



City of Blaine
Anoka County, Minnesota
Minutes - Final

10801 Town Square Dr.
Blaine MN 55449

City Council Workshop

**While this is a public meeting where interested persons are welcome to attend, it is a work session for Council and staff to discuss issues before them. It is not for the purpose of receiving public input.*

Thursday, March 1, 2012

6:30 PM

Cloverleaf Farm Room A

Meeting Number 12-14

NOTICE OF WORKSHOP MEETING

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Ryan at 6:30 p.m.

Quorum Present.

ALSO PRESENT: Clark Ameson, City Manager; Thomas Sweeney, City Attorney; Bryan Schafer, Community Development Director; Joe Huss, Finance Director; Chris Olson, Safety Service Manager/Police Chief; Bob Fiske, Community Standards Director; Roark Haver, Communications Technician; Jane Cross, City Clerk; and Recording Secretary Linda Dahlquist.

Present: 5 - Councilmember Clark, Councilmember Kolb, Councilmember Bourke, Mayor Ryan, and Councilmember Hovland

Absent: 2 - Councilmember Herbst, and Councilmember Swanson

1 [ORD 12-2247](#)

**CHANGES TO CHAPTER 90, ARTICLE II - WEEDS AND
TALL GRASS, SECTION 90-36 - ASSESSMENT OF
ABATEMENT COST**

Sponsors: Fiske

Community Standards Director Fiske stated under the current Chapter 90, Article 11, Section 90-36, ordinance there is not clear authorization for the City to assess and collect an eight percent inspection and administration fee for violations. He stated it was also determined that an eight percent (approximately \$9.00 per mowing) penalty is not sufficient to cover the City's costs in enforcing the ordinance. Mr. Fisk stated staff recommended an administrative fee of \$25.00 per lot will help to offset the cost to the City. He stated the \$25 fee will be added to the City's fee schedule, and an amended fee schedule will be brought before the Council at a public hearing and first reading.

Councilmember Bourke asked how much is charged. Community Standards Director Fisk replied the City would charge a \$70 per hour flat rate and a \$25 fee or \$95. Finance Director Huss corrected, the cost would not be \$95 per hour, if the time spent mowing was 1 ½ hours the time would be charged at the \$70 per hour rate and add the \$25 fee.

Councilmember Bourke asked if the City's costs are covered with a \$25 fee. Community Standards Director Fisk stated there are a lot of administrative costs that

need to be covered. Finance Director Huss stated the \$25 is a fair charge that would also cover inspection costs.

Councilmember Clark asked again, will the \$25 fee cover all the City's costs. Finance Director Huss replied in most instances, including inspection and preparing the bill.

Councilmember Hovland asked if the resident goes to court and loses, can the City charge the resident for court fees. Community Standards Director Fisk stated the judge tells the person to pay the total fee. He stated judges do not add fees.

Councilmember Hovland asked about the procedure on establishing ordinances. Community Standards Director Fisk stated the City Attorney has reviewed the changes to the ordinance. He stated he did not know who initiated the 8% fee.

Councilmember Hovland asked who reviews the ordinances. City Manager Arneson replied City staff, City Attorney and City Council review ordinances.

Councilmember Clark stated in most cases \$25 will cover the City's costs. Finance Director Huss replied the City will charge based on an hourly rate of the individual on site. Councilmember Clark asked about the staff person's rate. Finance Director Huss replied the rate is a staff person's normal hourly pay rate for time worked.

Councilmember Kolb stated the City can change the fee yearly and the \$25 fee is a good starting point.

Councilmember Bourke asked what happens when a property has multiple offenses; does it cost more to certify. Finance Director Huss stated if the offense is certified the City will charge \$50.

Councilmember Clark stated he is concerned that the City is not covering its cost and sees the issue as a budget drain with the current economy and the foreclosed properties in the City.

Mayor Ryan stated the Council sets the policy and we should try the \$25 fee for a year.

Finance Director Huss stated if the City goes back multiple times to a property, each visit is charged the \$25 fee. He stated notification is posted and if no response, the City sends a contractor to mow the property.

Councilmember Bourke asked how many times the City goes to the residence. Community Standards Director Fisk explained the City receives a complaint, the City sends an inspector to confirm there is a violation, the inspector sends the property owner a letter, and the City inspector does another site visit on the 10th day. He stated if the lawn is not mowed, the contractor is contacted. He stated the contractor takes before pictures, mows the lawn, and takes after pictures.

Discussed

OTHER

City Manager Arneson stated:

- The Charter Commission hearing will be on March 8.
- Three litigation issues will be reviewed in a closed session on March 8.
- A traffic study for the proposed Walmart on Ball Road will not be presented on March 8.

SBM Fire Chief Zikmund gave the Council a briefing on three grants that the SBM Fire Department have applied for under the Safer Grant. Chief Zikmund stated SBM qualified because they are a combination department of career and volunteer firefighters. He stated the grant will pay for a full time recruitment and retention coordinator that is a full time firefighter, develop a marketing program, training, and incentives

He stated the incentives would be paid to current volunteers of \$1,300 per fire fighter, \$1,000 for health care insurance and \$300 disability for four years, so the current volunteers will get this bonus. He stated grant funding will be used for training, background checks, and marketing. He stated the three grants totaled \$667,575.00. He stated SBM's per capita is \$23.48 for the fire district of 79,426 residents across the three cities.

Councilmember Bourke asked if the person that is hired will be able to fight fires. SBM Fire Chief Zikmund replied yes.

Councilmember Hovland asked after four years does the person go away. SBM Fire Chief Zikmund replied yes or the person could stay as an unpaid volunteer.

Councilmember Clark asked how many new fire fighters are expected to be recruited. SBM Fire Chief Zikmund replied six.

Councilmember Clark stated the volunteers get \$1,300 for four years; the volunteers might want this to continue. SBM Fire Chief Zikmund replied the volunteers will be informed the payment would only be four years and it will go away.

SBM Fire Chief Zikmund stated the second SBM grant will cover two full time fire fighters to augment existing staff of nine to cover for vacations, sick leave, training and meetings.

Councilmember Clark asked for the source of the grants. SBM Fire Chief Zikmund replied the Federal government.

Mayor Ryan asked how the grant process works. SBM Fire Chief Zikmund replied the grant was started after September 2011 and it is the federal government's response for addressing safety.

Councilmember Bourke commented adding additional fire fighters to the fire department is good.

SBM Fire Chief Zikmund stated the third SBM grant is in partnership with Anoka County for fire service operating a county-wide fire department. He stated the grant funds would be used for training costs. He stated scoring is in April, review is in May and awarding in July or August.

Councilmember Kolb stated she appreciates knowing a head of time about the grants.

SBM Fire Chief Zikmund gave an overview of fire call history and showed graphs to the Council.

City Manager Arneson commented the SBM calls are for fire, medical and false alarms. SBM Fire Chief Zikmund replied 1,272 calls were received last year.

Mayor Ryan stated he and his wife have used their CPR training that they received from SBM. SBM Fire Chief Zikmund replied CPR training is once a month.

ADJOURN

The Workshop adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Adjourned