CITY OF PARK RAPIDS
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
February 9, 2016, 5:00 PM
Park Rapids Public Library-Lower Level
Park Rapids, Minnesota

1. CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Pat Mikesh called the City Council Workshop for February 9th, 2016, to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL: Present: Mayor Pat Mikesh, Councilmembers Ryan Leckner, Rod Nordberg, Erika Randall, and Paul Utke. Absent: None. Staff Present: Administrator John McKinney, Planner Ryan Mathisrud, Public Facilities Maintenance Superintendent Chris Fieldsend, Treasurer Angela Brumbaugh, and Clerk Margie Vik. Others Present: Dick Rutherford.

3. DISCUSSION:

A. Paperless Packets: McKinney stated staff, with the leadership of Fieldsend, has delved into the information regarding paperless packets. It's an attempt to gather information so you can see what's available and how it might work in your situation.

Fieldsend stated there are several ways to do this. It depends on how much money and time you want to spend. The Council was polled and you all have a different idea of what you would like. Are there any questions on the information?

McKinney stated we started out with the assumption that we were looking into this because it might benefit accessibility to information in a user friendly way. It was suggested to determine if there might be a savings in terms of preparing this kind of packet. Another question is what about other uses if we went to an electronic device. Would it be versatile for other purposes? What are the costs for acquiring hardware and software, and staff production time? The options are listed in the packet. We did not have a particular target. We threw the net out there to see what kinds of things there are out there. Several of you had some experiences that you wanted us to relate to, such as the City of Walker, Itasca Mantrap, and the counties. Then, how can we produce the packets electronically to delete the amount of time to produce and how readily will it be available to you and the public.

Fieldsend stated option one is the Cadillac plan. It will be more than $1,500.00. It's $99.00 a month for ten users. We would have more than ten users. With that plan you build the packets on line using several programs like word, excel and acrobat pro. Then you would go there to the site to look at the packet.

Fieldsend stated option two is to build the packets locally on our computers using acrobat pro, word and excel. Then we up load it to the website and email. Both of those options require a learning curve for the clerk. We'd have to send her to some training to learn how to use the software. We'd have to provide her with a scanner. She may get a paper invoice for the packet which would require her to scan it for inclusion in the packet. Randall questioned the city doesn't own a scanner? Fieldsend stated it's on our printer, but

she'd have to run back and forth. If she's building this I would think she'd want to sit at her desk and do it. The cost of the scanner is about $300.00. It would save her some running time. Utke stated they're pretty inexpensive.

Fieldsend stated the third option is to make the paper copy of the packet like she does now and then scan it. That file could be emailed out. This option would be the least expensive. We'd still need acrobat pro. I was testing out the possibility of this and I scan a 300 page packet. It was upside down so I had to turn it and shrink it with special software because it was so big.

Fieldsend stated I'm not sure how intricate you want to get. McKinney stated option three is the simplest way to get the packet posted to our website. Then everyone could go to the website and see it and download it if they have a computer or laptop. One of our concerns is to come up with something so sophisticated that the general public doesn't have access to it. Fieldsend stated with those online programs you are limited to who can have access to them. You'd have to log in to get the packet.

Utke stated with option two you'd be building it, and then what would be on line to grab and look at, a PDF file? Fieldsend stated it would be a PDF file either way. It can also be done in word. You have to decide how many people are going to get them. There is a cost associated with that.

McKinney stated the quickest conversion for us to get the software to where it's available and then people would provide their own computer or laptop. A step up from that is that we'd acquire some suitable notebooks. They would be city owned and used by the Council. The way it's preserved on the website would be the same under those two options, it's the equipment that would be different.

Utke questioned currently does staff have laptops? Fieldsend stated there are two laptops but they are docked. They use them as a desktop. The planner has one and the administrator has one. McKinney stated mine has never been out of the dock, but I could.

Fieldsend stated if the city buys the tablets, any information on it is public information. You have to be aware of that. McKinney stated if we provide you with a notebook and you have any personal stuff on it, that's public record, even emails to your children. All of it, if it's on the equipment that we provide, that would be the same for all three options. If you wrote a nasty note inside your packet, somebody might get a hold of it. That's hardly the same thing as being on an electronic document.

Randall stated that would be the same thing as a desktop at work. People use the desktop every single day for personnel use. They send emails. Most counties and cities acknowledge that your county email can be used for personnel use, as long as it's not excessive. Your personal email is not public. It's not subject to data privacy. I think it's good to be cautious, but there's a difference in being ridiculous and cautious. If you give people a tablet, I'm not going to promise that I won't use it for look at the Star-Tribune website. The expectation that you can never use it for anything other than your packet, then it's a waste of money.

McKinney stated I raise the issue not to defend ourselves, but to put you on notice that is one of the things that go with that kind of transaction. Fieldsend stated Hubbard County still does paper packets because they are wrestling with that issue. Randall stated Hubbard County is excessive in their worry about data privacy issues. My computer was on lockdown in Hubbard County because I had excess to a secure criminal justice network. I could not access websites I needed to go to for work it was so restricted. I go to Beltrami County where they have an MIS department with people that actually know about

computers and I can access anything I want to, and we're on the exact same criminal justice network. I don't think Hubbard County is a good example.

Fieldsend stated Becker County creates them and emails them. They provided an electronic devise. Walker provides tablets and they upload packets to their website.

Utke questioned who are the various others that receive packets? Fieldsend stated the clerk produces fifteen copies, including townships. I don't believe we would do those. Utke stated we would only want tablets for Council and staff. Everyone else would have access to the PDF and they can put it on their own devises. Regarding the hardware, we were going to project it so those in attendance could see it up on a screen. Fieldsend stated I see that as two different problems. When we get moved over to our other spot we will have better screens and TVs and we'll be able to do that.

McKinney stated the basic concept of taking this material and dealing with it digitally we can do by buying new software. Fieldsend stated what we want to do is produce it in a PDF and upload it to the website. McKinney stated that would require us to have equipment, such as five tables for the Council. Fieldsend stated that option isn't going to extend the time to create packets by very much. I believe initially to create a packet with acrobat pro will take the clerk longer than it does now. McKinney questioned so we would produce the same stuff, but we would also scan it? Fieldsend stated once you have the file you can print any amount of packets.

Randall stated if we just left things the way they are you can scan this and upload as a PDF. Is the whole packet on the website? Fieldsend stated we don't do it now, but we could. McKinney questioned do we have the capacity on our website to handle that? Fieldsend stated there is a glitch in our website, which I am working on with them. For some reason you can't upload big files. It's got to work, or we will move the website. McKinney stated the theory is, if that were working the way it is supposed to we wouldn't have to make any adjustments. Nordberg questioned what kind of a file does the printer make if you scan it right now, and how big is it? Fieldsend stated I scanned a 300 page packet. After scanning, it was 45 megabits, which is pretty big. I have a program that reduced it down to 13. The website site says you can upload anything up to 100 megabits, but it's not working. Utke questioned is it the website or the internet service? Fieldsend stated we haven't figured that out yet. Their last offer was to give me an FTP site, which would probably work better. I'm working on this particular problem. If nothing else we could email them out.

Nordberg questioned is there a limit on the size of our storage? Fieldsend stated they have not told me that yet. Nordberg questioned did you actually get it up as a trial? Fieldsend answered no. Nordberg stated but if it worked, the public could go to the website, and then a PDF would be there? Fieldsend stated when it's scanned, it's an image. The whole packet would be an image so you couldn't search by words. If you do it the other way, by building it in acrobat pro, you can search it. Nordberg stated if it's not searchable, that's not so good. Fieldsend stated right now the minutes and the agendas on the web are searchable, just the packet would not be.

Dick Rutherford stated I've heard that if your agenda is printed, and then when I get to the meeting, and you add things like the armory. That should be put on the agenda, but not talked about until the next meeting. If someone wants to be here for that, they can be here. Nordberg stated I understand, but that happens now with the paper packets. We get additional items that get added. Rutherford stated people complain about that because it wasn't published. You don't pass something the night that you bring it. It's too bad if you

have to wait two more weeks. You need to let people know. Nordberg stated I understand that problem. There would be less of a problem if it was digital and you could get it on Friday night instead of Thursday at noon. We pick up the packets on Fridays. Something could be added on Friday afternoon. Right now it can't. If it comes in the door on Friday afternoon it's not in the packet. So you would have that advantage of several days if it was digital. I think that's a different compliant.

Rutherford stated tablets are a good deal, but how often do you have to switch and what's the savings to the public? Is there going to be a savings to the taxpayers? McKinney stated you can't look at just savings. In terms of dollars that you spend on equipment you could save money on personnel if they are only spending six hours doing something instead of eighteen.

McKinney stated the other thing, you can't cite very many examples when you were blindsided on what came up at a Council meeting. You have to understand that if we have to get the packet ready by Thursday to go into the paper that you are going to read on Saturday, that means that from Thursday at noon until the next meeting, because of your approach to it, you're talking three weeks. If it's not an important thing that's fine, but what if it is? You can't be so inflexible to say absolutely, you have to have this thing in the hands of the people who don't read it anyway, so that we're protected. There is a responsibility on your part to find out what's going on in the City Council, and we have a responsibility to get you reasonable notice of what it is. But it isn't an absolute. We do not have an absolute responsibility to say everything that we're going to do at a Council meeting. That's the distinction of what you are saying. If it's not important we can put it off for three weeks. If it's important we can't. I'm resenting your implication that we're playing games with the agenda and hiding things from the public, because that is not the case. Utke stated usually what we add is time sensitive stuff.

Rutherford stated I'm not saying you're hiding things. I think they should be on notice. McKinney stated we try to put them on notice. That's why we put it in the paper, which raises another question. If we have to go through any of these options does it change the lead time? Fieldsend stated depending on which option. Option one or two, the deadline would have to be sooner because it's going to take longer. It may have to be Tuesday. We don't know how long it's going to take her. McKinney stated that's because it will take longer to process things. Instead of a Thursday at noon deadline, it might have to be Wednesday.

Brumbaugh stated you have said you want to be able to search. The minutes and agendas are searchable. When I've looked for things from other cities I'll search their documents then I can figure out by the date where to look in the PDF packets to locate the information I'm seeking. As long as your agenda and minutes are searchable, your full packet could be a PDF and you could still find things without all the added costs. Using that method you could see if you actually liked using tablets. If you want to push up to a higher level later. It would still all be there accessible to everybody.

Randall stated I don't care if the entire packet is searchable. I want there to be a link where I could click on page 19 and it would take me to page 19 on my tablet. I don't want to be flipping through on a tablet to get to page 97. When we're sitting at a meeting and talking about something on general business, we all need to get there quickly without scrolling. Fieldsend stated that would be option two.

McKinney stated we were talking about going back a couple of meetings. Randall stated our city ordinances are terrible on our website. There should be a table of contents.

You should be able to click and go to the ordinance you want. Fieldsend stated it does. It didn't before. It took me about two weeks to bookmark it. Randall stated I was seeking for one thing in our city ordinances and I never found it.

Nordberg stated can you do that in a PDF to link things. Fieldsend stated I don't think you can bookmark a PDF. Nordberg questioned if I'm interested in leash law where do I go from the code to leash law? Fieldsend stated you can either search for words, or in the index at the back. Nordberg questioned what kind of document is that? Fieldsend stated it's a PDF that I created out of word. McKinney stated you'd have to do that each time for every packet.

Vik stated based on staff's conversations, what you are asking for, linking to pages that is the expensive option one. You need software to do that. The acrobat pro, option two is a fundamental program that you have to make every single page. I've never done it before. I don't know what the learning curve is going to be. I'd like to see us start with something small and build towards that, instead of jumping right into the expensive option. You may find that you don't really like it. Maybe you'll love it. Maybe I'll love it. I don't know.

Mikesh questioned if there is an add on, does it get rushed to the clerk to put it on, or does everybody have to be trained to use that new program? Fieldsend stated I think it would go to the clerk. Mathisrud questioned once the add ons are accepted by the clerk and they go through the process, is it possible to scan them and put those on the website with the regular packet? Fieldsend stated you can just upload the file. Mathisrud stated by posting to the website that would give people reasonable expectation. McKinney stated that would be fine if you have enough time, but if we don't have time to get it on the website, there isn't enough time to look at it as you come through the door. There will be the occasion where what's on the website isn't as current as we'd like it. The add-ons might be put up after the fact.

Nordberg questioned did you talk to anyone from Bemidji? On television they all have tablets in front of them. Fieldsend stated no I did not. Randall stated the City of Bemidji uses the county MIS. It's top notch.

Brumbaugh questioned would you be willing to start out with a combination? You could have the paper agenda so you could follow that and have a tablet with all the content. Randall stated you'll still have to scroll through the document. Brumbaugh stated on a PDF file you can use the "go to". It would be a start to get the tablet idea, and it would give the clerk time to get comfortable with some of the technical changes.

Randall stated I don't think we are ready to start it. I appreciate the amount of time that went into this. I don't think that we have the staff to do something like this without knowing what is or is not going to work. It doesn't seem feasible right now.

Utke questioned as far as your comfort level in talking with your referenced sources, do you have a good understanding at this point? Fieldsend stated everybody does it a little bit different. Some email, some upload. It depends on their circumstances. Nordberg questioned is Hubbard County using tablets right now? Fieldsend stated they provide a screen at the table, but they don't provide any electronics. Rutherford questioned if they are sitting there looking at a tablet, is there a screen for the audience to see what they are looking at? Fieldsend stated that is something we will do once we move. McKinney stated not if each one of the Council is doing their own thing. It will show the agenda in general, but not individual pages. The screen will show where we're at on the agenda. We can start that at any time.

Leckner stated I think for the money, and what we'll be gaining right away, I can't see the big advantages of it. Randall stated if we were big enough, or if we had our own MIS that we contracted with, but this is not Fieldsend's full time job. No offense at all, but when you're getting into technology and all the changes that we have experienced, we have to get people that really know it and understand it on board. If we don't, we're making a big mistake moving forward. Leckner stated these paper packets do a great job. It's nice to see that yearly cost for the supplies. I'd rather have this. Randall stated I thought there would be obvious time and money savings. Leckner stated I don't think changing would save anything.

Utke stated I would think there would be an advantage to see what we've done two months ago. You'd have your history with you. Fieldsend stated the minutes and the agendas are all on the website. You can search them if you go to the website right now. Rutherford questioned how far back can you go? Fieldsend stated back to 2014. McKinney stated you couldn't do the historical stuff during a meeting. It's set up to do research before you come to a meeting. Randall stated you could if you brought your own computer. Brumbaugh stated if we got the packets on the website, if people chose to they could get all of that stuff without a lot of extra work on staff's part. It would be your responsibility. We talked about not changing you guys at all. Leaving everything as is, just adding the packet to the website for constituents and if you wanted to, you could download it. Utke questioned you'd put the whole packet on the website? Brumbaugh stated yes. Randall stated I can just go to the website and grab it and put it on my iPad. That's a good way to start to see how it's working.

McKinney questioned there's a problem with it working? Fieldsend stated I have no problems with uploading the agendas, but once I get a bigger file it locks up. I've used about four different programs to load up. I'll try from my home to see if it's the city's server. McKinney stated the idea is acceptable, we just have to figure this out.

Nordberg stated you'd be putting a copy of the paper packet that's a JPEG. Fieldsend stated it would be a PDF image, not a text document. Nordberg stated that's a great first step. It would be a big change. Theoretically it would be ready by Friday afternoon as long as the internet works. Rutherford stated the big advantage is being able to get it anywhere you're at. I think it's a great idea. Randall stated you wouldn't have to make me a paper packet. I do not save my packets. I recycle them right after the meeting. If I want to look at something, city hall will have it.

McKinney questioned if someone is on our agenda do you send them notice? Vik stated I send them an agenda to inform them that their item is on. I don't send any information because more than likely they are the ones that brought me the information, but they wouldn't have staff comments. Randall stated but now they could go online and look at that.

Rutherford stated I've looked at the agendas on line. The public needs to know that it's there. It's up to them to go look at it. Don't complain that you didn't see it. Mikesh stated that's what we've been saying the whole time. If people don't want to look at it you can't make them.

McKinney stated if we had a closed session, we'd have to handle that separately. They'll only see that there's a closed session on the agenda. That's all they are going to see. Utke stated let us know when you start so we can try it.

Randall stated our minutes are far more detailed than any Council minutes I've ever seen anywhere. The county board meeting minutes are pathetic. I don't want her to go to

that, but it's extremely thorough and I don't think it has to be. If that's the way she wants to do it, great. But to save some time they could be shorter. McKinney stated I've left it up to her as to what she wants to write down. It is on tape. Nordberg stated I appreciate the thoroughness of it. Randall stated I do too, but it takes more time. If you want to you can shorten it. I didn't know if that was what was requested once upon a time. Nordberg stated sometimes thinking about how to compress things and editing might take longer. This way she just gets the words out. Vik stated there is some editing, but this meeting is your words, not mine.

Utke stated what you are thinking of doing, start trying it. Mikesh stated we did have a chance to go to the county for our meetings. They do have a top notch system there. But there is no savings to change now.

4. ADJOURNMENT: **A motion was made by Utke, seconded by Leckner, and unanimously carried to adjourn the workshop at 5:51 p.m.**

[seal]   _____
                                                       Mayor Pat Mikesh

ATTEST:

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Margie M. Vik
City Clerk