

City of West St. Paul  
Open Council Work Session Minutes  
January 9, 2017

1. Roll Call

Mayor Jenny Halverson called the work session to order at 5:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Jenny Halverson and Councilmembers Ed Iago, Dave Napier, Dick Vitelli, John Bellows, Anthony Fernandez and Bob Pace.

Others present: Assistant City Manager Sherrie Le, City Attorney Korine Land, Community Development Director Jim Hartshorn, Public Works Director Ross Beckwith, Police Chief Manila Shaver, Finance Director Joan Carlson, Fire Chief Mike Pott and City Clerk Chantal Doriott.

2. Review and Approve the OCWS Agenda

Council reviewed and accepted the work session agenda.

3. Review the Regular Meeting Consent Agenda

Council reviewed the regular council meeting agenda and will make the following revisions:

- Remove agenda item 6 as the Robert Street project has no updates.
- The SRSBA is here to discuss item 10.D.
- Possible removal of New Business item 12.D. dependent upon Council discussion with Senator Klein later in this work session.
- Move Consent Agenda item 10.I. to New Business item 12.F.

Motion was made by Clpn. Napier and seconded by Clpn. Vitelli to close the work session pursuant to State Statute 13b.05 Subd. 3(b) for attorney-client privilege. All members present voted aye. Motion carried.

4. Agenda Item(s)

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

Attorney Peter Mikhail gave an overview of parcel negotiations related to Robert Street easement acquisitions.

Motion was made by Clpn. Napier and seconded by Clpn. Bellows to open the work session at 5:30 p.m. All members present voted aye. Motion carried.

Clpn. Anthony Fernandez excused himself from the meeting at 5:23 p.m. and returned at 5:40 p.m.

Agenda items reorganized as Senator Klein was not present due to weather.

#### 4.C. Discuss Acting City Manager Position

City Attorney Korine Land explained that due to the resignation of City Manager Fulton, and the time it will take to conduct a search and hire a replacement, it is necessary to appoint an Acting City Manager. The Acting City Manager will keep the day to day operations of the City running smoothly until a permanent City Manager is hired. The Council has several options, including hiring an outside consultant to serve as Acting City Manager on an interim basis. There are a number of experienced consultants who are available to perform such interim City Manager services. Mayor Halverson is asking the Council to consider authorizing Attorney Land to identify, and begin discussions with a few consultants, and prepare a recommendation for the Council at its next meeting. City staff is fully capable of managing the day to day operations for the time being.

Attorney Land has already begun the process of identifying potential interim managers. Costs, interest and availability and other items are being reviewed. It was decided that a panel of Council and staff will perform the interim manager interviews. Council is in favor of a full time person.

Mayor Halverson said it seems right and fair to have someone outside of city staff as the interim city manager. There was discussion at one point in having a certain employee take over the interim duties but the Mayor believes this takes a new approach and a neutral person. She'd like to explore options presented by Attorney Land and move it along quickly. Clpn. Vitelli is in favor of Attorney Land's recommendation (she works for us) and having a committee interview two or three candidates. The Mayor asked if everyone was in favor of this process in having Attorney Land put together a list of potential interim candidates for interviews. Everyone responded in the affirmative. Attorney Land has started vetting and said we could hopefully start interviews next week. Assistant City Manager Le asked that the interim candidate be background checked; Attorney Land said yes. Attorney Land said if the Council is comfortable delegating the recommendation, then the committee will interview and will bring forward a recommendation to the Council on the 23<sup>rd</sup> (January 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting). Mayor Halverson, Councilmembers Vitelli and Bellows, Assistant City Manager Le and Attorney Land will form the interview committee. Council is in favor of interviewing Tuesday or Wednesday.

Attorney Land offered additional information about potential candidates, search firms and resources for the City Manager position. Councilmembers, staff and Attorney Land discussed various ways potential candidates are found: League of MN Cities, National League of Cities, various government publications, etc. These firms and publications have been used in the past and garner the best candidates.

Clpn. Pace asked if it is reasonable to make a decision next week. Attorney Land said it is aggressive, but possible.

Clpn. Iago asked Assistant Manager Le, if we directed you tomorrow where would you advertise for a manager. Assistant Manager Le mentioned the above in addition to ICMA, American Management Assoc., etc. There are a lot of national associations and they may have contacts. Would we receive a reasonable number of applicants – Ms. Le said yes; we have a position profile and job description from three years ago that is quite up-to-date. Maybe we could negotiate with a search firm to reduce their cost since we have this information. Council discussed having staff do the recruitment. Mayor Halverson believes a search firm might be able to provide more resources. She did not want to limit ourselves. Using a search firm could be more fair and comprehensive. Attorney Land asked who on staff would and could review 100 applications and explained a search firm has the resources. She indicated applications are usually open for three to four weeks. Clpn. Vitelli is in favor of using a search firm. Clpn. Bellows asked what would be encompassed for \$20,000. Attorney Land said a profile, position description, advertisement, applications vetted, all processes organized and updates on a number of applications, etc. would be provided. Council would be asked to review a number of blindly distributed applications; you will review and narrow the pool; and negotiate. Clpn. Napier said he liked the position description from three years ago and he wonders if the City Council could review to see if there is support for using it again. He is supportive of the outlined process. Attorney Land asked Assistant Manager Le to email the profile and job description to Council; Council will send comments back to Ms. Le.

Council authorizes Council Committee to interview consultants for the interim City Manager position and prepare a recommendation for Council to consider at its next meeting.

4.B. Discussion with Senator Matt Klein and Joshua Ney on Robert Street Funding (arrived at 5:55 p.m.)

Senator Matt Klein gave an overview of representatives on the Capital Hill Bonding Committee of which he is a member. The members are working on a funding bill. This was a Senator Metzen special bill and it might have some emotional appeal. SF (senate file) 30 is \$10 million to the Met Council and I/I and he is partnering with a cosigner of the bill. They will try to get funds for this bill.

Clpn. Napier said congratulations on the election and he appreciates Matt Klein and Josh Ney coming to the work session. Since the project is complete what is available? Sen. Klein met with Lobbyist Joel Carlson today and even though these are Capitol Hill bonding funds we are looking for grant dollars which are basically cash. Clpn. Vitelli asked if we should retain Mr. Carlson's services. Sen. Klein is not certain and defers back to Council. Mr. Carlson is a good lobbyist but he is not sure if any lobbyist will be effective with this bill.

Clpn. Bellows asked if there is still going to be an uphill battle for certain bills. Our real question is whether the chances of success would be pertinent to the spending of funds on a lobbyist. Sen. Klein said these bills are a long shot and most of the emphasis will be on greater Minnesota. Josh Ney said one thing about the bonding proposal is there needs to be seven caucus bonding votes.

Clpn. Iago congratulated Sen. Klein and said last year we heard it was slow-walked so what time are we talking about now. Sen. Klein said the governor came out with his bonding bill and these projects were not on it. It would not wait until next year. You should have an answer in the next six weeks. Sen. Klein explained this needs to pass through the bonding committee and will also go through transportation. Josh said this would come from the cash portion of the bonding bill.

Clpn. Bellows asked about a League of MN Cities proposal and potential law change in regards to condemnation proceedings where cities are being taken through the coals. The attorney fees are very large in acquisition issues. We don't want to short-change anyone. We hope you can support this issue when it comes up. Discussion regarding the 144 properties involved in the Robert Street easement acquisitions. The demands are large. Staff will get Sen. Klein more information on the condemnation law. Discussion continued regarding senate changes, 22 committees, and budget divisions; its different moving forward. Clpn. Bellows mentioned Sen. Sanguine who was very nice to West St. Paul Council last year.

Council thanked Senator Klein and his assistant Josh for supporting West St. Paul and advocating for project funding.

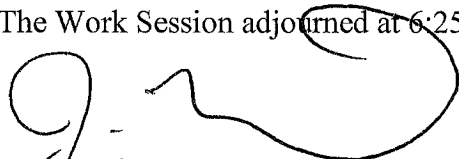
Clpn. Vitelli is in favor of keeping Joel Carlson. He could possibly work with the League about laws on condemnation issues. Mayor Halverson is not opposed to hiring Mr. Carlson. Clpn. Napier would like to continue pursuing whether it's with Council meeting with legislature or Mr. Carlson doing so. Clpn. Vitelli said Mr. Carlson will keep it (the issues) out in front. Clpn. Napier said it's competitive out there. Clpn. Bellows said the legislature has changed and we were pushing for change at a time that legislature was not working well together. He is not optimistic.

#### 4. D. EDA Items

Community Development director Jim Hartshorn was working with Mayor Halverson to call a special meeting but the dates and times have not worked for everyone. Director Hartshorn said a January 23 EDA work session <sup>would work</sup> and regular meeting. Items for discussion will include dealings with the YMCA and Hy-Vee. Clpn. Iago said we should be talking to the YMCA President or Board member. We need to separate these two projects. Discussion continued and Clpn. Pace asked if someone from the YMCA Board could also be present at the next meeting; Clpn. Fernandez indicated (YMCA member) Pat Connelly's supervisor should definitely be present at the meeting. Clpn. Bellows and others are in favor. Director Hartshorn said he will work on this request.

#### 5. Adjourn

The Work Session adjourned at 6:25 p.m.



Jenny Halverson  
Mayor

