City of Blaine
Anoka County, Minnesota
Minutes
City Council Workshop

Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Sq Dr NE
Blaine MN 55449

Monday, October 14, 2019 | **6:00 PM** | **Cloverleaf Farm Room A**

NOTICE OF WORKSHOP MEETING

1 Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Ryan at 6:00 p.m.

2 Roll Call

Quorum Present.

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Michelle Wolfe; Community Development Director Erik Thorvig; Public Works Director Jon Haukaas; Police Chief/Safety Services Manager Brian Podany; Finance Director Joe Huss; Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Bob Therres; Communications Coordinator Ben Hayle; City Engineer Dan Schluender; City Planner Lori Johnson; Budget/Fiscal Analyst Ward Brown; Communications Technician Roark Haver; Fire Chief Charlie Smith; Deputy Police Chief Dan Szykulski; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

Present: 7 - Councilmember Garvais, Councilmember Jeppson, Mayor Ryan, Councilmember Swanson, Councilmember Robertson, Councilmember Paul, and Councilmember Hovland

3 New Business

3-1

NORTH METRO MAYORS ASSOCIATION JPA AMENDMENT

Attachments: JPA
Bylaws

City Manager Wolfe stated the North Metro Mayors Association Board of Directors at the September 18, 2019 meeting approved the amended and restated joint powers agreement (JPA). The changes, as discussed by the Operating Committee in June, are housekeeping items that bring the document up to date and add the City of Fridley as a member. The goal was to align the JPA with how association business is conducted. The amended JPA was sent to all member cities, who are requested to adopt the amended JPA. The bylaws also had a few

housekeeping updates and Section 2 was added to address Associate Members. They were adopted by the Board and were primarily updated to reflect the JPA. The bylaws do not require city council adoption.

Mayor Ryan reported the City of Blaine has been a member of North Metro Mayors on and off for the past 30 years and stated while he does not get to all of these meetings Blaine does benefit from the purchasing power created by this group.

Councilmember Jeppson stated she supported the Council paying for a membership if it was being used but did not support paying for a membership if it was not being used.

Mayor Ryan indicated the new Mayor and City Manager would have to be committed to attending this group's meetings.

Councilmember Swanson believed that North Metro Mayors did not lobby well for the City of Blaine and was of the opinion Blaine would be better off doing its own lobbying. He commented that Blaine was so different from all of the other cities participating in North Metro Mayors.

Councilmember Robertson questioned if there had been any benefit to the City of Blaine from this group. She said she believed it may benefit the City to hire its own lobbyists to meet its needs versus paying to remain a member of this coalition of cities.

Councilmember Hovland stated he supported the City withdrawing from this organization but questioned if the Council could take this action now.

Councilmember Garvais reviewed the JPA language and said he believed the Council could withdraw at this time.

Councilmember Swanson recommended an email be sent to the Executive Director of this organization dated October 14 stating the City of Blaine wishes to withdraw.

Councilmember Paul said he supported the Council withdrawing from this group and noted the City's budget would have to be amended in order to make this change.

Council consensus was to direct staff to send notice via email withdrawing from the North Metro Mayor's coalition and to use the $25,000 for specific lobbying efforts for the City of Blaine.

3-2 **2020 PROPOSED CAPITAL FUND BUDGET**

Attachments: PowerPoint

Finance Director Huss stated Council reviewed a first draft of the proposed 2020 capital budget at the September 16, 2019 workshop. Based on direction at that workshop, a revised draft has been prepared for City Council review and consideration. Capital requests have been submitted and the requests have been reviewed by both finance staff and the City Manager. All capital requests are being compiled and integrated into the five-year capital budget plan. Staff reviewed the 2020 requests with City Council at the workshop and requested feedback.

Councilmember Jeppson asked if all of the police sedans were being changed over to SUVs. Police Chief Podany explained there was a combination of both sedans and SUVs.

Councilmember Robertson questioned if vehicles were repurposed over time or if the City only purchased new vehicles. Mr. Huss explained vehicles were repurposed and older CSO police vehicles were sent to auction. Public Works Director Haukaas commented further on how the City cycled its vehicles in order to reduce expenses and extend vehicle life.

Councilmember Robertson inquired if it would benefit the City to contract landscaping work in order to reduce overall capital equipment costs for the City. Mr. Haukaas reported the City was more efficient and less costly performing the work compared to hiring a contractor.

Councilmember Garvais requested further information regarding the trackless snowblower. Mr. Haukaas discussed the trackless snowblower details with the Council.

Police Chief Podany provided the Council with further information regarding the Police Department's equipment requests within the 2020 Capital Fund Budget. He explained the department was proposing to move to new squad cameras and body cameras in order to have both cameras in the same system. Deputy Chief Szykulski described the benefits of the new system noting there would be greater efficiencies and staff time would be saved.

Councilmember Hovland asked if there was a market to sell the City's existing body cameras. Deputy Chief Szykulski stated his staff was researching this at this time.

Councilmember Garvais questioned if this would be an expense the City would have to plan for every four years. Deputy Chief Szykulski stated the department would meet with Axon near the end of the contract and would have to discuss what the best options were for the City going forward. He commented the City would

know one year ahead of time in order to plan for the next contract.

Councilmember Hovland requested further information regarding the mobile camera trailer system and outreach trailer. Deputy Chief Szykulski explained the mobile camera trailer system would be used to assist the Police Department for larger events. He reported this trailer could be put in an area then monitored offsite. Police Chief Podany stated the City currently borrows this type of trailer from other agencies. Deputy Chief Szykulski indicated the outreach trailer would be used for the World Fest and other community events.

Councilmember Paul stated he supported the purchase of an outreach trailer.

Councilmember Robertson agreed stating she appreciated the fact the Blaine Police Department was finding creative ways to meet with the public.

Councilmember Jeppson requested further information regarding the proposed security system. Mr. Haukaas explained the current security system was quite old and operates on Windows XP with magnetic cards. He reported the current system requires a great deal of reprogramming each time a new employee is added to the system and that in addition the current system was no longer supported.

Councilmember Garvais asked for further information regarding the funding for GIS work. Public Services Manager/Assistant City Engineer Therres discussed the GIS work that needed to be completed for the City.

Councilmember Hovland questioned if the City had overhead cranes and if these cranes were being inspected annually. Mr. Haukaas reported the City does own overhead cranes which are inspected on an annual basis.

Mayor Ryan said while he understood the need for replacement equipment for Station 3 he asked if the purchase could be delayed. Fire Chief Smith explained he was proposing to replace two pieces of equipment with one new rig and this would lead to greater savings down the road. Mr. Huss stated the City was working to set funding aside for capital improvements in order to eliminate the peaks and valleys within the budget.

Councilmember Jeppson indicated she would like input from the Mounds View and Spring Lake Park about this equipment purchase.

Councilmember Hovland said believed it would be appropriate for Blaine, Spring Lake Park and Mounds View to meet to discuss capital expenditures for the Fire Department.

Councilmember Robertson agreed, stating she would prefer to postpone consideration of the proposed capital expenditures for the Fire Department until she better understood where the other cities stood.

The Council thanked staff for the thorough report.

Informational; no action required.

3-3

DEBT MANAGEMENT PLAN

Attachments: ADOPTED Debt Policy 2018
PowerPoint

Mr. Huss stated in June 2018, City Council adopted the city's debt policy which established guidelines for the effective governance, management, and administration of the city's debt. The policy assists the city in its long-term planning for capital improvements and management of the city's tax levy. How the policy works in practice and how the policy can be used to develop more comprehensive budget and tax levy policies was the focus of discussion at the Workshop. Staff provided further comment regarding the Debt Management Plan and requested feedback from the Council.

Councilmember Paul asked if the City had any funding gaps at this time. Mr. Huss reported the City has made up all gaps due to the economic downturn that occurred in 2008 and 2009.

The Council thanked staff for the thorough report.

Informational; no action required.

3-4

2020 BOARD/COMMISSION/FIRE BOARD APPOINTMENT PROCESS

Attachments: Board of Directors Information Package
2019 Council and Commissions

City Clerk Sorensen stated Council requested staff bring forward for review the 2020 Board and Commission appointment process, particularly for the upcoming vacancies on the SBM Fire Board. Staff reviewed the list of directors for the Fire Board. With the two upcoming vacancies next year, Council requested an opportunity to discuss the recruitment and interview process for the Fire Board, including timing of interviews, as there was a desire to have individuals identified prior to the incumbents' term expiration. Directors are appointed for a three-year term and are eligible for a second consecutive term of three years. As outlined in the bylaws after appointment by City Council the current Board has to vote to confirm the new Board members at the annual meeting. The annual meeting usually

takes place in March so the new Directors are in place by the April meeting.

Councilmember Robertson stated she had two candidates willing to serve on the Fire Board and would contact them regarding the application process.

Councilmember Hovland questioned what the term lengths were for the Fire Board positions. Fire Chief Smith explained the term lengths were three years.

Mayor Ryan requested the Fire Board interviews be held on a separate night in order to provide sufficient time to interview and review candidates.

Ms. Sorensen asked if the Council wanted to interview both new applicants and incumbents for commission and board positions or to utilize subcommittees for interviews. Council consensus was that they would like to interview all applicants, including incumbents, as they had in the past.

Councilmember Robertson encouraged the Council to consider setting term limits for Commission and Board positions in order to allow for more residents the opportunity to serve the community. She stated she was also concerned with the requirement for ward representation, especially if there were not enough applicants from a ward, adding she felt she represented the entire City and not just her ward.

Councilmember Swanson explained each ward had different issues than the others and for that reason supported the need for each ward to be represented.

Mayor Ryan stated he supported term limits.

Councilmember Hovland indicated he liked to see all wards fairly represented and stated he could support six-year term limits. He suggested any open seats could be filled temporarily by citizens outside the ward and that the position be backfilled once a candidate was identified.

Councilmember Garvais stated he did not support positions being filled temporarily as this would be a tremendous inconvenience to those willing to fill a position.

Councilmember Robertson questioned when the term limits would go into effect.

Mayor Ryan suggested the Commission and Board members be allowed to serve one more term and then the limits would go into effect.

Councilmember Swanson commented on the importance of the role of the Planning Commission Chair in conducting public hearings and the need for consistency in that role where possible.

Discussion ensued regarding Council liaison appointments. Councilmember Garvais stated he would like to discuss the Council appointments at an upcoming workshop meeting.

Discussed

3-5 **SCHEDULING OF CITY COUNCIL FALL RETREAT**

Ms. Wolfe requested the Council discuss their availability for a fall retreat. She explained some initial topic suggestions would include the Strategic Plan, 2020 Work Plan and the Park and Recreation System Master Plan. She commented on potential discussion points for the fall retreat and requested the Council provide staff with feedback on potential dates for a fall retreat.

Councilmember Hovland stated he would like to see the Council hold two retreats per year with one being overnight as he believed this type of event increased the cohesion of the group while increasing team building with staff members. He suggested the Mayor and City Manager select a date and provide this information to the Council.

Councilmember Robertson requested the retreat be held prior to Thanksgiving.

Councilmember Garvais stated he would like to have the strategic plan discussed at the fall retreat in order to assist the Council in planning for the coming year.

Council consensus was to hold the retreat on November 22 and November 23.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mayor Ryan explained Meals on Wheels was in need of space in order to keep providing Blaine residents with meals. The Council supported Mayor Ryan speaking with local churches to see if a church was available to meet this need.

Police Chief Podany commented on a recent email from Abigail Lombard regarding Four Paws and a Tail and concerns with their business model of pet sales at Northtown Mall. He explained he has also worked with Lindsay Holiday regarding similar complaints. He reported the Police Department has made numerous visits and has conducted a number of inspections at Four Paws at Northtown and found no evidence of ill-treatment of the animals at Four Paws. He explained Four Paws receives all of its pets from USDA licensed breeders and that he anticipated complaints would continue to come to the Police Department from advocates who were proposing ordinances to prohibit the sale of dogs and cats in retail stores. He reported the City could face litigation if it were to try and restrict the sale of cats and dogs at this time and questioned how the City Council would like the Police

Department to respond to future complaints.

Mayor Ryan indicated these concerns have been ongoing for many years and said the owner is a pet lover and does a great job in the community and had no concerns with their operations.

Councilmember Robertson reported it was not the City Council's role to close a business if it is operating within City and other regulations.

Police Chief Podany updated the Council on a shooting that occurred in the City of Blaine.

ADJOURN

The Workshop was adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

Adjourned