



CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Richfield, Minnesota

City Council Work Session

March 28, 2023

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Supple called the work session to order at 5:45 p.m. in the Bartholomew Room.

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

Council Members Absent: Simon Trautmann

Staff Present: Katie Rodriguez, City Manager; Sack Thongvanh, Assistant City Manager; Chris Fierst, Liquor Operations Manager; Dustin Leslie, City Clerk; and Chris Swanson, Management Analyst

ITEM #1	4-YEAR (2023-2027) STRATEGIC PLAN QUARTERLY UPDATE
----------------	---

City Manager Rodriguez gave a brief update about the progress of the strategic plan and dashboard and asked for feedback from Council Members.

Mayor Supple asked if there was a way to measure the amount of visitors to the dashboard. Management Analyst Swanson stated there was not a way to see how many people visit the dashboard but staff could see how many visited the website. He stated 83 people had visited the website since launch.

Council Member Whalen stated he would be interested in seeing how many people visit the website and asked if it would be worth keeping the dashboard if not many people were visiting the site. City Manager Rodriguez stated it would still be useful for reporting purposes, telling stories, and decision making.

Council Member Whalen stated it was helpful to have a comprehensive report at the beginning of the process but asked for more high-level reports over the course of the year. Management Analyst Swanson stated the dashboard is only at the starting point now and staff would look at other options as time went on.

Council Member Hayford Oleary stated the director notes were helpful in better understanding the goals of the plan.

Mayor Supple noted there were some benchmarks still waiting for progress updates. City Manager Rodriguez stated she was hopeful those benchmarks would be added by the end of 2023.

Mayor Supple asked if any members of the public had given any feedback. City Manager Rodriguez stated there has not been any feedback received from residents yet.

ITEM #2	RECAP PRESENTATION AND COUNCIL DISCUSSION ON THE REMOVAL OF ALL TOBACCO PRODUCTS FROM RICHFIELD LIQUOR STORES
----------------	--

City Manager Rodriguez gave a brief introduction into the item. Assistant City Manager Thongvanh gave updates on the operations of the liquor store as well as funding streams from revenues. He noted the city was studying the effects of removing tobacco products from liquor stores.

Liquor Operations Manager Fierst spoke about current inventory of tobacco products. Assistant City Manager Thongvanh spoke about challenges including worker turnover in the stores.

Mayor Supple summarized the discussion and spoke about the financial outcomes of removing tobacco products.

Council Member Hayford Oleary stated it would not be fair to new small business owners if the city could sell tobacco products but they could not.

Council Member Whalen agreed with Council Member Hayford Oleary's statement but noted there needed to be conversations about how the city would make up the lost income.

Council Member Whalen asked for clarifications about where additional profits go other than the park budget and if other sources could be reduced. City Manager Rodriguez stated that since it is an enterprise fund, portions of it go to other city funds. She also stated staff was still researching how the funds could be moved around. In regards to making up lost revenue, City Manager Rodriguez stated the city would look at selling low potency THC products and other possibilities. She expected some lean years as the pandemic produced better sales only temporarily.

Council Member Whalen asked if enterprise funds could be used to pay off bonding debts. City Manager Rodriguez stated she was unsure if liquor store profits could be used to keep up building maintenance.

Council Member Hayford Oleary and Assistant City Manager Thongvanh discussed liquor store profits and how one store was underperforming more than others. Council Member Hayford Oleary stated he would be comfortable with closing one store if underperforming. Council Member Whalen added that selling the store in a prime location could help the city financially.

Mayor Supple stated she understood both sides and asked if the prohibition of tobacco products would cause customers to go to other liquor stores instead. Liquor Operations Manager Fierst stated tobacco was a convenience product and that it would be hard to say if they drove overall sales.

City Manager Rodriguez spoke about Council Member Trautmann's views and that he could go either way depending on how the rest of the Council would vote. Council Member Christensen stated she would support ending tobacco sales in liquor stores giving the measure a majority vote along with Council Members Hayford Oleary and Whalen.

City Manager Rodriguez asked if this item should come to Council when adult-use cannabis legislation was completed at the legislature. Council agreed with that decision.

Mayor Supple stated if a prohibition was put in place, business owners should be notified ahead of time. City Manager Rodriguez stated there would be at least six months notice to business owners.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Supple adjourned the work session at 6:16 pm

Date Approved: April 11, 2023



Dustin Leslie
City Clerk



Mary B. Supple
Mayor



Katie Rodriguez
City Manager