



City of Blaine

City Council Workshop

January 22, 2025 | 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, Chris Ford, Leslie Larson, Chris Massoglia, Tom Newland, and Jess Robertson.

ABSENT: None.

Quorum Present.

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Michelle Wolfe; Community Development Director Erik Thorvig; Assistant Community Development Director Sheila Sellman; Safety Services Director/Police Chief Brian Podany; Finance Director Jason Zimmerman; Director of Administrative Services Scott Johnson; Director of Engineering Dan Schluender; Police Captain Mark Boerboom; Interim Community Standards Director/Fire Marshal Todd Miller; Project Engineer Brent Larson; City Attorney Tom Loonan; Communications Manager Ben Hayle; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

3. New Business

- 3.1.** 2025-24 Anoka County CR 53 (Sunset Avenue) Reconstruction Project
Sponsors: Daniel Schluender, Director of Engineering

Director of Engineering Schluender stated Anoka County is in the process of preparing a plan that will reconstruct Sunset Avenue (CR53) from the roundabout at 109th Avenue (CSAH 12) north to the newly constructed roundabout at 125th Avenue (CSAH 14). It was

noted the County was in the preliminary stages of the project and will begin to have a series of open houses to present the corridor to the public and receive comments and concerns.

Andrew Plowman, WSB representative, shared the preliminary design issues/features for the Sunset Avenue project in detail noting construction would begin in the spring of 2027. He explained this was a border road between Blaine and Lino Lakes as well as being the main corridor to Centennial High School. He reported this project would include a full reconstruct of the urban roadway. He stated storm sewer improvements would be a big component of this project. He indicated the first open house would be held on February 25 at the activity center next to the Lino Lakes City Hall from 5:00PM to 7:00PM.

Councilmember Larson asked if the first open house would be open to Lino Lakes council and residents. Mr. Plowman stated anyone could attend this first open house then explained he would be hosting a second open house in the Blaine area. He indicated he would also be hosting a virtual open house to allow residents to provide additional feedback.

Mr. Plowman further discussed the topography of Sunset Avenue and described how the roadway would be designed.

Councilmember Larson questioned what the traffic count was along this roadway.

Brandon Ulvenes, Anoka County representative, estimated the roadway had 5,000 trips per day. He explained the roadway improvements were not being proposed to meet increased traffic numbers, but rather was being proposed to accommodate multi-modal traffic.

Councilmember Massoglia inquired why the median would be so long. Mr. Plowman indicated this was required to address excess spacing and access points for safety purposes.

Councilmember Newland asked if the City would have to cost share on this project or would the entire project be covered by the County. Mr. Plowman stated this will be a cost share project.

Councilmember Larson questioned if the County had a plan for Sunset Avenue, south of 109th Avenue. Mr. Plowman indicated the County does not have any plans for this area for the next five years.

Mayor Sanders thanked staff and the representatives from Anoka County for the update on this project.

- 3.2.** 2025-25 National Street and 114th Avenue Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Update
 Sponsors: Daniel Schluender, Director of Engineering

Mr. Schluender stated the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) contacted city staff back in 2022 about a groundwater contamination issue with the Johnson Brothers Landfill

site (Lochness Park). As council may recall, the MPCA has been monitoring the private wells of homes on National Street and had detected excess levels of 1,4-Dioxane in two of the private wells. The MPCA, who is responsible for the closed landfill, inquired with city staff to see if the City would lead both the design and construction projects to connect these two homes to the city water system which has a main on the east side of National Street and abandon their private wells. The MPCA's rationale is that the City's engineering department is familiar with this type of project and can lead the project more effectively and expedite the project quicker than the MPCA staff. Staff has completed the design and construction of the service connections for these two homes on National Street and the city has been reimbursed for the costs of the design and construction.

Mr. Schluender reported the MPCA has once again contacted staff concerning a few more properties on National Street and 114th Avenue with the same concerns of contaminated ground water. They have asked if the city would prepare a feasibility report at their expense to determine the costs of connecting additional homes to the city's water system with a potential construction project in 2026. Staff will be bringing an agreement between the city and MPCA along with a consultant contract for the preparation of a feasibility report this Spring.

Councilmember Larson questioned if the MPCA would be paying for this project. Mr. Schluender reported this was the case, once the MPCA receives enough grant funding.

Councilmember Robertson asked if the homes being hooked up to City water would then be responsible for the City utilities. Mr. Schluender indicated these homeowners would be responsible for paying a water bill with the City in perpetuity.

Councilmember Newland inquired if the former landfill had a responsibility for this occurring. Mr. Schluender stated he was uncertain what kind of permit was in place for the landfill, but noted it was his understanding the MPCA would be managing this concern going forward.

3.3. 2025-26 Proposed City Hall Parking and Storage Facility
Sponsors: Mark Boerboom, Captain, Todd Miller, Deputy Fire Marshal, Brent Larson, Project Engineer

Administrative Services Director Johnson stated the Blaine City Hall and Police Department were designed in the late 1990s and the facility opened in 2001. The current garages at the site are now at capacity. The population for the city has more than doubled since the facility opened (45,000 population in 2001). Additional staff, vehicles, and specialized equipment has been added since 2001. Specifically, 34 police officers including squad cars and support vehicles have been added. The new vehicles are stored in various locations around the city. The Town Square Drive Land Usage Working Group was formed in 2022 to discuss the use of the property south of Town Square Drive for Fire Department and/or a parking garage. At the time, the working group concluded that this area should not be used for a new fire station or parking garage. The working group identified the area north of the Fire Barn as a potential site for the new Fire Station and the southeast corner of the existing City Hall parking lot as a potential site for a new parking garage.

Captain Boerboom explained staff has reviewed the current and future parking and equipment storage needs for Blaine City Hall and Police Department. Staff proposes development of a project to construct a parking and storage facility (potentially in the southeast corner of the existing City Hall parking lot) to accommodate current and future needs for parking and storage of equipment. The current garage will likely have some deferred maintenance issues that should be addressed as part of a project to allow the current garage to meet existing needs. The Public Works facility does not have capacity for any significant expansion at the current site. The parking and storage needs at that location are also at or near capacity. It may be possible to address those needs as part of this same project, as some of the vehicles and equipment are used seasonally (roughly six months of the year). He offered further comment on the the storage and parking needs for each department going forward and requested direction from the Council on the five year CIP.

City Manager Wolfe explained items were also being stored at the Larson lot and the Paul Parkway Fire Station. She stated the proposed additional parking was an expensive project that was not currently budgeted for and that staff was looking for direction from the Council on next steps in order to begin the planning process for the future CIP plans.

Councilmember Robertson stated she and Councilmember Newland were part of a subcommittee that worked to identify a location for a future fire station and cold storage on land within the City. She clarified for the record, this was not an item she or Councilmember Newland requested to be brought forward.

Safety Services Director/Police Chief Podany explained the subcommittee focused on fire station locations and the remodel to City Hall was previous to that. He indicated the cold garage updates were estimated to cost \$400,000 at that time. He reported he was open to feedback and ideas, but explained he was running out of space so he can figure out where to store his equipment.

Councilmember Newland stated the task force discussed this at length because they were uncertain what would happen with the fire station. He commented on how parking could be moved over to this land, but noted there was a layer of complexity on where items should be stored for each department. Ms. Wolfe commented on how the original recommendation was to locate the fire station in the center of the City. She explained the City would be willing to look into a public/public or public/private partnership for the new fire station, emergency operations center and parking space.

Councilmember Ford questioned if it would make more sense if the City had a north and south station for storage. Police Chief Podany explained City Hall was geographically in the center of the City and noted he would like to keep all offices at City Hall. He indicated he did not want to have to duplicate interior spaces through a new substation.

Councilmember Massoglia asked why the City needed to have squads parked in an enclosed space. Captain Boerboom reported the squad computers and Narcan cannot be stored in extreme temperatures. Police Chief Podany discussed how he has been encouraging staff members to bring squads home in order to free up space at City Hall. Deputy Fire Marshal Miller reported the engineering technician and fire inspection vehicles have medical gear and computers in them as well which requires the vehicles to be heated.

Councilmember Massoglia inquired if the equipment could be taken out on a daily basis by staff and be brought inside. Mr. Miller stated this could be done, but it would be a lot of equipment that would have to be taken in and out on a daily basis. Police Chief Podany explained the squads were stored indoors for safety purposes given the fact they had rifles and other equipment stored inside for officers.

Councilmember Ford stated he appreciated the fact the city had heated space for emergency personnel vehicles given how seconds count in emergency situations.

Councilmember Larson questioned how other cities manage their vehicle storage. Police Chief Podany stated he does not know of any cities or counties that do not have indoor storage for emergency vehicles.

Mayor Sanders and Councilmember Robertson supported staff seeking cost estimates for a potential project. Ms. Wolfe reported she could pursue estimates and report back to the Council, noting this would not cost the City any money.

Councilmember Newland stated the City had a big broad idea, but until a decision is made about the fire station, it may be difficult to make a decision on this project. He commented further on how these projects were interrelated and connected. Captain Boerboom indicated he was of the opinion, the additional storage was separate from the fire station. Ms. Wolfe thanked Councilmember Newland for this feedback and stated staff would take this under consideration.

Councilmember Massoglia questioned what could be taken off or removed from the five year CIP in order to pursue the additional parking storage facility. He agreed with Councilmember Newland that this project was not fully fleshed out and other options should be considered such as expanding the current facility.

There was Council consensus to obtain preliminary estimates for a project to share with Council at a future workshop for further direction.

3.4. 2025-27 Board and Commission Application/Process Review
Sponsors: Cathy Sorensen, City Clerk

City Clerk Sorensen stated the application period for the 2025 board and commission appointments closed on December 31 and the applications were forwarded to council for review and ranking. Staff is seeking council direction on the process for the 2025 board and commission appointments and whether that includes further review and/or possible interviews.

Mayor Sanders requested the Council submit the application rankings to staff as soon as possible. He stated he preferred to only hold interviews where necessary.

Councilmember Robertson asked that the Council work to keep equal representation amongst the wards through the new appointments.

4. Other Business

None.

5. Adjournment

The workshop was recessed at 6:55PM and reconvened at 10:28PM.

After a motion and second, Council moved into Closed Session pursuant to 13D.05 subd. 3(a).

The workshop adjourned at 10:50 PM.