

WORKSHOP
OAKDALE CITY COUNCIL
August 13, 2019
5 PM

Attendance

The City Council held a workshop on Tuesday, August 13, 2019, at Oakdale City Hall, 1584 Hadley Avenue North, Oakdale, Minnesota.

Present: Mayor Paul Reinke

Council Members: Jake Ingebrigtsen
Susan Olson
Colleen Swedberg
Kevin Zabel

Absent: None

Also Present: Brian Bachmeier, Public Works Director/City Engineer
Susan Barry, City Clerk
Bart Fischer, City Administrator
Chelsea Petersen, Administrative Services Director
Dallas Pierson, Planning Commission
Bill Sullivan, Chief of Police

Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce

Shannon Watson, Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce, provided an overview of the chamber and the areas in which they support member communities: advising, networking, partnerships, business attraction and retention, and economic development.

2020 Budget: Special Revenue/General/Levy

Administrative Services Director Petersen reviewed the following special revenue funds:

Communications and Broadcasting

In response to a question from Council Member Zabel, Administrative Services Director Petersen noted that she would need to review the city's various antenna contracts to provide contract lengths and added that they are a stable revenue source.

Mayor Reinke indicated that the \$2,000 cost for metro-wide broadcasting should be removed from the budget, per direction of the City Council in 2018.

In response to a question from Council Member Zabel, City Administrator Fischer noted that municipalities pay the Ramsey-Washington Counties Cable Commission a portion of franchise fees. He added that communities that are not part of the commission negotiate directly with cable companies.

Planning Commissioner Pierson added that cable companies receive PEG fees and that should member cities vote to dissolve the cable commission, assets (equipment) would be divided up.

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Staff was directed to provide more detail on the city's agreement with the Ramsey-Washington Counties Cable Commission.

Council Member Zabel asked staff to look into ways the city could better utilize the services of the Government Television Network.

The City Council discussed whether to conduct a community survey.

Mayor Reinke expressed concern with the time commitment needed of residents during the last survey.

Council Member Zabel suggested conducting a survey just prior to the expected significant growth in the community, to set a benchmark, or to survey only new residents.

Staff was directed to come back with survey options and associated cost estimates.

Forfeiture Fund

Chief Sullivan reviewed how the city acquires forfeiture funds and how they may be used.

Council Member Zabel asked that the City Council be provided with report showing forfeiture revenue and expenditures.

Chief Sullivan said that the majority of forfeiture funds will be used to purchase furniture and equipment relating to the police department addition.

Neighborhood and Strategic Initiatives

Council Member Zabel commented on monies spent in 2017 that produced a negative balance. He asked how the bills were paid.

Mayor Reinke noted that for initiatives approved by the City Council, reserves and contingencies can be used to cover related expenditures.

Council Member Zabel cautioned staff to keep funds from going into the negative. He asked that the proposed revenue for the Carlson transfer in 2020 be listed as zero until the funds are available.

Council Member Ingebrigtsen agreed.

Summerfest

Administrative Services Director Petersen informed the City Council that not all invoices relating to Summerfest have been received. She added that staff continues to work on more clearly identifying staff time attributable to the event, which had not always been tracked.

City Administrator Fischer noted that the activity fee revenue is weather dependent.

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Administrative Services Director Petersen indicated that she would provide more details at the next budget work session.

Chief Sullivan suggested that the event could be held for one day; parade in the morning, food and music throughout the day, fireworks at night.

Council Member Swedberg suggested that volunteers from a local church pick up trash along the parade route.

Mayor Reinke invited members of the City Council to serve on the Summerfest Committee.

Levy

The City Council discussed levy options.

Council Member Zabel expressed frustration with the budgeting process and suggested that it be changed so that all purchasing requests from department heads are presented to the City Council for review and consideration. He added that the process could necessitate adopting a higher budget.

Mayor Reinke supported keeping budget increases at the rate of inflation.

Council Member Zabel also noted that projects should be included in the budget rather than having to rely on special revenue funds to do the project after the budget has been approved.

Council Member Ingebrigtsen noted that the city's budgeting process is the same as for corporations whereby managers need to work within a set budget parameter.

Council Member Zabel asked that the levy cap be increased and then reduce it before final adoption, if needed.

Mayor Reinke did not support increasing the levy. He also shared support for the city's budgeting process where department heads present their budget requests to the city administration and administrative services director. Mayor Reinke recommended that the city's budgeting process be discussed at a future work session.

Chief Sullivan shared that the current process works well as department heads work together to stay within the goal of keeping the budget within inflation.

Council Member Zabel shared a desire to have the opportunity to review all the "wants and needs" that are presented by department heads. He also supported discussing the city's budget process at a work session.

In discussing the levy, Council Members Ingebrigtsen and Swedberg supported 3B (3.99 percent increase).

Police Staffing

Chief Sullivan reviewed current staffing levels at the police department as well as a variety of considerations relating to future staffing needs for the department.

In response to a question from Council Member Ingebrigtsen, Chief Sullivan noted that the city no longer has part-time police officer positions.

Council Member Zabel commented on raising the levy to hire an additional officer.

Council Member Olson commented on the need to hire more officers.

Mayor Reinke suggested having a contingency plan in place should a candidate be identified for hire.

In response to a question from Council Member Zabel, City Administrator Fischer noted that additional full-time fire department staff were financed out of the ambulance fund.

Police and Public Works Facilities – Timing and Order

Chief Sullivan indicated that plans are completed for the police department expansion; however, the need to build a new public works facility should be the priority if air quality is an issue and once a location is determined.

In response to a question from Council Member Zabel, City Administrator Fischer explained that the building fund would need one million to start construction.

In response to a question from Council Member Ingebrigtsen, Public Works Director/City Engineer Bachmeier indicated that the air quality at the public works building would be tested twice a year and, should test results warrant, the air exchanger would be run continuously until such time as a new facility is built. He also noted that the potential site for the public works facility, owned by 3M, was still under review.

City Administrator Fischer noted that a discussion on local sales tax would take place at a future work session.

Adjournment

The work session adjourned at 6:56 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Barry, City Clerk