



CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Richfield, Minnesota

Special City Council Work Session

November 9, 2022

CALL TO ORDER

The work session was called to order by Mayor Regan Gonzalez at 5:48 p.m. in the Bartholomew Room.

Council Members Present: Maria Regan Gonzalez, Mayor; Mary Supple; Ben Whalen; Simon Trautmann; and Sean Hayford Oleary

Council Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Katie Rodriguez, City Manager; Kumud Verma, Finance Manager; Kristen Asher, Public Works Director; Joe Powers, City Engineer; Amy Markle, Recreation Services Director; Jay Henthorne, Public Safety Director; Melissa Poehlman, Community Development Director; Mike Dobesh, Fire Chief; Jaimie Hafner, Human Resources Manager; Sack Thongvanh, Assistant City Manager; and Chris Swanson, Management Analyst

Mayor Regan Gonzalez introduced the topic for discussion for the work session and turned it over to City Manager Rodriguez.

ITEM #1	CONSIDER THE CITY'S PROPOSED LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR 2023
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City Manager Rodriguez introduced Management Analyst Swanson who gave a presentation that described the past legislative priorities and outlined the new legislative process and introduced the top three 2023 legislative priorities.

Director Markle presented on supporting a bonding bill to help fund the Wood Lake Nature Center (WLNC) construction. The state funding would cover some of the cost to renovate the site, including covering the cost for predesign, design, construct, furnish, and equip a new nature center building.

Director Markle then presented on the request for council to support legislation which would provide the City of Richfield the authorization to propose a local sales tax (LST) to support regionally significant park projects. She remarked the LST will be discussed further at a work session on December 8, 2022, to determine what projects will be included in the final legislative platform.

Fire Chief Dobesh presented on the support local control of Emergency Medical Services (EMS). He discussed how the current laws do not provide meaningful oversight of the ambulance service providers.

Council Member Whalen asked Fire Chief Dobesh why this EMS issue has risen to the top three this year. Fire Chief Dobesh outlined how there are no response time requirements or control of ambulance billing rates within the Hennepin County EMS Primary Service Areas. He discussed how, due to the change in Hennepin County EMS protocols, they have seen instances where residents are waiting up to 2 hours to receive service. He asked council to support local control to determine who is best able to provide EMS services in our community.

Council Member Supple was supportive of including the virtual/hybrid meeting option in the City's platform. She believes this will make the city more accessible to all and increase participation.

Council Member Hayford Oleary expressed support for the top priorities identified in the presentation. He wanted to comment on a few other legislative items included in the City's platform. Specially, he wanted to discuss THC regulations. He recognized that the THC item included in the platform was under the assumption that the political landscape would remain like the divide last year. He felt with the "trifecta" win by democrats we should reevaluate our language as there is a strong possibility for full legalization with the change. Police Chief Henthorne said the city will continue to look for direction from the League of Minnesota Cities and that the legislative priorities specifically relate to employment related cannabinoid questions. He also stated the city will continue to be involved in this discussion.

Council Member Whalen discussed how part of the problem with the THC regulation was that cities were not consulted with when the law was drafted and passed last year.

Council Member Hayford Oleary asked the words "in consultation with" be added to the THC regulation to ensure cities have a seat at the table for any future THC legislation. Staff was supportive of the change.

Council Member Whalen commented on how streamlined this process was this year. He was appreciative how this process incorporated the mission, vision and values and the strategic priorities of the city. He mentioned he looked forward to future discussion on freeway projects.

Council Member Supple mentioned the 494 Visioning Committee was still looking for comments on their legislative platform and that she wanted to hear from the rest of council before providing comments back to the committee.

Council Member Trautmann said he also appreciated the process and thanked staff for all the work they do.

Mayor Regan Gonzalez echoed comments of appreciation. She said she loved the final legislative approval process. She specially pointed to the connection to the both the mission, vision and values and the strategic priorities of the city in the process.

Council Member Supple asked if the city would still be able to quickly respond if other legislative issues arose. City Manager Rodriguez confirmed.

Council Member Supple asked about the presumption clause in the administrative section of the proposed legislative positions. Police Chief Henthorne, Fire Chief Dobesh, and Human Resources Manager Haefner provided more information on the presumption clause and the city's commitment to their employees getting the help and support they need to return to duty. Specifically, Police Chief Henthorne pointed to strong legislation passed in Wisconsin as a good example.

Council Member Hayford Oleary asked if there were any major projects coming up around work on 494. He was worried that we would not have a stance prepared if something were to happen soon. Director Asher and City Engineer Powers answered questions on the status of the 494 projects and outlined how the city would have time to review and respond if a project were to come up soon.

City Manager Rodriguez provided a summary of what she heard from council and the next steps of the legislative platform adoption process.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Regan Gonzalez adjourned the work session at 6:21 p.m.

Date Approved: November 22, 2022



Chris Swanson
Management Analyst



Maria Regan Gonzalez
Mayor



Katie Rodriguez
City Manager