



CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Richfield, Minnesota

City Council Work Session

January 23, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Supple called the work session to order at 5:30 p.m. in the Bartholomew Room.

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

Staff Present: Katie Rodriguez, City Manager; Brittany Bartlett, Equity Coordinator, Jay Henthorne, Police Chief; Chris Swanson, Management Analyst

ITEM #1	REVIEW OF THE RESULTS FROM THE RACIAL EQUITY DIVIDENDS INDEX (REDI) THAT THE CITY PARTICIPATED IN THROUGH THE CENTER OF ECONOMIC INCLUSION (CEI) THIS FALL.
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Mayor Supple introduced the items and turned it over to City Manager Rodriguez. She introduced Equity Coordinator Brittany Bartlett to the council and introduced the report.

Coordinator Bartlett presented the Racial Equity Dividends Index (REDI) report created by the Center for Economic Inclusion (CEI). She provided background on the report including discussion around how the city's responses were pulled together. She noted the REDI report not only serves as a comparison with what other cities are doing but really serves as a way for Richfield to evaluate the current racial equity work.

Coordinator Bartlett talked about the results of the report, specifically calling out public safety for their leadership around racial equity work. She talked about how the city compared with similar areas and noted that the city scored higher than 83 percent of peer small cities. She talked about how the various questions were scored and went over the general findings for all cities. She spoke about the specific results for Richfield as well as opportunities recommended by the CEI. One item Coordinator Bartlett noted was that many of these best practices are already part of how the city operates but just have not been formally accepted as general city standards.

Mayor Supple asked if the city has been evaluating the educational requirements for jobs. City Manager Rodriguez said that is something done for individual positions but have not been evaluated for the organization.

Coordinator Bartlett talked about some of the opportunities included in the REDI around culture, retention, and advancement. She spoke about some of the challenges faced by Richfield staff in pulling together the data for the REDI report given the short timeline the city had this year. Another

area of focus in the report was making the city's procurement process more equitable. She did mention that one of the issues was also a lack of diverse suppliers to take on this work.

Mayor Supple asked if there was a current list the city could use. Coordinator Bartlett noted there were lists currently available, but city staff would like to research them more thoroughly before the city could move forward with recommendations.

Council Member Trautmann talked about his experience representing BIPOC businesses and the challenges in connecting with local governments for this service. He noted the saying "a rising tide lifts all boats" and he appreciated this conversation.

Coordinator Bartlett talked about some of the ways the city could start looking at opening the procurement process and about some actions other cities are taking.

Council Member Hayford Oleary asked how Richfield would bring more input to the budget process. City Manager Rodriguez spoke about the significant amount of work staff currently does to pull the budget together. She talked about additional ways the city could get input on the budget. She did note that advisory boards provide their comments on the budget. One option she highlighted was pulling together a budget presentation and letting the council bring it to the community.

Council Member Whalen said that he had noted before how unapproachable the budget is and said it would be good to have a high-level snapshot of the changes included in the upcoming year. Council Member Hayford Oleary said he did want to balance this process with the frustration that could come if someone feels like their comments were not heard. City Manager Rodriguez agreed with that point and said she would follow up and see what other cities are doing to collect input. Council Member Whalen said some of these budget constraints would be good to express to the community.

Coordinator Bartlett provided a summary of the findings on community and economic development section of the REDI report. She talked about the good work the departments are doing but that, again, the city needs to formalize some of the processes.

Mayor Supple asked if when public works performed an ADA analysis on a project if that would have been considered for incorporating equity into our public work design process. Coordinator Bartlett said it would and the department has provided this evaluation in a few recent reports.

Coordinator Bartlett talked about the findings from the public safety questions. Council Member Whalen asked when the city can start sharing data from the new TYLER Tracking system. Chief Henthorne said the standard for when departments share data is two to three years from the implementation of the new system. That allows the system to build background on the data.

Coordinator Bartlett discussed the REDI report's findings on public policy and then opened the presentation up to the council for questions.

Council Member Trautmann thanked staff for their work. He said staff have been strategic in the way they have spent their time and energy. Council Member Trautmann gave a shout out to public safety for all their work and leadership in this space.

Council Member Whalen said he had a couple thoughts on the REDI report, he appreciated how blunt the report is in terms of looking at the system, and how Richfield was compared to other cities. He noted how it shows how the city needs to keep working on this issue. He feels it's helpful to have these base questions and see the examples of what other cities are implementing. He noted that most of this report was internally focused and wondered if there is an external facing evaluation tool available for cities. He hopes Richfield can expand its reach in terms of finding what is driving these disparities in the community.

Mayor Supple noted the Axtell Group is hosting focus groups around public safety. City Manager Rodriguez said the Axtell Group report will be presented at a future work session. Chief Henthorne said there will be data in the report from the focus groups and one-on-one interviews.

City Manager Rodriguez talked about the updated plan for the community survey to increase participation. Mayor Supple asked if the survey would have a specific question about community members who have a disability. City Manager Rodriguez said staff can explore including that as one of the questions if it's not already in the survey.

Council Member Hayford Oleary said he liked how the city was compared to other similar cities. He talked about how most of these items are more focused on structural issues and he appreciated this attention. Mayor Supple also expressed her appreciation for the work put into this report.

Council Member Whalen talked about the range of action items being worked on, he also wondered if there are items that the council should refocus their priorities on and asked staff to try to highlight these for council. Coordinator Bartlett said staff will talk about what this work looks like over the coming years and will come back to council if needed.

Council Member Trautmann was interested in the living language for contractors and subcontractors. Council Member Whalen also talked about how people could probably not legally afford housing in Richfield at \$52,000 a year, the amount identified as a livable wage in the REDI. He said it was important that we noted this point.

City Manager Rodriguez provided a summary of the council discussion.

ITEM #2	DISCUSSION ON INCLUDING THE NORTHSTAR BILL IN THE CITY'S 2024 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM.
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City Manager Rodriguez introduced the discussion around the North STAR Act (the Act). She talked about the work that has been done since inclusion of this bill was proposed by council. She spoke about how staff have reviewed the language of the Act and are comfortable with including it in the city's 2024 legislative platform.

Council Member Trautmann thanked staff for the work they did on this item. Council Member Whalen echoed the sentiment and said he liked how this review process worked and appreciated the model it sets for the future. He said he appreciated how the final policy was broad and focused on the issue while not getting stuck in the details. Mayor Supple agreed with the process and appreciated how everyone worked together.

Council Member Hayford Oleary stated he felt the language was less supportive than the other priorities and he wondered if this is in line with the rest of the platform. City Manager Rodriguez responded that, recognizing the bill is still being drafted, the current language gives staff clear direction for how to respond to any future language.

Council Member Hayford Oleary said he had an email from a resident about the current process. He asked Chief Henthorne to provide a summary of how the RPD handles cases with issues around civil immigration enforcement. Chief Henthorne provided a summary of the current visa process. He said they have been working with the county attorney to get this process done faster to help the community. He said the city does not currently help any agencies with any immigration enforcement.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Supple adjourned the work session at 6:25 pm.

Date Approved: February 13, 2024



Chris Swanson
Management Analyst



Mary B. Supple
Mayor



Katie Rodriguez
City Manager