

**STAFF SUMMARY
CITY OF MINNETONKA
CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2007
PAGE 1**

Council Present: Dick Allendorf, Bob Ellingson, Terry Schneider, Tony Wagner, Brad Wiersum, and Mayor Jan Callison. Al Thomas was excused.

Council Absent: None

Staff: John Gunyou, Geralyn Barone, Merrill King, Darin Nelson, Mark Raquet, Scott Boerboom, Jeff Sebenaler, Joe Wallin, Lee Gustafson, Ron Rankin, Brian Wagstrom, Jim Malone, David Maeda

Callison called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. City Manager John Gunyou reported that the shoreland listening session was on November 27, 2007.

1. 2008 Preliminary Budget Review

Gunyou said the council had an August study session on the budget to provide budget and levy targets. Subsequently a preliminary levy was adopted that provided direction to staff to put together detailed budget proposals.

Budget Summary

Schneider asked for clarification of the wording in the overall summary concerning renovation of the Williston Center. Schneider said the wording seemed to imply a new center could be built. He said the council has discussed repairs and even a major renovation but has never discussed building a new center. Gunyou said four or five years ago the council discussed what should be done with the Williston Center. At the time it was decided to put the center on a pay as you go basis to help pay for minor capital improvements. At the same time it was agreed to re-examine what should be done in another five years. Gunyou said it is time to make decisions on what the city wants to do in the C.I.P with funding repairs and renovation of the Williston Center. At the same time there is discussion in the comprehensive plan process on what kind of fitness center Williston will be five to ten years from now. The city has hired an architect to do preliminary programming projections.

Gunyou said the center is currently paying for itself except for major renovations. The recreation department is also working with the University of St. Thomas to develop a business plan. He said it makes sense to look at what Williston should be- should the city get out of the swimming pool business? Should it get out of or expand the tennis services? Because of the costs it's unlikely the center would be rebuilt. Gunyou said he was thinking of holding a separate study session on Williston or having detailed discussion during the C.I.P. process.

Allendorf noted that the city is not going to continue to provide prosecutorial services for a couple of nearby communities but is going to provide city court services to the city of Excelsior. Gunyou said the prosecutorial services were

**STAFF SUMMARY
CITY OF MINNETONKA
CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2007
PAGE 2**

getting to a point where an additional attorney needed to be hired. Barone said the city court is handled administratively.

Allendorf asked for clarification on the statement that "job recruitment will be increasingly targeted to manage costs." Gunyou said the city has stopped advertising job openings in the Star Tribune and is targeting the recruitment to trade journals.

Wiersum said in reading the information about managing escalation fuels costs, purchasing diesel fuels would seem to be more expensive. Wagstrom said diesel fuel is more expensive but it reduces the city's reliability on fossil fuels.

Recycling

Wagner said the city's recycling contract is up for renewal next year. The city has marketed the compost/organics program for about six months now. He asked for an update on what will be done for the next bid and how the experiences from the program will be incorporated in the bid process. Gunyou said the city received a grant from Hennepin County and once the organics program was in place for about a year, staff would evaluate how well it was working and possible changes that could be made. Wagner said he would like to see a review sooner rather than later because after the initial push people might get lackadaisical about the program. Wagstrom said currently around 300 residents have signed up. Callison said she had discussed with Gunyou options for making it easier for people to sign up.

Schneider said he has had several calls in the last few months from people asking why the city doesn't have a volunteer neighborhood allocation of carriers. He said he would like to have a discussion about encouraging neighborhood groups to cooperatively and voluntarily use a carrier. Wagner agreed the city could look into facilitating a way for the residents of a neighborhood to communicate better. Schneider said in the past the council has not wanted to take control of the garbage haulers but the city could work to have neighborhoods select a carrier. He said no one wants three or four different trucks driving down the same street.

Wiersum said the issue also applies to recycling efforts. The idea behind recycling is to help the environment and the benefits gained may be lost by multiple recycling company trucks driving down the same street. Given the interest in the focusing on the environment it may be time to take a look at some things the council didn't want to do in the past.

Wagstrom said currently the city works with Plymouth and Golden Valley for refuse and recycling. The agreement expires at the end of 2008. There already have been discussions on what should be done when the agreement expires. He said a consultant will help with reaching consensus with the other cities and the

**STAFF SUMMARY
CITY OF MINNETONKA
CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2007
PAGE 3**

politics that can accompany the issues surrounding hauling refuse/recycling. There is always a possibility the city may have to go out on its own.

Police

Ellingson asked if the police department could save money by patrolling less. Gunyou said a staff committee has looked at ways to reduce energy use. The committee looked at the timing of patrolling and determined there are not be a lot of savings to found. Changes have been implemented such as parking patrols in visible locations rather than driving around to maintain a presence. Raquet said one of the department's goals next year is to increase police visibility. He said there have been changes implemented such as stricter rules about when a patrol cars idling.

Wiersum asked how much the police department spends a year on fuel. Raquet said the department's budget this year for fuel is \$139,000. Wiersum said given the overall police budget of \$8.3 million the value provided by police presence, the amount spent on fuel seemed reasonable. Raquet said the department has taken the issue of energy conservation seriously and he thinks they have done a good job.

Schneider asked if there have been improvements to police vehicles that will help conserve fuel. Raquet said currently there are two options for police vehicles: the Ford Crown Victoria that has a V-8 engine and the Dodge Charger that comes with a hemi and a V-6. There have been discussions to try the Dodge Charger. Typically the department has watched other cities experiences with different vehicles to determine the pros and cons before making any decisions.

Environmental Heath

Callison asked if staff will provide inspection services for the city of Wayzata. Gunyou said Wayzata had an inspector who retired. The city asked Minnetonka staff to provide the inspection services. The Minnesota Department of Health who is responsible for the 100 restaurants in Wayzata said the agreement was fine. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture who oversees the convenience stores in the city said no to the agreement. Gunyou said the issue is a statewide issue. Staff met with the agriculture commissioner. It is up to the city of Wayzata to decide how they wish to proceed.

Street Maintenance

Wagner asked if there will be additional capitol costs related to improvements in street lights. Wagstrom said there is an emerging LED technology that is being looked at by a number of governmental agencies but the technology isn't quite ready yet.

**STAFF SUMMARY
CITY OF MINNETONKA
CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2007
PAGE 4**

Building Maintenance

Callison asked for an update on the energy studies being conducted. Wagstrom said the overviews are finished and now the specifics such as lighting and gas usage are being looked at.

Natural Resources

Allendorf asked for information about the forest inventory. Gunyou said an intern is being hired to identify the types of trees in different areas so when something like the ash boar hits, the city will have the information available to develop a strategy to fight the insect.

Callison said Thomas asked about assisting the residents near Wing Lake improve the water quality of the lake. Gunyou said Thomas asked if the city could create a matching grant program. Staff is working with the residents as a pilot project. Gunyou said other associations are also looking at improving water quality and if the city could find a way to help the associations help themselves, it might be an idea worth considering. Schneider said if there are meaningful ways to make some of the smaller ponds healthier it might make sense to create a special assessment district to help with the costs.

Senior Services

Allendorf asked why volunteers are no longer being used to help with the lunches. Gunyou said Senior Services has reached a point where the younger seniors are not as active in organized volunteering as the older seniors have been. Also the number of people who are here year round has become a problem in getting volunteers.

Mayor and City Council

Callison noted the funding for Teens Alone decreased from last year. Schneider said he has gotten feedback from the nonprofits that they are wary of asking for too much money. Gunyou said since there have been cutbacks in funding to nonprofits over the years that many of the organizations are happy to keep funding levels where they are at even though they could use the additional funding. Allendorf said in the past he has advocated that some of the services provided are really county services and the city has been kind enough over the years to fund the nonprofits. He said services are important but he has a question whether the city should be providing the funds. Barone said there will forthcoming agreements for council approval that will show the services the nonprofits provide for the city. She said Teens Alone works closely with the police department in providing its services. Raquet said the department works with Teens Alone indirectly through the schools and the organization provides valuable services.

**STAFF SUMMARY
CITY OF MINNETONKA
CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2007
PAGE 5**

Cable Television Fund

Callison asked for information about information that said expenses will not increase despite of increased involvement by the cable commission's attorney on franchise related issues. King said how much time the attorney can spend on issues varies. Some years there is a large expense because of the issues that arise. Choices need to be made on what issues attorney time should be spent on. The question is if the attorney should spend time on every issue that comes up or if there should be a cap on how much will be spent thus limiting what the attorney does.

Wagner asked the reason for the increase from 2007 to 2008. King said it's difficult for the city to project what the market will be. She said the FCC has ruled on federal legislation eliminating the requirement for cable companies under franchise agreements to provide local access networks. Staff is looking into the value of the cable access station. If the station is eliminated the council would have to determine if the service is worth the cost of continuing. Schneider said the city should promote online streaming. Barone said currently the council meetings are web streamed after the fact but staff is looking into streaming the meetings live.

Electric Franchise Fee

Wagner asked how far into the hole the fund can go. Gunyou said the fund will not be that far in the hole. It is not clear what the cost sharing arrangement will be. Wagner asked what the level of risk is with Hennepin County and at what point projects would stop because of the amount of debt. King said the fund is similar to the street improvement fund.

Callison asked if staff is working with Xcel so the estimates provided are more transparent, less one sided and more reasonable. Gustafson said for county road projects, the city relies on Xcel and the county to provide good up front estimates and staff continues to work to get better estimates.

Utility Fund

Callison said she wanted to emphasize the importance of getting the utility rate analysis completed in 2008 particularly to see if any water conservation has been achieved. Gunyou said the structure has been put in place but there isn't good meter data. King said she has made sure with the implementation of the new system that the data needed from the old system has not been lost. Callison said water usage has increased and the goal should be to level off use.

Environmental Fund

Callison said she would like a discussion about if the city should be more proactive in figuring out ways to be a leader in the global warming area. Schneider said he wasn't sure if the city should be a leader or a follower in the area because there are a lot of things being done that are not working. Callison

**STAFF SUMMARY
CITY OF MINNETONKA
CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2007
PAGE 6**

said a lot of things are working and data could be mined that would be useful. Wagner said the city could look at if there are certain types of activities on certain types of developments that should be implemented. He said he agreed with Schneider that it didn't make sense to try something just to be trying something but because the city's residents have an affinity for the issue it makes sense to be a leader and to look for practical things that can be done. Wiersum said the city should work hard to encourage the residents to be more environmentally conscious. He suggested including regular tips or even a column in the *Minnetonka Memo* on things that residents can do. Callison said the comprehensive plan process might include ideas on the issue. Wiersum said students are particularly environmentally conscious and this might be an area for the city to get youth more involved in the city affairs.

Municipal State Aid Fund

Schneider said the cost of the Shady Oak Road projects exceeds what funds the city can draw from the state. He asked how the city anticipates funding the project. Gunyou said the state no longer is advancing funding because the fund balance isn't adequate to do so. The contract calls for the city to come up with half of its cost in 2008 and the rest a year later. King and Gustafson are looking at alternatives. Gunyou said one of the major issues that will need to be discussed during the CIP process is the cost overruns on projects that impact the city's match. He said the impact on the city's match is caused by fixed MSA funding, and inaccurate estimates from the county. . The original budget the county had for the Shady Oak Road project was \$7 million. In three years that has increased to \$30 million. The city's match went from \$1 million to \$7 million. Gunyou said the dilemma is that the city still wants to do the projects. Schneider said there is a point where the city may have to reject projects to hold the county accountable. He would have an issue with bonding for a street that should be paid by MSA funds. There are projects that have gotten too costly for the benefit. Wiersum said there is a point where the city may have to go back to the drawing board because the cost of a project is no longer affordable.

Callison asked if it is time to have a conversation with the county about getting more accurate estimates. Gustafson said for the last four months he has talked with the county about the issue. Schneider said it may be time to send the county a message by denying approval. Gustafson said he would agree if it was still July but to deny approval would delay the construction scheduled to start in March. He suggested inviting Jim Grube, the Hennepin County Transportation Department Director and County Engineer, to a meeting.

2. Adjournment

The study session adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

**STAFF SUMMARY
CITY OF MINNETONKA
CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2007
PAGE 7**

Respectfully submitted,

David E. Maeda
City Clerk