

**City of West St. Paul
Open Council Work Session Minutes
September 26, 2016**

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Mayor David Meisinger called the work session to order at 4:50 p.m.

Present: Mayor David Meisinger and Councilmembers Pat Armon, Ed Iago, John Bellows, Dave Napier, Jenny Halverson and Dick Vitelli.

Others: Assistant City Manager and HR Director Sherrie Le, Assistant Community Development Director Ben Boike, Public Works Director Ross Beckwith, City Attorney Korine Land, Police Chief Manila Shaver, SMFD Chief Mike Pott, and City Clerk Chantal Doriott.

2. Review and Approve the Work Session Agenda

Council approved the agenda as presented.

3. Review and Approve the Regular Meeting Consent Agenda

The regular meeting agenda was approved with the following change:

- Move consent agenda item 10.G. to 12.G. Assessment Policy Revisions

4. Agenda Item(s)

Clpn. Bellows asked that there be no interruptions to the person speaking. Councilmembers agreed.

4.A. Closed Session to Discuss Robert Street Easement Acquisitions

Motion was made by Clpn. Napier and seconded by Clpn. Bellows to close the work session pursuant to State Statute 13b.05 subd. 3(b) for attorney client privilege related to the Robert Street Easement Acquisitions. All members present voted aye. Motion carried.

4.B. Group Home Amendment Discussion

Attorney Korine Land gave an overview. Last July the City Council adopted a one-year moratorium on accepting any zoning applications related to transitional housing, foster care, overnight shelters, and chemical dependency facilities. The one-year has expired and we are now proposing several ordinance changes to be consistent with recent changes in state law. Our ordinances have numerous types of categories of "group homes" that can be simplified by adopting the state law categories of: State Licensed Residential Care Facilities (i.e. nursing homes, developmentally disabled group homes) and Registered Housing with Services Establishments (i.e. people recently released from prison, chemically dependent-related group homes). State law (Minn. Stat. §462.357 subd. 7-8) requires a State-License Residential Care

Facility and a Registered Housing With Services Establishment to be permitted uses in certain zoning districts, which coincide with our ordinances. These permitted uses were reviewed and Council is being asked to review an amended ordinance.

- The County is not regulated by this new law.
- State law does not trump rental density.
- Bring it to the Planning Commission for a public hearing and then Council for two readings. This item will be back before the Council in another month or two.

4.C. 2017 Preliminary Budget and Levy Update

Assistant City Manager Sherrie Le gave an overview of proposed changes, from the last work session, which Finance Director Carlson had included in the newest draft budget. There were two options to review.

- 1) Maximum of 8.05%
- 2) Maximum of 7.22%
- 3) Primary reduction is because of a decrease in health insurance and saved about \$200,000.
- 4) If we move up the police officer hiring the budget increases to 8.05%. They would both start in January. If we staggered the officer hirings, the budget increase would be reduced slightly. We are currently in a hiring process and have a good group of candidates. If we wait until April we could lose someone we are interested in. Delaying officer hirings could cause a whole new interview process.

Comments:

- Clpn. Bellows is in favor of option 2.
- Clpn. Napier is in favor of option 1.
- Mayor Meisinger is in favor of option 1.

Finance Director Joan Carlson, who entered the meeting via phone, said the 2017 budget and maximum levy amount could be further reduced but will not be able to increase once Council sets an amount. Director Carlson said she is comfortable the employee insurance fees will not increase.

4.D. Discussion of Bidwell Safe Routes to School Project

Public Works Director Ross Beckwith gave an overview. In 2015 the City applied for a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) grant for the installation of concrete sidewalk along the east side of Bidwell St. from Thompson Ave. to Butler Ave. The City was granted \$288,400 for construction of this project. The grant application estimated construction at \$360,500 and requires a 20% local match. The City is also required to pay 100% of preliminary engineering, easement acquisition and construction administration. Staff has hired Kimley-Horn as the consultant to perform preliminary engineering and navigate the federal process.

This is a very challenging corridor to retrofit a boulevard and concrete sidewalk in with regards to right-of-way, steep grades and existing mature trees. As a result, three design alternatives were put together for evaluation and reviewed:

- 1) Install a 5 foot boulevard and 5 foot sidewalk behind existing curb.

- 2) Install a 7 foot sidewalk directly behind the existing curb.
- 3) Install new curb out in the existing road (4 to 8 feet out) and install a 5 foot boulevard and 5 foot sidewalk.

Comments:

- Clpn. Vitelli is on same page as Clpn. Iago - the west side from Thompson to Bidwell and Logan, the westerly block, if you crossed there it is pretty much a straight shot.
- Does Xcel Energy pay to move poles? Director Beckwith says it depends – sometimes they do and sometimes they don't.
- Assistant Manager Le said Council could decline doing this project.
- Clpn. Napier asked about the CIP. There was nothing prior to this but there is now. There is a \$288,000 grant we received. He appreciates the need especially for the school. He thinks there are so many things and is in favor of holding off
- Clpn. Armon cost is high and he is concerned about future grants if we turn this back. Ross is unsure.
- Clpn Halverson asked if the city could reapply for the grant funds at a future date. Director Beckwith said probably for the 2020 selection. Clpn. Halverson definitely sees the need and understands this area needs attention.
- Council advised Director Beckwith to stop the consultant from doing any more work on this potential program so Council can further review the area and grant offer.

4.E. Discussion of Legal Service Contract

This item has been moved to the December 15, 2016 work session.

5. Adjourn

Council adjourned the work session at 6:24 p.m.



David Meisinger
Mayor
City of West St. Paul