



CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Richfield, Minnesota

City Council Work Session

October 27, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Regan Gonzalez at 5:45 p.m. virtually via WebEx.

Council Members Present: Maria Regan Gonzalez, Mayor; Ben Whalen; Mary Supple; Edwina Garcia; and Simon Trautmann

Staff Present: Katie Rodriguez, City Manager; Blanca Martinez Gavina, Executive Analyst; Pam Dmytrenko, Assistant City Manager; Neil Ruhland, Communications and Engagement Manager; and Kelly Wynn, Senior Office Assistant.

Others Present: Yacaira Rodriguez, MIRA Program Coordinator

Item #1	REVIEW THE RESULTS AND HIGHLIGHTS OF A SERIES OF FOCUS GROUPS WITH MEMBERS OF THE RICHFIELD LATINO COMMUNITY.
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City Manager Rodriguez spoke of the grant MIRA received to conduct focus groups within the City of Richfield.

Executive Analyst Martinez Gavina introduced Yacaira Rodriguez with MIRA.

Yacaira Rodriguez reviewed the mission for MIRA and the presentation outline. She began by stating MIRA received the 2020 Social Service Grant Project where over the course of four weeks, MIRA conducted a series of focus groups which concentrated on expanding Latino/Immigrant outreach in the Richfield community. She spoke of the difficulties for the Latino community as well as being able to conduct the focus groups during this time of COVID.

Executive Analyst Martinez Gavina reviewed the focus group highlights and the barriers indicated by the participants including: language; immigration status; transportation; and navigating city services.

Yacaira Rodriguez spoke of the places the focus group participants' accessed information regarding services: Facebook; MIRA; PICA Head Start; relatives; schools; and WhatsApp. She also reviewed the information and services residents want: more programming, activities and support for the Latinx community in Spanish; information and training on Public and Fire Safety; access to affordable housing; transportation access; and adult education access.

Executive Analyst Martinez Gavina stated residents would like to know how to learn more about city government. Residents would like more information on who to contact and how to connect with the city. She then spoke of how the participants also assisted in handing out COVID-19 surveys to Latinx community members and how 70 surveys were completed and returned to city staff.

Yacaira Rodriguez reviewed next steps and questions the participants had for the city in how they will move forward with the information. They would like to hear from the city and how the city will move forward in providing more information and services for the Latinx community.

Mayor Regan Gonzalez thanked everyone for the time and leadership.

Council Member Supple thanked Executive Analyst Martinez Gavina and Yacaira Rodriguez along with the focus group members who participated. She then asked if this presentation could be shared with the public and Human Rights Commission.

Executive Analyst Martinez Gavina confirmed the presentation is available on the city's website or can be obtained from her.

Council Member Trautmann echoed thanks for the presentation. He then wondered if the city could integrate the WhatsApp into communications.

City Manager Rodriguez stated the city will follow up on looking into the application.

Council Member Whalen asked if staff already had next steps.

City Manager Rodriguez spoke of how staff is in the early steps of equity and inclusion work. The information provided will also be incorporated in the strategic planning steps. She spoke of how departments within the city will be picking up the pieces for a more coherent approach.

Council Member Garcia offered her services to volunteer after she retires from the City Council at the end of the year and gave some of her previous experience.

Mayor Regan Gonzalez would like to keep at the forefront of communications, the ever-changing demographics within Richfield. She spoke of how significant the Latino community is in Richfield and how outreach might look different when reaching out to youth versus adults. She spoke of how a flyer in Spanish is a great first step but there are many other things the city needs to do to break down deeply rooted barriers. She also stated the city used to hire outside consultants to do outreach work for Community Development and Public Works but believes this money could be utilized within the community instead of hiring outside consultants.

Council Member Whalen wondered if the six residents that participated in the focus group, could continue to be involved and provide leadership moving forward. This group of people could assist in passing information along to the community.

Executive Analyst Martinez Gavina stated many of the focus group participants would like to be involved in helping.

Yacaira Rodriguez spoke of how the participants would like to create a Latino group and meet every month for the City of Richfield.

Mayor Regan Gonzalez reiterated the support from Council and staff and would like some outreach with other local groups and organizations.

Item #2	UPDATE ON THE NEW WEBSITE FOR THE CITY RICHFIELD
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City Manager Rodriguez introduced Neil Ruhland, Communications and Engagement Manager.

Manager Ruhland began by how the Communications Department has been working hand in hand with many Latino organizations, especially around the upcoming election, to provide information about voting. He then reviewed the new website for Richfield including the process and goals. The primary goals for the website include: incorporate city branding; link to best website practices; expand communication options; improve site aesthetics; and increased mobile accessibility. He also reviewed the process which included: resident feedback; reviewed top government website providers and other city websites; studied site analytics; and held discussions with content creators.

Manager Ruhland displayed the Richfield website that is currently active and pointed out some deficiencies it has. He then gave a preview of the new site and how things will look and be more functional for residents.

Council Member Garcia commented on how happy she is to have Manager Ruhland working on this project as he is so knowledgeable and has the best interest of the residents in mind.

Council Member Garcia left the meeting at 6:46 p.m.

Council Member Trautmann commended Manager Ruhland on all his work with the site. He then asked about ADA compliance with the site.

Manager Ruhland confirmed the site is 100 percent ADA compliant as to be the most accessible to residents.

Council Member Whalen thanked Manager Ruhland for the hours spent on creating this site and making it more accessible. He then asked about future support and management of the site.

Manager Ruhland explained how the company built the site but day to day management will be done in house. However, if there are larger coding pieces or major changes, those will be done by the site management company. The new site will be more user friendly for staff.

Council Member Whalen asked about news updates that eventually expire.

Manager Ruhland spoke of how staff can archive items or create longer run times for news items.

Council Member Supple thanked Manager Ruhland for his tremendous work in making text alerts possible and a more functional mobile site.

Mayor Regan Gonzalez stated how a new site was a need for the city and this will be a huge win for all residents.

Manager Ruhland stated training will begin next week and roll out should happen by the end of November. He then thanked Council for their comments and feedback. He also thanked Kate Aitchison, Housing/Communications Specialist and Brad Drayna, Police Lieutenant for assisting in the process.

ADJOURNMENT

The work session was adjourned by unanimous consent at 6:55pm

Date Approved: November 10, 2020



Maria Regan Gonzalez
Mayor



Kelly Wynn
Senior Office Assistant



Katie Rodriguez
City Manager