



**MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL  
OF THE CITY OF WHITE BEAR LAKE, MINNESOTA  
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2021  
7:00 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Mayor Jo Emerson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The clerk took attendance for Councilmembers Doug Biehn, Kevin Edberg, Steven Engstran, Dan Jones and Bill Walsh. Staff in attendance were City Manager Ellen Hiniker, Community Development Director Anne Kane, Public Works Director/City Engineer Paul Kauppi, Finance Director Kerri Kindsvater, City Clerk Kara Coustry and City Attorney Troy Gilchrist.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIENCE

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. Minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting on October 12, 2021

It was moved by Councilmember **Biehn** seconded by Councilmember **Jones**, to approve the Minutes of the October 12, 2021 City Council meeting as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting on October 20, 2021

It was moved by Councilmember **Walsh** seconded by Councilmember **Biehn**, to approve the Minutes of the Special City Council Meeting on October 12, 2021 as presented.

Motion carried. Councilmember Engstran abstained.

**3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

It was moved by Councilmember **Jones** seconded by Councilmember **Engstran**, to approve the Agenda as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

**4. VISITORS AND PRESENTATIONS**

A. Swearing in of Police Officers

Police Chief Julie Swanson welcomed three new Police Officers, each with ties to the City of White Bear Lake, and provided a brief history for each as follows.

After enrolling at Mankato State, Eddie Yobbie served in the US Army for four (4) years, with deployments to South Korea and Poland. He earned the coveted Expert Infantryman Badge in

2016 before departing from military service at which time he enrolled at Century College. Eddie Yobbie worked as a security guard for M Health Fairview before joining White Bear Lake in January 2020, as a Community Service Officer and volunteer Police Reserve. His badge was pinned by his wife, Nicole.

Eager to become a Police Officer, Luke Dohman volunteered more than 1880 hours over three (3) years with the White Bear Lake Police Reserves, during which time he was also hired on as a part time Community Service Officer. While attending Century College and later Metropolitan State University, he remained active with the Ramsey County Sheriff's Explorers unit where he served as an Advisor for the past year. While waiting for this opportunity to work in White Bear Lake, Luke Dohman became a Chisago County Sheriff's Deputy in December 2019. His badge was pinned by Lew, his Grandfather.

Influenced by the events of 911, Jerome Carey pursued an education in Law Enforcement at Inver Hills College. Upon graduation, he started his law enforcement career in 2014 as a volunteer Police Reserve for White Bear Lake, while also working as a Corrections Officer for Oak Park Heights Prison. In 2016 he was hired by the Minneapolis Police Department where he continued to serve until this opportunity opened. His badge was pinned by fiancée Morgan.

City Clerk Kara Coustry administered the Oath of Office.

## B. ACE Study – HGKI

Rita Trapp with HGKI summarized the findings of an Arts, Culture, and Education (ACE) Study, which was a partnership with White Bear Center for the Arts, Lakeshore Players Theatre, Children's Performing Arts, White Bear Lake Area Schools, Ramsey County Bruce Vento and Rush Line BRT and the City. The study was conducted for the purpose of exploring improvements, development and redevelopment opportunities to support growth and integration of arts, culture and education within the existing residential neighborhood north of downtown White Bear Lake.

Ms. Trapp presented four potential strategies as a framework for taking potential actions toward the making of a creative district:

1. Network and circulation
  - a. Improve east-west connections for pedestrians.
  - b. Focus traffic calming along north / south corridors.
  - c. Modify roadway circulation to provide more space for pedestrians on Long Ave.
  - d. Prioritize pedestrian crossing on Division Street by exploring curb extensions, surface treatments and raised crosswalks.
  - e. Address pedestrian continuity and connection on both sides of Highway 61.
  - f. Develop wayfinding plan for the area.
2. Placemaking
  - a. Activate parking lots, streets and other in-between spaces for events or gathering spaces.
  - b. Enhance the streetscape along key corridors to create shared streets that consider: pedestrian lighting, pavement / surfaces, seating and gathering, landscaping, crosswalks, conversion as an event space or festival space.
  - c. Create public access to wetland area.
  - d. Develop a district branding effort.
  - e. Create an artist-in-residence program focused on placemaking.

3. Land Use and Redevelopment
  - a. Create overlay district for this area that allows flexibility for certain provisions.
  - b. Explore adaptive re-use opportunities.
  - c. Explore creative ways to use larger yards along streets for public realm improvements.
  - d. Develop tools (staff training) to encourage mixed-use and creative spaces.
4. Organization Framework
  - a. Create an organization dedicated to the creation and ongoing program / event planning for the District.
  - b. Develop a social media and branding campaign to gather excitement or ideas for the District.
  - c. Organize one or more public events that involve collaboration between all partner organizations.
  - d. Connect downtown business resources to this area.
  - e. Explore funding and partnership opportunities beyond White Bear Lake.
  - f. Create sub-districts with the larger Downtown District.

Having presented this information to the arts organizations and now the City, Ms. Trapp will present at a neighborhood meeting on Monday, November 1<sup>st</sup> at 6:00 p.m. in the White Bear Lake District Center Board Room (Room 1112), 4855 Bloom Avenue, followed by a presentation to the White Bear Lake School Board on Monday, November 8<sup>th</sup>.

Councilmember Edberg asked, was there enough core arts activities to support a district designation and who has accountability for shepherding these conversations. Ms. Trapp mentioned the area is small and lacks the supportive arts businesses, which is something that will have to evolve naturally over time. More challenging related to accountability, Ms. Trapp said the City can support and even be a leader, but needs to balance its role. She mentioned that periodic check-ins as a group will serve to keep these ideas in the forefront of conversations.

With regard to presenting this information to the Chamber and the Downtown Association, Ms. Trapp explained that City staff are empowered to provide this information them, but that was not part of the scope of this project.

Councilmember Walsh asked about Long Avenue, noting a potential for creativity during much needed road reconstruction. City Engineer Kauppi said that Ramsey County would like to turn back this road to the City, however, there are issues with that road such as its disrepair and much of that road sits outside of the right-of-way, within the railroad right-of-way.

Ms. Kane mentioned sending a Press Release tomorrow and posting this presentation on the website in advance the neighborhood meeting on Monday.

## 5. PUBLIC HEARINGS

### A. Resolution certifying delinquent charges related to the municipal utility system assessment

Finance Director Kindsvater explained that quarterly utility bills that are delinquent beyond 30 days as of June 30 and are not paid by November 19, are certified to property taxes. Ms. Kindsvater stated this is the lowest number of delinquent accounts in five (5) years with just under half of the noticed accounts being brought to current status. She attributed the low number of delinquent accounts to staff making referrals to Ramsey County for available federal funding aid. She mentioned, payments will continue to be accepted through November 19, 2021.

Mayor Emerson opened the public hearing at 8:03 p.m. There being no one coming forward, the public hearing was closed.

It was moved by Councilmember **Walsh** seconded by Councilmember **Engstran**, to adopt **Resolution No. 12866** certifying delinquent charges related to the municipal utility system assessment.

Councilmember Edberg inquired as to the high interest rate of 7.5%. Ms. Kindsvater said this has been the interest rate for years, but agreed to review the assessment policy.

Motion carried unanimously.

- B. Resolution certifying delinquent 2021 miscellaneous private property assessment for recovery of city expenses

Finance Director Kindsvater explained that as a result of unresolved property maintenance issues, the City contracts services to complete lawn care, tree removal and other unresolved maintenance matters. All effected property owners are billed for the services at their properties and two invoices remain unpaid this year. Ms. Kindsvater forward a resolution to certify the unpaid invoices to the County for assessment on 2022 property taxes for any invoice amounts which have not be settled by November 19, 2021.

Mayor Emerson opened the public hearing at 8:07 p.m. There being no comment by public, the public hearing was closed.

It was moved by Councilmember **Walsh** seconded by Councilmember **Jones**, to adopt **Resolution No. 12867** certifying delinquent 2021 miscellaneous private property assessment for recovery of city expenses.

Motion carried unanimously.

## 6. LAND USE

Nothing scheduled

## 7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Nothing scheduled

## 8. ORDINANCES

Nothing scheduled

## 9. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Resolution authorizing execution of an employment contract with the new City Manager

Related to the appointment of a City Manager, Mayor Emerson noted the memorandum and contract were provided in the packet and asked if there were any questions.

In response to a clarifying question from Councilmember Jones, Mayor Emerson explained that the review would be completed by the Council.

It was moved by Councilmember **Biehn** seconded by Councilmember **Jones**, to adopt **Resolution No. 12868** authorizing execution of an employment contract with the new City Manager.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Resolution accepting a donation from the Lions Club for the Caboose Renovation Project

City Manager Hiniker relayed that the Lions Club provided a generous donation of \$20,000 to assist with the Caboose renovation project. She mentioned Assistant City Manager Rick Juba has been working on the Caboose Committee. Mayor Emerson added that Councilmember Biehn also serves on the Caboose Committee.

It was moved by Councilmember **Biehn** seconded by Councilmember **Engstran**, to adopt **Resolution No. 12869** accepting a donation from the Lions Club for the Caboose Renovation Project.

Councilmember Jones received confirmation that the City will be setting aside designated funding for ongoing maintenance and repair of the Caboose moving forward.

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Resolution scheduling a public hearing on the issuance of bonds and related Capital Improvement Project

With approval of the construction documents at Council's last meeting, Finance Director Kindsvater said the City is taking another step forward in the Public Safety Facility renovation project. As such, the City Financial Management Plan relies on the issuance of bonds for this project. As a side note, staff is working with Senator Wiger to create a bill seeking support of the project in the bonding bill. Staff also received confirmation from the MN Management and Budget Office that passing the resolution to set a maximum bond amount does not preclude the City from receiving assistance through the State's bonding bill process.

Ms. Kindsvater explained that the type of bonds for this project will be Capital Improvement Bonds, which provides the ability to bond without a city-wide election, assuming approval is reached by 3/5<sup>th</sup> vote of the governing board. Tonight, Ms. Kindsvater is asked to schedule the public hearing for November 23<sup>rd</sup>, which begins the 30-day period where a reverse referendum petition can be filed. She explained, if no petition is received, the project may proceed as planned with the bond issuance limited to that approved in the Capital Improvement Plan in the bond documents. But if a petition is received, the Council can choose to hold an election, seek alternative financing methods or abandon the project.

Ms. Kindsvater reported, to meet the planned schedule of a 2022 construction date, the City is conducting the public hearing for bond issuance at the same time the construction documents are being developed, and without knowing the exact project costs. At this time, the Council's resolution will set the maximum amount for the bond issue, which can be lowered in the future once bids are received, but she said, cannot be increased above the amount set in this resolution. Ms. Kindsvater relayed the following cost estimates to set the maximum bond amount:

- Wold Architects provided a project cost of \$12.5 million.
- Added 7% of project cost for unforeseen market issues, \$875,000.
- Added \$500,000 for potential energy performance add-ons.

She said the total costs of the project for bonding is approximately \$13.9 million and the total bonds would be approximately \$14,315,000 when the cost of issuance, capitalized interest and fees are added to the project costs.

Ms. Kindsvater said Ehler's is assisting with the bond calculations and recommended a 20 or 25 year bond life rather than 30 years as fewer bidders are interested in bonds for that period of time and the interest rates are not as favorable. She reported that 20 year bonds average annual bond payments of approximately \$898,000, and 25 year bonds average annual bond payments of approximately \$778,000. And added, Council is not making decisions on specifics of the bond issue at this time, and forwarded a recommendation to schedule a Public Hearing on November 23rd for consideration to issuance bonds up to \$14,315,000.

In response to Councilmember Biehn, Ms. Kindsvater stated the interest rates on the 20 or 25 year bonds is approximately 2.5%. Ms. Kindsvater explained that since the amount of the bond exceeds \$10 million, banks cannot bid on them which has provided lower interest rates in past issues. She added, it may be possible in working with Ehler's to split the bond into two separate issues to allow bank bidding, however, that will depend on the project cash flow timeline.

It was moved by Councilmember **Edberg** seconded by Councilmember **Engstran**, to adopt **Resolution No. 12870** scheduling a public hearing on the issuance of bonds and related Capital Improvement Project.

Motion carried unanimously.

D. Resolution approving 2022 Union Contract with the International Association of Firefighters Local No. 5202

Ms. Hiniker forwarded a recommendation to adopt the 2022 Contract for Firefighters and Paramedics, which set a 3% wage adjustment for the first six months and another 1% adjustment mid-year, which is consistent with the other contracts and non-bargaining units. Ms. Hiniker explained that these adjustments fit within the proposed tax levy. With regard to insurance, she said, the City is proposed to cover 75% of the increase in the premium, and employees would cover 25%. She noted a slight adjustment to accrued compensatory time and language refinement related to call-back, and an adjustment for shift leaders' compensation.

It was moved by Councilmember **Biehn** seconded by Councilmember **Jones**, to adopt **Resolution No. 12871** approving 2022 Union Contract with the International Association of Firefighters Local No. 5202.

Motion carried unanimously.

E. Resolution approving 2022 Union Contract with MN Public Employees Association – Patrol Officers

City Manager Hiniker forwarded a recommendation to adopt the 2022 Contract for Patrol Officers, which also set a 3% wage adjustment at the beginning of the year with a 1% increase mid-year. She mentioned there were changes to the vacation accrual to make is the same and similar to other contracts and non-bargaining units.

It was moved by Councilmember **Edberg** seconded by Councilmember **Jones**, to adopt **Resolution No. 12872** approving 2022 Union Contract with MN Public Employees Association – Patrol Officers.

Motion carried unanimously.

- F. Resolution providing benefits for employees of the City of White Bear Lake who are not covered by employment agreements

Finance Director Kindsvater said, the majority of City staff are not covered by bargaining units, rather they are covered under the annual Position and Classification Plan. She noted similarities with the previously approved union contracts in proposed wage increases and insurance benefit coverage for 2022.

It was moved by Councilmember **Jones** seconded by Councilmember **Engstran**, to adopt **Resolution No. 12873** providing benefits for employees of the City of White Bear Lake who are not covered by employment agreements.

Motion carried unanimously.

- G. Resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute a contract with McGrath Human Resources Group for a Compensation Study

Noting the current Classification and Compensation Plan was created in 1988, City Manager Hiniker said the City faces challenges with new positions and competitive salaries with cities of like size. She mentioned that three firms in the metro area are known for this work and the City reviewed two of them. She forwarded a proposal by McGrath Human Resources to perform a Compensation Study on behalf of the City, in which staffs' preferred choice was also the cheapest of the two considered.

Councilmember Edberg supports doing a study, but asked how long this study will be relevant and the durability of the results given the high level of inflation at this time. Ms. Hiniker replied, this study will provide a solid base for considering positions into the future for several years. To date, she explained that the City has been using their best judgement to make adjustments to salaries from the 1988 base. Councilmember Edberg clarified, this will provide both an internal and external comparison for the City to consider. Ms. Hiniker felt comfortable with the current state of salaries with the exception of a bargaining group and directors' salaries which will have a budget implication.

Councilmember Biehn mentioned that a comparable worth study is beneficial when some positions need greater adjustment than others, and arbitrators will rely on these studies for justification. He noted that job descriptions do not change that significantly over time, so once a study has been conducted, those comparisons are valuable for a long period of time. He added, wage adjustments can be phased in over several years.

Councilmember Walsh received confirmation that salary schedules are public information. He mentioned that the public sector is fairly consistent across the industry, providing relatively seamless comparisons of position descriptions from various organizations.

It was moved by Councilmember **Biehn** seconded by Councilmember **Engstran**, to adopt **Resolution No. 12874** authorizing the City Manager to execute a contract with McGrath Human Resources Group for a Compensation Study.

Motion carried unanimously.

**10. CONSENT**

Nothing scheduled

**11. DISCUSSION**

Nothing scheduled

**12. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CITY MANAGER**

- The Housing Task Force and Welcoming and Inclusive Community (WIC) Task Force will be holding meetings in November in order to prepare a report for Council.
- City Clerk Coustry achieved her Municipal Clerk Certification.
- Chief Peterson was awarded “Fire Officer of the Year” Award.
- Work Session on Nov. 16 at 6:00 p.m. to review the findings of the WIC and Housing Task Force groups.
- Public Works Director/City Engineer Paul Kauppi reported that the bolder retaining wall project will start next week at Memorial Beach.
- Community Development Director Anne Kane reminded Council of MICAH’s virtual bus tour.

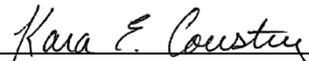
**13. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the Council, it was moved by Councilmember **Biehn** seconded by Councilmember **Jones** to adjourn the regular meeting at **8:44** p.m.

Motion carried unanimously.

  
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Jo Emerson, Mayor

**ATTEST:**

  
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Kara Coustry, City Clerk