



City of Blaine Anoka County, Minnesota Minutes

Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Sq Dr NE
Blaine MN 55449

City Council Workshop

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.

Monday, December 19, 2022

6:00 PM

Cloverleaf Farm Room A

NOTICE OF WORKSHOP MEETING

1 Call to Order

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

2 Roll Call

PRESENT: Mayor Tim Sanders, Councilmembers Wes Hovland, Julie Jeppson, Chris Massoglia, Tom Newland, Richard Paul (arrived at 6:15PM) and Jess Robertson.

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; Finance Director Joe Huss; Deputy Finance Director Ali Bong; Finance Analyst Jenna Trittin; City Engineer Dan Schluender; Senior Park & Recreation Manager Jerome Krieger; City Attorney Chris Nelson; City Attorney Tom Loonan; Communications Manager Ben Hayle; Interim Public Works Director Nick Fleischhacker; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

Present: 6 - Councilmember Robertson, Councilmember Paul, Councilmember Hovland, Massoglia, Sanders, and Councilmember Jeppson

3 New Business

City Manager Wolfe commented on improvement projects that would be discussed at the City Council meeting.

City Attorney Nelson reported the improvement projects would require a four-fifths vote, which meant six members would have to be voting in the affirmative.

3-1

Lobby Contracts: 2022 Year in Review and 2023 Contracts

Attachments: [LGN - City of Blaine Report 2022.pdf](#)
 [Blaine Work Plan 2023.docx](#)
 [Blaine Year End Report and 2023 Work Plan Jacobson.pdf](#)
 [TFG-City of Blaine 2022 Review - FINAL.pdf](#)
 [2022-2023 Blaine Federal Agenda - FINAL.pdf](#)

City Manager Wolfe stated the City of Blaine contracts with three firms for lobbying services: one for state lobbying, the other two for federal lobbying. The topics for this workshop, relating to each of the three firms are as follows review 2022 year-end reports, outlining the activities and accomplishments, proposed 2023 work plans, and 2023 contract review. The current retainer with Lockridge Grindal Nauen (LGN) for state lobbying services is effective until December 31, 2023. The 2022 contract fee was \$36,000 and the 2023 fee will be \$38,000. LGN has been lobbying for the City since 2018. 2023 will see the first contract increase since 2018. The Federal Lobbying services contract with The Ferguson Group is set to expire on December 31, 2022, but is renewable at the same rate of \$5,000 per month for 2023. The existing retainer with Jacobson, Magnuson, Anderson & Holloran (Jacobson) will expire on April 30, 2023. The monthly fee is \$4,100.

Councilmember Robertson stated she appreciated the partnerships the City had with the three lobbying firms. She explained she has not worked with lobbyists in the past and found the Ferguson Group to be a great entity to work with. She asked if Metro Cities lobbied on behalf of the City of Blaine as well. Ms. Wolfe reported Metro Cities advocates on behalf of its members but does not lobby for anything that does not have agreement throughout the State. She indicated they have also been very active in representing cities' interests with the Met Council.

Councilmember Robertson questioned if the City needed to retain its membership with Metro Cities then requested Metro Cities be asked to provide the City with a list of action items from the past year. She noted if there were items that did not properly align with the City's goals and priorities for the coming year, this would be a concern for her.

Councilmember Newland asked if the City has historically used state and federal lobbyists, or were they brought in specifically for TH65. Ms. Wolfe reported Lockridge was brought on board to get funding for 105th Avenue and after this project was completed, they were asked to focus on the Public Safety Training Center. She explained when she was brought on board, the focus shifted to TH65.

Mayor Sanders discussed how continuity matters and noted once TH65 was completed, the City can reevaluate the need for lobbyists. He was of the opinion they were of great value at this point because they were assisting the City with getting \$130 million in funding for TH65.

Councilmember Newland agreed they were providing valuable services and supported the lobbyists work being evaluated each year.

Mayor Sanders agreed the work should be evaluated on an annual basis and noted he would only support a two-year contract with the lobbyists. Ms. Wolfe commented further on the ways lobbyists have been working on behalf of the City, such as the armored vehicle, assisting with earmarking funds, and pursuing other grant opportunities.

Councilmember Paul stated he appreciated how well the lobbyists worked with the City Council and staff members.

Council consensus was to direct staff to sign the lobbying contracts for 2023.

30 Minute Discussion

3-2

Council Code of Conduct

Attachments: [Blaine City Council - Code of Conduct](#)

Ms. Wolfe stated elected officials often adopt codes of conduct. Some members of the City Council have indicated interest in adopting a code of conduct for Blaine. She reviewed a draft document that was modeled based on another metro city and requested feedback from the Council.

Councilmember Newland stated code of conduct was well written and would help new Councilmembers understand the expectations of the position. He thanked staff for their efforts on this document.

Councilmember Paul explained this document could be used at the Council orientation and would address many concerns from new Councilmembers.

Councilmember Robertson thanked staff for their efforts on the code of conduct. She indicated she likes structure but not rules and believed this document would provide structure for the Council moving forward.

Councilmember Jeppson explained she believed the document was well done and would assist in providing defined roles for new Councilmembers.

Mr. Nelson reported the information in the code of conduct covers actions

of the Council which were also defined in City charter but added the powers of the city manager were also well defined.

Council consensus was to support this document going forward for Council approval.

30 Minute Discussion

4 Other Business

Community Development Director Thorvig discussed the actions that would be taken on the Blaine Lakes project. He explained the Council denied the CUP, plat, comp plan amendment and rezoning two weeks ago. He reported findings have been provided to support this denial. He stated the property owner has asked that the plat be reconsidered.

Councilmember Newland indicated he understood this matter but noted it was not clear what was being reconsidered and asked that staff make this item very clear to the public at the Council meeting.

Councilmember Jeppson questioned what action would be required for Item 10.9. Mr. Nelson reported this item had to be adopted with a written statement for denial providing a reason the item was denied.

Councilmember Jeppson asked what would happen if the written statement and resolution for denial was not adopted. Mr. Nelson indicated the City would not be in compliance with state law and theoretically the applicant may consider this item approved if not properly denied.

Ms. Wolfe reviewed the items that would be discussed by the Council at the January workshop meetings.

Councilmember Massoglia asked when the Council would be discussing the vacant seat in Ward 2.

Mayor Sanders stated the process would begin in January after Councilmember Jeppson was sworn into her new position with Anoka County.

Councilmember Paul indicated he was concerned with evictions taking place because rental rates were being pushed too high and that he would like to see the Council discuss this matter at a future workshop meeting.

Councilmember Hovland Recognition at 7:00 PM

ADJOURN

The Workshop adjourned at 6:54PM to attend Councilmember Hovland recognition event._

Adjourned