

ROBBINSDALE CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR WORK SESSION MINUTES
Tuesday, September 6, 2022

1. The work session was called to order by Mayor Pro Tem Webb at 8:03pm
2. Councilmembers Present: Webb, Selman, Backen, Mayor Blonigan
3. Staff Present: Tim Sandvik, City Manager; Patrick Foley, Chief of Police; Ryan Parks, Recreation Services Manager; Rick Pearson, Community Development Coordinator; Diaa Tahoun, Finance Director; Richard McCoy, Public Works Director/City Engineer

Discussion: 2023 Budget Discussion

4. Sandvik provided a brief introduction, including a high-level recap of the August (budget) discussion. He reviewed the documents provided as a part of the packet and asked that each department head present provide some updates for the 2023 proposals, and respond to Q&A.
5. Chief Foley shared the Police Department continues to work through staff shortages. This year's budgeting approach has been more involved, which has been good learning for a number of team members. Police is looking at a roughly 8% year to year (operations) increase. Some nuance to retain staff includes updating equipment. There will also be a cost to offboarding old equipment. Retention, training, and staying competitive in the market will remain a priority. Cpt. Stensrud shared that new technology and tools excites younger candidates and ultimately helps attract younger candidates.
6. Councilmember Webb discussed the importance of conveying the challenges the City has with keeping staff. Webb asked what other incentives are available to recruit PD members?
7. Foley gave the example of utilizing cloud-based software like going to Lexipol that will require officers to undertake additional, preferred, trainings in a variety of areas. Foley also noted that 2023 budgeted dollars includes monies towards updating the speed trailer, maintaining a social worker, and updating body camera and patrol cameras (which will move to cloud servicing).
8. Selman noted that a fully functional Police Department is a priority. As far as citizens are concerned – when there is an emergency... its important to respond. He asked if the 8% increase was enough to keep up with competing wages and ongoing costs.
9. Backen asked why are PD applications limited and whether or not this is unique to Robbinsdale? Cpt Stensrud responded that there are currently over 90 agencies hiring.

10. Ryan Parks shared that the Parks Department has been experiencing some staffing changes – but is fully staffed as of last Monday, for the first time in months. Increase is largely due to wages and an increase in printing a new parks brochure. Community gyms were closed last summer due to work being done at the school, but as of next week, we will be opened limited hours as we are having a hard time finding staff. Sandborn Open House in September and October at City Hall. Spooky Sandborn Movie in the Park coming... Deep into fall programming.
11. Rick Pearson shared that Community Development is relatively small – four people in the department. Fully staffed, at this point, although there may be retirements coming up. Many duties between a small team and there are occasionally issues with balancing priorities. There remains a philosophical question about things like code enforcement. Staff often gets requested to conduct additional code enforcement, but sometimes neighborhood expectations exceed the authority available to the city. Rental licensing requirements are difficult to enforce. Rental property owners receiving compliance orders often don't follow-through with corrections and city staff has to "hound" them to make repairs. In addition, some property owners evade licensing requirements. Staff will continue to navigate these challenges.
12. Selman – if we got rid of point of sale, could we dedicate more efforts to code enforcement? Sandvik responded that while we have dedicated staff in certain areas, we would not be immediately equipped to shift services. And while a good, operations question, the focus on budget means these operations would either need to increase by way of resources, or something else would have to go.
13. Diaa Tahoun shared the budgeting process was more involved this year, which included having the Finance Director and City Manager meet with each department head. For finance, we have moved a position from a PT to FT. Some numbers remain a best guess as we gain additional information. A brief explanation about fiscal disparities and local government aid was provided. While we try to predict as best we can, we remain conservative in many areas.
14. McCoy provided information relating to Engineering and Public Works operating budgets for 2023. Engineering operations (including building inspections) are anticipated to remain consistent. Currently short an Engineering Technician as they are difficult to find. Forestry remains a visual, but expensive task and the (budget) ask in this program area is a request to continue catching up on deferred pruning. The Parks Division of Public Works maintains fields and buildings and is anticipating costs for materials and utilities to increase for 2023. There is nothing out of the ordinary anticipated in the Streets Division. Utilities Division operations will be discussed at a future meeting but remains somewhat uncertain as we get new items dialed in, like the new water treatment plant.
15. Council hosted discussion on staff retention strategies, ensuring Public Safety is fully funded, and requested that staff bring back figures on what slight increases to

accommodate the aforementioned would look like. Sandvik said he would prepare materials for the September 13 Work Session.

Update: Hubbard Ave Project

16. McCoy identified that staff have held two information sessions for the project and sought written comment / feedback from neighbors within and beyond the project area. Neighbors have expressed some concerns about the proposed off-street bike trail. Staff sought Council feedback about whether to have a listening session as a part of a regular Council Meeting, in addition to the public hearing? Key issues include off street bike trail, speeding, parking, and the loss of trees/lighting. Staff would like to get out to bid late this year if possible to maximize opportunity for competitive pricing and commence construction as soon as possible in 2023.
17. Council discussed the pros and cons of all considerations. It was ultimately decided that there will be opportunity to receive comment as part of the formal hearing process and that Council can direct adjustments to the proposed design if deemed appropriate as part of the hearings. No additional listening session was deemed necessary.

Adjournment

18. Council adjourned the meeting at 10:00 p.m.



Tim Sandvik, Recorder



Sheila Webb, Mayor Pro Tem