

## UNAPPROVED

CITY OF BLAINE  
ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA  
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP  
Thursday, March 3, 2016

6:30 P.M.  
Council Chambers  
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 Mike Bourke, Dave Clark, Russ Herbst, Wes Hovland, Jason King, and Dick Swanson.

**ABSENT:** None.

Quorum Present.

**ALSO PRESENT:** City Manager Clark Arneson; City Attorney Patrick Sweeney; Planning and Community Development Director Bryan Schafer; Public Services Manager Bob Therres; Finance Director Joe Huss; Police Chief/Safety Services Manager Chris Olson; City Engineer Jean Keely; Stormwater Manager Jim Hafner; Interim Information Services Manager Paul Grosse; Communications Technician Roark Haver; Senior Engineering Technician Al Thorp; City Clerk Catherine Sorensen; and Recording Secretary Linda Dahlquist.

### NEW BUSINESS

#### 3.1 16-13, Request to Add One Public Services Employee.

Stormwater Manager Hafner stated staff is seeking authorization to hire a public services worker. He stated with the growing city and storm sewer system, the amount of work necessary to maintain the system is surpassing what two FTEs can handle. He stated staff estimates that one extra public services worker could work both in the streets and in stormwater areas.

Councilmember Bourke inquired about mandated activities. Stormwater Manager Hafner replied the City is compliant at a minimum level with all the required programs and noted staff is maintaining the stormwater system.

Stormwater Manager Hafner gave an overview of the stormwater program, routine maintenance, existing system, and the department's tasks and hours of work for streets and storm sewer. He noted items that are not being done in a timely manner or not at all are ditch maintenance, storm pipe cleaning, flared end section maintenance, and completing repairs found during inspections.

Councilmember Herbst commented the cleaning of ditches and culverts is important.

Stormwater Manager Hafner gave an overview of the storm sewer hours by FTE. He noted all FTEs are union workers and the seasonal workers are non-union.

Councilmember King inquired about the jet vac and who can operate the equipment. Public Services Manager Therres replied currently six staff members are trained to use the jet vac equipment.

Councilmember Clark inquired about contracting out some of the work. Stormwater Manager Hafner replied street sweeping is historically more expensive when contracted and noted that maintenance and repair work are not contracted.

Councilmember Herbst inquired about excavating. Stormwater Manager Hafner replied staff does some of the excavating work depending on the job size otherwise it is contracted.

Stormwater Manager Hafner stated staff is not getting to enough storm sewer maintenance tasks. He noted there is adequate funding in the storm sewer fund to cover this position while working on storm sewer maintenance.

Councilmember Herbst stated he does not want to build the stormwater department and that any staff hired should be done through the Public Works department. He stated a reserve is needed in the Stormwater Fund.

Councilmember Bourke suggested union (skilled) staff be utilized for the major street and storm sewer work and bring in part-time (non-union) for other non-skilled work.

Councilmember Clark stated he would like to see the City move to a more flexible work model by utilizing contractors.

Councilmember Swanson stated he has worked with contract models in the past and is not in favor of it because when there is a problem with a contractor sometimes they are not available or have moved on.

Councilmember Herbst commented a professional staff person is needed to run the jet vac.

Councilmember Hovland commented the City is growing and at some point additional staff will need to be hired. He noted that the County maintains their portion of the culverts and ditches, and the City needs to maintain our portion.

Public Services Manager Therres noted the City has 40 FTEs in the Public Works department and uses seasonal part-time workers. He commented sometimes it can be difficult to find enough seasonal help.

City Manager Arneson stated if the City moves to a part-time model the wage structure will need to be reviewed which would likely involve union negotiation. He commented the budget would need to be amended if a person is hired for 2016.

Mayor Ryan commented the City is \$2 below scale and have lost workers because of it.

Councilmember Bourke suggested the City have an apprentice program for the part-time help.

Councilmember Herbst clarified that hiring will be done through the Public Works department. He commented the position could be paid from inspection fees.

Councilmember Hovland inquired about Public Works staff being cross trained on tasks. Public Services Manager Therres replied as tasks are mastered staff are trained on additional tasks.

Council consensus was to add one public services employee in 2016 if funding is available and to emphasize cross-training throughout the department.

### 3.2 16-14, Storm Ponds and Fountains.

Stormwater Manager Hafner gave an overview of essential stormwater management and stormwater pond characteristics. He stated current City ordinance prohibits the installation of fountains in stormwater ponds. He stated compliance with the ordinance ensures compliance with water quality standards and prevents an unnecessary increase in maintenance and costs that would result from the transport of sediments and pollutants.

Councilmember Herbst commented he disagrees and cannot see how silt could be raised by an aerator, adding pond water is cleaner with an aerator. Stormwater Manager Hafner replied the owner of the restaurant who wishes to implement a fountain has purchased one with a  $\frac{3}{4}$  horse motor. He noted the fountain can draw water from a six foot deep pond. He noted the pond is only four feet deep and the algae would only be pushed to the side.

Councilmember Bourke commented he does not have a problem with a fountain in this specific pond and suggested developing an ordinance to allow the use.

City Manager Arneson stated this is a City pond and there are 250 of the same size ponds throughout the City. He stated a City wide policy will be needed and that City ordinance would need to be amended.

Councilmember King stated any policy change should include the model, size and type of fountain based on pond depth and should include the necessary fee.

Councilmember Swanson suggested selling the pond to the restaurant owner.

Councilmember Hovland asked if the water was taken from a well instead of the pond, would that be ok. Stormwater Manager Hafner replied two other ponds flows into this pond and to augment the pond with a clean water source will not help.

Councilmember Hovland stated businesses are using pond water for watering grass. Stormwater Hafner replied golf courses do use their pond water for grass watering.

Council consensus was for staff to bring forward the proper ordinance amendments to allow a fountain in this pond and to develop a policy City-wide.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

The Workshop adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

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Tom Ryan, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Catherine Sorensen, City Clerk

*Submitted by TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*