

**MINUTES**  
**COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION**  
**June 20, 2022**  
**City Council Chambers**

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Craig Clark, Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert and Police Chief David McKichan, Administrative Services Director Tom Dankert, Public Works Director Steven Lang, Fire Chief Jim McCoy, Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace, Human Resources Director Trish Wiechmann, City Clerk Ann Kasel

APPEARING IN PERSON: Dave Schenck, Austin Daily Herald,

Mayor King opened the meeting at 6:17 p.m.

**Item No. 1 – 5<sup>th</sup> Place and 10<sup>th</sup> Drive SE Stop Sign Discussion**

Assistant City Engineer Mitch Wenum reviewed the 10<sup>th</sup> Drive SE and 5<sup>th</sup> Place intersection. He stated from 1920 to 2016 the intersection was controlled by a 2 way stop on 5<sup>th</sup> Place. In 2016, rapid flashing beacons were installed as part of the Safe Routes to School grant. Then in 2019, a four-way stop was installed as part of the Oakland Place SE reconstruction detour and the four-way stop remains in place.

He added that there was a traffic accident in the spring at the intersection. However, there have not been a significant number of accidents at the intersection and he recommended keeping it as a 4 way stop for safety purposes. There were 2.4 accidents per year when it was a two way stop versus 1.6 accidents per year as a four way stop.

Mr. Wenum stated there are three options for the intersection. The first of which would be convert it back to a two-way stop. This would be the lowest cost but would not be effective in handling peak hour traffic.

The second would be to keep the intersection as a four-way stop with flashing stop signs. This would be at a cost of \$5,000. This would make the stop signs more visible but does not improve intersection sight distance. This would require the flashing beacons to be removed and placed at another intersection that does not have flashing stop signs.

The last option would be to install a roundabout at the intersection at a cost of \$500,000. This would improve intersection safety but would be at the greatest cost. This option would improve the intersection sight issues.

Public Works Director Steven Lang stated staff would continue to recommend to restrict parking on the service road with both of the stop sign options.

Mr. Wenum recommended the installation of solar powered flashing stop signs with the evaluation for a roundabout in the future.

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member Postma, recommending approval of the red flashing stop signs installed at the 10<sup>th</sup> Drive and 5<sup>th</sup> Place SE intersection. Carried.

The item will be on the July 5, 2022 Council meeting.

### **Item No. 2 – Annexations**

Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace requested the Council approve the annexation of parcels that are wholly located in the City of Austin including parts of I-90, parcels west of Todd Park, parcels near the Nature Center, the Vossler property and 218 and the Murphy property. She stated the parcels could begin to be annexed in August by providing 30 days notice to the homeowners. The Council stated they would like to give the homeowners more notice than 30 days.

Moved by Council Member Postma, seconded by Council Member Poshusta, recommending approval of the annexations to be moved forward with ample notice to the homeowners. Carried.

The items will be on a future Council Meeting.

### **Item No. 3 – 2023 Budget Discussion**

Administrative Services Director Tom Dankert began the discussion for the 2023 budget and tax levy with the Council stated that the preliminary tax levy and budget needs to be adopted by September 30, 2022. The tax levy cannot increase after that date. The City is anticipating to receive \$8,904,574 in LGA from the State of Minnesota which is an increase of roughly \$150,000.

Mr. Dankert asked the Council what their priorities were for 2023.

He noted that the City will need to settle contracts with the eight bargaining units for 2023 as all the contracts expire in 2022. He stated that every 1% of wage increase is an estimated \$150,000 of cost. In addition, the comp and class step increases are roughly \$325,000. He inquired if the Council desires to add or remove staff.

He also stated there is about \$2 million of excess fund balance which could be used to help balance the budget or for one time capital improvements.

He asked if the Council is happy with the programs that are in place. If there are things that need to be changed then it is the time to do it now.

Mr. Dankert stated the tax levy is \$7,942,000 for 2022.

Council Member Baskin noted that there is a 4% increase for the comp and class and if there are settled contracts for 2-3% would bring the proposed tax levy increase to 9%.

Mr. Dankert stated there is approximately \$200,000 in “savings” for the 2023 year over the 2022 budget.

Council Member-at-Large asked if there are staffing vacancies from 2020.

Human Resources Director Trish Wiechmann stated the City is down and librarian, an engineering technician and a part time CSO.

Mayor King stated it is a challenge to create a budget in today’s economy. He stated he would like a 7% levy increase. He would like to keep the housing funding at \$150,000. He stated he is waiting to hear on a body cam grant. He noted he would like to add a housing inspector to be proactive to conserve housing stock and would like to get payroll out of the police department and add a half time person in the accounting department.

Council Member Poshusta asked about staffing and if the elimination of overtime would help with adding a position.

Public Works Director Steven Lang asked about how to keep the operating budgets the same.

Mayor King stated there would need to be adjustments for inflation.

Council Member Baskin suggested the department heads bring forward any program cuts. Mr. Dankert noted that rates haven’t been reviewed for many years.

Council Member Postma requested that staff look into purchases that will increase efficiencies and save money in the long term.

Mr. Dankert recapped the discussion stating the Council’s direction would be a 6-7% increase, adding a proactive building inspector, adding a half time to help with police payroll and the department heads could bring additional staffing requests.

No Council action needed at this time, the budget discussion will be on a future work session.

## **Item No. 5 - Administrative Report**

None.

**Item No. 6 – Open Discussion**

Mayor King noted the chicken request would create enforcement issues and there isn't staffing for it at this time. He stated the citizens have come to appreciate living in a community without chickens.

Mayor King noted that Helen Jahr would like to come to the work session to discuss Park Board issues. The Mayor stated he would like the Park and Rec Director Dave Merrill to work out a date.

**Item No. 4 – City Administrator Performance Evaluation**

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Postma, to close the meeting at 7:45 p.m. for the City Administrator Job Performance Evaluation pursuant to Minn. Stat. 13D.05 Subd. 3(a).

**See DVD of Closed Session**

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Postma, to reopen the meeting at 8:26 p.m.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Waller, adjourning the meeting at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Ann M. Kasel  
City Clerk