

**PARK RAPIDS CITY COUNCIL  
WORKSHOP  
JANUARY 14, 2020, 5:00 PM  
Park Rapids City Council Chambers  
Park Rapids, Minnesota**

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Ryan Leckner called the City Council Workshop for January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020, to order at 5:00 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL:** Present: Mayor Ryan Leckner, Councilmembers Tom Conway, Liz Stone, and Robert Wills. Absent: Councilmember Erika Randall. Staff Present: Administrator Ryan Mathisrud, Planner Andrew Mack, Liquor Store Manager Scott Olson, Public Facilities Superintendent Chris Fieldsend, Police Chief Jeff Appel, Public Works Superintendent Scott Burlingame, Fire Chief Terry Long, Treasurer Angela Brumbaugh, and Clerk Margie Vik. Others Present: Robin Fish from the Enterprise.

**3. DISCUSSION:**

**A. Park Rapids City Three Year Work Plan to Prioritize Goals for 2020 to 2022:** Ryan Mathisrud stated I have provided you with a memo of a list of priorities that staff has put together. In my past, working for another community, we did a two-year goal setting exercise. The Council would bring up a list of priorities that they wanted staff to work on. Staff would review and add some and then recommend those to Council, and then we'd figure out a work plan for the next two years.

Mathisrud stated I directed staff to put together a three-year list of priorities that they thought the city would benefit from. I asked for items that would make delivery of services more efficient, more cost effective, and generally better provide services to the community. They brought them to me and we discussed them. They are summarized in your memo. I intend to carry out what the Council decides and that will be used as a measurement to determine if we are accomplishing their goals throughout the time period. Just because we set goals today doesn't mean that we are inflexible going forward. What this is trying to do is give us a general work plan. We should still be able to respond to the daily things that come up, but would still be prioritized against our work plan before changing course.

Mathisrud stated historically the capital improvement plan (CIP) would be used by the city as a decision-making tool for setting goals. But it doesn't capture all of the things that we need to work on, the things that take staff time and resources. It's more of a budgeting tool for prioritizing projects that require capital improvements. This isn't intended to be that, but it's also supposed to inform our CIP where it's necessary. This is mostly staff's response to my request, but I've also added more things in there that I'm suggesting that we consider working on. It will ultimately be up to the Council to choose them.

Mathisrud recited all of the forty-six listed priorities from the city departments, including planning, finance, police, clerk, liquor, public works, fire department, facilities, administration, and the airport. After all proposed goals were presented the Council was asked to rank them according to what their highest priorities are and to add any goals to the list.

Conway stated there are several things in here that appear to me to be either they are part of the CIP or should be. There are also several things in here that it looks like they should have been included in the budgeting process. If they're not, and if they are is the question, and it's just a matter of where are we putting it on the list, anything that is going to be a major expenditure, if we didn't include it in the budget, it wasn't a high enough priority, or this would appear to be a backdoor to try and get something in there. I'd think we need to put a priority on certain things on the list, like an auditing process for the finance department. We need to make sure that our funds are in order. I would list that as extremely high priority.

Stone questioned on #3, implementing a short-term rental program, the Planning Commission has already been working on that, would it be out of line to remove that from the list? Mathisrud stated planning was a little different. He's already working on that stuff that is on the list, so I don't think it's critical to throw those out tonight. Stone stated I'm all about decluttering, so that you know #3 has already been taken care of. Mack stated another way to say that is it's a very high priority because it's being handled.

Conway stated a lot of things on the list I would look at like those are normal staff functions. I don't know if they need to be on a list of priorities. They are just standard expectations from staff, like maintenance plans for equipment, that the records are being kept according to the state standards. I would hope that they are. A lot of this stuff belongs in someone's job description as opposed to on a priority list for city staff. This is specifically listing out each staff's job duties and what their expectations are. I'm used to having a job description that listed the specific duties and then two or three times a year you have a meeting with your supervisor that says here's the things that I'm expecting. So, this is what this meeting is. I would expect someone to have in their job duties for the maintenance of the mobile equipment and the accuracy of the finances, and the maintenance of the record keeping. Those types of things. I don't think we need to keep them on a priority list.

Conway stated one item you touched on but the write up went in a different direction than I was hoping, development of a performance management program. It looked like you were looking at the city as a whole and how it performs to the citizens. I was hoping that it would go to having a performance management system for the staff and employees. Leckner stated that's what I was thinking too. That's something that would be good as a yearly evaluation for all department heads and staff. Mathisrud stated we intend to get that done by the end of the month. I'll be doing it on the department heads, and it's expected that they do it annually on their employees.

Stone stated I do like the direction of #39. I would like us to take our own temperature as the Council and see where we're at and what we've done each year too. I think it's a good idea. Conway stated don't misunderstand me to say that I didn't think that was a good idea, I was just hoping it would go somewhere else and it didn't go there.

Conway stated one item not on the list, it may be a Personnel Committee thing, I think that there needs to be a review of the structure of the city staff and reports to determine if we have the right people in the right departments according to the right people in the right departments. Mathisrud stated so reviewing our organizational structure to make sure we have the right fit.

Leckner stated as I go through this, a lot of this stuff is what I would just expect. But high priority, I think finding industrial park lots would be a high priority since we are running out of lots. In finance, completing a water/sewer rate study, and converting to monthly water bills. My main reason for that is we need to keep up with what the other cities are doing. We need to have money set aside if we have a problem with our wells, water or

sewer treatment facilities, we'll need money for that. We owe that to our citizens to keep that up. I agree with exploring body cameras for the police department.

Conway questioned are we sure body cameras are an advantage to the city? Appel stated in my opinion it's a great advantage. In community relations with any department, transparency is a huge thing with the public. It allows that aspect of things and being able to show exactly what has happened. It takes care of a lot of liability in a major police incident. It gathers more evidence in a criminal case. There's a multi-tiered benefit to having it. It's headed in that direction nationwide. I wouldn't be surprised if it's mandated at some point in the future. We're trying to get ahead of it.

Leckner stated the clerk obviously reviews records retention, that's something that we have to continue to look into. We definitely need to evaluation if we need a new building for the liquor store. We have to decide what we are going to put into the old building if we are going to keep it. We've been holding back on some updates for that. The infiltration basin is high priority, along with installing a new well, which we are planning on doing. Those would be my top choices.

Conway questioned I'm assuming that you have to have certain nitrate levels at the irrigation ponds to irrigate during the winter. Burlingame stated we are not permitted to do that. Conway questioned what would it take to be able to do that. Burlingame stated I don't know. He added it would cost a lot of money to winterize those irrigators. I'm not sure that would be cost effective for a city of this size. For you, at the plant, you go through so much water every day you don't have a choice. We still don't have an issue with storing it all winter long. When you have a wet year, it becomes an issue.

Conway questioned reviewing the rates for our services, how much money actually comes into the city through those fee schedules? Brumbaugh stated I don't know off the top of my head. Our fee schedule includes everything, the building permit fees, everything that we charge for is there. Mack stated I've just undertaken a study of all of the planning/zoning, building, rental fees. I've looked at twelve cities in preparation of looking at the fee schedule. Conway stated it may very well be worth it, but I want to be careful. The majority of our money comes from taxes. Somebody walks in to buy a building permit they are not going to say I can get this cheaper in Detroit Lakes and move over there. But at the same time, it's something that when you walk in to get services, if the price has jumped up from the last time you got that service, it will piss people of, and we might not be gaining enough to be worth the trouble to upset the people. They're not going to compare us to see whether we're comparable to other cities. They're going to compare it to what they paid last time. If we are going to do that, that should be of an economic value that it's not just going to upset people and we're not going to get anything out of it anyway.

Mathisrud stated we'd study it and make sure it's worth doing prior to recommending implementing it. We may find out just that, that it's not worth it. Brumbaugh stated with your building permits, we don't keep a majority of the fee, because of the contract. A lot of it goes to our building official. Mack stated those fees haven't been adjusted for over ten years. Stone stated if we are going to increase fees, I would suggest doing it incrementality and not just a big jump. Leckner stated that's why I think it's of importance because if we wait longer, we'll be even further behind. We need to find out where we are at, and not jump up to where everyone else is. We can start working our way up there.

Brumbaugh stated your water rates are important because they are billed out all of the time, and it goes into your enterprise fund for taking care of other issues you've been talking about. You need money for that and the more improvements that we do, the less

depreciation that we cover, and we're going backwards, even though we have cash you're really not covering your depreciation. Leckner stated that's why we need to look ahead. It scares me that we have one well. Water is important for the city residents. We have to have money to fix that stuff. We should have a second well and that will cost money.

Stone stated completing the GIS asset map of the water/sewer system is in process. Burlingame stated it will be finished up this spring. Stone stated that should be removed so we're not clouding our focus.

Conway stated the item for a plan to replace underground infrastructure, I thought, I hope we already have that. Mathisrud stated we generally have a five-year CIP plan. It doesn't really look farther than that. It would be nice to have a long term 25 to 50-year plan for when stuff gets done. We already know having a good plan, which is clearly demonstrated throughout the city is what we are looking to achieve there. Leckner stated a lot of projects are on the CIP but they keep getting pushed back. You're looking for direction on how in-depth do we want you to dig into certain projects.

Conway stated there's a lot of stuff that sooner or later it's going to become a major priority. Mathisrud stated we think that a long-term plan would also help to inform if the Council choose to pursue working on a local option sales tax, you'll need a longer-term plan for streets and underground as well. Those two are tight together if we go that route.

Leckner stated I think the breathing gear for the fire department is super important. You keep applying for grants, but if we don't get one in 2022, do we start budgeting for that? Long stated I believe it's on the CIP. Our hope is that we will apply for a FEMA grant and that we will be funded. Leckner questioned do they get easier to get as you get closer to being outdated? Long stated you would think so. That's the impression I've gotten from the people that I've been talking to about it. We've changed grant writers to see if we can get a different take on things. I'm hopeful that will improve our odds.

Stone questioned is it realistic to think that the finalization of the firemen's handbook will be done this year? Long stated yes, I'd like to get it approved and move forward. We had brought it up before and the discussion was there were a few things to be reevaluated. We can put that together pretty quickly. Leckner stated there was something about the retired firefighters, just one or two things. Mathisrud stated we talked to the attorney and we'll have to set a time with the Council to go through their comments and identify a scope on that for changes. Stone stated that's one of those things that I feel like we started and it's hanging out there, so let's button it up.

Stone stated in regard to the mutual aid agreements, when do they get updated? Long stated we put the current agreements together in 2013. The reason for that was because we were applying for a regional FEMA grant to update our radios, which we were successful in getting. They needed that countywide mutual aid contract. At that time, we talked about updating them every few years. Nothing changes that much to warrant updating them that often. We'd like to make them a little more efficient. All the Hubbard County fire chiefs sat down to talk about them. They're pretty happy with them. One thing is there is no paid mutual aid for the first four hours fighting fire if they come and help us. After that we like to tie them to rates similar to the DNR rates. It's not real big stuff.

Leckner stated creating operator maintenance policy manuals is something that we should work on. It would be a good idea to figure out what to do with the old liquor store building. It's going to fall apart if we don't use it. Fieldsend stated we are working on it. Conway stated we looked at it for another purpose. Leckner stated we should try and utilize that space.

Leckner stated we should work on the local option sales tax, annual reviews, and to look into the union contracts and do an investigation so we are prepared for the next set of contract negotiations. If we do want to change things, we can get a handle on it before the negotiations start. There's a lot of important stuff on the list, but those are the things that stood out to me.

Stone stated I'd like to see a more specific procedure in regards to equipment maintenance, like simply things like checking the oil every time an operator gets into it before they take it out. A more proactive type thing. Implementing some kind of driver log so we know who used a piece of equipment and when, and recording the mileage. I also felt developing a long-term maintenance plan is a good idea. We need to have something in place which prioritizes maintenance issues so that things are not a surprise. Overall, the CIP that you mentioned is somewhat outdated. I just feel that a CIP always provides pretty valuable direction.

Mathisrud stated we'll do this exercise in two years to see how we did, and what we have accomplished. This will be a fluid working report. He requested the Council rank and prioritize the work items using the dot exercise by voting for the top eight items, which will then be your priorities that staff will work on.

The top three items were:

1. Identify future industrial park sites.
2. Install new water well.
3. Implement a police body camera program.

Mathisrud stated he will summarize the results from the session and include them in the packet for the next Council meeting.

**4. ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made by Conway, seconded by Stone, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 6:57 p.m.**

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Mayor Ryan Leckner

ATTEST:

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Margie M. Vik  
City Clerk