



CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Richfield, Minnesota

Regular Council Meeting

February 28, 2023

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; Kristin Asher, Public Works Director; Joe Powers, City Engineer; Matt Hardegger, Transportation Engineer; Julie Urban, Assistant Community Development Director; and Chris Swanson, Management Analyst

Others Present: Lance Bernard, Transportation Consultant

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

There were no participants.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

M/Trautmann, S/Whalen to approve the minutes of the: (1) City Council Work Session of February 14, 2023; (2) City Council Regular Meeting of February 14, 2023; (3) City Council and Director Retreat of February 15, 2023.

Motion carried: 5-0

ITEM #1	APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA
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M/Hayford Oleary, S/Trautmann to approve the agenda.

Motion carried: 5-0

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

- A. Consider the adoption of a resolution supporting the repeal of the exclusion of Hennepin and Ramsey counties from receiving Motor Vehicle Lease Sales Tax (MVLST) funds. (Staff Report 29).

**RESOLUTION NO. 12073
RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR THE REPEAL OF THE EXCLUSION OF HENNEPIN
AND RAMSEY COUNTIES FROM RECEIVING MOTOR VEHICLE LEASE SALES (MVLST) FUNDS**

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

Motion carried: 5-0

ITEM #3	CONSIDERATION OF ITEMS, IF ANY, REMOVED FROM CONSENT CALENDAR
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None.

ITEM #4	PUBLIC HEARING AND CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION SPECIFYING THE USE OF FUNDS FROM THE URBAN HENNEPIN COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT ALLOCATION FOR 2023 AND AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF A SUBRECIPIENT AGREEMENT WITH HENNEPIN COUNTY AND ANY REQUIRED THIRD-PARTY AGREEMENTS (STAFF REPORT 30)
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Council Member Hayford Oleary presented Staff Report 30 and opened the public hearing.

M/Hayford Oleary, S/Whalen to close the public hearing.

M/Hayford Oleary, S/Trautmann to adopt the Resolution approving proposed Use of 2023 Urban Hennepin County Community Development Block Grant Program Funds and Authorizing Execution of Subrecipient Agreement with Hennepin County and any Required Third Party Agreements (Staff Report 30).

**RESOLUTION NO. 12077
RESOLUTION APPROVING PROPOSED USE OF 2023 URBAN HENNEPIN COUNTY COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM FUNDS AND AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF SUBRECIPIENT
AGREEMENT WITH HENNEPIN COUNTY AND ANY REQUIRED THIRD PARTY AGREEMENTS**

Council Member Trautmann stated this was a powerful tool for affordable housing and he supported this Resolution.

Council Member Whalen asked if there was more demand for this than could currently be filled.

Assistant Director Urban responded there was a long waiting list for the deferred loan program. With respect to the downpayment program it has remained strong, but it a challenge right now for people to make this work.

Mayor Supple expressed appreciation for both programs and was glad they were able to be continued.

Motion carried: 5-0

ITEM #5	<p>CONSIDER THE ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS FOR FUNDING APPLICATIONS TO THE MNDOT CORRIDORS OF COMMERCE PROGRAMS FOR THE FOLLOWING PROJECT:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) THE CITY OF RICHFIELD'S APPLICATION FOR A PROPOSED PROJECT ON TRUNK HIGHWAY 62 BETWEEN PORTLAND AVENUE AND TRUNK HIGHWAY 77, INCLUDING RECONFIGURATION OF THE TRUNK HIGHWAY 62/TRUNK HIGHWAY 77 INTERCHANGE. 2) THE CITY OF BLOOMINGTON'S APPLICATION FOR A PROPOSED PROJECT AT THE 82ND STREET/I-35W INTERCHANGE AND RECONSTRUCTION OF THE RAILROAD BRIDGE OVER I-494 AT PLEASANT AVENUE. 3) THE I-494 CORRIDOR COMMISSION'S APPLICATION FOR A PROPOSED PROJECT TO ADD E-Z PASS LANES ON I-494 FROM I-35 TO TRUNK HIGHWAY 77 AND RECONSTRUCTION OF THE RAILROAD BRIDGE OVER I-494 AT PLEASANT AVENUE. <p>(STAFF REPORT 31)</p>
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Council Member Trautmann presented Staff Report 31.

City Engineer Powers presented the Richfield Corridors of Commerce Application for Highway 62 and Highway 77.

Council Member Whalen asked if they had Minneapolis' support for this proposal.

City Engineer Powers responded Minneapolis has shown interest in the project and at the staff level they want to support it, but currently they were not in support of the application.

Council Member Trautmann asked if Minneapolis had a concern with this project or expansion as a whole.

City Engineer Powers believed Minneapolis did not have equity concerns with this project but rather the city would oppose highway expansion in recognition of the historical equity wrongdoings and have taken a strong stance regarding this.

Amy Marohn, City of Bloomington Traffic Engineer, presented Bloomington's request for a Resolution of support for their proposed project.

Council Member Hayford Olearly asked if the new bridge was funded, would it improve transit operations for multi-modal traffic.

Ms. Marohn responded that the preliminary layout did address the pedestrian and bicycle issues, but nothing had been finalized yet.

Council Member Whalen asked with the E-Z Pass lanes were their projections as to what traffic would be like on 77th or American Boulevard.

Ms. Marohn responded there was a traffic volume projection map, but she believed there would not be a significant reduction on American Boulevard, but there would be a reduction on 84th Street.

Melissa Madison, Executive Director I-494 Corridor Commission, presented the I-494 Corridor Commission proposal.

Rebecca Schack, Chair I-494 Corridor Commission and Minnetonka Council Member, provided the historical reason the I-494 Corridor Commission as well as the city of Minnetonka's supported the project.

Council Member Whalen asked if there was any quantified data regarding the transit benefit of how many people are currently using I-494 and who would have the E-Z Pass lane or other non-Metro transit versions that would plan to use it.

Ms. Madison responded they did not have data on this. She noted transit easing and an E-Z Pass Lane would allow for 8,000 people to move through the corridor on an hourly basis versus 2,000 people.

Council Member Hayford Oleary acknowledged it was difficult to get people to change the way they get around and he was surprised that 95 percent of people drive alone. He noted there were not other good options on I-494 but believed driving must be attractive to people also. He asked what could be done about this.

Ms. Madison believed if other alternatives were provided to try to reduce the unattractive elements of using an alternative mode more people might use the alternative transportation. She noted they were working on ways to promote alternative transportation also.

Council Member Hayford Oleary noted the world changed a lot over Covid with respect to transportation and there was less of a problem than there was in 2017. He asked why the 2017 plan should still be the guide.

Ms. Madison responded she believed they were in a fluid situation, and they had not settled on what post-pandemic commuting and travel would be in the future. She noted they did survey employers on a quarterly basis regarding telework and mode split of employees. She indicated they also survey commuters quarterly. She stated the employers wanted the employees to come back to the office, but it was the employees that did not all want to return without flexibility and a hybrid situation.

Council Member Hayford Oleary asked what percentage of employers still did telework.

Ms. Madison responded it was a high percentage, but she did not have specific numbers.

Council Member Trautmann thanked the Commission and representatives for attending tonight's meeting and helping Richfield advocate for the priorities.

Ms. Madison stated transportation was a system and not a segment and that was what they wanted the Council to think about when they considered their letter of support.

Council Member Whalen asked since the benefits were from E-Z Pass lanes, has there been any talk of reconsideration on the ban on converting an existing lane to E-Z Pass and if not, why not.

Ms. Madison responded this has not formally come up, but their lobbyists have asked them to be prepared to answer questions like that to give a position. She indicated she was not aware they were formally visiting it.

Ms. Schack stated they work closely with the Legislative committees, and they had not heard directly that was something they were looking for feedback on. She believed MnDOT has done some internal studying of this though.

City Manager Rodriguez stated there was no ban at the State level to take a general-purpose lane to be used as an E-Z Pass lane. She noted she had reached out to Met Council to discuss this specifically and they indicated for this corridor it would not be technically or politically practical.

Council Member Whalen stated part of his skepticism was the projections are from pre-pandemic data. He indicated he was happy with parts of project one and comparing to no build was no longer relevant comparing just project one to the full vision. He acknowledged there were benefits to the E-Z Pass lanes but in terms of congestion they were not going to get to a place where traffic was going through consistently. He asked if there was an explanation as to how much better the full vision addressed the congestion.

Ms. Schack did not believe that information existed, but she indicated his point was well taken. She noted as congestion continued to build in the general lanes, they would need to come up with ways to incentivize people to use public transit or carpooling.

Council Member Whalen noted this was a lot of money for traffic during the construction and 20 years out would be worse than it is now. He did not see building more lanes as addressing congestion. He believed the transit option was good, but he was unclear as to what that looked like.

Council Member Hayford Oleary stated he was in support of the E-Z Pass, but he was not sold on another lane. He asked for future projects this be broken down more.

M/Trautmann, S/Supple to adopt the Resolution of Support for the Trunk Highway 62/Trunk Highway 77 Interchange Improvements Corridors of Commerce Project Submittal (Staff Report 31).

**RESOLUTION NO. 12075
RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR THE TRUNK HIGHWAY 62/TRUNK HIGHWAY 77 INTERCHANGE
IMPROVMENTS CORRIDORS OF COMMERCE PROJECT SUBMITTAL**

Council Member Hayford Oleary believed the expansion of freeways was harmful especially for cities like Richfield where they are ringed by freeways. However, in this case he believed this project brought a lot of benefit to Richfield and most of that would not be possible without the expansion. He stated he supported this Resolution and hoped if it did not go through that next time they could have better dialogue with the City of Minneapolis.

Council Member Whalen stated he appreciated the projects that focused on problem intersections and pedestrian improvements, and he believed this project warranted special consideration. He stated he was in support of this Resolution.

Mayor Supple stated she supported this Resolution as she believed it helped deal with the cut through traffic. She believed this would help the local safety and traffic movement.

Council Member Trautman noted one of the secondary benefits would that it would help with congestion, and he also supported the Resolution.

Motion carried: 5-0

M/Trautmann, S/Supple to adopt Resolution of Support for the City of Bloomington's 82nd Street Interchange Improvement Corridors of Commerce Project Submittal (Staff Report 31).

**RESOLUTION NO. 12076
RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR THE CITY OF BLOOMINGTON'S 82ND STREET INTERCHANGE
IMPROVEMENT CORRIDORS OF COMMERCE PROJECT SUBMITTAL**

Council Member Hayford Oleary agreed they cannot build their way out of congestion with additional lanes. He indicated it was alarming to see that 95 percent of people drove alone. He believed the I-494 project did not help with congestion and it was a stand-alone highway expansion project that did not offer much to Richfield except for bringing more vehicles through the city. He believed this would harm Richfield and would increase the amount of traffic through Richfield. He stated on an individual basis he would not support either project.

Council Member Trautmann appreciated Council Member Hayford Oleary and Council Member Whalen's insight and agreed they cannot build their way out of traffic congestion. However, he stated he was going to support both Resolution 2 and 3. He noted what they were trying to do was to not fix a problem that was endemic in the structure and the consequences of economic growth which they were generally glad for.

Council Member Whalen stated he would support this Resolution. He indicated he was excited for the 82nd interchange for safety and intermodal reasons. He believed it was worth replacing the railroad bridge as it was old and did not look nice, but he had concern with the third project and building a wide railroad bridge might not be the best use of money.

Mayor Supple believed 82nd Street would help with the local traffic, and she supported Bloomington with that. With respect to the railroad bridge, she believed this needed to be replaced and she would be supporting the Resolution.

Motion carried: 5-0

M/Trautmann, S/Supple to adopt Resolution of Support for the I-494 Corridor Commission E-Z Pass Lane Corridors of Commerce Project Submittal (Staff Report 31).

**RESOLUTION NO. 12074
RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR THE I-494 CORRIDOR COMMISSION E-ZPASS LANE CORRIDORS OF
COMMERCE PROJECT SUBMITTAL**

Council Member Whalen hoped they would have a more serious conversation regarding transit before moving ahead with something like this. He stated they have not seen the full data on this project including the greenhouse gas emissions. He agreed if the result would be more people using public transit or carpooling that would improve greenhouse gas emissions, but to him this felt that they were claiming this without having any data. He indicated the cost of this compared to the available funding, if all three of these are approved, they are actually putting them in direct competition with each other. He stated he would not be in support of this Resolution.

Council Member Hayford Oleary stated they also had to look at the value received relative to the money was worth looking at. He did not think this was the best use of public money. He believed this would increase traffic and greenhouse gas emissions. He expressed concern they were basing their decision on a 2017 study, and he did not believe the study was relevant today.

Mayor Supple believed this was originally proposed in 2017 but there was a lot of discussions about equity, etc. She noted they did not give their approval until 2021 so it was much more recent and there had been change it as it went along. She supported this entire package.

Council Member Trautmann stated there was a value in maintaining infrastructure, so it does not become poor and decrepit. He agreed they needed better data, but right now they did not have that data.

Council Member Whalen stated his vote would probably not stop this from happening and he believed there were ways to move forward with this project that would address his concerns and he would like to continue to look at incorporating enough trees being planted once they received the full greenhouse gas emissions information. He hoped the concerns they are raising would be heard and they would work together on some collaborative solutions.

Motion carried: 3-2 (Whalen and Hayford Oleary)

ITEM #6	CONSIDER THE APPROVAL OF AGREEMENTS WITH NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS TO PROVIDE SOCIAL SERVICES TO THE CITY OF RICHFIELD AND AUTHORIZE THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE AGREEMENTS WITH THOSE AGENCIES. (STAFF REPORT NO. 32)
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Council Member Whalen presented Staff Report 32.

M/Whalen, S/Hayford Oleary to approve the Agreements with Non-Profit Organizations to Provide Social Services to the City of Richfield and authorize the City Manager to Execute Agreements with those Agencies (Staff Report No. 32).

Mayor Supple thanked all the agencies for everything they did for the community.

Motion carried: 5-0

ITEM #7	CITY MANAGER REPORT
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City Manager Rodriguez stated she had no report.

ITEM #7	CLAIMS AND PAYROLL
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M/Whalen, S/Hayford Oleary that the following claims and payrolls be approved:

<u>U.S. BANK</u>	<u>02/28/2023</u>
A/P Checks: 312847 - 313075	\$1,759,082.25
Payroll: 176604 - 176971	<u>\$746,799.36</u>
TOTAL	\$2,505,881.61

Motion carried: 5-0

ITEM #9	HATS OFF TO HOMETOWN HITS
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Council Member Christensen expressed gratitude to her friends and neighbors who had supported her through her recent health issue.

Council Member Whalen shared his wife and he attended a Richfield White Caps game and had a good time. He encouraged residents to check them out.

Council Member Hayford O'leary thanked staff for the excellent plowing and the communication during the last snowstorm. He stated Mayor Supple and he attended a League of Minnesota Cities event conference and it was nice to collaborate with people from other communities.

Mayor Supple thanked the plow crews, first responders, and neighbors who helped neighbors during the recent snowstorm. She noted last week was supposed to be the winter walk to school event, but it was cancelled due to the snowstorm. She stated that event would be tomorrow, and she thanked the people involved in setting up this event. She announced they have a few open Commission spots still left that can be applied for through March 17.

ITEM #10	ADJOURNMENT
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The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:58 p.m.


Date Approved: March 14, 2023



 Mary Supple
 Mayor



 Kelly Wynn
 Administrative Assistant



 Katie Rodriguez
 City Manager