

UNAPPROVED

CITY OF BLAINE
ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
Thursday, August 17, 2017

6:30 p.m.
Cloverleaf Farm Room
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 Dave Clark, Wes Hovland, Julie Jeppson, Jason King, and Dick Swanson.

ABSENT: Councilmember Andy Garvais.

Quorum Present.

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Clark Arneson; Interim Police Chief/Safety Services Manager Dan Szykalski; Finance Director Joe Huss; Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Bob Therres; City Attorney Patrick Sweeney; Associate Planner Lori Johnson; Communications Technician Roark Haver; Senior Engineering Technician Jason Sundeen; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

3.1 Traffic Unit Update.

Interim Police Chief/Safety Services Manager Szykalski provided the Council with a synopsis from the Traffic Unit. He commented on the recent zero tolerance traffic enforcement event that was held from May 16th to June 23rd. He explained citations were given to violators exceeding the speed limit by more than five miles per hour. He indicated the event occurred on Rice Creek Parkway, 129th Avenue, Lakes Parkway and Radisson Road. He reviewed statistics from this event and reported the officers made 297 stops with 107 citations issued along with 205 warnings. He provided further comment on the work being conducted by the Traffic Department throughout July and August. He stated the Police Department was working to have a high visibility near schools at this time. He believed the Traffic Department was doing a great work on behalf of the community to reduce speeds and make their presence known.

Councilmember Hovland commended the Police Department for their great work. He requested staff scan and email his report to the City Council. He recommended that the statistical information be passed along at an upcoming Council meeting as well.

Councilmember Clark agreed this information should be passed along. He stated the neighborhoods were pleased that the Police Department had a higher presence and was addressing the speeders.

Mayor Ryan thanked the Police Department for beginning the Cone with the Cop initiative.

3.2 Body Camera Policy Update.

Interim Police Chief/Safety Services Manager Szykulski provided the Council with an update on the City's body camera policy. He noted he has received no public comment on the City's policy and noted the final draft would be presented to staff next week. He stated 99% of the Police Department has been issued a body camera to date and has received training. He anticipated the go live date would be Tuesday, September 5th.

3.3 City Manager Recommended 2018 General Fund Budget.

Finance Director Huss presented the Council with the City Manager's Recommended 2018 General Fund Budget for consideration. It was noted the recommended budget will reflect direction provided by the City Council in budget discussions up to this point. The goal is to provide a balanced budget with a safe margin of revenues over expenditures for approval as the Preliminary 2018 Budget and Preliminary 2018 Tax Levy that Council will approve at the September 21 Council meeting. It was noted the budget currently had a \$247,000 gap and staff requested feedback on how to proceed in covering this shortfall. Staff then reviewed how residents would be impacted monthly and annually if the 2018 tax levy were increased.

Mayor Ryan stated his roof received a visual inspection this week. He explained that his siding work has yet to be completed. Finance Director Huss commented on the numerous roof and siding inspections staff was completing due to the recent storm.

Councilmember Jeppson questioned when the permits were expected to slow down. Finance Director Huss said he was uncertain but anticipated the number of permits may slow down after Labor Day. Mayor Ryan commented these contractors will work all through the winter.

Councilmember Jeppson asked if the bulk of the permit fees would be set aside to compensate for a future decrease. Finance Director Huss stated this would be determined by the City Council. Further discussion ensued regarding the influx of roofing and siding permits.

Councilmember Hovland said he was in favor of the Council reviewing other areas where additional cuts could be made prior to increasing the tax levy for 2018.

Councilmember Swanson stated if the Council did not place an additional \$250,000 in the Pavement Management Program (PMP) the tax levy would be breaking even. Finance Director Huss reported this was the case.

Councilmember King questioned what the biggest risk would be if the Council were to keep the levy flat. City Manager Arneson stated valuations could go down, but typically this would not be a large amount.

Councilmember Hovland inquired if the City could provide its own safety training or if this had to be contracted. Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Therres said he did not believe this would be possible even after the new Public Works Director started, given the high level of training that was required within this department.

Councilmember Hovland asked why the City was having additional street lighting expenses. Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Therres discussed how residents were responsible for covering the expense for street lights in the past and some of these expenses (lights at intersections) were being covered by the City.

Councilmember Jeppson stated she felt strongly the Police and Fire Department should be supported given the fact Blaine was still a growing City. She said she believed the Communications Technician was an important position for the City to invest in as well.

Councilmember King supported the levy remaining as is and said he was of the opinion that staff could find a way to cut the shortfall.

Councilmember Swanson stated he disagreed with this course of action as he did not believe this responsibility should be placed on staff. He recommended \$150,000 be cut from the PMP, along with one patrol officer and the administrative float position. He explained this totaled \$257,000.

Mayor Ryan explained he supported 1% increase in the levy given the fact the City was growing. He said he wanted to see the City supporting the Communication's Department, along with the Police and Fire. He said he did not want the Council to always look at cutting when the City was growing and said he believed the budget was fair and only a small increase was being requested.

Councilmember Swanson stated he could support a levy increase to cover the gap as well.

Councilmember Clark commented his number one priority would be to hold the levy flat while also investing in law enforcement. He stated he wanted to see the City addressing break-in issues but after that he said he would be flexible in addressing the shortfall. He reiterated the fact that this budget had an 8% increase in revenue, which reflected the pace at which the City was growing.

Councilmember Swanson stated he would like to see the Council going into the preliminary levy with a \$250,000 tax increase, which would keep the PMP funding whole.

Councilmember Jeppson asked what the harm was in doing the 1% increase with the preliminary levy. She explained the Council could always pull back.

Councilmember Hovland commented on the nuisance the cottonwood trees would become in the future if not addressed. He discussed the EDA levy and how this could impact redevelopment in the City of Blaine. He recommended the Council keep in mind the primary responsibilities for the City which were roads, Public Works, Police and Fire.

City Manager Arneson stated it would benefit the Council to have Councilmember Garvais weigh in on this issue. He encouraged the Council to consider the 2018 budget and tax levy further prior to the September worksession.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

The Workshop was adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Tom Ryan, Mayor

ATTEST:

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