

MINUTES
WEST ST. PAUL CHARTER COMMISSION
Thursday, June 9, 2022
5:30 P.M.
MUNICIPAL CENTER
COUNCIL CHAMBERS

MEMBERS PRESENT IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS:

Chair Doug Fromm, Commissioners Mark Tessmer, Tim Valento, Aaron VanMoorlehem, Matthew Schempp, Tim Haubrich, Andrea Friesen, Jim Probst, Kae Jae Johnson

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Jim McKie, Karen Vavreck

OTHERS PRESENT:

City Manager Nate Burkett, City Attorney Kori Land, Councilmember Liaison Eng-Sarne.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Fromm called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

3. ADOPT AGENDA

Motion by Probst/Schempp to adopt the agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

4. ADOPT MINUTES

Motion by Probst/Tessmer to approve the minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

5. NEW BUSINESS

A. Charter Amendment

Mayor and Council salaries:

- Charter Section 2.07 and City Code Section 30.04

Over the last several years, the salary increases have been consistent with the increase in wages for non-union wages. City Manager Burkett indicated that non-union increase for next year is likely to be around 3%. City Manager Burkett

mentioned that one council member suggested that salary increases should be sizable to reflect a part-time job. Commission Probst said being on the council is a service position so it should not be akin to a part-time job. City Manager Burkett confirmed that current council salaries are within the range of similar communities in Dakota County. Commissioner VanMoorlehem was concerned that making a significant jump is something that the Commission would have to study because it is a big change to the philosophy of how the City compensates its elected officials. Commissioner Tessmer said he would be interested in looking at it, but does not know if he would support it. Commissioner Friesen was concerned that an automatic COLA adjustment was artificially low.

Commissioner Schempp likes an automatic COLA increase but may want to further study a larger salary increase at a future meeting. Commissioner Tessmer prefers to control the Council's salary and look at it each time.

City Manager Burkett said it is possible that there may be a new formula that would provide a raise for each non-represented employee, but may not be a true "COLA." Attorney Land indicated that there could be an automatic COLA and still have the Commission review salaries in odd-numbered years to determine if it was a sufficient increase.

Commissioner VanMoorlehem would support doing a regular increase now and then revisit a larger increase or structural changes over the next year.

Councilmember Eng-Sarne does not look at the salary as the reason for being on Council. She likes it that the Commission has oversight on the Council's salary.

The City Manager indicated a 3% increase from the current salary would result in the following:

Mayor 2023 \$10,174 and Council \$8,165
Mayor 2024 \$10,480 and Council \$8,410

Motion by VanMoorlehem/Tessmer to recommend the Council salaries be increased as articulated by the City Manager. Motion passed unanimously.

6. OLD BUSINESS

A. Charter Commission Members Expiring Terms and Appointment Process

Chair Fromm identified those members with terms expiring in 2022. In addition, Commissioner Vavreck resigned.

- Friesen – seeking reappointment
- Probst – seeking reappointment
- McKie – not seeking reappointment

- VanMoorlehem – not seeking reappointment but will continue to serve until his replacement is appointed.
- Vavreck – resigned

Chair Fromm recommended reaching out to get candidates and seek out those who have applied in the past. He recalled that the last time we interviewed all of the applicants.

Motion by Valento/Johnson to request reappointment of Friesen and Probst. Motion passed unanimously.

7. SET NEXT MEETING DATE BETWEEN JULY/DEC.

Agenda items:

- Interviews
- Elect Chair/Vice Chair

Commission decided to hold its next meeting on July 28, 2022

8. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Tessmer/Friesen. Unanimous. The meeting was adjourned at 6:07.