

**WORKSHOP MINUTES  
OAKDALE CITY COUNCIL  
June 14, 2022**

The City Council held a workshop on Tuesday, June 14, 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  
Susan Olson

**City Staff Members:** Christina Volkens, City Administrator  
Katie Robinson, Deputy City Clerk  
Nick Newton, Police Chief  
Jason Zimmerman, Finance Director  
Jim Romanik, Public Works Manager  
Andrew Gitzlaff, Community Development Director  
Lori Pulkrabek, Communications Manager  
Kevin Wold, Fire Chief  
Kyle Stasica, Accounting Manager  
Holly Wilson, Human Resources Director

**Public Members:** Andy Hering, Auditor, Redpath and Co., Ltd

**REVIEW OF FINANCIAL AUDIT**

Redpath & Co. Ltd, Auditor Andy Hering distributed bound copies of the reports and addressed the Council with the results of the financial audit. The following are results of the audit; Annual Comprehensive Financial Report; this included financial statements, footnotes and supplemental information, the overview was an ‘unmodified’ Clean opinion on the Basic Financial Statements. The next part of the report was on Internal Control Over Financial Reporting and on Compliance and other Other Matters; no internal control findings or compliance findings; the third part of the update is a MN Legal Compliance report which had one compliance finding. The finding was due to two invoices that were paid outside of the 35-day requirement. The corrective action to be taken is to stamp (by finance staff) all invoices the date they are received to assist in monitoring this requirement.

A summary of activity is as follows:

The General Fund experienced a slightly lower collection rate during 2021 than in the past due to the City allocating tax collections to other funds during 2021.

The City experienced strong permit / license revenue that exceeded the budgeted revenue by \$171,000.

Revenue in the amount of \$3,052,581 related to the American Rescue Plan Act was unbudgeted and is reported in the General Fund.

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Expenditures of Public Works were under budget by \$237,330 primarily due to unfilled positions.

Transfers to the General Fund were under budget by \$267,500 while transfers out were over budget by \$4,756,000. All transfers were either included in the budget or approved separately by Council.

As far as Special Revenue Funds, the following were discussed:

Forfeited Proceeds

The Forfeited Proceeds fund was established to account for confiscated goods and cash related to controlled substance and gambling crimes. The fund balance as of December 31, 2021 was \$118,446 a decrease of \$54,649 from the prior year.

Recreational Activity Fund

This fund received transfers of \$38,765 from the General Fund, \$180,000 from the Communications and Broadcasting Special Revenue Fund and \$30,000 from the Charitable Gambling Special Revenue Fund during 2021. This fund balance was increased by \$36,387 during the year to \$43,072 at December 31, 2021. During 2022, the fund was closed and recreation activities are accounted for in the General Fund.

Summerfest fund

Sources and expenditures related to the City's annual Summerfest are accounted for in this fund, which had a fund balance of \$32,245 at December 31, 2021.

Community and Economic Development fund

This fund balance was \$349,171 on December 21, 2021.

Cable Commission Fund

This fund was renamed in 2011 to Communications and Broadcasting as antenna rental fees are not collected in this fund. The fund balance as of December 31, 2021 was \$28,773. During 2022, the fund was closed and its activities were accounted for in the General Fund.

Charitable Gambling

This fund balance as of December 31, 2021 was \$212,063.

Surface Water Management Fund

This fund balance as of December 31, 2021 was \$319,573 and increased by \$227,715.

Veteran's Memorial

This fund balance as of December 31, 2021 was \$3,558.

Neighborhood Strategic Planning

This fund balance as of December 31, 2021 was \$120,165.

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Pandemic Business Recovery Loan Fund

This fund received an initial transfer from the General Fund in the amount of \$117,197, which is equal to the fund balance at year-end.

The following Capital Project Funds were discussed:

Vehicle and Equipment Replacement

Funding will be derived from an annual levy. The fund incurred \$0 of expenditures during 2021 and had a fund balance of \$949,256 on December 31, 2021.

Water Availability Reserve

During 2021, \$550,000 was transferred out of the fund to the Utility System Replacement fund to finance project costs. Fund balance was \$46,671 on December 31, 2021.

Future Building Fund

This fund incurred \$78,018 of expenditures during 2021 and had a fund balance of \$3,385,186 on December 31, 2021.

Utility System Replacement Fund

During 2021, the fund incurred \$2,409,988 of costs related to construction of Well #7, all of which were funded by a grant from MPCA. The fund received transfers totaling \$1,800,000 during the year and had a balance of \$3,076,024 on December 31, 2021.

City Sewer Availability Charge

This fund balance on December 31, 2021 was \$376,775.

Capital Improvement Planning Fund

This fund balance on December 31, 2021 was \$710,078.

Special Projects

This fund balance on December 31, 2021 was \$3,039,506.

Highway 36 Realignment

This fund balance on December 31, 2021 was \$139,479.

Mayor Reinke asked Council if they had any questions, no questions were brought to the table at this time. He then thanked Mr. Hering from Redpath, Finance Director Jason Zimmerman and Accounting Manager Kyle Stasica for a job well done and a good clean audit.

**PARK DEDICATION FEES**

Community Development Director, Andy Gitzlaff presented Park Dedication Fees. Mr. Gitzlaff stated that staff has been working with Stantec to update the City's park dedication fee schedule to better align with identified park land needs, best practices and to comply with a recent court ruling from

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the City of Burnsville that reaffirmed there needs to be a rough proportionality between the fee and the need for park land.

Oakdale's current population and park acreage translates to roughly 17.4 acres per 1,000 population. National standards for park development recommend 15 to 20 acres per 1,000 people. A search of peer and neighboring cities identifies park dedication requirements between 5% - 10% of the land.

Based on an analysis of 17 parcels, representative vacant parcels in Oakdale that will likely develop for residential uses, the average assessed value of this land, as calculated from Washington County Assessor figure is \$82,156 per acre for residential.

Based on an analysis of 8 representative vacant parcels that will likely be developed for commercial use, the average assessed value of this land, as calculated from Washington County Assessor figures, is \$293,590 per acre for commercial -industrial land.

Council had discussed the revised park dedication methodology and proposed fees at the May 10, 2022 workshop and provided the following feedback;

The council relayed general support for 17 acres per 1,000 people as an appropriate ratio of park land for the City of Oakdale based on the current data. There is a desire to address inequities in park locations throughout the City.

The council requested additional detail on how 17 acres per 1,000 residents was calculated.

The council desires to see the actual fees that will result from the methodology once a standard calculation for average land value is determined for residential and commercial property.

Council Member Zabel asked for clarification on the methodology specifically as to how commercial and residential calculations were obtained. His example was directed towards why the Reagan Properties (commercial) and Eberhart farms (residential) were not included.

Mr. Gitzlaff explained that Stantec, with the assistance of staff, identified representative parcels by comparing existing and future land uses in the Comprehensive Plan and selected sites where there has been known development interest by the City or private sector. However, Mr. Gitzlaff assured Council that he will take another look as to why these two parcels were not included. He noted that some parcels were not included because the assessed land value skewed too far either higher or lower than the average. Likely due to unique circumstances such as the percentage of land that is developable.

Mayor Reinke mentioned that the bulk of Reagan Properties is not developable. The Mayor is willing to get more information directly from Reagan Properties to share with Council if needed.

City Administrator Volkert noted that the next step would be to Council action to update the fee schedule through a fee schedule amendment.

**TIME WITH POLICE CHIEF**

Chief of Police, Nick Newton shared a very in-depth presentation on Policy Activity from 2015 – 2021. These numbers included Complaint Reports, Calls for Service, Persons in Crisis, Firearms Crimes, Assault Reports, Robbery, Theft Reports, Auto Theft (Oakdale has the highest number in auto thefts in Washington County at this time), Vehicle Pursuits, Vehicle Crash Reports, Police Use of Force, Search Warrants and Police Staffing.

Chief Newton highlighted the following discussion topics;

Crime and Policy Activity Trends:

The data shows an increase in mental health calls, auto theft and police pursuits and a decrease in assaults and vehicle crashes.

Police use of Force:

The police department's new method of documenting use of force encounters allows for timely reporting and the ability to analyze data to learn from incidents and incorporate into training.

Staffing:

Currently the police department is in the midst of backgrounding candidates to fill two open vacancies. Staff is currently at capacity of what they can handle with the volume of service calls. At this time the police department does not have 24-hour patrol supervisor coverage. The patrol division is down four officers and one sergeant due to vacancies and an extended leave. This is difficult as the department is continually working on minimum staffing standards.

Chief Newton mentioned to Council that he believes it would be very beneficial to conduct a staffing study for the police department. Based on current studies, the average life expectancy of police officers is 55 years old and that the wellness of the officers is jeopardized by the demands of the job.

Another consideration for staffing is to hire social workers to attend/assist with mental health calls. Currently the City of Woodbury is trying out this model.

Officials from the FBI and down are beginning to get involved in wellness programs for officers. The City of Oakdale would need an outside consultant to review this for the City.

City Administrator Volkens asked Chief Newton if he knew about how much time and money this type of study would cost. He gave the example of the City of Stillwater conducting such a review and it will cost them between \$40K - \$45K.

Council Member Ingebrigtsen stated that he believes the City needs to get this study rolling and is in full support of whatever can be done to assist the police department.

Mayor Reinke agreed fully that the City needs to move forward intelligently.

Transparency:

Chief Newton stated that it is more important than ever before that the police department build trust and legitimacy with the community and is eager to find ways to share as much information as possible with our governing body and community. One step to share information will be updating their website in the near future.

Chief Newton expressed a concern about the rise in gun crimes in 2021 and how this trend will carry out in 2022. Same results with aggravated assaults.

Council Member Zabel asked if the rise in certain crimes was due to individuals being “locked” in at home during the pandemic and /or if the numbers pertain to certain demographics. Chief Newton responded and stated that as far as the pandemic, it cannot be singled out as the reason for high numbers and the information was based off raw numbers as a whole and not pulled demographically.

In an effort to be more transparent to the residents of Oakdale in regard to police activity, Council Member Zabel brought up the discussion of how we can get this information to our residents. Council members shared ideas from having Chief Newton on the “Oakdale Update” show, adding such presentations to the police department website, creating a more structured way to add the information to Social Media (via Communications Manager Lori Pulkrabek).

**FIRE DEPARTEMENT FINAL HIRES**

Fire Chief, Kevin Wold spoke to the progress of the fire department becoming a full-time fire service at midnight on December 31, 2022. All volunteer fire fighters will be done at that time.

After receiving 75 applications for full time firefighters, the department has narrowed their search down to 6 qualified candidates. All of these finalists come with experience and are employed in other cities.

The budget currently allows for hiring three new fire fighters in July and three more later in the year. The need for all six is now given the excellent quality and quantity of candidates. Chief Wold asked if it would be possible to hire per the needs (all 6) and offered some suggested budget solutions.

Council Member Ingebrigtson asked Chief Wold if he believes the qualified candidates that the Chief has chosen would wait until later in the year of if there is a chance we would lose them. Chief Wold was unsure and thought we would risk losing the qualified candidates in that case.

City Administrator Volkers shared that there is \$2.55 million remaining in the Special Projects Fund therefore if needed, the funding would be there to hire all six candidates at once.

Mayor Reinke expressed his feelings about not wanting to lose qualified candidates by waiting for a later hire date and supports moving forward with hiring the six qualified candidates. Council

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Member Olson agreed. There was general support all around to proceed with hiring the six candidates to start no earlier than August 1, 2022 and start the shutdown of the corporation in full by December 31, 2022. Funding will be as noted in the memo.

Chief Wold reminded the Council that there is still a chance of receiving the SAFER grant.

**POLICY UPDATES**

Human Resources Director, Holly Wilson brought forth the following policies;

Cell Phone / Clothing Reimbursement (Policy PE-003)

Cell phone allowance or reimbursement taxable amounts would be determined by the following criteria unless specified in applicable labor agreements; Executive Employees (\$75/month), Management Employees (\$60/month), Employees that work outside of the office for a majority of time (\$55/month), Employees with demonstrated business necessity (\$45/month).

Clothing / uniform reimbursement / allowance taxable amounts are determined by the following criteria; positions that require the employee to spend most of his/her time in the field, position that requires the employee to spend time in the field where public contact often occurs, a need for recognition as a City employee when in public, positions of Engineering Technician, City Engineer, Public Works Manager, Building Inspector, Building Official, Code Enforcement Office, Diversion Services Coordinator, Investigative Aide, Recreation Coordination or Recreation Administrative Assistant.

The City will provide an allowance or reimbursement of \$350 annually. Of this allowance, \$200 can be used toward appropriate work boots. Due to the unique uniform requirements the allowance or reimbursement amount for the Police Chief is \$900 annually and an annual allowance or reimbursement amount of \$450 (raised to \$700) to the Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief.

See policy for clarification and details.

Tuition Reimbursement (Policy PE-026)

Eligibility is continuing education and training to further their education and develop and improve their skills and knowledge for the workplace. The City may provide tuition reimbursement to employees enrolling in job-related educational programs. Reimbursement will not include books, parking, activities, tickets or transportation.

Reimbursement will not exceed \$4250/annually and employee must maintain a grade average of "C" or better. If an employee leaves their role at the City they are required to pay back the reimbursement via the following guidelines;

*Up to one year after course completion 100%*

*After one year and up to two years after course completion 75%*

*After two years and up to three years after course completion 50%*

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*After three years of course, completion 0%*

Council Member Zabel would like the policy to include books (Section 4.1 of the revised policy) and would like Legal consulted about his section. Mr. Zabel also asked how the reimbursement pay back is collected. Ms. Wilson stated that it would be a payroll deduction on their final paycheck. Council Member Olson brought up that an employee would have to sign an acknowledgement / agreement for the City to take money out of their paycheck. This will be confirmed with Legal.

See policy for clarification and details.

Outside Employment (Policy PE-033)

The new policy states all outside employment is to be reported to the employee's immediate supervisor. If a potential conflict exists based on this policy or any other consideration, the supervisor will consult with the City Administrator.

Council Member Ingebrigtsen asked why do employees have to disclose a second employment.

Human Resources Director, Holly Wilson reiterated the policy is put into effect to avoid any possible conflict of interest.

This policy is being reviewed by Legal.

Mayor Reinke asked the council for feedback, all were good w/these policies.

See policy for clarification and details.

**CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE**

City Administrator Volkens shared w/the Council that she is following up on her proposal for a 'summer hours' trial. City Hall would be open from Monday – Thursday 7:30am – 5:00pm and Friday 7:30am – 11:30am.

Council Member Zabel is concerned with how this would look to the community and feels there is enough flexibility with hours for the City staff now and currently.

Mayor Reinke asked the rest of the Council for feedback; Council Members Ingebrigtsen, Swedberg and Olson are all in agreement for a trial run of summer hours for the summer of 2022.

Mayor Reinke added that there needs to be emergency contact procedures in tact for possible customer/resident emergency needs.

The policy is on tonight's council agenda for approval.

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

**RECONVENE**

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The workshop reconvened at 8:12pm to continue discussion on the Comprehensive Plan and Council Topics.

**BREA UPDATE**

Kim O'Brien from the Oakdale and St. Paul Chamber shared a presentation on BREA (Business Retention, Expansion and Attraction) Program Kick-Off.

The goals of the program are to express appreciation to local business and build relationships, support local businesses by connecting them with resources that can help growth, understand real estate and investment plans of local employers, understand how city policy impacts business success.

The presentation covered the following details;

Who will participate

The plan is to have 1 Elected Official, 1 - 2 City Staff, 1 Community Leader and 1 Chamber Staff Member.

Businesses to Visit

COVID Impacted, Women Owned, BIPOC Owned, Legacy Employers, Top Employment Sectors and Geographic Diversity. Visiting the top employers/largest businesses in Oakdale was identified as an additional priority by Council.

Scheduling of Visits

Businesses will be ranked by priority, invites will be sent from the Chamber via email and all scheduled visits will be confirmed via phone prior to visit.

Visits will begin in July and go through the end of Q1 2023.

What Will be Asked at Visits

The participants from the City and Chamber will inquire about business plans, facility information, investment plans, workforce issues, transportation and transit insights, and community connectedness.

Resources

Businesses will receive a welcome packet with City information and contacts, Chamber information, Open to Business / Washington County Information, Oakdale branded appreciation gifts

Use of Information Gathered

A written report will be presented to City Council with synthesized findings and recommendations, a staff review on what went well and how to improve for future visits and time for questions.

Council Member Zabel mentioned that he didn't think the program highlighted 'attraction' for the businesses. Ms. O'Brien said she will discuss with Chamber leadership to see if additional assistance could be provided as part of the future efforts.

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Council Member Swedberg asked to consider getting other EDC members involved as well.

**COUNCIL TOPICS**

Council Member Zabel mentioned that Hy-Vee has food trucks and a garden tent and was concerned about parking and / or issues with parking or traffic in the lot.

Council Member Swedberg brought up the fact that there are many commission member / liaisons that are missing numerous meetings which leaves them behind with topics and such. She would like to have that addressed for each commission to see if they are feeling overwhelmed with their commitment to the board/commission.

Council Member Olson brought up the concern of the chemical Tru Green is using on resident's lawns. Many animals have gotten sick due to these chemicals and asked if anyone knows of something else that could be used on lawns that are less harmful. City Administrator Volkert will forward some links to her in regard to what you can use on your lawn that is safe for pets.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The workshop was adjourned at 8:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Katie Robinson  
Deputy City Clerk