

CITY OF BLAINE
ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
Wednesday, September 8, 2021

6:20PM
Council Chambers
10801 Town Square Drive

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Sanders at 6:27PM.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Mayor Tim Sanders, Councilmembers Wes Hovland, Julie Jeppson, Chris Massoglia, Richard Paul, Jess Robertson, and Jason Smith.

Adjunct Member Drew Brown.

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; City Engineer Dan Schluender; City Attorney Chris Nelson; Director of Administration Cassandra Tabor; Detective Zach Johnson; Community Standards Director Bob Fiske; Senior Parks and Recreation Manager Jerome Krieger; Deputy Fire Marshal Todd Miller; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

3.1 Data Practices for Elected Officials.

City Attorney Nelson provided the council with a presentation on the Data Practices Act and how data practices impact elected officials. He described how data requests are managed by the city. He explained elected officials and city staff should assume all records are public and available to the public including phone records, emails and texts, even correspondence made on personal devices. The exceptions were then discussed. He reported best practice is to always use a city issued account or city issued device to conduct city business. Open meeting law requirements were discussed along with social media exemptions.

Councilmember Hovland asked who made the decision what information was public and what information was private on a personal device. Mr. Nelson stated the responsible authority, which includes the city clerk and the city attorney, make this determination.

Councilmember Paul questioned if the council could receive devices from the city in order to conduct all city business as he reported he uses his personal phone at this time. Mr. Nelson explained no one would be invading his personal calls. He stated from a best practices standpoint, the council should consider getting cell phones for and using these for official business for peace of mind. City Manager Wolfe explained this would be staff's recommendation and encouraged councilmembers to make a request to IT if they would like a city cell phone.

Councilmember Massoglia indicated he used Google Voice on his iPad and it worked well and noted this was a free application and eliminated the need for two cell phones.

Councilmember Smith stated he did the same thing which allowed all city business to come through his iPad.

3.2 Citizen's Academy Introductions.

Community Standards Director Bob Fiske introduced the 2021 citizen's academy members to the city council.

Mayor Sanders thanked each member of the community for being engaged and taking the time to learn more about the city. Councilmembers introduced themselves to the citizen's academy members and thanked them for their involvement and interest in the city.

3.3 City Manager's Preliminary 2022 General Fund Budget and Tax Levy.

Finance Director Huss stated at the August 16, 2021 Workshop, staff presented to council a preliminary budget and tax levy scenario and discussed the next step in budget development - the City Manager's Preliminary 2022 General Fund Budget. This budget will serve as a recommendation for the 2022 Preliminary Budget and Tax Levy that is scheduled for council approval on September 20, 2021.

Mr. Huss explained the city council is required to annually adopt a preliminary levy before the end of September and certify that levy to the county. Once certified, the levy cannot be increased; it can only be decreased. Blaine's 2021 overall tax rate is 35.834% and council consensus was to proceed as in prior years and develop a preliminary levy that, in total, produced the same overall tax rate as that of 2021. Current tax base estimates indicate an overall growth in taxable market value of 6.4%. Most of the growth in tax base is from residential property, which saw a \$461 million increase (7.3%) from 2020 to 2021. Roughly 2%

of the increase in residential value is from new construction. Estimates for commercial/industrial property indicate an increase of \$44 million (3%) increase in value, with \$6.6 million of that increase coming from new construction.

Mr. Huss reported after factoring in tax base adjustments for tax increment financing (TIF) and Fiscal Disparities, a conservative estimate for the increase in the city's tax capacity for 2022 is 5%. These preliminary, conservative, tax base estimates would allow for an overall levy increase of \$1,540,000 (4.5%) to \$35,725,000. This levy would maintain the previous year's combined tax rate of 35.834%. Staff commented further on 2022 revenues and expenditure, noted staffing changes and asked for comments or questions from the council.

Further discussion ensued regarding the changes that occurred within the HR department and the HR Technician position.

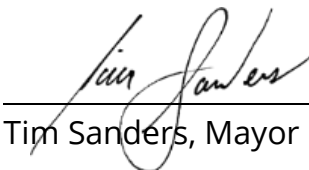
Councilmember Hovland stated he did not believe the city needed to spend \$50,000 on customer service training as he was of the opinion this training could be conducted internally.

Councilmember Robertson supported the city giving the police department the vehicles that have been requested.

Detective Zach Johnson thanked the council for supporting a wellness center at city hall. He discussed how this wellness center will benefit Blaine police officers along with city staff members both physically and mentally. He commented further on the agreement he reached with Push Pedal Pull for commercial equipment that would be placed in the wellness center. He thanked the council again for supporting this space for city employees.

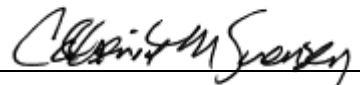
Mayor Sanders thanked Detective Johnson for all of his efforts on the wellness center.

The Workshop was adjourned at 7:26PM.



Tim Sanders, Mayor

ATTEST:



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