

**CITY OF PARK RAPIDS
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
OCTOBER 8, 2019, 5:00 PM
Park Rapids City Hall Council Chambers
Park Rapids, Minnesota**

1. CALL TO ORDER: Acting Mayor Erica Randall called the Park Rapids City Council Workshop for October 8th, 2019, to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL: Present: Councilmembers Tom Conway, Erika Randall, Liz Stone, and Robert Wills. Mayor Ryan Leckner arrived at 5:10 p.m. Absent: None. Staff Present: Administrator Ryan Mathisrud, Treasurer Angela Brumbaugh, Liquor Store Manager Scott Olson, Planner Andrew Mack, Public Facilities Superintendent Chris Fieldsend, and Clerk Margie Vik. Others Present: Lance Bagstad, Jason Splett, Lynn Dyer, and Robin Fish from the Enterprise.

3. DISCUSSION:

A. Park Rapids Area Schools Community Listening Session: Park Rapids School Superintendent Lance Bagstad stated I appreciate the opportunity for these two organizations to continue to work together. I want to thank all of you for the commitment to the School Resource Officer Program. That partnership has been a blessing. It's very much appreciated.

Bagstad stated tonight, Jason Splett and Lynn Dyer are here. Dyer is a retired educator from Thief River Falls. Splett is a local. They work with ICS Consulting Inc. That is the consulting company that the school has been working with to look at the education and facilities future of our district. We're trying to plan forward. Last spring, we went through a Strategic Planning process for the next five years. It went very well. Part of that is looking at the future. How do we planning for the next two generations of students coming through? It's no secret that we have \$20 million in bonds coming due in the next few years. How do we utilize what we can do for our kids in our community into the future? I think, right now, the city and the school have a great working relationship.

Bagstad stated I think it would be in our best interest to see if we could work together and make Park Rapids better for all of our students. We have 12,088 residents in the school district. I know most of those people, if not all of them, come to Park Rapids city proper. We have some vested interests in mind here that are aligned together. I'm going to let the ICS consultants do their thing. I appreciate all of your input. I hope you find this interesting. As we think forward, how do we to educate the community of Park Rapids and all of our kids and all of our people moving forward towards those next two generations of people coming through.

Lynn Dyer stated I've been with ICS for three years. Prior to that I was a high school business teacher and coach in Thief River Falls for thirty-nine years. I loved being in the classroom. I taught financial management, personal law, computer apps. We were a one

to one school so I managed our computer network, coached three sports over the years that I taught. The toughest decision I had to make professionally was when I decided to leave the classroom because I wasn't ready to be done and then this opportunity presented itself. I could see myself doing this for a few years and I found that it's like teaching in a classroom. It's just facilitating a different group of people. It's been a great experience. I'm excited to work with Park Rapids and your school district. I do have a Park Rapids connection. My wife is from Park Rapids. We got married here a lot of years ago. I'm familiar with your school district because I've spent a fair amount of time down here as well.

Jason Splett stated I've been with ICS for five years now. Prior to that I've spent three years as facilities director of the Park Rapids School District. I'm excited to come back into the community. My wife and I live here locally. ICS opened an office in town over the course of this summer. We have six employees here between Park Rapids, Nevis, and Menahga. I'm excited to be a part of this process.

Dyer stated here's what this is all about. We were hired by the school district to assist them with some long-range planning. As Bagstad said they have done a strategic plan this past year. That's a little bit of a shorter vision. Our hope is that we can assist them with some longer-range plans. It's not only a part of what you're going to be doing in the next three to five years but what you're going to be doing in ten to twenty years down the road and the best use of taxpayer's dollars. The whole purpose of what we're doing is for the benefit of the kids. It's all about improving their education across the school district.

Dyer stated the second priority is to assist the district in their long-range planning and give them some help in identifying ways that they can plan for the future. The way that we do that is through engagement with the community with different stakeholder groups. It's something that our company does a lot of. We feel that when you get input from the community from a variety of different stakeholders then it becomes a community project, rather than just a school plan. We have been meeting with a variety of different groups over the last several weeks. This is our last listening session. These really are input sessions.

Dyer stated I'm going to quit talking and I'm going to ask you to give us some input to some open-ended questions. We've met with the school board and administration. We sat down with community members in both Park Rapids and Osage. All of the teachers, staff, and the students. We've gotten great feedback. We ask everyone the same questions from every one of the stakeholder groups for the purpose of getting responses as to how these folks view the school. We find that we get some unique perspectives depending on which stakeholder group we deal with. The students look at it from a totally different aspect than what the school board or a community member, or a senior citizen would. We love working with the kids because they are very honest. They don't have a political agenda. They tell you how it is. We've seen that even from different people, trends still tend to develop an overall theme. When we look at all of the data that we collect from all of our different stakeholders and put that all together in a final report it gives us some trends across the community, which will be beneficial for the school district to use in planning down the road.

Dyer stated the listening session is only one part of what our company has done. The other component is called education adequacy. My partner and I walked through every building in your school district and evaluated the space in each of those schools. We

take the data that has been provided by the MDE guidelines from the Department of Education. They're guidelines, not recommendations. We look at those and compare them to what your schools have to make an evaluation as to how adequately that space is serving your students. We also met with the staff. We have eighteen categories that we ask them about and get feedback from. We take their data and we compare it with our evaluation of going through the building for the purpose of coming up with a color code, green, yellow, or red, for each of the categories that we evaluate. It gets pretty detailed. Green means it meets the criteria MDE recommends. Yellow means some does and some doesn't. Red means it doesn't meet the guidelines or needs of your students. That's a whole piece that we add to the listening process that we are going to be doing here tonight. Another component is a facility use evaluation, like the roofs, the tuck points, the mechanical parts. This tonight is one piece of a much larger picture of data that we combine and report back to the school board.

Dyer stated we are going to use post it notes on a wall chart, and a dot exercise to prioritize one specific question. We'll ask you a series of open-ended questions. There are no right or wrong answers. We're looking for your opinions. You'll write your responses on the post it notes, which we will read, then the post it goes on the board. Then we move on to the next question. If someone answers the question as you would have go ahead and write down your answer. We are looking for frequency of responses when we put our final report together. It's not a one and done. Use as many post it notes as you need to.

The question and answer session proceeded.

Dyer stated after we've collected all of this data from the seventeen sessions that we conducted, it will go into the database. All of the educational adequacy information goes into the document. The building evaluations goes into the document. It will all come back to the school board. We don't tell them what they have to do. We give them the information to help guide them to make decisions that will benefit the children and the taxpayers.

Dyer stated the board has received some of the data. Once we have all of the listening information accumulated, we will come back and present that to the school board. We will also be setting up community meetings to deliver some of the results from the listening sessions. It will also be available on the school's website. We pride ourselves on delivering results to the communities. If we're expecting you to give up an hour of your time, it's only right that we come back and give you the results of what the community has said.

Randall questioned will you talk about the space study at that time? Dyer stated we do talk about the educational adequacy component and the listening results. Those two we always talk about. Splett stated we will give a recap of all of the assessments that we've gone through. Dyer stated the details of all of the reports will be on the school's website.

Splett stated on the demographics, which pertains to the city as well, over the last ten years the district has grown 6%. The projections show that it will grow 10% more over the next ten years. A large majority of that is residential population students based on our projections.

Dyer stated we have seen a lot of similar kinds of responses from the different groups. When we come back, you will see how your group evaluated, and then you'll see the overarching trends that we have found. Randall questioned what have you seen for community participation? Dyer stated the turnout has not been really good. Our largest

group was around twenty-five people at one session. Stone questioned how did you notify people about the meetings? Splett stated both Facebook and email directly to everybody, and the newspaper. Dyer stated we would have liked to have seen more community members, but we tried to reach out to as many groups as we could to get the word out. Thank you for being here.

4. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

[seal]

Mayor Ryan Leckner

ATTEST:

Margie M. Vik
City Clerk