



CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Richfield, Minnesota

City Council and Staff Planning Retreat Virtual Meeting held via WebEx

June 10, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Maria Regan Gonzalez at 4:00 p.m. via WebEx.

Council Members

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

Staff Present:

Katie Rodriguez, City Manager; Mary Tietjen, City Attorney; Jay Henthorne, Public Safety Director; Chris Regis, Finance Director; John Stark, Community Development Director; Amy Markle, Recreation and Services Director; Kristin Asher, Public Works Director; Bill Fillmore Liquor Operations Director; Neil Ruhland, Communications and Engagement Manager; Blanca Martinez Gavina, Executive Analyst;

Others Present: Lisa Sorenson, Consultant.

Introductions

Consultant Sorenson began the meeting by reviewing the discussion, expectations and outlining the standards of engagement.

Staff and City Council engaged in the conversation by reviewing standards of engagement and other suggestions for best meeting outcomes and future engagement.

Mayor Regan Gonzalez and City Manager Rodriguez welcomed staff and city council and provided their hopes for the discussion.

Consultant Lisa welcomed the Department Director Chris Regis to begin his presentation.

Finance Department	Presentation on COVID19 Budget Impacts by Finance Director Chris Regis
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Director Regis reviewed the COVID19 budget impacts, which included financial challenges around future tax collections, possible local government aid cuts, revenue reduction

in general fund and other changes. He stated that with the cuts proposed by directors and robust permit revenue he anticipates the 2020 General Fund budget to be balanced.

City Council gave feedback on public works projects and asked about the impact of postponing some projects. There were also questions around on the pool and the cause of the projected deficit, and Director Regis pointed out the lack of any revenue but that there are still fixed costs. Additionally there were questions on capital improvement plans, improvements to Woodlake and other projects.

Staff responded by stating that public works maintenance and capital projects will be explored on a case by case basis and that Woodlake project is not included in the current budget but was introduced as a bill to gain traction.

Mayor/City Manager Expectations	Mayor / City Manager state expectations / outcomes for Council and Staff's discussion of priorities for 2020 – 2021.
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City Manager Rodriguez stated the need to focus on priorities and moving those forward as a team.

Mayor Regan Gonzalez discussed the great work the team has done in building trust. She stated that she expects to have a respectful dialogue and a way to move forward.

Department Director Priorities Update	Each Department Director state current Department priorities / needs & recommended changes to Action Steps to continue
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Community Development Presentation:

Community Development Director John Stark described his department and stated that 30% of staff in Community Development are focused on redevelopment and housing, and that there are 70% of the department that focuses on other critical services to the community. He continued to state that the department's priorities are the core services to constituents, COVID-19 response, housing equity and housing affordability. Finally, he closed with some observations and recommendations on programs that are no longer fit for the community and that need to be modified.

City Council commented on programs that need to be modified to meet constituents needs, consensus among HRA & Planning Commission to focus on housing affordability, diversity of housing, tracking affordability of past development, focusing on more deep affordability.

Staff responded that there is a need to review issues around affordability, diversity of housing, and give people access to programs to purchase a home.

Public Works Presentation:

Public Works Director Kristin Asher reviewed the department's priorities as the continuation of uninterrupted essential services, funding package for the underpass, storm water solution for 65th St, MnDOT project plans, focusing on right of way rather than field maintenance.

City Council commented on the work that public works has done in lifting equity as a cross developmental goal, the work on 65th street, long term planning, keeping in mind that resurfacing is cheaper than rebuilding, and commendations for their work.

Fire Services Department Presentation:

Fire Services Director Fire Chief Wayne Kewitsch reviewed the department priorities as maintaining the core mission, vision and values, managing the overtime as a result of COVID 19 and the establishment of a battalion chief position.

City Council commented that they support the hiring of the battalion chief position, asked about the possibility of providing Spanish instruction via zoom, and support focusing on core services.

Executive Department Presentation:

City Manager Rodriguez spoke of the departments' priorities as equity and inclusion by hiring a professional to support the work of the city, providing support to other departments to reach the city's goals. City Manager Rodriguez then asked for feedback on priorities and the possibility of deferring some projects like a new agreement with RTPB.

City Council commented on prioritizing some projects over others, especially the work on equity and inclusion as the highest priority for all Council Members and the Mayor. Consensus to hire an equity professional and to defer a new agreement with RTPB to next year.

Administrative Services Department Presentation:

Assistant City Manager and Administrative Director Pam Dmytrenko spoke of the departments' priorities as core services, equity work and communications and community engagement.

City Council stated that the delivery of core services is essential and there needs to be support in that area, that IT needs to be prioritized as well as the communications and engagement services. There were also commendations for the department's great work in elections, communications and ability to connect with Richfield's community. CC recognized that communications and IT have been under-resourced.

Public Safety Department Presentation:

Public Safety Director Chief Jay Henthorne reviewed the departments priorities as public safety during the global pandemic of COVID 19 and the collaboration with Bloomington Health, having the new JCPP Liaison in the building, the possibility of sharing an embedded mental health professional with Edina, body cameras implementation, reviewing police reforms and possible

legislative mandates and tracking retirements in the department closely to continue increasing the diversity of the department. In addition, Chief Henthorne spoke to the requests from community for public safety data collection on specific demographics as the public safety department currently collects what is mandated by law and additional data would require significant resources in staff and software.

City Council commented that they appreciated the responsiveness from the department, the embedded mental health worker, increasing the priority of body cameras, the need to have community based policing, sharing stories of success, working closely with Martin Costello for ideas on justice reform, and focusing on equity. A question was raised about not filling all public safety positions and Chief Henthorne responded that it puts a burden on the rest of the staff and that is a way that departments tend to lose officers, due to the lack of opportunities.

Recreation Services Department Presentation:

Recreation Services Director Amy Markle reviewed the department’s priorities as the continual of core services, supporting the digitization of services and highlighted specific projects like the ice arena refrigeration, and new dog park.

City Council commended the department for its work, the support for the families and appreciated the response to COVID 19.

Liquor Operations Department Presentation:

Liquor Operations Director Bill Fillmore reviewed the department’s priorities as customer service, developing a free standing website paired with a stronger social media presence, community awareness and a point of sale system.

City Council commended the work by Liquor Operations and their great response and adaptability to the COVID 19 crisis.

Finance Department Presentation:

Finance Department Chris Regis stated that the department’s goal is to continue to pay for core services and focusing on template for the budget.

City Council commented that a summary template with a budget summary in layman’s term is useful. There were also comments of appreciation for conversations about debt and appreciation for the department director’s hard work and wisdom.

Closing	Summary and next steps
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Mayor Regan Gonzalez and City Manager Rodriguez commented on the great conversation and look forward to supporting all of the city’s goals forward.

Consultant Sorenson ended the meeting by thanking the City Council and Staff for a robust and respectful conversation.

Date Approved: June 23, 2020

Maria Regan Gonzalez
Mayor

Blanca Martinez Gavina
Executive Analyst

Katie Rodriguez
City Manager