

**WORKSHOP
OAKDALE CITY COUNCIL
February 22, 2022**

The City Council held a workshop on Tuesday, February 22, 2022 at Oakdale City Hall, 1584 Hadley Avenue North, Oakdale, Minnesota. The meeting began at 5:00 PM.

Present: Mayor Paul Reinke

Council Members: Jake Ingebrigtsen
Colleen Swedberg
Kevin Zabel

Absent: Susan Olson

Also Present: Christina Volkens, City Administrator
Kathy Laur, City Clerk
Nick Newton, Police Chief
Jason Zimmerman, Finance Director
Jim Romanik, Public Works Manager
Andrew Gitzlaff, Community Development Director
Kevin Wold, Fire Chief

OPENGOV CITIZEN SERVICES, BUDGETING & PLANNING AND REPORTING & TRANSPARENCY

Finance Director Zimmerman followed up with the Council on a discussion he had with them in January about OpenGov software. OpenGov is the only company that offers an integrated, cloud-based suite for local government that includes permitting, licensing, code enforcement, online forms, budgeting and planning, reporting and transparency platforms. It is proposed that the City have a 5-year contract with them.

Currently, the city uses Permit Works and that would cease to operate once OpenGov is installed. The City has an agreement with Permit Works now that costs under \$10,000 a year.

Staff is proposing that funding for the first year of OpenGov, or the first \$98,854, come from the Special Project Fund. The ongoing subscription fee is proposed to be funded by the tax levy. The annual subscription would cost about \$60,000 with an annual increase.

Council member Ingebrigtsen asked if the City could make a deal in perpetuity. He would like to keep the fee after year five low. Zimmerman responded that he would look into that possible option for the March 8 council meeting request for approval.

Council Member Swedberg stated she thought the annual cost was too high, but would support.

Mayor Reinke said he would support the software and he liked that staff had prior experience with it.

Council Member Zabel asked if this would be a replacement to Tyler Technologies Incode 10 – which is used as our financial ERP – and Mr. Zimmerman indicated this would be a complement to help with budgeting, reporting, and transparency. Incode 10 is still used to record transactions, process accounts payable, payroll, accounts receivable, etc.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN LAND USE CHAPTER DISCUSSION PART 2

Community Development Director Gitzlaff explained that this topic is a continuation of the discussion the Council had at the last workshop on February 8, 2022. He gave a brief recap and reminded the Council that the City Council has the discretion to modify the policy statements in the Comprehensive Plan but would need to go through a formal amendment process and receive Metropolitan Council approval. The current plan was adopted in 2019 and went into effect in 2020. Mr. Gitzlaff discussed the land use goals and policies. If there is something in the plan that doesn't sit well with the Council they should bring those items to staff who will make a list so the issues can be addressed collectively.

Council expressed a concern about references to public financing. Mr. Gitzlaff said it was important for Council to provide clear direction to staff and the development community where public financing doesn't make sense and where Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) could be used. Mr. Gitzlaff suggested that the Council revisit it's TIF policy

City Administrator Volkens noted that having Baker Tilly look at the City's TIF districts was a good thing since they discovered additional funding that was left over that could be used to fund other projects or programs. Other areas to look at during the March 29 special council workshop would be the housing chapter and its goals along with the current status of the City's housing programs.

Council member Zabel stated that our current TIF policy doesn't separate residential and commercial. He feels it's outdated.

Council member Swedberg believes it's a good thing that the city is looking at the TIF policy because it is outdated.

Mayor Reinke would like to see a comparison and contrast of how it is now and recommendations from staff for how it could be.

BUSINESS RETENTION, EXPANSION AND ATTRACTION PROGRAM SCOPE OF WORK

Community Development Director Gitzlaff and City Administrator Volkens have identified a need for business retention and talked about what the city potentially has to offer businesses in Oakdale.

Mr. Gitzlaff suggested having visits with businesses to show them the city cares about their businesses. Getting the pulse of the community while on these visits would be helpful in knowing

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what they feel the city does well and what it doesn't do well in terms of business services from the City.

A discussion was had by the Council that if the city starts a project like visiting businesses that it has to be sustainable. The Oakdale and St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce already have something like this in place for ribbon cuttings.

There are approximately 600 businesses in Oakdale. The idea of 24 business visits a year was questioned. Council member Swedberg thought that was a lot. Mr. Gitzlaff said staff could taper that off to 10 over time. Council Member Swedberg was concerned that if the City decides to move forward with this initiative we need to be consistent or the City will lose credibility in the community. Follow up is important.

Ms. Volkens suggested we start with 18 businesses per year. Mr. Gitzlaff felt that if the City focused on less visits but with better quality of service that could work.

Council member Zabel stated that with 600 businesses in Oakdale, if we only see 18 businesses a year, it would be 30 years before we'd visit that business again. He's expressed concern about where the city would begin. Council Member Zabel stated the visits cannot be a sales pitch for the Chamber of Commerce. Overall, Council Member Zabel likes the idea. He said the City needs to have a long-term strategy.

Mr. Gitzlaff suggested having sectors and that the Economic Development Commission (EDC) could make recommendations to the Council. He said the EDC was supportive of proceeding with the partnership with the OACC and the SPAAC to implement the BRE&A Program. A few of the commission members offered to volunteer to be a part of the participant pool for visits. The EDC recommended that an action plan be completed as part of the scope of work to ensure that proper follow-ups are done after initial visits.

Mr. Gitzlaff will finalize the agreement and bring back to a future council meeting for approval.

COUNCIL CODE OF CONDUCT

Council Member Zabel said he was good with the policy that was presented. He thought that section 3.4 (Diversity) could be deleted because 3.5 covers it. 3.4 Diversity states, I will support and value diversity – promoting an environment that embraces all people's similarities and differences to the organization. 3.5 Respect states, I will respect the act fairly toward all those I encounter and refuse to engage in or tolerate any form of discrimination or harassment. Similar sentiments.

Council member Swedberg said she was fine keeping 3.4 as part of the policy. Most code of conduct policies include language related to Diversity.

Council member Ingebrigtsen said he doesn't have an opinion on keeping 3.4. He doesn't believe the Council needs a code of conduct policy.

Mayor Reinke doesn't believe the Council needs it, but will support it.

City Administrator Volkens said she would put it on the consent agenda for the March 8, 2022 meeting.

COUNCIL TOPICS

Council Member Ingebrigtsen apologized to the Parks and Recreation Commission. The last meeting only had four commissioners there and Council Member Ingebrigtsen felt like he overstepped by suggesting they take no action on items. He later realized there was a quorum present and action could have happened so he wanted to apologize.

Council member Swedberg asked the Council if they had read the article in the Star Tribune about the METRO Gold Line. The article stated that it would be years before the project would get started.

City Administrator Volkens mentioned that Pioneer Press journalist Bob Shaw retired. He used to cover city business and report on it.

Mayor Reinke mentioned that a friend of his, Don Mullin, would like to have a table at the City's Summerfest event to promote St. Paul Building Trades. This would be an option for students exploring career paths separate from going to college. City Clerk Laur stated she would talk to the Summerfest Committee to see if they are open to that.

Council Member Zabel suggested it could be an expo type thing at Summerfest.

Council Member Swedberg shared that she thought Summerfest should be at least two full days since it's the biggest event the City has.

In April, more detailed plans on Summerfest will come back to a Council workshop.

Mayor Reinke said he had breakfast with the security team at Hy-Vee. Hy-Vee is very concerned about security and now has security people working there full-time.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Laur, City Clerk