

**WORKSHOP MEETING  
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE  
CITY OF VADNAIS HEIGHTS  
FEBRUARY 19, 2019**

The workshop meeting of the Council of the City of Vadnais Heights was held on the above date and called to order by Mayor Gunderson at 5:34 p.m.

The following members were present: Mayor Heidi Gunderson, Council Members: Craig Johnson, Greg Urban, Patricia Youker and Bob Morse. The following member was absent: None.

Also present were: City Administrator Kevin Watson, Assistant City Administrator Tim Sandvik, Planning/Community Development Director Nolan Wall, Fire Chief Ed Leier, Public Works Director Jesse Farrell, City Attorney Erich Hartmann and Deputy City Clerk Peggy Aho.

Others present were: Ling Becker, VHEDC, and Matt Fulton, Polco.

**1. Polco Survey Tool**

Mayor Gunderson and City Administrator Watson noted that they have met with Matt Fulton of Polco to learn about their program and think it is an interesting tool that could benefit the City. It is a tool to communicate and survey the citizens. Watson noted that the last time the City completed a survey of its residents was in 2016, previously it was 2006, at a cost of over \$20,000.

Matt Fulton, Engagement Director with Polco, gave the Council an overview of the platform which combines polling and engaging community networks using the methods people currently use to communicate for example Facebook. Fulton reviewed how the City of Rosemount has been using the program to engage their community.

Gunderson said that she believes this tool could be an important one for the City to use, but that it would need to be rolled out properly so that it makes sense to the community and that it's easy for them to access.

Watson said he will bring approval of a contract with Polco before the Council on the next agenda if the Council is in agreement. Council Member Morse said that he likes the budget part of it, and that it seems more efficient and the proactive comments and inclusivity for businesses as well as residents. Council Member Johnson said that he would be okay with it but is worried about the number of responses and the Council swinging its decisions based on the response of the ones that answer the questions. Council Member Urban said that he thinks it would be okay but that we would need to dial in how to best use it and that it would be best to avoid using it for items that are coming before the Council for a decision. People should still be asked to come before the Council if they want to make comments on an issue. Gunderson said that it could be used as a tool to get opinions and ideas from the residents. Council Member Youker said that it is important to get the word out that it's there and ask people to use it.

## **2. Status of Negotiations with Haulers for the Refuse Contracts**

Assistant City Administrator Sandvik noted that VHG, Inc. is a group of organizations that serve as refuse and recycling haulers and the City has been under contract with them since 1991. The last time an RFP was done was in 2008. He said that the group has been made up of anywhere from two to eight haulers and that it currently consists of two: Waste Management and Republic. He noted that staff met with VHG in the fall of 2018 to begin discussing a new agreement. VHG has recently come before them with new proposed pricing which includes a direct fee, a la carte options, and a revenue sharing component for recycling. All pieces would have increases. Sandvik noted that staff are looking for input and direction from the Council on next steps. He suggested that it could be brought before the Health & Public Safety Commission for discussion/input. Council Member Johnson asked what the average person in the community pays for trash and recycling services and is this amount in the ballpark with what other communities are paying. Sandvik reviewed a chart showing a cost comparison for various communities and what is currently being proposed to Vadnais Heights. He said that costs can vary because some of the communities have different services and some handle their own billing, while the City of Vadnais Heights does not.

Mayor Gunderson asked what type of direction Sandvik is looking for. Sandvik said that staff can take it to the Health and Public Safety Commission for their feedback, and then understood feedback from the Council as to what they are hearing from the public. Council Member Morse said we need a little more flexibility and that perhaps we should do an RFP. Council Member Johnson said that the initial decision was made to go to organized collection because the residents were tired of having so many haulers and traffic because of that. Watson said that we could have a discussion on this with the Health & Public Safety Commission and we may want to do an RFP and if that is the direction, it would need to be started in March. Watson also noted that perhaps one of the Council Members would want to help with the review of the proposed agreement. Gunderson said she would be interested in knowing why the cost to Vadnais Heights is higher than other communities. Council Member Urban said that he doesn't think that the rates will differ enough to consider going through the RFP process. He said that he thinks we should go to them and say this is what others are paying, and ask what they can do for us. Watson said that in years past we had a Council Member participate in the negotiations, and asked if anyone is interested in doing that. None indicated they were.

## **3. City Center Drive Request**

City Administrator Watson noted that the Council received a registered letter from an attorney representing Mr. Convery who owns property north of Perkins. Watson said it is his impression that Convery learned about the settlement the City had with McCollough on his assessment concerns as well as Mr. Goff. Watson, not that it is obvious that this request is four years after the fact.

Watson asked the Council how they wish to respond to the letter. Mayor Gunderson and Council Members Johnson, Morse, Urban and Youker all responded that they recommend response is to say no.

**4. LHB Facilities Contract**

City Administrator Watson said that staff have run into issues were we are lacking expertise with staff on facilities issues, such as our HVAC unit. Watson gave an example on how the staff need guidance and said that LHB would be able to assist the City with assessing what needs to be done and what the best price would be. The services would only be used as needed. Watson said that this would be for contracted professional services.

City Attorney Hartmann said that, if the Council wants, EQBB could prepare a standard professional services agreement for the City to use on future agreements. Watson said that we can talk about that in the future. The Council agreed.

**5. Other Staff Items**

None.

**6. Future City Council Requests**

Council Member Johnson asked for an update on the operations of the VHC. Assistant City Administrator Sandvik noted that current agreements are in affect through 2019. Johnson asked for an update on bookings and on revenue/expenses.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Prepared for and approved by:

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Kevin Watson, City Administrator