

**City of West St. Paul
Open Council Work Session Minutes
March 22, 2021**

1. Call to Order

Mayor Napier called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present: Mayor Dave Napier
Councilmembers Wendy Berry, Julie Eastman, Lisa Eng-Sarne,
Robyn Gulley, John Justen, and Dick Vitelli

Absent: None

Also Present: City Manager Ryan Schroeder
City Attorney Kori Land
Police Chief Brian Sturgeon
Finance Director Char Stark
City Clerk Shirley Bueckler

Nate Burkett, Incoming City Manager

3. Review and Approve the OCWS Agenda

Council approved the OCWS agenda, as presented.

4. Review the Regular Meeting Consent Agenda

Councilmember Berry requested that Item 9I be moved to New Business for discussion.

Councilmember Gulley requested that Item 9H be pulled for discussion and returned to the Consent Agenda for approval.

Motion was made by Councilmember Justen and seconded by Councilmember Berry to approve the Consent Agenda with the above amendments.

Vote: 6 ayes / 0 nays. Motion carried.

5. Agenda Item(s)

A. Translation Services Discussion

West St. Paul is a City with a close-knit community and strong diversity. The U.S. Census estimates that, in 2019, about 22% of West St. Paul residents would consider

themselves “Hispanic or Latino.” We will have more accurate demographics when the 2020 Census results are released on March 31st. Of course, much of West St. Paul’s Hispanic population speaks and/or understands English; however, there is a portion that use Spanish as their primary language. Some relevant data from the recent West St. Paul Town Hall surveys includes:

- 98% of total submissions noted that all members their household speaks fluent English.
- Of the 2% that have at least one non-English speaking household member, all of them speak Spanish.
- 100% of Spanish surveys submitted answered that everyone in their household speaks fluent English.

Progress has been made in recent years to translate some documents to Spanish and offer expanded in-person and over-the-phone translation services. However, this progress has revolved around mostly day-to-day Staff operations and community events. It has been requested that Staff research the cost of translating certain official documents to get the conversation started on how to progress further in the translations offered to the public, while keeping in mind that the cost of accurate translation services can add up quickly. While it might make sense to the Council to translate some items, the cost of translating Council and Commission agenda packets would easily reach into six figures annually and may not give our community the best return on investment. Below are estimated costs to translate some key documents into Spanish.

City Council Documents

Average 2020 City Council Agenda: ~\$40 (~\$920 /yr)

Average 2020 City Council Agenda Packet: ~\$2,260 (~\$52,000 /yr)

Average 2020 City Council Agenda Minutes: ~\$100 (~\$2,300 /yr)

Other Key Documents

Annual Report: ~\$520

Budget Book: ~\$420

CIP/CEP: ~\$340

Please keep in mind these estimates are for raw translation services only and this list is a small example of documents that the City creates. If it is the Council’s wish for translated documents to look similar to the English versions, current Staff could likely integrate some smaller documents into their workload; however, significant sized or quantity of documents would need to be outsourced. Translation costs could be up to double the above estimates for well-designed documents.

City Manager said there is no budget for this item and assume we are looking for allocation in the 2022 budget.

Council discussion:

- Don't think we need agenda packets and minutes translated, but some areas of the website and forms.
- Could the survey be included in a future newsletter for residents to mailing?
- Translate newsletters into Spanish at minimum.
- Newsletter also available for download in Spanish.
- We didn't reach those who speak Spanish with no English. We may need it more than we think we do.
- Translate just the agendas, not the entire packet, and also reports, key documents and Staff memos for a summary. Would like to see this top priority.
- Translate the entire website, Council and Committee meetings.
- \$50K could cover a full-time employee, rather than pay more to piece-meal.
- Do Officers meet many Spanish speaking residents?
 - Sturgeon: Yes, and we have an intern who translates some items for us. To legally get a statement from an individual, you need a certified translator. We have a budget line for it.
- Could a Staff person be an official translator?
 - Schroeder: If they were at Council meetings, they would have less time at their desk.
- A part-time Staff person may make the budget work better. Costs could be offset by reallocating resources.
- If it's not a full-time person, we could hire a communications person to translate. Wouldn't need a certified translator since they wouldn't translate legal documents.
- Does Town Square Television know how many watch the Spanish broadcast?
- Two years ago, Town Square wasn't ready to do closed captioning. Do they now in Spanish?
- Town Square is very motivated to find funds to do it. It's high on their priority list.
- It would be valuable to find out how many watch. Don't think we can look at current participation now compared to what we may get letter with translation services. By doing it, we will start to move that way.
- We should move with caution and we have already taken big steps to invite people to get involved. But we should not invest a lot of money and need to budget wisely. Surveys every time will get us closer, and we are moving in the right direction.

Schroeder said we will be back with this.

B. West St. Paul Days Discussion

With the closing of the Celebrate West St. Paul Days organization, it opens the door for the City to look at reinventing what the West St. Paul Days event could look like in the future.

Council discussion:

- We have the opportunity to reinvent this event with partners such as South Robert Street Business Association and the Commercial Club.
- Make it a closed off event with vendors lining Robert Street from Thompson to Butler.
- Car show in Menards lot or another lot?
- Full day event celebrating West St. Paul.
- Represent different ethnicities with food and crafts.
- Roll out May 2022.
- Street dance at the Sports Complex or the Dome.
- Can we use tax dollars?
 - Attorney Land: You are allowed to use City or EDA funds for community celebrations.
- Tie into the Open House event.
- Parade.
- Don't want to intrude on businesses that don't want to participate.
- Center median will close down all directional traffic.
- Businesses won't be open during the parade.
- Love the idea of Robert Street but we could look at Smith Avenue. Less barrier with MnDOT. Could be a different route each year.
- Alternate location could be Wentworth Avenue.
- If on Robert Street, go all the way to Annapolis to tie in the north end.
- Open Streets concept, weekend or evening. Close the street and have it open to walking, biking, no vehicles. Could be don't low cost and organizations we could coordinate with. There are seven events like this in Minneapolis over the summer – look at for examples.
- Same weekend as parade.
- Revisit Art on the Avenue. Could be a second event.
- Excited for any public event, especially coming out of COVID.
- Look for funding sources.
- Could we do pull-tabs and bingo?
 - Attorney Land: No.
 - Mayor Napier: Our partners do this.
- This could kick off an annual event.
- The key is finding the right person to head it up.
- Make sure we are including all of our communities. Look at how to build relationships with everyone.
- Should talk to St. Paul for collaboration and their construction project north of Annapolis. If we could connect that corridor even more and cross that border, we all win.

Mayor Napier suggested we try to do something in 2022.

6. Adjourn

Motion was made by Councilmember Berry and seconded by Councilmember Gulley to adjourn the meeting at 6:17 p.m.

All members present voted aye. Motion carried.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David J. Napier". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "N".

David J. Napier
Mayor
City of West St. Paul