

**MINUTES**  
**COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION**  
**December 5, 2022**  
**City Council Chambers**

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Council Members Joyce Poshusta and Rebecca Waller

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Craig Clark, Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert and Police Chief David McKichan  
Public Works Director Steven Lang, Fire Chief Jim McCoy, Park and Rec Director Dave Merrill, Human Resources Director Trish Wiechmann, City Attorney Craig Byram and City Clerk Ann Kasel

APPEARING IN PERSON: Austin Daily Herald, KAUS Radio, Laura Helle

Mayor King opened the meeting at 5:52 p.m.

**Item No. 1 – Airport T-Hangar Budget Update**

Public Works Director Steven Lang provided an update for the Airport T-Hangar construction project. He stated the City of Owatonna recently completed a similar project and based off the completed construction cost of that project; Mr. Lang felt that the project will come in over budget. He stated the City could cancel the project, reduce the project from 10 units to 8 units, or move forward with the project as planned. Mr. Lang recommended moving forward with the project as planned because of the high demand for plane space in Austin. He stated the rental income from the hangar will pay back the local share of the project over time.

The Council expressed interest in keeping the project as a 10 unit t-hangar.

For Council information only; no additional Council action needed at this time.

**Item No. 2 – Tree Maintenance Pay**

Parks and Recreation Director Dave Merrill stated the Council recently approve the reinstatement of two full time tree trimmer positions. He stated the positions were posted and an employee posted to the position that was currently doing the tree work at a rate of \$37.84. He received a notice what he would be receiving \$35.95 per hour for full time tree work, thereby reducing his wage by \$1.90 to do the same work. The employee was upset about this and Mr. Merrill met with Human Resources Director Trish Wiechmann and City Administrator Craig Clark about the issue and was told it is City policy to handle the posting in that manner.

Human Resources Trish Wiechmann provided a memo stating that this is how postings have been handled in the past.

Mr. Merrill noted that the past practice is not the best practice in this case. He noted that employees should not have to file a grievance to be heard.

Chris Grev stated the Park and Rec Board is in full support of the matter.

Mayor King stated he would like to move into closed session for the matter since it is part of a union contract.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Postma, to move into closed session pursuant to Minn. Stat 13D.03 Subd.1(b) in Conference Room A. Carried.

**See DVD of Closed Session**

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Postma, to reopen the meeting at 6:53 p.m.

**Item No. 3 - Administrative Report**

None

**Item No. 4 – Open Discussion**

None.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

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Ann M. Kasel  
City Clerk