



**City of Blaine**  
**Anoka County, Minnesota**  
**Minutes**  
**City Council Workshop**

Blaine City Hall  
10801 Town Sq Dr NE  
Blaine MN 55449

---

Monday, April 1, 2019

6:00 PM

Cloverleaf Farm Room A

---

**NOTICE OF WORKSHOP MEETING**

**1 Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Ryan at 6:00 p.m.

**2 Roll Call**

Quorum Present.

**ALSO PRESENT:** City Manager Clark Arneson; Planning and Community Development Director Bryan Schafer; Public Works Director Jon Haukaas; Police Chief/Safety Services Manager Brian Podany; Finance Director Joe Huss; Economic Development Coordinator Erik Thorvig; Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Bob Therres; City Engineer Dan Schluender; City Attorney Patrick Sweeney; Senior Engineering Technician Al Thorp; Acting Human Resources Director Sheri Chesness; Communications Technician Roark Haver; Fire Chief Charlie Smith; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

**Present:** 7 - Councilmember Garvais, Councilmember Jeppson, Mayor Ryan, Councilmember Swanson, Councilmember Robertson, Councilmember Paul, and Councilmember Hovland

**3 New Business**

**3-1**

**CURRENT CONDITIONS AND MAJOR CHALLENGES  
FACING THE CITY OF BLAINE**

City Manager Arneson stated staff would like Council to identify current conditions and major challenges facing the City, adding this will be reviewed in the strategic planning process over the coming weeks. Topics of discussion should include:

- Financial picture: fund balance situation in all funds, growth impacts (taxes, fees) general outlook for the next 3 years
- Infrastructure: general condition of streets, w/s/storm, facilities and major projects impact
- Growth-projects and impact
- Intergovernmental issues/challenges - State, schools, joint powers

- Staffing/workforce: turnover, training, capacity
- Community/stakeholder issues: service demands, changing demographics, trends, etc.

Finance Director Huss commented on the City's financial position and commended the City Council for their great financial efforts. He discussed the upgrades that would occur at City Hall and in the Council Chambers. He reported the City would not have to issue additional debt for capital purchases in 2019. He commented on the street projects that would be completed in the coming years. The balance of the utilities funds was then reviewed. Inflation and the City's five- and ten-year outlook were discussed.

Councilmember Jeppson questioned how all of the SCADA updates impacted the City's utilities reserves. Mr. Huss explained the City drew down its reserves approximately \$2 million in order to cover these expenses.

Councilmember Hovland asked how the City's water rates compared to other cities in the metro area. Mr. Huss noted the City's water rates were still among the lowest in the metro area.

Councilmember Hovland requested further information on the City's pipe lining program. Public Works Director Haukaas explained staff could provide a more thorough report to the Council after this summer. He noted the majority of the City's 12-inch or smaller pipes have been lined.

Councilmember Robertson questioned what ice pigging was. Mr. Haukaas described how City staff completed the ice pigging procedure on the City's water lines in order to remove unwanted sediment.

Councilmember Hovland asked for further information on the EDA levy. Economic Development Coordinator Thorvig explained the annual EDA levy was approximately \$650,000 each year and noted the City could go up to \$1.2 or \$1.3 million but reported the City had enough funding in place to not raise the levy at this time.

Mayor Ryan commented on the strong growth he was seeing in Blaine's housing market.

Mr. Haukaas discussed the condition of the City's internal infrastructure and streets. He noted the pavement condition survey would be completed this spring. He anticipated the City would be doing a large amount of roadwork each year for the next 10 years in order to get a better grasp on the City's road condition. He commented on the County projects that would be completed in 2019 and

described how the I-35W project would impact the community. He explained the City was having a tough time finding seasonal employees and noted an age or pay adjustment may be necessary. He commented on the expense the City would incur to paint City's water towers.

Councilmember Robertson encouraged staff to reach out to North Metro Chamber of Commerce for help in filling the seasonal positions.

Councilmember Hovland indicated the Council may have to discuss how the increased minimum wage amount will impact the City and its seasonal worker positions.

Planning and Community Development Director Schafer discussed residential growth the City would see over the next five to ten years. He anticipated the City would see an additional 200 to 250 units per year through 2025 and indicated the attached townhome market was on the rise. He commented on the redevelopment potentials for the Kmart site, noting the retail market was not strong. He noted there would be a continued push for affordable housing. He reported the housing crisis in Minneapolis was becoming a concern given the fact the cost to build a home in Minnesota was quite high when compared to other large cities in the Midwest. He explained it would be very important for the City to be involved in redevelopment projects in the future due to the high cost of redevelopment projects.

Councilmember Jeppson requested an update on the Hy-Vee development. Mr. Schafer explained that staff anticipated construction was to begin on this project this spring but has likely been delayed.

Police Chief/Safety Services Manager Podany discussed the service demands the Police Department would be facing in the coming years. He reported the Police Department was having a difficult time recruiting officers and was working to improve its work/life balance as well as the mental health of its officers. He stated the City of Blaine was paying 18% above average for worker's compensation claims and explained the impact the City's approximately 400 special events have on staff each year. He indicated one of his biggest concerns was with staffing and how he would be able to keep a full contingency of officers given the number of calls coming into the City with the understanding the City continues to grow. He commented how he would also like to see the department with 24-hour supervision and reported the City's DUI officer grant would expire in October of 2020. Further discussion ensued regarding the staffing concerns that were being planned for the future.

Fire Chief Smith explained that as the City continues to grow Fire Station 6 will be

needed in 2024 to 2026. He estimated the expense for this station to be \$6 million and anticipated 12 volunteer fire fighters and five full time staff members would be needed. He reported Allina would be interested in locating an ambulance at Station 6 and the value of training and retaining volunteer fire fighters was discussed. He stated his challenge would be to balance the growth in Blaine with the non-growth in Spring Lake Park and Mounds View.

Mayor Ryan stated he would like the City's retiring Fire Board representatives to be recognized for their efforts.

**Discussed**

### **Other Business**

None.

**None.**

### **ADJOURN**

The Workshop was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

**Adjourned**