

UNAPPROVED

CITY OF BLAINE
ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
Thursday, May 12, 2016

6:30 P.M.
Council Chambers
10801 Town Square Drive

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Mayor Tom Ryan; Councilmembers Mike Bourke, Dave Clark, Russ Herbst, Wes Hovland, Jason King, and Dick Swanson.

ABSENT: None.

Quorum Present.

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Clark Arneson; City Attorney Patrick Sweeney; Planning and Community Development Director Bryan Schafer; Public Services Manager Bob Therres; Finance Director Joe Huss; Police Captain Dan Szykulski; Spring Lake Park/Blaine/Mounds View Fire Chief Charlie Smith; Senior Engineering Technician Al Thorp; City Clerk Catherine Sorensen; and Recording Secretary Linda Dahlquist.

NEW BUSINESS

3.1 16-29, Replacement of Aerial Ladder(s) for Spring Lake Park/Blaine/Mounds View (SBM) Fire Department.

Fire Chief Smith gave an overview of SBM's organizational assumptions which include modern facilities, high quality equipment, and the use of technology. He stated SBM's aerial ladders are front line apparatus and ladder 12 is permanently out of service and ladder 17 is requiring significant maintenance to keep it in service. He stated both ladders are incapable of functioning independently due to the lack of fire pumps, water tanks and fire hose, which make them dependent on other apparatus to achieve required fire flows.

Councilmember Herbst asked why the ladder trucks do not have pumps, tanks and fire hose. Chief Smith replied the decision was made by Chief Zikmund at the time to purchase these trucks.

Councilmember Hovland asked how often the ladder trucks have been used and are they needed. Chief Smith replied he will need to research and report back but said ladder trucks are needed and are secondary apparatus. He stated the new operational mindset is to replace the aerial ladders with Quint apparatus that can perform multiple functions.

Councilmember Clark inquired about SBM's operational mindset. Chief Smith replied a Quint has a fire hose, pump, and ladders, adding it is important to have as much equipment on the scene as soon as possible.

Councilmember Clark asked how Quint apparatus was chosen. Chief Smith replied one truck is not operational and the second truck requires two staff to take the truck out of the station which causes a delay in getting the ladder truck to a fire. He stated a Quint only needs one person to drive it which would be more efficient.

Councilmember Clark stated the City has two story homes and asked why a ladder truck is needed. Chief Smith replied the City has numerous senior living and assisted living facilities being built throughout the City that have three or four floors.

Councilmember Herbst asked about the longevity of a new Quint. Chief Smith replied 20 years. He noted the two ladder trucks had good maintenance and have provided over 25 years of service.

Councilmember Hovland asked for the purpose of the water tank. Chief Smith replied the tank would be used for small fires and used until a hydrant is hooked up.

Chief Smith stated Blaine is rated at 61.50 points and has an Insurance Service Office (ISO) class 4/9 (mixed rating); Mounds View is rated 70.75 points and ISO class 3; and Spring Lake Park is rated 71.78 points and ISO class 3. He stated the removal of one aerial apparatus will cause a negative ISO Class change and insurance rates for commercial could go up 3-5%. He stated his goal is to get the City to ISO class 3. He gave an overview of the features of a Quint truck which is all hazards capable and has a 100-foot ladder, 80-foot ground ladder, 1500 GPM pump, 500-gallon tank, and full hose complement.

Councilmember Clark asked if the ISO rating changes from the east to the west. Chief Smith stated the ISO is an average for the entire City. He noted the City is lacking coverage on the east side of the City.

City Manager Arneson stated Mounds View, Spring Lake Park and SBM Board have requested a meeting with Blaine for June 14, 2016. He noted that trucks take 13 months to build.

Mayor Ryan asked if the Quint can operate on natural gas. Chief Smith replied he would need to do some research and thought it could but noted apparatus sometimes need to refuel on the scene which is not ideal in a fire situation.

Councilmember Hovland asked if the same presentation will be given to Mounds View and Spring Lake Park. Chief Smith replied yes.

Mayor Ryan asked if there is room for the Quint in all of the stations. Chief Smith replied yes, except for station 4.

3.2 16-30, Off-sale Liquor Licenses.

City Clerk Sorensen stated at Council's direction during the February retreat, staff is bringing forward several options for discussion regarding off-sale liquor licenses, including removing the one-mile radius, amending the ratio requirement by population, and the possibility of a new Class B off-sale liquor license that would allow for the off-sale of intoxicating malt liquor and wine only. She stated the Class B would be tied to an approved primary use of 50,000 square foot space and associated with a grocery store with a conditional use permit.

Councilmember Swanson asked about the 50,000 square foot minimum. Planning and Community Development Director Schafer stated the 50,000 was decided upon just for discussion purposes, adding a Class B license could be in conjunction with higher end grocery stores such as Trader Joes, Byerly's, Cub Foods, or Hy-Vee.

Councilmember King asked if the City has a specific request. Planning and Community Development Director Schafer replied no.

Councilmember King stated he would prefer to have the current license structure remain with full off-sale licenses only. He asked if the City can choose between businesses to locate in a specific area. City Manager Arneson replied no the City cannot.

Councilmember Herbst commented it would be tough to say no to a higher-end grocery store.

Councilmember Bourke stated he would not be in favor of adding a second tier license structure.

Councilmember Clark stated he would like to involve the current license holders in any discussions.

Councilmember Hovland stated more information is needed from the upscale grocery stores before any decisions can be made.

Mayor Ryan stated the radius was created due to the proximity of two liquor stores several years ago.

Councilmember King stated he is not interested in a two tier model but would be interested in reducing the radius.

Jon Halper, Top Ten Liquors, stated all of Blaine has the same liquor distributor and beer distributors can vary. He stated competition is good but do not layer the stores on top of each other.

Corey Burstad, Tournament Liquor, stated he has to follow Blaine's rules and could not move his business because of his license so he had to purchase his building to make improvements to the property. He stated if Hy-Vee wants to come to the City it will come and it is not based on a liquor license. He stated the City is creating something that does not exist right now.

Councilmember Bourke suggested holding the additional license.

Councilmember Herbst stated if a company comes to the City wanting a liquor license, the City should issue that license. City Clerk Sorensen noted the City Council does not have to issue every available license.

Councilmember Swanson stated if a business qualifies for the license they should get the license.

Council consensus was for no change to the current ordinance and to accept an application for processing of a license if one comes in.

Councilmember Clark requested notice be sent to the Chamber of Commerce and liquor license holders should a liquor-related topic come up with the City.

Financial Director Huss stated staff has received initial valuation estimates from the Anoka County Assessor's Office of properties appraised in the last quarter of 2015 and Blaine's tax base increased 9.3%. He stated residential growth of 7.8%; commercial and industrial growth of 16.9%; and new construction growth of 3.3%. He gave an overview of market values and taxable percentage. He stated the current estimate for the overall tax levies will increase by \$2.5 million if the same tax rate is maintained from 2016 at 35.901%. He stated \$250,000 is committed to debt service; otherwise funds could be put into the General Fund, EDA, Pavement Management Program, and Capital Equipment. He noted the EDA levy is \$650,000.

Councilmember Herbst asked about billboards' funds going to EDA. Financial Director Huss stated billboard funds are \$150,000; although the EDA needs to levy \$650,000 to support operations.

Councilmember Clark stated the first priorities to consider are to plan for staff wages, eliminate EDA draw down from reserve, and eliminate the City draw from unrestricted reserve.

Councilmember Herbst stated the unrestricted funds would pay for equipment.

Councilmember Bourke clarified that the EDA needs \$800,000 in operating funds. Finance Director Huss replied the golf tournament, fire suppression grant program, general economic development funds, EDA director salary and benefits.

Councilmember King stated he is not opposed to reducing the levy.

Councilmember Herbst requested an EDA budget and priority breakdown.

Councilmember Clark stated first priority is structural balance.

OTHER BUSINESS

Aquatore Dog Park Amenity Costs

City Manager Arneson stated at the last workshop Council gave direction for galvanized chain fencing for the dog park but noted the City's ordinance does not allow businesses to use galvanized chain fencing in the City. He noted the black fencing costs \$8,500 more.

Councilmember Clark asked if the City would install fencing down to the pond if the Blaine Festival did not initiate the project. City Manager Arneson replied the Police Department would have come to the Council for funding.

Public Services Manager Therres stated electricity, security light, and heaters could be removed to maintain the budget. Council discussion was held on potential removal of these items.

Councilmember Bourke stated funds have been earmarked for this park and no amenities should be removed.

Councilmember King stated he would prefer to keep the amenities.

Public Services Manager Therres stated the CIF fund is already budgeted for \$200,000 and this \$8,500 would bring the budget over for 2016. City Manager Arneson said staff will work to locate appropriate funding as necessary.

Traffic Issues

Councilmember Clark stated he has received many emails about the recent pedestrian death on 119th Avenue and said Council needs to look at traffic management approaches. He stated the City needs a program to address traffic improvements in designated areas and lowering warrant standards for stop signs, speed humps, etc.

Councilmember Bourke stated he would like to enhance the existing system where the neighborhoods come to the Council.

Councilmember Hovland stated the City cannot control people behavior and suggested further research on traffic calming products.

Mayor Ryan stated this incident and two others involved impaired drivers.

Councilmember Clark stated the neighborhood reported that two cars were racing on 119th Avenue the evening of the crash.

Councilmember Swanson suggested increasing enforcement in the known traffic issue areas.

Councilmember King stated he has researched traffic issues in other cities. He suggested creating a traffic committee with residents appointed from each Ward and funded similar to the Pavement Management Program. He suggested Engineering design new and reconstructed roads with traffic calming features; review speed hump policies; transverse pavement markings, and install speed signs with radar.

Councilmember Bourke suggested the traffic committee could report to the Planning Commission to bring forward a recommendation.

City Manager Arneson commented Bloomington has a traffic commission that goes to each hot spot in their city. He noted cities also have traffic enforcement units.

Police Captain Szykulski stated a traffic unit would be beneficial to the City. He noted the sixth district is not staffed 100% of the time. He stated the Police Department shift minimum is five officers.

Councilmember Bourke suggested the Police Department research a traffic unit and report back to the Council.

Councilmember Hovland stated a traffic unit with one officer is a good start. He stated a traffic committee is a great idea; although there is a large learning curve. He asked if there is training available on traffic.

Councilmember Clark stated he would like solutions that are not labor intensive. He suggested installing oversized speed signs. He suggested a Blaine Safety Week be in conjunction with Night to Unite. He stated he is open to a traffic committee but wants to use caution on the appointees.

Councilmember Bourke stated he is in favor of a traffic committee with appointees and have one dedicated officer.

Mayor Ryan stated he is in favor of more enforcement.

Councilmember Herbst asked if a traffic committee will need a budget.

Councilmember Bourke stated the traffic committee will only provide recommendations.

Councilmember Hovland suggested modifying the Pavement Management Program to include traffic committee recommendations. Councilmember Clark replied he does not want to share funding from the Pavement Management Program.

Mayor Ryan suggested the Police Department make recommendations.

City Manager Arneson stated several larger cities have traffic committees. He stated a neighborhood meeting will be scheduled with the 119th Avenue neighborhood for some time in June.

Councilmember Clark suggested creating hot spot zones and reduce warrants in these zones.

Councilmember Clark stated he will be out of the country June 4-18, 2016.

Councilmember Bourke stated a plan is needed from the City for the neighborhood meeting and the plan should include reports from staff and the Police Department. He suggested a Police Officer sit in the neighborhoods and not just on the main streets.

City Manager Arneson stated staff will review establishing a traffic committee/commission, traffic unit recommendations, site specific recommendations for 119th Avenue and Cloud Drive, and schedule a neighborhood meeting for after June 20, 2016, and work to combine education of traffic issues with Night to Unite events.

The Workshop adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Tom Ryan, Mayor

ATTEST:

Catherine Sorensen, City Clerk
Submitted by TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.