

MINUTES
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION
December 6, 2021
City Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor King. Council Members Paul Fischer, Rebecca Waller, Michael Postma, Oballa Oballa, Joyce Poshusta and Council Member-at-Large Jeff Austin

MEMBER APPEARING
ELECTRONICALLY: Council Member Jason Baskin

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Craig Clark, Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert and Police Chief David McKichan, Human Resources Director Trish Wiechmann

STAFF APPEARING
ELECTRONICALLY: Public Works Director Steven Lang, Fire Chief Jim McCoy, Park and Rec Director Kevin Nelson and City Clerk Ann Kasel

APPEARING IN PERSON: Honorary Council Member Kris Heichel, Austin Daily Herald,

Mayor King opened the meeting at 6:08 p.m.

Item No. 1 – Police Department Response Times and Hiring Incentives

Human Resources Director Trish Wiechmann stated in recent years the applications for police officers have declined. In response to that decline, she stated the City may want to consider removing the 30 minute response time requirement and create some incentives for the police department.

Ms. Wiechmann stated that other cities close to Austin have removed the response time requirement for their police department and recommended it be removed as well for Austin.

She stated the Council may want to consider adopting a policy for up to \$5,000 of student loan repayment or \$5,000 in relocation expenses.

Another proposed incentive would be a referral bonus to current employees, up to \$1,000, for an employee that successfully refers a candidate that becomes employed with the City.

Police Chief David McKichan stated he supports all the proposed options to increase the amount of applications that the City is receiving. He noted that the officer test from Iowa does not transfer into Minnesota so being a border county with Iowa is a disadvantage.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Waller, recommending approval of officer incentives and the elimination of the 30 minute response time.

The item will be on the December 20, 2021 Council Agenda.

Item 1a – Airport Navigational Aids, VOR Decommissioning

Public Works Director Steven Lang stated the City owns an aircraft landing assistance device in inclement weather called a VOR. It is located 6 miles south of the airport and has not been working for over 5 years. MnDot had stated that they were going to replace the device at no cost to the City. However, they stated they would like the City to participate in the cost for the replacement and maintenance with a cost of approximately \$264,000 over 10 years. Mr. Lang and the airport manager recommended against replacing the device.

Council directed Mr. Lang to decommission the device. No additional Council action needed.

Item No. 2 – Administrative Report

City Administrator Craig Clark stated he is working on a Christmas party date.

Item No. 3 – Open Discussion

None.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Waller, adjourning the meeting at 6:53 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann M. Kasel
City Clerk