

CITY OF BLAINE
ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
Monday, July 20, 2020

6:30 p.m.
Council Chambers
10801 Town Square Drive

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Ryan at 6:34 p.m. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic this meeting was held both virtually and in person.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Mayor Tom Ryan, Councilmembers Andy Garvais, Wes Hovland, Julie Jeppson, Richard Paul, Jess Robertson, and Dick Swanson.

ABSENT: None.

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; Deputy Chief Dan Szykulski; City Planner Lori Johnson; City Attorney Christopher Nelson; Communications Technician Roark Haver; Communications Manager Ben Hayle; Water Resources Manager Rebecca Haug; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

3.1 2019 CAFR/Audit Review.

Finance Director Huss stated representatives from the City's external auditing firm, Redpath and Company, Ltd., will be at the workshop to discuss the City's 2019 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) and the auditing process. It was noted discussion will focus primarily on the Report on Internal Control, the audit process, and new auditing standards that are forthcoming.

Andy Hering, Redpath and Company, Ltd., reviewed the financial audit in detail with the Council. He reported the City of Blaine received a clean or unmodified opinion which meant the financial statements were fairly presented. He explained the MnGFOA would be reviewing the City's financials and he anticipated Blaine would receive a CAFR award again for its financial efforts in 2019. He commented on the City's general fund balance and findings within the audit were discussed then commended the City for their strong financial position. He thanked the finance staff for working with him to complete the audit remotely this year.

Mayor Ryan thanked the Finance staff for their tremendous efforts on behalf of the City of Blaine. Mr. Huss thanked Supervisor/Accounting Bonnie Friedrich for her efforts within the Finance Department.

3.2 Street Reconstruction Capital Improvement Program 2021-2025.

Public Works Director Haukaas stated Public Works and Engineering staff have collaborated with the Finance Department to develop a Five-Year Street Reconstruction Capital Improvement Program for 2021 through 2025. The prioritization is based on the Pavement Condition Survey Results and Recommendations Report completed by Braun Intertec in April 2020. Staff reviewed this report with the City Council at the May 4, 2020 Work Session. It was noted the Pavement Condition Survey provides a rating for each individual street segment. Street segments are then grouped into manageable project areas of 1.5-2.5 miles and an average condition rating is assigned for each of these neighborhood groups. This grouping of project areas preserves construction efficiency and reduces the impact to neighborhoods during construction. This average condition rating was used for the prioritization.

Mr. Haukaas explained the initial accelerated street improvement program, from 2019-2021, has focused on addressing the lowest rated local streets and collector streets throughout the city. Looking ahead, there are the competing needs of continued replacement of pavement to improve safety, congestion, and control deterioration, versus various traffic signal projects. Staff feels strongly for the need to continue to prioritize pavement rehabilitations. In 2022 there are a number of planned joint projects with Anoka County on 125th Avenue, Radisson Road, and Lexington Avenue. Also in 2022, the plan calls for a focus on local street improvement projects in neighborhoods. It is anticipated that in the 2023-2025 timeframe, numerous signal system improvements will be recommended for completion. Staff commented further on the street reconstruction plan and requested feedback from the Council.

Councilmember Hovland questioned why there was a shift in 2023. Mr. Haukaas reported this was due to the fact the worst streets in the City would have been addressed and the City could then focus on mill and overlay projects versus full reconstruction.

Councilmember Jeppson stated she appreciated the fact that this was just a plan and things could change. She recommended the intersection of Radisson Road and 116th Avenue be considered for improvement in 2021.

Councilmember Robertson suggested the City create a process that would let neighborhoods know when they are scheduled for street improvements. Mr. Haukaas discussed the neighborhood notification process already in place and reported neighbors were informed one year in advance after which neighborhood meetings were held.

City Manager Wolfe reported the goal would be to fold this into the City's capital plan for future budgeting purposes.

Council consensus was to direct staff to move the Radisson Road/116th Avenue intersection to 2021.

3.3 COVID-19 Impacts.

Ms. Wolfe stated she was not aware of any new positive reported tests for City employees. She explained beach activities were going well. She reported a team of staff was looking at limited use of a park shelter for outside meetings.

City Clerk Sorensen provided the Council with an update on the upcoming elections. She noted the City of Blaine would be receiving \$35,000 in CARES Act dollars to assist the City with preparations for the upcoming elections.

Ms. Wolfe indicated staff would continue to work on how to allocate the CARES Act dollars and this information would be coming before the Council in early August.

Councilmember Jeppson challenged all of the cities in Anoka County to educate themselves in the rental and utility assistance programs that were available for those in need during the COVID-19 crisis.

Councilmember Robertson questioned how things were going for the newly hired parking attendants at the beach. Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Therres explained the parking attendants had been set up with a table and plastic shield and said things were going smoothly for the parking attendants. Deputy Chief Szykulski stated Community Service Officers were still heavily patrolling the area and were monitoring traffic in the parking lots.

Councilmember Paul indicated he had received a number of emails from the public asking if Blaine Police Officers were going to be wearing masks. Ms. Wolfe reported Police Chief Podany had responded to these emails and explained rules and guidelines were in place for the use of masks then discussed the instances in which masks were worn, such as in businesses where required and in large groups but noted there would be some discretion left to the officers in order to keep communication lines open.

4.0 Council Calendar Review

Ms. Wolfe reviewed the Council Calendar.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

The Workshop was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

ATTEST:

Tom Ryan, Mayor

Catherine Sorensen, CMC, City Clerk
Submitted by Minute Maker Secretarial