



CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Richfield, Minnesota

City Council Work Session

November 10, 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; and Simon Trautmann

Council Members Absent: Edwina Garcia

Staff Present: Katie Rodriguez, City Manager; Amy Markle, Recreation Services Director; Rachel Lindholm, Sustainability Specialist; Blanca Martinez Gavina, Executive Analyst; and Kelly Wynn, Senior Office Assistant.

Others Present: Peder Sandhei, Principal Planner-Sustainable Materials Management Unit

Item #1	ORGANIZING CURBSIDE RESIDENTIAL SOLID WASTE (TRASH, RECYCLING AND ORGANICS) COLLECTION
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City Manager Rodriguez introduced the item and Director Amy Markle.

Director Markle gave an overview of items to be discussed. She then spoke of the guiding principle and plans including equity, affordability, sustainability and quality of life. She also explained why organized collection makes sense for the City of Richfield including economic, environmental and social and education benefits.

Sustainability Specialist Lindholm added that many of these benefits have been identified by staff as well as residents. It has become a priority for many residents for many reasons. She then spoke of recent industry developments including Republic Services acquiring Randy's Environmental Services. She also gave a process overview for the remainder of 2020 including public engagement and education events where staff will be able to answer questions residents may have regarding organized hauling. She then reviewed the process for 2021 which will include public engagement and education, public hearing and contract proposal, approval and implementation.

Council Member Whalen expressed his support for the effort. He asked for clarification on the public engagement and education piece and how residents will be able to provide feedback. He also asked about the options committee and if residents will be a part of it or if it will be staff and Council.

Sustainability Specialist Lindholm explained there will be a variety of ways for residents to provide feedback to staff along the way. She then spoke of the options committee and they would like to have residents included. Members of that committee will be appointed.

City Manager Rodriguez reminded Council that there is no road map for this process and staff is doing their best to create one. The city has a strong tradition to make decisions with residents and they will be included throughout the process.

Council Member Trautmann thanked staff for their efforts. He asked about the services residents will receive and if it will be one bundle of services or a menu of residents can choose from.

Sustainability Specialist Lindholm clarified residents would have options on can size and services available. She then spoke of the options committee that will focus on alternatives if necessary.

Director Markle spoke of the options committee being another route for brainstorming and feedback regarding collection options and what would be best for the community.

Council Member Supple stated her excitement to see this process moving forward. She asked about the initial meeting with haulers and who would be attending. She also asked who would be assisting with reaching out to the community to retrieve feedback.

Sustainability Specialist Lindholm stated the Sustainability Commission will be assisting with learning about the process and gathering feedback from residents. She then spoke of how details are still in progress regarding an initial meeting with collectors and will try to coordinate with as many Council Members as possible.

Council Member Whalen stated how some engagement is challenging and even more with the pandemic. He suggested a mailer since not all residents have internet and asked about non virtual ways to reach residents.

Director Markle stated there have been many conversations around mailers or postcards. A contract has also been extended to someone to assist in translating items into Spanish.

Sustainability Specialist Lindholm elaborated on Director Markle's comments in that new technological items have been acquired to provide closed captioning in Spanish.

Council Member Trautmann spoke of the residents with lack of internet access will be taken most by surprise and have the hardest time with the transition. He appreciates the staff efforts in developing other lines of communication.

Sustainability Specialist Lindholm stated she has heard from residents that neighbors are sharing information with each other and have opened up alternative routes of communication.

Council Member Supple stated how students at the Richfield High School are very interested in sustainability and could be a resource to tap into for feedback and ideas.

Mayor Regan Gonzalez believed this process is headed in the right direction. She commended staff on outlining how this will benefit the community. She then spoke of how important this item is but will be somewhat of a struggle with COVID mitigations.

Director Markle spoke of getting information up on the community channel.

Council Member Trautmann offered utilizing kid's backpacks to help communicate efforts of the process.

Council Member Whalen asked about the transition and making it as seamless as possible for residents.

Sustainability Specialist Lindholm thanked Council Member Whalen for bringing up the disruption it may have on residents but they are hoping to develop a plan so residents will not have extra charges or possibility of overlap so residents are not without a collection cart. Staff is making it a priority to make the transition as smooth as possible.

Peder Sandhei expressed appreciation of being involved in this process. He shared observations of how public engagement is important as some residents will oppose this transition. It is vital to be present in the community with what, why and how this transition is taking place. He also urged Council to consider the number of haulers and size of each hauler. The cost to residents will need to be weighed along with keeping local small haulers in business.

Sustainability Specialist Lindholm stated the city is fortunate to have options of haulers within Richfield. She believed this will be greatly beneficial to the community and its residents.

Peder Sandhei expressed his curiosity of the acquisition of Randy's Sanitation and how it will affect the process as they were the most vocal against the organized collection process.

Council Member Trautmann would like to make sure cost to residents is a priority.

Mayor Regan Gonzalez echoed having the best interest of the residents in mind.

Sustainability Specialist Lindholm spoke of how currently, there are five licensed haulers and the city would be looking to have three or less.

Council Member Whalen asked for clarification that it is not an option to have only a single hauler for the city.

Sustainability Specialist Lindholm confirmed the city needs to enter into negotiations with a consortium of haulers available and willing to negotiate. Staff will enter negotiations with licensed haulers willing to enter the process.

Peder Sandhei confirmed the process of determining price gets easier with only three licensed haulers.

Mayor Regan Gonzalez thanked staff for attending and providing information along with Council asking a variety of questions.

ADJOURNMENT

The work session was adjourned by unanimous consent at 6:35pm

Date Approved: November 24, 2020



Kelly Wynn
Senior Office Assistant



Maria Regan Gonzalez
Mayor



Katie Rodriguez
City Manager