

CITY OF BLAINE
ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Monday, December 9, 2019

8:00 P.M.
Council Chambers
10801 Town Square Drive

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Ryan at 8:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PRESENT: Councilmembers Garvais, Jeppson, Paul, Robertson, Swanson, and Mayor Ryan.

ABSENT: Councilmember Hovland.

Quorum Present.

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Michelle Wolfe; Community Development Director Erik Thorvig; Public Works Director Jon Haukaas; Police Chief/Safety Services Manager Brian Podany; Finance Director Joe Huss; Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Bob Therres; City Engineer Dan Schluender; Budget/Fiscal Analyst Ward Brown; Communications Technician Roark Haver; Communications Coordinator Ben Hayle; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

8:00 P.M. – PUBLIC HEARING AND ITEMS SET FOR A CERTAIN TIME

TRUTH IN TAXATION HEARING

Finance Director Huss explained the Truth in Taxation Public Hearing was being held to take input from the public on the proposed budget and tax levy for 2020. He stated the Council has held monthly discussions about the proposed budget and tax levy since May. Mr. Huss then provided the Council with detailed a presentation on the 2020 Proposed Budget and Tax Levy. It was noted the school district and County were holding separate hearings for their tax levies.

Mr. Huss described how property taxes were determined based on property values and the City's tax rate. He offered the Council a definition of Market Value Homestead Exclusion and described how they worked. He discussed how the median value homeowner would be impacted by the proposed 2020 Tax Levy which was 36.7%. He compared Blaine's tax rate to neighboring cities and noted the City's tax and utility rates were quite low in comparison.

Mr. Huss reviewed the General Fund Budget revenues and expenditures in further detail and reported on the extra expenses that would occur in 2020. It was noted the majority of the general fund expenditures were for elections, public and safety services. The General Fund 5-year projection assumptions and concerns were discussed with the Council. He described how the City funds General Fund activity. The ratio of employees to residents was reviewed and he explained the City was proud of the fact it achieved a AAA bond rating from Standard & Poor's. He indicated the last City Council meeting of 2019 would be held on Monday, December 16 where the final levy would be approved.

Mayor Ryan asked when the Board of Review meeting was held. Mr. Huss stated the Board of Review meeting was typically held in April.

Mayor Ryan opened the Truth in Taxation Hearing at 8:58 p.m.

Roger Meyer, 12311 Ghia Street, expressed concern about private/public street maintenance noting his private street was being used by the public. He believed it was discriminatory to people who live on a private street because his homeowner's association had to maintain the street even though it was being used by the public. He requested the City help his homeowner's association given the large expense to remove snow and maintain the private roadway. He feared that the value of his unit would be on the decline given the rising expenses to maintain his association.

Councilmember Swanson stated he was very aware of this concern and encouraged Mr. Meyer to speak to local legislators regarding his concerns. He noted he would be in contact with Mr. Meyer.

Don Koehler, 1770 132nd Lane, shared concerns about the overall City tax increase noting his taxes were projected to increase by 9.5%. He noted he was semi-retired and his income did not increase each year. He encouraged the Council to reconsider its expenditures and how increases impacted those living on fixed incomes. He stated he would like to see the size of government reduced in order to increase freedoms. He recommended the City only provide essential services such as fire, police, roads, water and sewer. He suggested the City not conduct tree sales, charitable gambling or bike helmet events but instead be managed by the private sector.

Mayor Ryan reported bike helmets were provided at cost to youth for safety purposes and noted the City makes no money from this program. He explained he supported this program because it improved public safety then indicated many of the other programs offered were by State mandates. He commented further on the benefits of economic development in the community.

Bob Crowther, 2726 Zumbrota Circle, spoke to the Council regarding contracts and procurements noting the City does not always go with the lowest bidder for large projects. He requested this information be broken down further for the public.

Mayor Ryan closed the Truth in Taxation Hearing at 9:28 p.m.

OTHER

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Ryan adjourned the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

Tom Ryan, Mayor

ATTEST:

Catherine Sorensen, City Clerk

Submitted by TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.