeting attended and \$75 per meeting attend for chairpersons, not to exceed two meetings per month.



City of Blaine
Anoka County, Minnesota
Meeting Agenda - Final
City Council Workshop

Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Sq Dr NE
Blaine MN 55449

While this is a public meeting where interested persons are welcome to attend, it is a work session for City Council and staff to discuss issues before them. It is not for the purpose of receiving public input.

Tuesday, January 24, 2023

6:00 PM

Cloverleaf Farm Room A

This is a joint meeting with the City Council, Natural Resource Conservation Board, and the Park Advisory Board

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**

2 **Roll Call**

3 **New Business**

3-1 [WS 23-06](#) Joint Council/Natural Resources Conservation Board/Park Advisory Board Workshop - Proposed Parks and Open Space Commission

Sponsors: Wolfe

Attachments: [Board and Commission Appointment Policy](#)
[Draft 2023 Workplan](#)

4 **Other Business**

ADJOURN



City of Blaine Anoka County, Minnesota Text File

Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Sq Dr NE
Blaine MN 55449

File Number: WS 23-06

Agenda Date: 1/24/2023

Version: 1

Status: Agenda Ready

In Control: City Council Workshop

File Type: Workshop Item

Agenda Number: 3-1

Workshop Item *Michelle Wolfe, City Manager*

Title

Joint Council/Natural Resources Conservation Board/Park Advisory Board Workshop - Proposed Parks and Open Space Commission

Background

In late 2022 Council briefly considered the possibility of combining the Park Advisory Board and Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB) into a joint Parks and Open Space Commission. One reason the proposal was made as there is significant overlap between the two groups and combining the talents, knowledge and skill sets of all will benefit both parks and open space programs. Both groups do very important work and that work needs to continue as it impacts the quality of life here in Blaine.

The following is background and rationale for the proposal. Should the proposal move forward, next steps would include developing a transition plan and a 2023 work plan, a draft of which has been included for discussion. If there is continued support to move forward, a code amendment is needed and formal action by Council in February to accomplish oaths of office in April.

Council would like to hear member input regarding this transition regarding the framework, structure, and proposed work plan. While ideas for goals, mission and purpose have been drafted, it is important to have members provide input and their valuable feedback.

Historical Background

- **Mission and Scope/Charge of the NRCB**
The NRCB was created in 2001 by resolution after working with Council, Open Space and Greenway Planning Citizen Committees to create an Open Space Plan through a Natural Resource Inventory (1999) and Master Greenway Plan (2001). Blaine voters passed a bond referendum in November of 2000 to fund the preservation of significant natural areas and trail corridors and Council wished to implement an Open Space Plan for the City by acquiring significant natural areas for preservation and creating trail corridors with bond funds, park dedication fees dedicated to Open Space, and grant funds available through the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. The \$3.5 million bond fund was a huge success and the City was able to

acquire 10 separate parcels of land designated for open space, the final purchase completed in 2009. The goal when the NRCB was created was to have a board dedicated to exploring policy options for the maintenance and preservation of Blaine's natural resources, including both public and private initiatives/responsibilities. Based on this goal, Council combined the role of the Citizen's Environmental Committee with this new Board, establishing a formal recommendation process for issues relating to the Board's charge. The Natural Resources Conservation Board was charged with developing a Natural Resource Plan that would contain criteria for all future open space acquisition which is now complete. The plan included Environmental Policy and Guidelines for the maintenance and preservation of Blaine's existing and future open space and natural areas. The board is an advisory committee to the Council and makes recommendations for action concerning land acquisition and environmental policy to Council, which makes all final decisions. The board currently consists of 7 members, down from 11, appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by Council for three-year terms.

- **Mission and Scope/Charge of the Park Advisory Board**

The Park Advisory Board is an advisory body to the Blaine City Council and makes recommendations on all park related concerns and issues. The board is established by the city's charter for the purpose of planning, promoting, and maintaining a diverse park system for residents of all ages. The park system currently has 65 parks with two left for development to complete the system. The park board consists of 7 members appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by Council for three-year terms and functions of the board include:

- Addressing funding strategies
- Conducting public meetings and workshops for citizen involvement in the park planning process
- Conducting surveys
- Evaluating and recommending capital improvements for new and existing park facilities
- Holding neighborhood meetings
- Receiving resident input
- Reviewing residential, commercial, and industrial developments for park dedication

Rationale for Proposal

The concept to combine the boards was suggested by various staff members over the past 3+ years based on information listed below:

- A combined board will provide opportunities to evaluate funding sources as they evolve and change
- Currently there are areas of overlap between the NRCB and Park Board
 - Properties that are both parks and open space include: Pioneer Park, Lochness Park, Laddie Lake Park
 - Properties that are adjacent to one another include: Kane Meadows Park and Open Space, Hidden Park and Open Space, Sunrise Pond Park and Sunrise Ponds Open Space
 - Both boards provide residents recreational areas and amenities. Merging the boards would provide a better overall vision for the City

- A combined board offers the opportunity to maximize the talents of members to the benefit of both parks and open space
- There are challenges with attendance and not having a quorum
- It is not uncommon for a lack of agenda items to result in cancelled meetings
- No other cities in the state have separate boards
- The ability to maximize and streamline staff resources

Opportunities

- Combined passions, skills and talents
 - Channel areas of interest via subcommittees or projects as appropriate
- Work jointly on areas of overlap
- Advise on funding sources and uses
- Fewer (and likely no) cancelled meetings
- More robust agendas
- Boards have completed master plans for Park System, Trails, Blaine Wetland Sanctuary, Open Space Management to provide valuable data and resources to guide board merger

Appointment Process

The board and commission appointment process was amended in 2020 by removing the process from city code and establishing a council policy. This was done to allow for flexibility in appointments and more opportunity for new members to be considered. The policy allows for a maximum of two 3-year terms unless agreed upon by consensus of a majority of Council, and each year members whose terms are expiring are asked if they wish to continue and that information is shared with Council. On February 22, 23, and 24, 2021, council interviewed 33 applicants for all boards and commissions, including long-standing board members. During the virtual interviews, then-Councilmember Jeppson verbally confirmed these appointments would be the last for some members, who acknowledged and agreed. Once Council provides final direction regarding this proposal, staff will reach out to members regarding the appointment process.

Meeting Data

Meeting data for both groups, including number of meetings held, cancelled, and those with no quorum, is outlined below:

NRCB Meeting Data

Year	Meetings Held		Meetings Cancelled	Meetings without Quorum
2021	7	5	0	
2022	7	5	1	

Park Board Meeting Data

Year	Meetings Held		Meetings Cancelled	Meetings without Quorum
2021	9	2	1	
2022	11	0	2	

Summary

This proposal would provide ways to be more inclusive while retaining the opportunity to engage more members in more topics, have more frequent and robust meetings, and to

bring the combined talents, skills, passion, and knowledge to benefit parks and open spaces in Blaine. As park dedication fees decrease, work will be needed to review revenue sources for all three capital budgets, including Parks and Trails, Open Space, and Parks Development. Additional funding opportunities and flexibility in use of funding sources can be identified, and those commissioners with specific interests and/or expertise can be designated to work on specific topics, issues, and projects, such as through a subcommittee. A combined commission will result in full agendas with robust projects, initiatives, and actions and there will be time and capacity for all the work that will result through this streamlined process.

Staff Recommendation

Staff is seeking direction on next steps regarding this proposal.

Attachment List

Board/Commission appointment policy

Draft 2023 work plan

COUNCIL POLICY

Board/Commission Appointment Process

Purpose: Boardmembers and commissioners are vital to the community and provide input and guidance on the many opportunities and issues Blaine faces as a growing community. Requirements for these volunteer positions include being a resident of Blaine, attending monthly meetings, and having a community interest. In order to be most responsive to residents interested in serving on boards and commissions and to be able to be flexible during the recruitment, the appointment process previously outlined by ordinance was moved and included as a Council policy outlined below.

Planning Commission/Board of Appeals and Adjustments

The Planning Commission shall be composed of:

- 7 members appointed for a maximum of two 3-year terms unless agreed upon by consensus of a majority of the City Council.
- Terms for Planning Commissioners to expire in March of each year when a successor is qualified.
- Vacancies occurring at the end of a term or during a term will be filled by mayoral appointment confirmed by a majority of the City Council.
- Members may be removed by the mayor if the removal is confirmed by a majority vote of the City Council.
- The mayor shall appoint a chair from among the members and a vice chair may be selected by the members.
- At least two members must reside in each council election ward during the term of their appointment.
 - o In the event a candidate cannot be identified from a ward, including as a result of redistricting, a resident from outside that ward may be appointed to serve at large for one 3-year term upon consensus of a super majority of City Council.
- Current members who move from the council election ward they were appointed to will be allowed to complete their term with the approval of the mayor and the two councilmembers from the council election ward they moved from.
- Should a Commissioner move outside the City their term shall end immediately.
- The Commission shall adopt rules for the transaction of its business and such rules may include provisions for conducting public hearings and the

filing of written testimony by the public.

- The Commission shall provide a public record of its proceedings which include the minutes of its meetings, its findings, and action taken on each matter heard by it, including the final recommendation.
- Meetings to be held the first Tuesday of each month or at the call of the Planning Commission shall be held at the call of the chair and at such other times as the Commission in its rules of procedure may specify.

Traffic Commission

The Traffic Commission shall be composed of seven members appointed for a maximum of two 3-year terms. Terms for traffic commissioners shall expire in March of each year when a successor is qualified. Vacancies occurring at the end of a term or during a term shall be filled by Mayoral appointment confirmed by a majority of the entire City Council. Members may be removed by the mayor if the removal is confirmed by a majority vote of the entire city council. The mayor shall appoint a chair at large from among the members and a vice chair may be selected by the members. At least two members must reside in each council election ward during the term of their appointment. Current members who move from the council election ward they were appointed to shall be allowed to complete their term with the approval of the mayor and the two councilmembers from the council election ward they moved from. A Board Member/Commissioner may serve no more than two 3-year terms unless agreed upon by consensus of a majority of the City Council. In the event a candidate cannot be identified from a ward a resident from outside that ward may be appointed to serve at large for one 3-year term upon consensus of a super majority of City Council. Should a commissioner move outside the city their term shall end immediately.

Park Advisory Board

The Park Advisory Board shall be composed of seven members appointed for a maximum of two 3-year staggered terms. All park board members' terms shall expire in March of each year when a successor is qualified. Vacancies occurring at the end of a term or during a term shall be filled by Mayoral appointment confirmed by a majority of the entire City Council. At least two members must reside in each council election ward during the term of their appointment. Current members who move from the council election ward they were appointed to shall be allowed to complete their term with the approval of the mayor and the two councilmembers from the council election ward they moved from. A Board Member/Commissioner may serve no more than two 3-year terms unless agreed upon by consensus of a majority of the City Council. In the event a candidate

cannot be identified from a ward a resident from outside that ward may be appointed to serve at large for one 2-year term upon consensus of a super majority of City Council. Should a commissioner move outside the city their term shall end immediately. The mayor shall appoint a chair from among the members and a vice chair may be selected by the members.

Natural Resources Conservation Board

Resolution 01-88 adopted May 17, 2001 established the NRCB; the policy outlined structure and amended as outlined in Resolution 16-028:

- a. The Natural Resource Conservation Board will be comprised of 10 members consisting of two (2) members from each Council ward and four (4) at-large members, one (1) of whom will serve as chair for a total of ten (10) members. The mayor shall appoint a chair from among the members and a vice chair may be selected by the members. Blaine residents as well as non-resident taxpayers are eligible to serve on the Board. If a Board member moves from the council election ward they were appointed to, they shall be allowed to complete their term with approval of the Mayor and two Councilmembers from the council election ward they moved from. If a current Board member moves outside the City, their term shall end immediately.
- b. Board members will serve two 3-year terms expiring in March.
- c. Board members may be reappointed to additional terms.
- d. In the event a candidate cannot be identified from a ward a resident from outside that ward may be appointed to serve at large for one 2-year term upon consensus of a super majority of City Council.

Others

Charter Commission appointment process is outlined in Statute. Mary Ann Young Center Advisory Board and Fire Board appointments are made every two years or as needed.

Draft Open Space and Park Workplan Items by Quarter

Q1

Open Space	Parks
Educate on Open space History of original fund and acquisition Virtual tour of spaces Highlight success past project	Educate on Park system How many parks, playgrounds, courts, and miles of trails
2023 Open Space Projects Site 7 Trails Other Trails Land Management	2023 Park Projects Playgrounds Shelters Trails
Wetland Credit Updates	Programming Updates
	MAYC Presentation

Q2

Open Space	Parks
Site 7 Wetland Bank Wetland banking 101 Contract for land management 2023-202x	Bid results and contractors for park projects
Earth Day volunteer opportunities/highlights	Park construction updates
Trail Projects updates Sunrise Ponds Lex Athletic Connection	Park programming updates
Site 7 Trails Feasibility update	June: Typically do a tour of parks

Q3

Open Space	Parks
July: Typically do tour of open spaces	Park Construction updates
Site 7 Update Land Management contract update Trail Feasibility Update	Programming Updates
Open meeting in August for topics or issues that arise over the first few meetings	Open meeting in August for topics or issues that arise over the first few meetings

Q4

Open Space	Parks
Budget	Parks Development Budget
Project Bid Results	Parks and Trails Budget
	Park Dedication Fees
	Park Construction Updates/Programming Updates

CITY OF BLAINE
ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL JOINT WORKSHOP WITH
NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION BOARD AND PARK ADVISORY BOARD
Tuesday, January 24, 2023

6:00PM
Cloverleaf Farm Room A
10801 Town Square Drive

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Sanders at 6:00PM.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Mayor Tim Sanders, Councilmembers Tom Newland and Jess Robertson.

ABSENT: Councilmembers Terra Fleming, Chris Massoglia, and Lori Saroya.

Quorum Present.

BOARDMEMBERS PRESENT:

Park Advisory Board: Chair Jeff Lester; Chris Ford, Hellen Keraka, Tonya Lizakowski, Kristopher Paulseth

Natural Resources Conservation Board: Kristen Genet, Carolyn Panning, Gene Rafferty, Mary Jo Truchon

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Michelle Wolfe; Senior Parks & Recreation Manager Jerome Krieger; Recreation Manager Nate Monahan; Stormwater Coordinator Megan Hedstrom; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

3.1 Joint Council/Natural Resources Conservation Board/Park Advisory Board.

City Manager Wolfe stated in late 2022 Council briefly considered the possibility of combining the Park Advisory Board and Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB) into a joint Parks and Open Space Commission. One reason the proposal was made as there is significant overlap between the two groups and combining the talents, knowledge and skill sets of all will benefit both parks and open space programs. Both groups do very important work and that work needs to continue as it impacts the quality of life here in Blaine. Staff shared background and rationale for the proposal and stated that should the proposal move

forward, next steps would include developing a transition plan, work plan, and code amendments for formal action by Council.

City Clerk Sorensen shared background on the current board/commission appointment process that was amended in 2020 to be conducted via Council policy to allow for more flexibility in appointments versus through City Code.

Mayor Sanders invited members of the boards to share their feedback on the proposal.

Boardmember Genet shared how the proposal was not shared at a public meeting and input from the public not sought and felt the idea was being decided without input. She said the NRCB was established by the “will of the people” and did not want the purpose of the Board to fall away and if changed should be done by the people. She said the NRCB has a steep learning curve so it is difficult to do term limits for them specifically and not in the best interest of the City to term people out. She asked if the City was still abiding by the 2040 Comprehensive Plan as the goals outlined there would be good to have as prioritized needs, adding she was not sure if supportive of a merger.

Boardmember Panning agreed the learning curve was high and expressed frustration when meetings were cancelled due to lack of items to be voted on as there still could be things to do such as tours and the wetland bank. She said she felt the City lost interest in the Board and suggested a Sustainability Board instead that could grow and evolve. She stated the education center changed to a recreation center instead at the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary (BWS) and that an opportunity was missed to come back to the Board first but Council changed direction instead.

Boardmember Lizakowski said while she was surprised about the concept, she did not have a negative reaction and agreed there is overlap. She acknowledged the large learning curve and felt her NRCB experience helped her on the Park Board, stating it was advantageous for both sides to know what both groups are doing. She was concerned about prioritization with NRCB and as we think about the future and should give thought on how to prioritize and dedicate resources, adding it was not so important of which board they sit or but what is prioritized.

Boardmember Rafferty said he was on both boards and did not believe there would be enough time to do all the work on both sides if combined.

Boardmember Truchon shared background and history of the NRCB and said their biggest recommendation was to establish an open space plan with the first focus being the BWS. She

shared how they were told by then-Council there would be no room for open space once the City was fully built out so they formed Open Space 2000 and asked for meetings with Council and requested a survey of residents that showed residents would pay additional taxes to focus on preserving open space, especially for water quality. She shared how then-Councilmember Clark helped them draft a \$3.5 million referendum question which was successful then shared frustrations on how they feel suggestions don't get to Council, such as sustainability efforts. She said they had a fiduciary duty to manage money for the wetland bank and the money they had from the referendum then stated they were behind in restoration of wetland banks and their first responsibility is to take care of restoration and should be a priority based on what the people wanted. She said the nature center was too expensive and was adjusted to a learning center and agreed they should cooperate with the Park Board more through things such as mowing practices in Lochness Park for restoration. She said the merger was not a bad idea but said we have to be careful about budgets and have staff keep them informed and communicate with Council. She stated she would like to be reappointed to the NRCS and shared how two subcommittees were formed similar to Springbrook Nature Center and Wargo.

Chair Lester said the scope will not change much so he has no concerns about combining the Boards. He said the City is changing and there was a time and place in the beginning to be separate but it makes sense from a practicality standpoint for staffing. He noted the Park Board should consider what is next with the number of parks almost complete and should it change to a Recreation Commission instead or combine with NRCB.

Boardmember Keraka agreed there is heavy emphasis on education for the NRCB but noted Park Board is recreational and there are many overlaps in both with health benefits, outdoor spaces, and water quality and if merged will the education piece be lost and the focus on the importance of natural resources.

Boardmember Paulseth said he was in favor of the merger as his main concern is on fulltime staff and suggested creating a Forestry/Natural Resources Division to accomplish more and allow room to grow. He said residents would like to see this direction and felt boardmembers could handle this type of combination but would need more staff.

Boardmember Ford said any time government can be more effective it is good for the residents. He shared his respect for staff and said to combine would bring efficiency but cautioned against expanding the same amount of time in the end, adding he would support anything they can do to make the job easier.

Councilmember Robertson referred to the need to sometimes focus on specific topics like some members of Council are doing with development and suggested something similar could be done with the boards. She said she would like to find a hybrid way to overlap the two groups and said while Council did discuss the proposed merger briefly at a retreat there was no final decision made. She said it's important to make the best use of staff time and understood the differences in passions and said maybe those would be recognized through something different than a board structure. She thanked all boardmembers for their time, adding it was never intended to remove the historical component of both boards.

Senior Recreation Manager Krieger commented how the goal was not to remove both boards but instead make the BWS the best it can be as it is both open space and recreation. He said everyone has the same overall goal then spoke about park dedication and the opportunity to get more funding if combined.

Mayor Sanders thanked everyone for their honest input and said the topic would be discussed further by the full Council. He encouraged board members to contact Council if they had anything further to add then spoke about decisions that will impact the City over the next 5-10 years as Blaine was close to full build out. He said he liked hearing solutions such as matching funds and the synergy to explore/combine then noted it is difficult for Council to provide expertise so fully vetted plans need to be brought forward for review and approval

Ms. Wolfe noted if staff time was the only factor for this proposal staff would have never brought it forward, adding it was more about being respectful of boardmembers' time and being impactful and valuable. She said the Council will be refreshing the strategic plan this spring and will use this information to formulate expectations that will help both boards move forward.

Other Business

None.

The Workshop was adjourned at 7:05PM.

Tim Sanders, Mayor

ATTEST:

Catherine Sorensen, CMC, City Clerk



City of Blaine Staff Report

File Number: 2024-222

Agenda Date	Status
June 10, 2024	
In Control	File Type
City Council	Workshop Item

New Business - Michelle Wolfe, City Manager

Agenda Item # 3.7

North Metro TV (NMTV) - Merger Discussion Update

Background

The City Council previously discussed this topic and authorized a letter to be sent to CCX TV, requesting the opportunity to explore the option of merging cable commissions. CCX TV responded that they would be open to such a discussion. North Metro Cable Commission has had discussions about this topic, with a recent vote resulting in a tie. The commission will be discussing the topic again this month. Councilmember Massoglia is Blaine's representative on the Commission, and would like the opportunity to update the council on the status of these discussions.

Below is the narrative from a previous workshop discussion, as background:

History and Background

Blaine is a member of the North Metro Telecommunications Commission. The Commission operates North Metro TV and offers community television programming: Community television is a form of mass media in which a television station is owned, operated or programmed by a community group to provide television programs of local interest known as local programming. Community television stations are most commonly operated by non-profit groups or cooperatives.

The Commission was created through a Joint Powers Agreement, with the following General Purpose Clause:

The general purpose of this agreement is to establish an organization to monitor the operation and activities of cable communications, and in particular, the Cable Communications System (System) of the parties; to provide coordination of administration and enforcement of the franchises of parties for their respective System; to produce, edit and transmit video programming for the parties of this agreement; to make video production, editing and studio facilities and equipment available to the citizens of the parties to this

agreement through the operation of a Community Media Center; to promote the development of locally produced cable television programming; to ensure public access to emerging telecommunications technologies; and to conduct such other activities authorized herein as may be necessary to insure equitable and reasonable rates and service levels for the citizens of the Members to this agreement.

The commission is also governed via by-laws. The full joint powers agreement and bylaws are available on the North Metro TV website:

<https://northmetrotv.com/cable-commission/by-laws-of-the-north-metro-telecommunications-commission/>

The cable commission operates North Metro TV (NMTV). NMTV offers news and sports coverage, broadcast and streaming of local meetings, and a variety of services and classes.

NMTV consists of the following seven cities:

Blaine
Centerville
Circle Pines
Ham Lake
Lexington
Lino Lakes
Spring Lake Park

The joint powers agreement between these cities was signed in 1980. The first franchise was signed in 1983. Additional history is available via the NMTV website: <https://northmetrotv.com/cable-commission/north-metro-telecommunications-commission-a-brief-history/>

The current Executive Director of North Metro TV is retiring in January 2024. The cable television landscape has been changing with the advent of streaming and satellite television. Given these and other considerations, Councilmember Massoglia would like the city council to consider exploring options for the future of NMTV.

One option is to explore joining with Northwest Suburbs Cable Communications Commission. Established in 1982, NSCCC currently offers its services as CCX Media for the northwest suburbs of Minneapolis. These suburbs include:

Brooklyn Center
Brooklyn Park
Crystal
Golden Valley
Maple Grove
New Hope
Osseo Plymouth
Robbinsdale

Exploring options will involve working collaboratively with our North Metro partner cities, NMTV staff, CCX staff and member cities, cable commission attorney(s), and possibly other cable commissions and individual cities.

Below is a brief outline of information regarding NMTV:

NMTV receives revenue primarily from franchise and PEG fees. Franchise fees are paid by the cable companies doing business within the defined geographic area. Pursuant to Section 611 of the Communications Act, local franchising authorities may require cable operators to set aside channels for public, educational, or governmental ("PEG") use. PEG funds collected are typically designated only for capital expenditures.

Commission Funding: Franchise and PEG fees

- Franchise fees = 5% of gross revenue – there are no spending restrictions related to these fees
- PEG fees are currently \$3.30 per subscription per month – spending restrictions, related to use for capital expenditures, are expected as part of the franchise renewal
- NMTV currently has a settlement agreement that allows us to use PEG fees for operating expenses until franchise renewal
- Franchise fees have remained fairly steady - growth has been offsetting loss of subscribers; NMTV's current franchise fee stability likely due to an older population and growth in the total number of households
- Attached are two reports related to PEG and franchise fees
- Metro/industry wide – many commissions are experiencing revenue loss due to competition from streaming, satellite, and other technologies

Structure

- Member cities receive some funding back from NMTV annually for qualified expenses (see attached Franchise Fee Chart)
- NMTV owns its building and other assets (\$4.6 million in total assets as of 2022 audit.)
- Currently in a good financial position
- Debt – Existing equipment certificate (will be paid off in 2024 resulting in \$230,000 of annual expenditures freed up)
- NMTV members have weighted voting; voting is determined based on the number of cable subscribers per city (one vote for every one thousand subscribers or portion thereof, with each city having at least one vote). The number of votes per city is determined based on subscriber numbers in December. In December 2022 the number of votes for each city for the calendar year 2023 was determined. Total votes were 17; Blaine has 8 of the 17 votes
- As of December 2022, Blaine contributed 54.98859% of combined PEG and franchise fees to the Commission
- That represents Blaine's 2023 percentage of assets (Blaine's share if the commission dissolved or Blaine left the commission)
- Income for 2022, both PEG and franchise fees, was \$1,882,695; Blaine's portion was \$1,035,267.50.

Budget

2024 NMTV Budget: \$1,991,494

Beginning Fund Balances Total: \$1,341,748

Estimated Revenues:

Franchise Fees	\$1,150,000
PEG Fees	\$ 565,000
Other income	\$ 35,000
Interest income	\$ 50,000
Income from Reserve Funds	\$ 191,494

	\$1,991,494

Estimated Expenditures:

Operating Expenses	\$1,420,610
Capital Expenses: Equipment/Building	\$ 190,618
Capital Expenses: Bond Payment	\$ 230,266
Capital Expenses: PEG Fees to Cities	\$ 150,000

	\$1,991,494

Year End Fund Balances Total: \$1,150,254

Services provided by NMTV

Below is an outline of the service areas provided by NMTV. The attached document "North MetroTV Services and Responsibilities" provides a detailed overview.

- VideoEngineering
- Channel Management
- Video-On-Demand
- CityMeeting Coverage
- Closed Captioning
- Meeting Podcasts
- Meeting Transcription Service
- Staff Program Production
- Educational
- Commercial
- Drone Services
- Franchise Administration

Options: Future of the Commission

Currently, a number of factors are in place that provide a window for discussing the future of the commission. The rationale for reviewing options for the future of the commission at this time includes the following:

1. Status of cable subscriptions and revenues
2. Executive Director retirement January 12th, 2024
3. Opportunities for economies of scale
4. Opportunities for enhanced services

NWSCC/CCX: Councilmember Massoglia has proposed exploring a merger with Northwest Suburbs Cable Commission/CCX. In a conversation with their Executive Director, it was indicated that NWSCC/CCX would consider and discuss this concept once approached by a city or entity wishing to engage in conversation about joining or merging. If the parties are interested in entering discussion, due diligence would be conducted. This due diligence would include an analysis of the impact of a merger, including pros and cons and how operational differences between the two organizations would be addressed.

Additional options could be explored if the above merger idea is not feasible. For example, consideration could be given to filling the Executive Director position by hiring from within and not replacing the backfill position, resulting a cost savings. In addition, there are individual cities near the North Metro TV area, and they could be approached to join NMTV. Work could also be done to identify any other commissions for a possible merger.

Next Steps

If council is supportive of exploring a possible merger with NWSCC/CCX, and/or other options, Councilmember Massoglia will take steps to open discussions with that organization and the city's partners with NMTV.

Staff Recommendation

Questions for Council

General Update only. Councilmember Massoglia, as the city's representative on the cable commission, may request input and feedback following the discussion.

Attachment List

None



City of Blaine Staff Report

File Number: 2024-223

Agenda Date

June 10, 2024

Status

In Control

City Council

File Type

Workshop Item

New Business - Michelle Wolfe, City Manager

Agenda Item # 3.8

City Manager's Update and Preliminary Financial Report Follow-UP

Background

This is time for general updates from the City Manager. In addition, this time can be used for any follow-up discussions and questions from the June 3 Workshop discussion regarding the Preliminary Financial Report.

Staff Recommendation

Questions for Council

Attachment List

None