



MINUTES

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION CALLED TO ORDER

Mayor Pro Tem Blackledge called the meeting to order at 7:15.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Pro Tem Blackledge, Member Parisian, Member Greenberg, Member Wagner

Absent: Mayor Sutton

Staff: Tim Sandvik, City Manager; Heather Rand, Community Development Director; Rachel Leen, Communications Coordinator; Guy Dorholt, Fire Chief; Members of the Aerial Apparatus Committee - Darren Olson, Scott Welle, Tom Robertus, Alex Johnson, Greg Logan, Aric Gobernatz

DISCUSSION

A. Robbinsdale Fire Department - Aerial Apparatus Replacement

Guy Dorholt, Fire Chief, introduced himself and the Apparatus Committee and shared that they are here to discuss the apparatus replacement plan and answer questions. He explained that the current apparatus consists of two engines, a 75' aerial ladder, a light rescue, a hovercraft, a Jon boat, a utility vehicle and three command vehicles.

Dorholt explained the function of the Apparatus Committee and how they research, design, recommend, purchase, and deliver the final product. He explained that a new apparatus is purchased every 10 years, with a 30-year cycle for each apparatus. The current apparatus up for replacement is a 1999 Pierce 75' Heavy Duty, All-Steer Ladder truck. He emphasized that the current apparatus does not have front/side impact crash protection, a carcinogen-resistant crew cab, and industry-leading aerial operation software, as well as fall short of NFPA 1911 guidelines.

Dorholt explained that the committee inspected options from 4 different manufacturers: Custom Fire, E-One, Pierce, and Rosenbauer. The committee also viewed apparatus equipment from Brooklyn Center, Golden Valley, Hopkins, Minnetonka, and West Metro Fire. He shared that our community is changing with existing buildings being redeveloped to greater heights and light rail coming with at-grade and above-grade access, which means our equipment must be able to handle those conditions.

Dorholt highlighted key points of the Aerial Apparatus replacement timeline, including the purchase agreement getting signed in July/August 2025, and the delivery of the apparatus expected in July/August 2029. He explained that the Fire Department is looking for Council support on a 4-year build, so Council will need to decide how to move forward by August of 2025. Councilmember Wagner asked if any money is paid up front when the purchase agreement is signed. Dorholt noted that the department has utilized a purchasing consortium in the past and discussed the various purchasing consortium options for this payment.

Member Greenberg asked if this purchase had been included in the budget for a while now. Sandvik shared that this project has been in the CIP for several years, and this situation is unique since the purchase must be started 4 years out. Member Parisian asked for a reminder of the budget for this vehicle, and Sandvik answered that it is \$2.5 million.

Member Wagner asked what work the Apparatus Committee will do between signing the purchase agreement and pre-construction. Dorholt shared that the gap is a time for aesthetic decisions to be made, such as lighting,

striping, and more. Gobernatz shared that the committee plans to research how to configure the truck to best fit the needs of the community and the department.

Member Greenberg asked if there is training included in the purchase of the new apparatus. Dorholt answered that there is mandatory training by the manufacturer, and that the department will take additional time to become proficient.

Member Greenberg asked what would happen if the life of the current apparatus was extended. Dorholt answered that its life would be extended via a refurbishment process, and that it would cost half the price of just purchasing a new apparatus. Sandvik added that the cost of the new apparatus will only continue to rise in coming years.

Sandvik emphasized that August is the big milestone and that questions can be directed to Sandvik or Chief Dorholt before then. Mayor Pro Tem Blackledge asked how this information would be communicated to the public, and Sandvik mentioned that the Public Safety Open House in early August could be a good opportunity.

B. Human Rights Commission Annual Updates

Sandvik introduced Julie Ralston-Aoki, Courtney Kirkeeng, and Rita Fox from the Human Rights Commission (HRC), and shared that they are here to provide an update on their work and a draft resolution.

Ralston-Aoki explained that the resolution was created after feeling that there has been fear among residents about the new federal administration. She shared that a resolution would help Robbinsdale double down on the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Member Wagner thanked the HRC and shared his support for the range of topics and issues covered in the resolution. Member Parisian echoed her thanks and shared that this resolution continues upon conversations that Council had at the recent goal-setting session. She expressed that her only fear in having such a wide range of items in a single resolution is that the individual pieces could get diluted. Member Greenberg echoed his support. Mayor Pro Tem Blackledge shared his support for Robbinsdale leading the charge as a small community who makes sure residents feel welcome in the community. Mayor Pro Tem Blackledge asked if there is any need to alter language to protect ourselves from federal pushback.

Ralston-Aoki addressed the concern of this resolution putting a target on the City's back, and she shared that the target is already there due to what the City values. Sandvik raised the question of whether the resolution is intended to hold the Council to a certain standard, and who decides if those standards are met. Ralston-Aoki shared that this resolution can be a tool of accountability for the City.

Member Greenberg expressed a desire to take a deeper dive as a Council into the resolution to ensure that it is fully fleshed out. Mayor Pro Tem Blackledge agreed that there are opportunities for having more discussions, especially since Mayor Sutton is not in attendance at this meeting. Sandvik recommended that the Council provide the HRC with direction about what they would like changed in the resolution. The Council concluded that this resolution should be discussed again at an upcoming work session with all Council members present.

Ralston-Aoki shared that the HRC is actively working on community engagement and outreach, particularly with business groups and renters.

Rita Fox shared that there is a community event coming up about the supreme court decision Obergefell vs. Hodges that gave the right to same-sex couples to marry. She explained that the event would center around the

idea of what would happen if Obergefell fell. She discussed how this event would also focus on the history of LGBTQ+ rights, as well as look towards the future and provide various resources. The Council shared their appreciation.

The HRC members shared that they have been working with Phillip Gray of the JCPP, as well as Elim Lutheran Church, to host movie nights. They are also planning a series called "Beloved Community" focused on starting conversations about how to be a better community member. Kirkeeng discussed her involvement with the Chamber of Commerce. The HRC is also working with Robbins Landing and Lilac Parkway on events. Ralston-Aoki shared that the HRC is working on a communications plan with Leen to get more HRC information out to the community.

The HRC members expressed their concern about the new fees that come with Republic Services when disposing of bulk items, and they wondered if the City would ever host a trash dump event for large items.

Sandvik shared that the bulk-item pricing was negotiated as a part of the contract. Sandvik also highlighted that yard waste has been identified as a concern and will be discussed at an upcoming meeting. Sandvik explained that a waste drop-off day would be costly, but that it could be paid for out of the general levy if Council has a desire.

Sandvik shared an update on the Parks Naming Policy and explained that the previous Council left the topic by urging the new Council to address the policy. The Council decided that they will revisit the policy soon.

C. Fee Schedule, Utility Fees - Updates

Sandvik reminded Council that there was a first reading of an ordinance on the fee schedule at the last Council meeting. He explained that the ordinance has been brought to the work session before the second reading in case there are any concerns. He discussed how there has been an increase in the permit fees, since staff want these fees to cover the cost of services. He also noted that an electric vehicle charging rate has been set for our chargers, which can be adjusted going forward if needed. He explained that the water rate for North Memorial is formally established in the updated fee schedule.

Member Parisian asked if there was any consideration for slowly increasing permit fees in smaller increments. Sandvik shared that the adjustments in the costs of permit fees will make up for the licensing going away, so the increase is only to cover our costs.

Member Greenberg asked for an estimation of how many people will use the EV Charger. Sandvik shared that staff discussed usage expectations with peers, and we are confident they will get used.

D. Council Meeting Schedule

Sandvik discussed that there are other options for how our Council meetings are scheduled each month. He shared that other City Councils fit their meetings into two Tuesdays each month, instead of three. He explained that this option would require an earlier start time, with either an EDA or Work Session first followed by a City Council meeting afterward. He explained that he is looking for Council's input on whether they would like to explore this option.

Member Greenberg and Member Wagner expressed that they prefer the current schedule. Member Parisian shared that she would like meetings to stay on Tuesdays, but she does not feel strongly otherwise. Mayor Pro Tem Blackledge stated that he would be open to exploring the option, especially during the summer. The Council concluded that they will continue with the current schedule for the rest of the year, with plans to reconsider the new schedule when planning for next year.

- E. Discuss proposed city ordinance text changes pertaining to zoning, business registration, and special event permitting related to state-licensed cannabis and lower-potency hemp edible (LPHE) product businesses for adults.

Rand explained that the state approved their rules on cannabis this week, which will go into effect by the end of the month. Rand reminded Council that staff brought zoning changes to the Planning Commission first, and they recommended treating cannabis similarly to how THC products are currently managed. The Planning Commission also recommended allowing cannabis businesses to be zoned in most business districts, while staying clear of the residential business district. She shared that there would be a public hearing at the next City Council meeting on the first ordinance reading.

Rand listed several important notes for Council's awareness:

- Rand discussed how the City does not license - we register. When the state issues a license, they will give staff 30 days to respond about registration.
- Rand noted that we do not have much input on licensing fees.
- Rand discussed plans for annual compliance checks by the Robbinsdale Police Department.
- Rand noted Council's decision to limit the number of cannabis businesses allowed to two for now, which is the required minimum.
- Rand explained the Planning Commission's recommendation for a buffer of 300 feet between cannabis businesses and schools. She also mentioned that cannabis businesses cannot be 500 feet from the next closest cannabis retailer, which is modeled off off-sale-liquor rules.
- Rand wondered how Council wants to proceed with lower-potency hemp edible (LPHE) businesses, since Council could establish a buffer and zoning districts more specific to LPHE. The Planning Commission recommended treating LPHE businesses like all other retail cannabis businesses.
- Rand noted that hours of operation will be treated just like liquor.
- Rand explained that cannabis businesses will be allowed two signs on their buildings.
- Rand discussed how another kind of cannabis retailer requires being zoned in an industrial business park. She noted that Robbinsdale does not currently have that district, but the Comprehensive plan identifies a location that could be zoned as a business warehouse category. She clarified that folks could bring ideas forward if they want to rezone an area for their business.

Member Parisian expressed concern about energy usage from industrial businesses in relation to our Energy Action Plan. The Council decided that they could keep an eye on business warehouse opportunities going forward and consider rezoning if necessary.

Council and staff discussed cannabis use at events. Rand shared that Council could prohibit any on-site consumption and designate where special events can occur.

Rand reminded Council that Council can specifically limit the number of LPHE registrations in the City. Council supported not limiting registrations for LPHE retailers.

Council and staff discussed the idea of our Municipal Liquor Store potentially selling retail cannabis products. Rand emphasized that the final decision does not need to be fully made tonight if they use flexible wording, such as the City of Robbinsdale "may authorize the sale of cannabis in the municipal liquor store." The Council supported that wording.

STAFF UPDATES

A. Robbinsdale Topics for CCX Media City Videos, May-July 2025

Leen shared a list of upcoming CCX Robbinsdale stories and asked if any Councilmembers would like to participate in the stories.

Member Greenberg showed interest in talking about Whiz Bang Days. Member Wagner stated that he would be interviewed about the Flocculation Plant tour.

Member Parisian noted that she would love to do an interview on the Home Energy Squad visits, even though it is not on the current topic list. Leen confirmed that it could be a story idea for CCX this fall. Member Parisian also expressed interest in discussing the solar panels.

B. City Manager Review

Sandvik informed Council that the annual review for the City Manager happens each May. He discussed how the administration team and management staff get the opportunity to provide feedback for the City Manager via a survey. He noted that the feedback will be given to Council ahead of time to review.

C. Upcoming Facility Tours

Sandvik informed Council that he wants them to tour both the Public Safety and Public Works building in the upcoming months. Council has recently been involved in initial conversations about redoing the Public Works facility, so a tour would provide context for why a new facility is necessary. Sandvik stated that these tours would be considered special work sessions and open to the public.

COUNCIL UPDATES

Member Greenberg noted that he cannot make it to the employee luncheon at the end of April, but that he would like to meet more City staff.

Mayor Pro Tem Blackledge shared that he might miss the work session in May due to a track meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem Blackledge wondered if storm water fees were worth revisiting, and Sandvik mentioned that those fees will be part of a utilities discussion at the May work session.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pro Tem Blackledge adjourned the meeting at 10:24 PM.

Signed by:



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Rachel Leen, Communications Coordinator

Signed by:



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Raymond Blackledge, Mayor Pro Tem