



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, December 15, 2011

6:30 PM

Cloverleaf Farm Room A

Meeting No. 11-68

NOTICE OF WORKSHOP MEETING

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

PRESENT: Councilmembers Bourke, Clark (entered the meeting at 6:32 p.m.), Herbst, Hovland, Kolb, Swanson, and Mayor Ryan

ABSENT: None.

Quorum Present.

ALSO PRESENT: Clark Arneson, City Manager; Bryan Schafer, Community Development Director; Bob Therres, Public Services Manager; Joe Huss, Finance Director; Ward Brown, Budget/Fiscal Analyst, Tom Sweeney, City Attorney; Chris Olson, Safety Service Manager/Police Chief; Nyle Zikmund, SBM Fire Chief; Jim Hafner, Storm Water Manager; Mike Ulrich, Public Works Director; Roark Haver, Communications Technician; Jane Cross, City Clerk; and Recording Secretary Linda Dahlquist.

Present: 7 - Councilmember Clark, Councilmember Kolb, Councilmember Bourke, Councilmember Herbst, Mayor Ryan, Councilmember Hovland, and Councilmember Swanson

3 [WS 11-05](#)

2012 PROPOSED UTILITIES FUNDS BUDGETS

Sponsors: Huss

Attachments: [2012 Sanitation Fund Overview](#)

Finance Director Huss distributed the proposed 2012 Capital Equipment Fund Budget. He stated the staff has made several adjustments to the proposed budget since the Council first viewed the proposed budget on October 13th. He stated some of the computer equipment expenses have been reduced or removed from the proposed budget. He commented some items may be eligible for grant funding.

City Manager Arneson commented the City's website was hacked this past week.

Discussion took place on purchasing new police squad cars.

Councilmember Bourke asked about upgrades to the City's building. City Manager Arneson stated the building is ten years old and is starting to show wear.

Councilmember Kolb asked if the City will buy or lease a copy machine. Finance Director Huss responded it is not worthwhile to purchase a copier. He suggested the Council remove the Copy/Print Scan Unit, Fax Machine and the Fiberoptic Service for the Senior Center.

Councilmember Herbst asked about the brand of track backhoe. Public Works Director Ulrich responded it is a Caterpillar. Public Services Manager Therres stated it is a ditch bucket. Public Works Director Ulrich stated the backhoe has too small of a reach. He stated the skid loader is leased and the actual cost is \$3,000 per year.

Finance Director Huss stated the adjustments will be cost savings to the City and would be unrestricted funds.

Councilmember Herbst asked if there are items that could be deferred to another year. Finance Director Huss responded if items are deferred, there could be double the expenditures in the next year. The City has a replacement schedule which creates balance for annual expenses.

Councilmember Herbst asked how much a squad car trade is worth. Finance Director Huss responded auctions bring more money than trading squad cars.

Councilmember Swanson asked about purchasing squad cars on a bond. He stated the interest is currently low. Finance Director Huss responded purchasing cars on a bond is more expensive.

Councilmember Clark asked how long the term of a capital note is. Finance Director Huss responded five years. Councilmember Clark stated as current notes are paid and new issued they should equal out. Finance Director Huss stated the City is looking at a debt issue with the Pavement Management Program. Councilmember Clark asked how much could be deferred. Finance Director Huss responded each department head would have to provide input. Councilmember Clark asked about the replacement cycle for computers. Finance Director Huss responded every five years. Finance Director Huss stated the computers are on a user rotation.

Councilmember Bourke asked about equipment bonding. City Manager Arneson stated the staff will look at equipment bonding.

Councilmember Herbst stated he sees the need for the squad cars.

Councilmember Kolb stated upgraded computers are necessary. She agreed with repurposing computers is good.

Mayor Ryan stated when you remove items from one year, the next year it is brought back and the expenses are doubling up.

City Manager Arneson commented the City's staff is doing more with less.

Councilmember Clark asked if every computer needs new software. City Manager Arneson responded no. The Council could eliminate all of the computer related expenses to save money.

City Manager Arneson stated the staff will review the proposed budget; although the City needs new squad cars.

Councilmember Swanson stated the Senior Center's van is needed. Mayor Ryan

stated the current van is falling apart.

Councilmember Clark asked if the Council is comfortable with a three percent cut. Councilmember Kolb responded three percent is reasonable.

Councilmember Bourke stated he would like the flooring expense and the postage meter expense removed from the proposed budget. Finance Director Huss responded the postage meter needs to be replaced. The current meter is ten years old.

Councilmember Swanson stated he would like staff to look at equipment bonding for all of the equipment. Finance Director Huss stated bonding for the full amount would be sought for all of the equipment.

City Manager Arneson stated the budget will be ready for approval on January 5. He stated the staff will do a comparison of bonding versus funding.

Discussed

1 [WS 11-10](#)

PROPOSED CHARTER AMENDMENTS

Sponsors: Cross

Attachments: [St. Paul Charter Amendment 2-2-11](#)
[Request to Compile Write-in Votes FORM](#)

City Clerk Cross stated there are two proposed Charter amendments for the Council's consideration. (1) Charter, Sec. 2.03 and 2.03(a), requires a housekeeping amendment that would change the word "district" to "ward" throughout the Charter to make the election language portion consistent with the Secretary of State's records and other metro cities. The proposed change is consistent with the language used on all election forms at the county and state. Currently all election forms used throughout the state refer to wards and precincts. The Charter language will be consistent with the election management system that is being implemented throughout Anoka County in 2012; and (2) Charter, Sec. 4.06, would require all write-in candidates for City Council to file a written request for their votes to be tallied. Write-in candidates who want their votes counted have to register with the City seven days before the General Election in order for their votes to be tallied by the election judges. This has been done at the federal, state, and county level for the past several elections.

Councilmember Clark asked about filing as one candidate. City Clerk Cross responded the write in candidates will be counted automatically by the machine as one candidate and the election judges will only separately count the registered write-in candidates.

Councilmember Swanson asked what happens when a write-in candidate gets the most votes. City Clerk Cross responded the write-in candidate would have to register with the City in advance in order for the votes to be counted.

City Clerk Cross stated the first reading will be in either late January or early February.

Councilmember Clark questioned the use of the word "ward" as he expressed discomfort with using the word "ward". City Clerk Cross responded currently Blaine uses districts and precincts. All of the state and county records and forms refer to them as wards and precincts.

Mayor Ryan thanked City Clerk Cross for her work on the city elections.

Discussed

2 [WS 11-11](#)

DISCUSSION ON CITY SURVEY RFP RESULTS

Sponsors: City Manager Arneson

City Manager Arneson stated the City sent out a Request for Proposals (RFP) to develop and conduct a City residential and business survey. The City received proposals from eight firms. City staff have reviewed the RFPs and developed a comparison chart for the Council to review. From the eight companies, staff narrowed the choices down to four companies and then picked the top two companies.

City Manager Arneson asked the Council's assignment is to review the surveys over the holidays and be ready to discuss at the Workshop on January 5. He stated the City may want to conduct only a resident survey.

Councilmember Herbst commented that the business community seems to be hesitant with contacting the City staff.

Councilmember Kolb suggested doing a residential survey this year and businesses survey next year and developing a rotating schedule.

Councilmember Swanson commented a residential survey is more important for this year. Councilmember Herbst disagreed.

Councilmember Kolb asked would it be better to have a focus group or a survey for the businesses.

Councilmember Clark asked if the survey would be on retention or attraction. He stated residents would like to see more boutique type businesses in Blaine.

Mayor Ryan stated Blaine's codes on sprinkler systems may be a deterrent for businesses.

City Manager Arneson stated Work Session 11-05, 2012 Proposed Utilities Funds Budgets and Work Session 11-12, 2012 Storm-Water Utility Fund will be deferred to the Workshop on January 5.

Discussed

4 [WS 11-12](#)

2012 STORM-WATER UTILITY FUND

Sponsors: Huss

Attachments: [2012 Storm Budget](#)

This item was not discussed.

The workshop adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

Adjourned