



CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Richfield, Minnesota

Regular Council Meeting

January 9, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Supple at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Council Members Present: Mary Supple, Mayor; Sharon Christensen; Simon Trautmann; Sean Hayford Oleary; and Ben Whalen

Staff Present: Katie Rodriguez, City Manager; Mary Tietjen, City Attorney; Melissa Poehlman, Community Development Director; Jay Henthorne, Police Chief; Jennifer Anderson, Support Services Manager; Karl Heumiller, Recreation Services Director; Chris Swanson, Management Analyst; Karl Huemiller, Recreation Services Director; and Dustin Leslie, City Clerk

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Supple led the Pledge of Allegiance.

OPEN FORUM

Mayor Supple reviewed the options to participate:

- Participate live by calling 1-415-655-0001 during the open forum portion
- Call prior to meeting 612-861-9711
- Email prior to meeting kwynn@richfieldmn.gov

Kathleen Balaban, 6526 Stevens Avenue, stated she did not believe the City utilized the Sun Current newspaper to the extent it should be used. She expressed concern regarding the 2024 priorities and that nobody asked her what her legislative priorities were for the City. She noted she had issues with air quality in the City. She stated the Council Members did not make any comments on what the 2024 legislative priorities were and did not receive citizen input.

Santwana Dasgupta, 6951 First Avenue South, stated she was a member of the Richfield Community for Public Safety organization. She indicated their focus was on the results from data they analyzed regarding low level traffic stops and that people of color were stopped at a significantly higher rate than those who were white. She stated they have been raising this issue for over 2 years and were disappointed their findings had not been addressed. She noted several cities have either enacted laws to stop or reduce the traffic stops and while they have had several meetings with the City and the Police Department regarding this, they do not believe their data was being taken seriously. She stated it felt like they had run into a brick wall and no progress had been made on this issue. She requested the

City Council look at this. She requested if their data did show this was a problem, then the City Council needed to advocate for change at the County and State levels that would make it illegal for routine low level stops to be conducted. She also requested if their data was correct, that the City Council work with staff and the Police Department to review the approach to low level traffic stops and take appropriate action to address the inequity.

City Manager Rodriguez read an email received from Laury Baars, at 6508 Stevens Avenue expressing concern about the property at 101-66th Street being an eyesore. They requested if the owner was given another year before building on this site, that the Council make it contingent on the immediate removal of the buildings on the premises for safety concerns.

City Manager Rodriguez read an email received from Alex Asmus, 6401 Harriet Avenue, urging the Council to reject the request for the granting of an extension for an extension of the PUD at 66th Street. He expressed concern that an extension would set a precedent for laxity in project timelines and could be taken advantage of in the future. He noted all developers were having challenges with increased labor and materials. He stated giving an extension to January 2025 prolonged the need for housing and commercial space in the City. He indicated the City had to uphold the integrity of their policies and expectations they set for development in the City and denying the extension would send a strong message that the City was supportive of development but were also stringent about commitments and timelines.

City Manager Rodriguez read an email received from Jonna Klisch, 6641 First Avenue South regarding the proposed extension of the North Bay Development at 101-66th Street. She stated every time the project came up for discussion, the City had shown no consideration for the surrounding neighbors and what they had to say about the project. She indicated the buildings were an eyesore and a safety risk. She asked what was the developer’s plan to address these issues. She noted there has been no communication with the surrounding neighbors on the project status from the City or Council Members that represent their area.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

M/Whalen, S/Christensen to approve the minutes of the: (1) City Council Work Session of December 12, 2023; (2) Regular City Council Meeting of December 12, 2023.

Council Member Trautmann noted on page 2, his name was misspelled.

Council Member Hayford Oleary requested the removal of the sentence that stated staff spent too much time on speed limits and replace with he thanked staff for their work on speed limits.

Motion carried: 5-0

ITEM #1	APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA
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Mayor Supple requested Item D be removed from the Consent Agenda.

M/Hayford Oleary, S/Christensen to approve the agenda with the removal of Item D on the Consent Agenda.

Motion carried: 5-0

ITEM #2	CONSENT CALENDAR
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City Manager Rodriguez presented the consent calendar.

- A. Consider approval to designate an Acting City Manager for 2024 (Staff Report No. 01)
- B. Consider the designation of Mayor Pro Tempore for 2024 (Staff Report No. 02)
- C. Consider representatives to serve as the 2024 liaisons to various local, regional, and state organizations, and City boards and commissions (Staff Report No. 03)
- ~~D. Consider adoption of a resolution granting an extension of land use approvals for a planned unit development at 101—66th Street East (Staff Report No. 04)~~
- E. Consider approval for a Temporary On-Sale Intoxicating Liquor license for the Blessed Trinity Catholic School, located at St. Richard’s Catholic Church, 7540 Penn Avenue South, for their 2024 Sno*ball Dance taking place February 3, 2024 (Staff Report No. 05)
- F. Consider the approval of an agreement allowing Richfield Department of Public Safety to accept grant monies from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, the Edward Byne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program. (Staff Report No. 06)

RESOLUTION NO. 12173

**RESOLUTON AUTHORIZING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY/POLICE
TO ACCEPT THE EDWARDS BYRNE MEMORIAL GRANT (JAG) FOR
\$11,813.25 FROM THE OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS
TO PURCHASE LAPTOPS FOR PUBLIC
SAFETY EMPLOYEES**

- G. Consider the approval of the Response Sustainability Grant. This new grant is awarded to public health departments and tribal health agencies via the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) based on funding provided by the Minnesota State Legislature. (Staff Report No. 07)
- H. Consider a resolution designating an official newspaper for 2024 (Staff Report No. 08)

RESOLUTION NO. 12174

**RESOLUTION DESIGNATING AN OFFICIAL
NEWSPAPER FOR 2024**

- I. Consider a resolution designating official depositories for the City of Richfield for 2024, including the approval of collateral (Staff Report No. 08)

RESOLUTION NO. 12175

**RESOLUTION DESIGNATING U.S. BANK
A DEPOSITORY OF FUNDS FOR THE CITY OF
RICHFIELD FOR THE YEAR 2024**

RESOLUTION NO. 12176

**RESOLUTION DESIGNATING CERTAIN SAVINGS AND
LOAN ASSOCIATIONS, BANKS, AND CREDIT UNIONS
AS DEPOSITORIES FOR THE DEPOSIT AND
INVESTMENT OF CITY FUNDS IN 2024**

RESOLUTION NO. 12177

**RESOLUTION DESIGNATING CERTAIN FINANCIAL
INSTITUTIONS AS DEPOSITORIES FOR THE
INVESTMENT OF CITY OF RICHFIELD FUNDS IN 2024**

- J. Consider approval of the purchase of eleven (11) Ford SUV Police Interceptor vehicles for Public Safety from McGovern Municipal Headquarters for \$498,743.85 plus destination, tax, title, and license fees and authorize the City Manager to approve contract changes up to \$175,000 without further City Council consideration. (Staff Report No. 10)

M/Whalen, S/Trautmann to approve the consent calendar removing Item D.

Motion carried: 5-0

ITEM #3	CONSIDERATION OF ITEMS, IF ANY, REMOVED FROM CONSENT CALENDAR
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Mayor Supple read the staff report which stated approvals typically expired after one year unless extended due to the economic climate. She noted the approvals had already been extended and now the applicant needed a second extension due to labor, material costs, and the high interest rates. She stated the developer was looking at options including bringing in a partner to help finance the project. She noted the developer had continued to make progress and the full building permits have been approved. She indicated if an extension were not granted, the applicant would be required to begin the land use approval process. She noted staff continues to support the proposed development as an investment that capitalized on the major investment made along 66th Street and the needed housing in the City.

M/Supple, S/Hayford Oleary to adopt the resolution granting a one-year extension of land use approvals for a planned unit development to 101 – 55th Street East, adding a condition requiring the removal of the vacant buildings on the site within 90 days.

RESOLUTION NO. 12172

**RESOLUTION GRANTING A SECOND TIME
EXTENSION FOR A FINAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND
CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT FOR A PLANNED UNIT
DEVELOPMENT AT 101 – 66TH STREET EAST**

Council Member Whalen noted he understood and shared the communities concerns about the vacant buildings and how long this had gone on. He asked if this would add significant costs for the developer, what the impact would be, and would the developer ask for more assistance.

Director Poehlman responded that the amount that had been pledged to the development was the maximum amount available under the TIF note. She indicated she had a conversation with the developer and he believed they could get the buildings down within 60 to 90 days.

Council Member Whalen requested a summary of the developers progress. Director Poehlman summarized what the developer had done including submitting full building plans and the building permit

was ready. She indicated the developer still had to secure his construction financing though. She stated with respect to the TIF district, there was a statutory timeframe for expenditures which expired March 2025 so if the project was not moving forward there would not be TIF assistance to help the project.

Council Member Whalen asked what the impact would be if this were denied. Mayor Supple noted she had taken all of that into consideration and she did think there was a valid concern from the residents and that this was a way to get those buildings down because of a safety hazard. She did not believe this would hold up development and she did want to see the development move forward.

Mayor Supple requested a summary of what happened with TIF with respect to this agreement.

Director Poehlman responded the HRA had an agreement with the developer that if the development was created with qualified expenditures made through tax increment, the City will reimburse the developer up to \$2.685 million over the course of the life of the district which she believed was 23 years now.

Council Member Hayford Oleary stated he supported the motion as amended. He indicated he did not want to see making a project that was financially struggling more expensive, but one of the developers duties was to keep the buildings secure. He stated he did not like that the City was in this situation, but he believed it was reasonable that the developer demolish the building.

Council Member Whalen stated while he had some healthy skepticism of developers, this particular developer has had two other successful developments in the community, so he had more confidence in this and he did not feel the developer was dragging the City along. He stated he supported the overall project and the best route was to move forward and approve this. He noted he would support the motion as amended.

Motion carried: 5-0

ITEM #4	CONSIDER THE ADOPTION OF THE CITY'S LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR 2024. (STAFF REPORT NO. 11)
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Council Member Hayford Oleary presented Staff Report 11.

City Manager Rodriguez stated staff had made several changes based on feedback from the December 12 Work Session which she reviewed.

M/Hayford Oleary, S/Trautmann to adopt the proposed legislative priorities for 2024.

Council Member Trautmann stated the process as to how the Council came to the legislative priorities was evolving. He acknowledged the staff's time constraints but requested they prioritize time to look into the North Star Act to be included in the priorities this year. Mayor Supple requested this be put on a further work session agenda.

Council Member Whalen stated he was supportive of the idea, but noted if they really wanted to make a serious impact he believed that would need to be done within the next month or so. He asked if that would be a realistic timeframe. City Manager Rodriguez responded it would be hard, but staff will work on it and get it done. She indicated this it might need an additional work session to be scheduled. She requested they look at this for next year as a legislative priority but bring it to a work session this year.

Council Member Trautmann stated he believed this was important and was a priority for the community.

Mayor Supple asked if they could add a work session in March to discuss this. Council Member Trautmann responded he would like this to be discussed within the next month.

Council Member Whalen noted there were committee deadlines in the legislature that he did not think were set yet but were likely to be mid-March. He believed Council Member Trautmann was correct with the timeline they would need. He noted to clarify the miscommunication, it sounded like there were community members that planned to speak on this tonight but were told there would be a work session coming up instead. He stated he supported a work session within the next month. He acknowledged the research might not be ready, but for community members that wanted to speak to this point it was important they find a way to make space for that.

Council Member Hayford Oleary asked if the motion needed to be amended. City Manager Rodriguez stated she was confused about the comment on community members being dissuaded from coming to the meeting. She indicated she did nothing to dissuade them from coming to this Council meeting. She stated she was looking for direction as to whether Council felt this was urgent and wanted to include and amend it for this platform or if they are comfortable waiting and having a work session this year and include it in the next platform. She noted the Bill was presented last session and did not get a hearing. She indicated a lot of the goals in the Bill was to have a clear line that local law enforcement did no federal immigration control or enforcement and they already had a position on that in the City. She noted locally they were already doing much of what the Bill was hoping to achieve with the legislation.

Council Member Hayford Oleary stated he supported the idea of the Bill. He was concerned about the aggressive drop everything and get this in though approach. He stated he understood why it was relevant and important to a lot of the residents. He asked if it was Council Member Trautmann's desire that this became one of the three to five top priorities or added to the list under the public safety item. Council Member Trautmann responded he would be open to either. He noted this was important as it provided a level of clarity and he believed it was a good policy for the City.

Council Member Hayford Oleary stated he was reluctant calling this one of their top priorities because it did not relate as directly as the other items. However, he acknowledged Council Member Trautmann had strong feelings that if this were done in March there would not be sufficient time.

Council Member Trautmann stated he did not think there was sufficient time to make the difference. He wanted the City to speak publicly and say this was a priority for the City and this was a legislative priority. He believed doing this sooner rather than later was better.

Council Member Hayford Oleary stated he was fine with an additional meeting or adding it to an existing work meeting. He requested as long as they would be doing this early, that it would be ready to go on the same Council agenda so there was not a 2-week delay to get it on the Council agenda.

Mayor Supple stated this was not something they could decide tonight and it needed to be discussed at a work session. She agreed this was a good idea and something they should look into. She stated she was in agreement with having another meeting.

Council Member Whalen stated if the issue was finding time to do this, he suggested they have a discussion at a Council meeting instead of a work session meeting. He thanked staff for their work on this and he appreciated the community feedback.

Council Member Trautmann thanked the City Manager and Chief Henthorne for doing good work on this throughout the years. He thanked them for their leadership and flexibility.

Motion carried: 5-0

City Manager Rodriguez stated based on what she heard there was consensus among the Council to bring this back as soon as possible before February either at a work session or at a Council meeting to have further discussion and consider amending it into the platform.

Council Member Whalen stated he wanted to give staff permission to come back and tell the Council if this needed to be delayed a month. He requested staff keep the Council updated on the next steps.

ITEM #5	CITY MANAGER’S REPORT
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City Manager Rodriguez stated she had no report.

ITEM #6	CLAIMS AND PAYROLL
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M/Whalen, S/Trautmann that the following claims and payrolls be approved:

<u>U.S. BANK</u>	<u>01/04/2024</u>
A/P Checks: 325638 - 326122	\$5,834,702.53
Payroll: 183928 – 184569 43731 – 43744	\$1,639,914.84
TOTAL	\$7,474,617.37

Motion carried: 5-0

ITEM #7	HATS OFF TO HOMETOWN HITS
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Council Member Trautmann thanked the Friends of Woodlake and the Woodlake Nature staff for the New Years Eve Midnight Walk.

Council Member Hayford Oleary stated he had no items.

Council Member Christensen echoed Council Member Trautmann’s comments regarding the Woodlake Nature Center.

Council Member Whalen gave hats off to his 16-month-old son who had his first sledding experience at Roosevelt park. He thanked the recreation and public works staff for the sledding hills.

Mayor Supple gave hats off to the staff. She noted there were a lot of things going on behind the scenes the people did not see and she did not want to take staff for granted. She thanked staff for all of their hard work. She thanked all of the community volunteers. She stated if anyone was interested in signing up for the citizens police academy they need to register by tomorrow. She gave hats off to Rachel from the Sustainability Committee.

ITEM #8	ADJOURNMENT
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M/Trautmann, S/Whalen to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Motion carried: 5-0

Date Approved: January 23, 2024



Dustin Leslie
City Clerk



Mary Supple
Mayor



Katie Rodriguez
City Manager