



CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Richfield, Minnesota

City Council Work Session

December 12, 2023

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; Chris Swanson, Management Analyst; Dustin Leslie, City Clerk; Jay Henthorne, Police Chief; Karl Huemiller, Recreation Services Director; Mike Dobesh, Fire Chief; Melissa Poehlman, Community Development Director; Sack Thongvanh, Assistant City Manager; Rachel Lindholm, Sustainability Specialist; Kristin Asher, Public Works Director; Joe Powers, City Engineer; and Paul Smithson, Woodlake Nature Center Manager.

ITEM #1	WOOD LAKE BUILDING PROJECT UPDATE AND TIMELINE
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Director Huemiller introduced the topic and Manager Smithson to the Council.

Woodlake Nature Center Manager Smithson gave the presentation including the history of the Woodlake Nature Center, the history of the project, an overview of HGA, next steps in the process, construction manager at risk overview, timeline of events, and community engagement.

Council Member Whalen asked if trails around the nature center would also be approved. Director Huemiller confirmed there would be trail improvements.

There was a discussion about what the Local Sales Tax would be able to cover if it were approved. Management Analyst Swanson noted there is a lot of flexibility in the Local Sales Tax funds.

Council Member Hayford O'leary spoke about neighborhoods being cut off from the nature center area and asked staff to look at different options for accessible entrances.

Council Member Hayford O'leary asked if there was any private funding. Program Manager Smithson spoke about donations and volunteer groups.

Council Member Whalen asked who would be leading the Local Sales Tax education campaign. City Manager Rodriguez stated there was no formal group yet, but some community members have shown interest.

Council Member Trautmann spoke about how the whole community would need to be engaged in the process. Recreation Director Huemiller spoke about outreach campaign strategies.

Council Member Whalen spoke about the need to reach out to kids and teens since they would be big users of the nature center. City Manager Rodriguez spoke about getting the schools involved in student feedback.

ITEM #2	CONSIDER THE CITY'S PROPOSED LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR 2024
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City Manager Rodriguez introduced the topic and spoke about 2023 legislative successes as well as the top 2024 legislative priorities.

Director Asher spoke about the Nicollet Avenue bonding request as well as the supporting limits on local contributions and ownership of county and state projects.

Council Member Hayford Oleary stated it seemed like an uphill battle on limiting local contributions for it to be a top priority. City Manager Rodriguez spoke about the importance of educating on the topic now and the difficulties of cost shares rolling down to the cities who struggle with keeping up the on the additional burden.

Fire Chief Dobesh spoke about support for local control of emergency medical services.

Assistant City Manager Thongvanh spoke about legislative priorities for Administrative Services.

There was a conversation between the Council and staff about taxing streaming services for fiber use.

Director Poehlman spoke about legislative priorities in the Community Development Department.

Council Member Whalen spoke about the importance of supporting Housing Infrastructure Bonds and other financing capital for affordable housing. He also spoke about the importance of getting clarifications regarding comprehensive plans.

Council Member Hayford spoke about not being comfortable with supporting legislation to allow two-family and accessory dwelling units by-right but retain local autonomy in the development and approval of official controls. Council Member Whalen asked what happens if the full council did not fully agree on a priority. City Manager Rodriguez spoke about the priority vetting process.

City Manager Rodriguez spoke about the Finance Department's legislative priorities.

Fire Chief Dobesh spoke about the Fire Department's legislative priorities.

Police Chief Henthorne spoke about public safety legislative priorities.

Council Member Whalen and Chief Henthorne discussed the support of an update to state statute on use of reasonable force by SROs. Police Chief Henthorne spoke about what the update would entail.

Director Asher spoke about Public Works legislative priorities.

Director Huemiller spoke about Recreation and Sustainability priorities.

Council Member Whalen asked staff to look at language around connecting people more sustainability funding from the state and federal government.

City Manager Rodriguez summarized the discussions.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Supple adjourned the work session at 6:55 pm.

Date Approved: January 9, 2024



Dustin Leslie
City Clerk



Mary B. Supple
Mayor



Katie Rodriguez
City Manager