

**WORKSHOP MEETING  
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE  
CITY OF VADNAIS HEIGHTS  
AUGUST 15, 2023**

**OPEN MEETING**

The workshop meeting of the Council of the City of Vadnais Heights was held on the above date and called to order by Mayor Krachmer at 5:30 p.m.

The following members were present: Mayor Mike Krachmer and Council Members Erik Goebel, Steve Rogers, Kelly Jozwowski, and Katherine Doll Kanne. The following member was absent: none.

Also present were: City Administrator, Kevin Watson; Assistant City Administrator, Kaylin Clement; Planning/Community Development Director, Nolan Wall; Public Works Director, Jim Hauth; Fire Chief, Chris Hearden; and Deputy Clerk, Phillip Lundquist.

**OTHER STAFF ITEMS**

None

**COUNTY INITIATIVES (County Commissioner Frethem)**

County Commissioner Frethem presented and discussed the following topics:

Appropriate Response initiatives and updating 911 calls to divert mental health calls. Goal to send appropriate response teams to different calls. Growing to public health for substance use emergencies. Expand to rest of county in 2024 after pilot communities.

Business Retention and Expansion Pilot with Shoreview, may be fit for other cities. County staff works with economic development staff at City to tailor support and resources to businesses based on responses from businesses. Priorities such as alleviating broadband deserts and tech needs.

Housing Redevelopment Authority (HRA) Levy since activation has been focused on affordable housing, critical corridors, administration support, wealth generation projects. Within Vadnais Heights monies went to mortgage assistance. Energy assistance, down payment assistance, all towards the goal of affordable housing. Community Development page is resource for such projects on the county website.

Food Scraps Pickup Program. Free year supply of bags, full bags go in garbage bins, they get sorted and some will be industrial composted and developing an anaerobic digestion to produce methane (remaining product can be used as fertilizer and replace activated charcoal). Pilot program happening now. Not all transfer stations have the technology to sort, so hauler dependent. Pilot cities in the fall and expand from there. Goal of 2026. Learning of other new technology to deal with waste streams.

Non-Public-Safety Traffic Stops. County Attorney declining to prosecute non-safety stop violations. Stops and searches went down and there were no effects on crime rates. Issued fix-it-tickets to get safety repairs done. Attorney Office had good infographics from their press conference; that site has good resources.

County Continuum of Care on how the county interfaces with homeless populations was asked about by Mayor Krachmer. County team is working with encampment and the data from suburbs is important for county to know. Deeper discussion about housing affordability.

### **FIRE RELIEF ASSOCIATION (Vadnais Heights Fire Relief Association)**

Chief Hearden provided overview of relief associations. Relief associations must be separate entities from municipalities. State PERA supports association, and there is an annual audit and formula to determine the health of the fund against upcoming needs. To maintain a certain level, the City is responsible/obligated to make up the difference. The relief association is what pays retirement benefits for part-time firefighters that are not eligible for city pension.

Relief Association is trying to make VH more attractive to stay and the pension is one of the draws for retaining firefighters. Goal to move towards a model like Little Canada where the city contributes regularly to avoid unexpected contributions. Wanted to take risk off the city for when the funds dip below the required amount. Little Canada contributes annually per firefighter. After 5 years it was not keeping pace so a cost-of-living increase was built-in. Yearly accrued liability is determined by member numbers and experience. Little Canada has stabilized relief association contribution and the fund has not gone below the required level.

Relief members progressed through the slides.

### **FUTURE COUNCIL REQUESTS**

Council Member Rogers asked about parade walking.

Council Member Rogers asked about conduct when members from the public speak to Council.

### **ADJOURN**

Meeting adjourned at 6:55p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin Watson, City Administrator