

**WORKSHOP
OAKDALE CITY COUNCIL
January 11, 2022**

The City Council held a workshop on Tuesday, January 11, 2022 at Oakdale City Hall, 1584 Hadley Avenue North, Oakdale, Minnesota. The meeting began at 5:02 PM.

Present: Mayor Paul Reinke

Council Members: Jake Ingebrigtsen
Susan Olson
Colleen Swedberg
Kevin Zabel

Also Present: Christina Volkens, City Administrator
Kathy Laur, City Clerk
Nick Newton, Police Chief
Jason Zimmerman, Finance Director
Brian Bachmeier, Public Works Director/City Engineer
Jim Romanik, Public Works Manager
Andrew Gitzlaff, Community Development Director
Shannon Reidlinger, Senior CD Specialist

BOARD AND ACTING MAYOR/OTHER ASSIGNMENTS

Council Members Ingebrigtsen and Zabel both expressed an interest in the Acting Mayor designation for 2022.

COUNCIL PAY

City staff put together a spreadsheet that included five of the cities surrounding Oakdale and the compensation that is paid to their Mayor's and Council Members. Additionally, the spreadsheet was updated with additional cities with approximately the same population. Oakdale's Mayor and Council have not had a raise since 2007.

Council Member Zabel would like to see the Mayor receive \$850 per month and Council receive \$700 per month. However, he wants to wait until later in the year (September) to see what the tax levy will look like before a decision is made to increase Mayor and Council pay. Council Member Swedberg asked Council Member Zabel to clarify if he supported a pay increase and he responded he did. Discussion was held amongst all council members and it was agreed that an increase is needed but a discussion will be tabled until we know what the preliminary 2023 budget will look like.

ENGINEERING SERVICES

City Administrator Volkens is recommending Bolton & Menk to take over the city's engineering services temporarily upon the retirement of Brian Bachmeier until at least until the end of summer

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so an analysis can be done on the efficiency of contracting out for these services, or whether we should hire a full-time city engineer. The city currently uses for road projects, etc. Bolton & Menk matched their fees with SEH and reduced regular engineering services to \$125 per hour.

Mayor Reinke commented that SEH has been really good about work on the city streets. With the promotion of Jim Romanik to Public Works Manager and the addition of Andy Gitzlaff as the

Community Development Director, the city will be strong in those areas. The retirement of Public Works Director/City Engineer Brian Bachmeier is a loss as Brian has been with the city for 30 years and has intimate knowledge of city operations.

Council Member Ingebrigtson said he supports Ms. Volkers recommendation. The rest of the council said they did as well.

POLICY PE-020 PAID TIME OFF

City Administrator Volkers asked that the council to consider a one-time pay out exemption of PTO to recently retired City Clerk Sue Barry, and retiring Public Works Director/City Engineer Brian Bachmeier. Barry had been with the city for over 40 years and had accrued over 900 hours of PTO that went unused due partly to the absence of a backup. Bachmeier too, had hundreds of hours of unused PTO beyond the maximum allowed at payout. As the Council Memo explains, there are several reasons for this request – both are extremely long tenured employees, both gave several months' notice of their retirement and stayed on to help train new employees and assist with vacancies and the transition. Generally, it was not possible for these employees to use all their accumulated PTO.

Mayor Reinke commented it's been a difficult two years because of the COVID-19 pandemic. A lot has been expected of employees.

Council Member Zabel recommended a five week additional payout for Ms. Barry and three weeks payout for Mr. Bachmeier. Mr. Bachmeier is taking much sporadic vacation now before formally retiring in February. Ms. Barry is now retired as of last week with final payout soon. The council members concurred. This item will be added to tonight's regular meeting agenda.

OPENGOV CITIZEN SERVICES, BUDGETING & PLANNING & FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY SOFTWARE

Finance Director Zimmerman asked the council to consider new software that will accomplish permitting, licensing, code enforcement, on-line forms, budgeting, reports and financial transparency. The current system is done manually and is prone to errors. This software will streamline processes and help with budgeting for personnel. It will do financial and non-financial functions. It has the capability to do customizable forms and it gives staff the ability to move forward with technology instead of the inefficient way it's being done now.

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Mayor Reinke added the city will be increasing its population by 20 percent in the next few years with all of the new development starting and this will help not only city staff but will be an increased services to our citizens as well.

Council Member Swedberg is concerned about the senior members of the community. Not everyone has a computer. Something would need to be set up at City Hall to help guide people through the process. Zimmerman stated that computers could be set up at City Hall and city staff will help those that need guidance.

In general, the council supports a software upgrade. This will be brought back to the council at the next council workshop on January 25 with more details.

EMC WORK PLAN UPDATE

Senior Community Development Specialist Reidlinger shared the Environmental Management Commission's draft work plan for 2022. The work plan concentrates on implementing priority actions like a bike and pedestrian plan and on supporting energy efficiency efforts.

Reidlinger added that the EMC wants to host a Solar Twin Cities Power Hour to promote energy efficiency and educate people on solar energy. She stated the desire is to increase access to solar power by analyzing the opportunity to reduce barriers to solar for businesses and residents through suggested implementation of recommended solar best practices. The EMC would like to host a Citizens Utility Board (CUB) Bill Clinic by having an expert consult on hand to explain how to save money.

Lastly, Reidlinger added that the City of Oakdale is a step 5 Green Step City and they have already begun to implement GreenStep Cities best practices for 2022 by working to complete the bike and pedestrian plan update to identify and fix trail gaps between city streets and off-road trails along with other metrics required,.

Council Member Zabel said he noticed a deduction in wastewater by 10 percent in 2021. Public Works Director/City Engineer mentioned there has been a reduction in Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) ground water.

Mayor Reinke mentioned that there is a push for cities to use less salt on their roads so it doesn't run off into lakes and wetlands and impact the environment.

CATALYTIC CONVERTER ORDINANCE

City Administrator Volkens said this topic was brought to her attention by Council Member Ingebrigtsen. The City of St. Paul has implemented an ordinance making possession of a catalytic converter a misdemeanor without proof of ownership. When possible, St. Paul's prosecuting attorney will prosecute these cases.

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Police Chief Newton added that without a serial number on the catalytic converters it will be hard to prosecute. Having an ordinance in Oakdale will allow officers to seize the catalytic converters if found inside a car.

The proposed ordinance will state that no person shall be in possession of a catalytic converter that is not attached to a motor vehicle unless the individual can provide verification of a legal receipt. Newton said with this ordinance, it will really make a difference.

It was requested that a definition of “proof of receipt” be added.

In general, the City Council agreed with the proposed ordinance. It will be noticed in the paper and brought back to an upcoming meeting.

FOOD AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

City Administrator Volkens recommended that dinner would no longer be provided at Council workshops unless there was a special occasion.

In general, the council supports.

PUBLIC WORKS EQUIPMENT PURCHASE – JETTER

Public Works Manager Jim Romanik stated that the purchase of a new sewer jetter is needed by the Public Works department. This jetter provides high water pressure for cleaning sewers. It keeps sewers from backing up and is used in emergencies. The current jetter truck is 20 years old. Because of its age it's difficult to get parts when there's a need for repair or replacement. The current jetter has a couple of leaks.

City Administrator Volkens said the city has the money available to purchase a new jetter. Public Works has said this is a CIP priority.

In general, the Council supports the purchase of a new jetter. This will be brought back to the City Council meeting January 25.

COUNCIL TOPICS

Council Member Ingebrigtsen said he would be voting no on the COVID-19 proof of vaccination, testing and face covering policy. It's his opinion that this isn't constitutional. If the Supreme Court rules its constitutional then he would change his vote to yes. On another topic, he said he would be asking to pull Consent Agenda item “I” that the Mayor and Council sign a joint powers agreement between the Metropolitan Council and the city of Oakdale.

Council Member Zabel would like to see the council thinking about the 40th Street pedestrian bridge and making a bonding request to the legislature for a few reasons. It is a bonding year, the state has an \$8 billion dollar surplus, and we also have federal infrastructure dollars coming in. Even though the bridge is in the CIP for year 2025, Council Member Zabel stated we shouldn't wait to get in line for that money. Every city will be asking for that federal money and state surplus money. He's asking for support from the council to ask Administrator Volkens to maybe get the council a quote on a contract lobbyist.

In general, the council supports Volkens getting a quote from a lobbyist.

Mayor Reinke said candidly he has lost track of the funds status and the spending out of each of the funds [the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 monies and the CARES monies]. Volkens said we haven't used the former for many projects yet. We've used all CARES act monies. It was requested that the Finance Director prepare a report on such for council.

Volkens suggested reviewing the city's fund balance potentially at the end of February or whenever the auditors are done. Finance Director Zimmerman stated that would not be until April.

Mayor Reinke said there would be a swearing in of two new police officers at the regular City Council meeting. He went on to explain the procedure.

ADJOURNMENT

The workshop was adjourned for the Regular City Council meeting at 6:55.

The workshop reconvened at 7:49.

Still in attendance: Mayor Reinke
Council Members Swedberg
Council Member Zabel
Council Member Olson
City Administrator Volkens
City Attorney Thomson

Absent: Council Member Ingebrigtsen

COUNCIL TOPICS CONTINUED

Council Member Swedberg said Edina is the latest suburb to roll out a homeowner surveillance camera program. This was brought up a couple of years ago; a program through Ring. This program is subsidized.

Volkens added Woodbury does this. Swedberg will give the information she has to Volkens.

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City Administrator Volkens asked to take a moment to discuss the process of the City Administrator performance review per the email recently sent. She would like to formalize a process that would be professional and responsible and would include a form.

Mayor Reinke agreed a form is important and should be the model for the rest of the direct reports. It would include goals. Reinke feels there is a valuable component in getting feedback of performance from directors regarding goals, etc. However, the request for feedback should be clear if it is for professional development or performance review

Professional development for all city staff is a good idea and Volkens believes, based on conversations with staff, that it would be welcomed. Volkens would like to have a third party conduct the professional development program and has been speaking with Executive Management Systems.

The workshop adjourned at 8:28 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Laur, City Clerk