

**WORKSHOP MINUTES
OAKDALE CITY COUNCIL
JULY 25, 2023**

The City Council held a workshop on Tuesday, July 25, 2023 at Oakdale City Hall, 1584 Hadley Avenue North, Oakdale, Minnesota. The meeting began at 5:01 PM.

Present: Mayor Kevin Zabel

Council Members: Noah Her
Jake Ingebrigtsen
Andy Morcomb
Susan Willenbring

City Staff Members: Christina Volkers, City Administrator
Sara Ludwig, City Clerk
Jesse Farrell, City Engineer
Andrew Gitzlaff, Community Development Director
Melanie Lee, Human Resources Director
Max Lohse, Community Development Specialist
Nick Newton, Police Chief
Lori Pulkrabek, Communications Manager
Jim Romanik, Public Works Manager
Ryan Stuart, Police Sergeant
Julie Williams, Recreation Superintendent
Kevin Wold, Fire Chief
Jason Zimmerman, Finance Director
Kevin Zittel, Facilities Manager

AUTO THEFT PREVENTION GRANT

Police Chief Nick Newton provided a brief overview of the Auto Theft Prevention Program. He explained that the City is facing an uptick in auto thefts, and this grant would help cover the costs associated with theft prevention and recovery of stolen vehicles. The technology sought in the grant request are two Starchase units and automated license plate readers (ALPR). Starchase is a vehicle mounted system that allows officers to deploy a GPS tracking device to a vehicle that is fleeing police or committing crimes in transit. This allows the officer to back off and follow the vehicle via GPS until it comes to a stop and provides a safe opportunity to arrest offenders with no high-speed chase involved. The request for funding related to ALPR's would enable the ALPR features on the current Motorola squad cameras that are mounted in all patrol vehicles, along with the purchase of two portable ALPR units. These items were requested to allow for early detection of stolen vehicles entering an area. This would allow officers to respond to the alert and potentially apprehend the offender before they commit additional crimes.

In response to Council Member Willenbring's question about the Starchase technology, Police Sergeant Ryan Stuart said that the GPS tracker releases from the front bumper of the squad

car. Council Member Willenbring asked a follow up question about the guidelines around the use of Starchase. Sergeant Stuart explained that the Police Department would create an internal policy for its use. He added that there would be no long-term tracking as it only works for eight consecutive hours. Council Member Willenbring asked if the tracked data would be saved. Sergeant Stuart informed her that it would only be downloaded and saved for each specific case, but not kept indefinitely.

City Administrator Chris Volkens asked if the Police Department would follow a sample policy provided by LMC or their association for their internal policy. Sergeant Stuart stated that other cities have a similar policy, as well as the League of Minnesota Cities is likely working on a model policy for departments to follow. He added that State statute has guidelines around situations in which the Starchase technology can be deployed and yes, Oakdale police would follow those model policies.

Council Member Her recapped his understanding of the ALPR technology and asked when a police officer would be deployed after the ALPR provides a hit on a vehicle in the vicinity. Sergeant Stuart explained that the ALPR technology can be programmed to only alert the police officer to things such as stolen vehicles, outstanding warrants, amber alerts, missing persons, etc. Additionally, the two requested mobile ALPR systems would be placed in retail areas and could be moved around as hot spots are identified.

In response to Council Member Morcomb's question about this being a one-time grant, Sergeant Stuart explained that if the City can show positive results during the Auto Theft Prevention Program's biennial audit, the grant will be a continued funding source for the auto theft prevention technology.

The Council was supportive of the Police Department accepting the awarded funds and implementing the Auto Theft Prevention Program. This will go to the next Council meeting for final grant acceptance.

Ms. Volkens stated that she would send the KSTP-Woodbury Police Department news story about Starchase to the Council.

In response to Council Member Her's question about the effective range of Starchase, Sergeant Stuart said it is 50-60 feet.

In response to Council Member Willenbring's question about the reusability of the GPS trackers, Sergeant Stuart stated that Starchase will replace trackers as needed.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN DRAFT PLAN REVIEW

Mayor Zabel asked Community Development Director Andy Gitzlaff and Community Development Specialist Max Lohse to focus on any changes that have taken place since the last time this item was brought to Council.

Mr. Lohse explained that this is a complete draft of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan which includes all chapters and figures, but does not include the graphic design process. He reviewed the changes that have been made including an introduction within Chapter 1, the inclusion of Chapter 2 and Chapter 5 in their entirety, and new figures scattered throughout the Plan.

Mayor Zabel suggested that staff cite and link to the City's 2040 Comprehensive Plan in reference to the Vision section on Page 4.

Council Member Her suggested quantifying the near-term and long-term phasing in the *Implementation of the Future Network* graph in Chapter 5. Mr. Lohse added that near-term is likely 1-5 years, but he will discuss with the consultant.

In response to Mayor Zabel asking about how the timeframes are crafted in a way that indicates suggestions versus firm commitments, Mr. Lohse stated that there is language throughout the Plan like 'recommended' and 'possible timeline', but he said staff can check the document again to ensure the language aligns with Council's intent.

Mayor Zabel asked about adding City and County responsibility distinction on the snowplow trail maps. Mr. Lohse indicated that not all of the proposed changes to the maps have been made yet, but this change is one on the list to be made.

Council Member Ingebrigtsen expressed safety concerns about the 'road diet' roadway reconfiguration option as referenced on page 27. Mayor Zabel asked if there were any specific routes identified for this type of reconfiguration. Mr. Lohse said there are none identified in the current Plan. Mr. Gitzlaff referenced the *Implementation of the Future Network* graphs in Chapter 5 and explained how a 'road diet' may be a way to obtain right-of-way.

Council Member Ingebrigtsen was pleased to see that there was not a strong push within the Plan for bike lanes on the roadways.

Mayor Zabel asked if the Plan will be updated as sidewalks and trails are updated and completed outside of the Plan, specifically referencing the Willowbrooke Development Plan. Mr. Gitzlaff noted that GIS layering will address this.

Ms. Volkens and Mayor Zabel suggested establishing a timeline for future review of the Plan. Council Member Her followed up, clarifying that the Plan is used to take action. Mayor Zabel stated that it is when the opportunities present themselves.

Mr. Lohse concluded that the revisions provided by Council will be incorporated in the final document which will be posted to the City's website for public review. The Plan will then be brought back to City Council for formal adoption.

PROPOSED UPDATES TO CITY POLICY EPB-022: OAKDALE FIRST

Mr. Gitzlaff explained that the City is updating its internal policies and identified EPB-022: Oakdale First as one that needed review. The current policy seeks to improve employment outcomes for residents of Oakdale and Washington County by requiring businesses that receive financial assistance from the City to utilize Washington County Workforce Center services when filling new positions and encouraging the prioritization of hiring Oakdale candidates. He then reviewed staff's proposed policy changes as indicated by tracked changes.

Mayor Zabel suggested repealing the policy in its entirety as the City has scaled back its loan programs in recent years. It was also mentioned that given the low unemployment currently, the Council is not interested in these types of mandates to our businesses in Oakdale. Council was in agreement.

Mr. Gitzlaff noted that it is not required for the City to have a preferential hiring policy.

COUNTY STATE AID HIGHWAY 13 (50TH STREET NORTH) CONSTRUCTION PROJECT: TRAIL CONNECTION PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY WITH WASHINGTON COUNTY

City Engineer Jesse Farrell explained that Washington County is planning to do infrastructure improvements in 2024, from the Hadley Interchange to Olson Lake Trail, which includes pavement resurfacing, existing trail replacement, guardrail replacement, concrete work, and signing/striping replacement. The County has discussed extending the existing bituminous trail along the south side of County State Aid Highway 13 from Helmo Avenue North to Olson Lake Trail, which covers about 1,000 feet. Per the County's Cost Participation Policy, Washington County is willing to fund half of the new trail construction, and would look for the remainder to come from the City of Oakdale. The County is estimating the total cost to be around \$150,000. Mr. Farrell noted that the City would not have to begin payments until 2025.

Mayor Zabel was opposed to the project and was unclear about the origins of the Washington County Cost Participation Policy. Mr. Farrell referenced his work with Ramsey County noting that they have a similar policy.

Council Member Willenbring asked if Washington County will only complete the project if the City agrees to fund half of it. It was unclear if that is the case.

In reference to a comment made by Mr. Farrell about Washington County having limited funds to complete all the necessary and/or desired cities' and County projects, Mayor Zabel stated that the County has the ability to raise its tax levy just like a city might have to do in order to participate in a cost-share project.

Council Member Willenbring clarified that it is a County trail and therefore the County is required to maintain it. Council Member Ingebrigtson was in agreement.

Council Member Morcomb asked for background information regarding the previous trail improvement project along County Road 14. Mayor Zabel explained that the City participated in a cost-share with the County, however, the original estimate for the project doubled from the time the City agreed to fund half the project to the time the improvements were actually completed.

Mr. Farrell stated that staff's recommendation is to proceed with this project to close the trail system gap within the City, and evaluate future cost-share projects in regards to the City's right to not participate. In response, Mayor Zabel asked where the City might draw the line with the County in terms of future cost-share projects or City versus County responsibilities.

Council Member Willenbring asked about the specific advantage to closing the gap in the trail system. Mr. Farrell stated that this trail would add value to the City.

Council Member Her was supportive of moving forward with the cost-share project as there is a benefit that Oakdale residents receive from the completion of this trail. He added that the City always has the option to decline if the County asks to turn the trail maintenance over to the City in the future.

Council Member Ingebrigtson expressed concern with accepting this project and how that may affect future cost-share requests from the County.

Mayor Zabel pointed out that there have been past opportunities for the County to complete this portion of the trail.

In response to Council Member Her's question about the City's option to turn down the County if they request to turn over the trail maintenance back to the City, Mayor Zabel said it is ultimately up to the City. Council Member Her reiterated his support to move forward with the cost-share project as presented.

Council Member Morcomb noted that there are several other trails in the City that are in despair that are owned by the County. He was not supportive of this cost-share project.

Ms. Volkens asked Mr. Farrell if the County will continue with the trail improvement project if the City declines to help fund it. Mr. Farrell said that he has gotten the indication the County will re-evaluate the project for implementation in a future year. It was also noted that Lake Elmo may have a role in this trail segment.

Council Member Willenbring asked about resident feedback in regards to closing this gap in the trail system. Mr. Farrell stated he only saw one resident response in support of this on a

City social media post. Mr. Gitzlaff added that there were comments received about this gap as part of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan community engagement effort.

Council Member Ingebrigtsen commented that looking beyond this specific request, is it prudent to spend \$75,000-\$80,000 on any projects right now?

Mayor Zabel suggested declining the cost-share request, but adopting a resolution that encourages Washington County to move forward with the trail improvement project.

Council Member Willenbring was not supportive of moving forward with the cost-share project, but was supportive of Mayor Zabel's suggestion of a resolution.

Council Member Her was not supportive of adopting the suggested resolution.

Mr. Farrell brought up a question about how trail dollars are being spent by the County in terms of equity among the cities within the County. Council Member Willenbring and Ms. Volkens were also interested in this information.

In conclusion, the majority of the Council was not supportive of the cost-share project, but directed staff to put the resolution under the Engineering Department on a future Council agenda.

ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

Ms. Volkens reminded the Council about *Night to Unite* happening on Tuesday, August 1st. The Police Department will provide the list of registered neighborhood organizers internally this week so Council and staff are able to plan their visits to the parties accordingly. The neighborhood organizers will receive a City swag bag with party supplies.

COUNCIL TOPICS

Council Member Ingebrigtsen indicated that he will likely wear a polo with dress pants and a nice pair of tennis shoes to future Council workshops and regular meetings after finding out there is not a dress code. He also noted that it may be less intimidating for residents to approach them if they are dressed in business casual versus business formal.

Council Member Her stated that when he was at Tanners Lake over the weekend he noticed motor vehicles driving on the sidewalk from the boat launch to the shelter area. He also noted a lot of trash that was in the tall grass in the park. Mayor Zabel asked if there is anything that can be done to deter cars from driving on the sidewalks. Staff will look into this.

Council Member Her brought up the possibility of passing a moratorium on the public use of cannabis until the State has established the Office of Cannabis Management and provided the cities with more guidelines.

Mayor Zabel noted that most cities are focusing on three main areas surrounding the legalization of recreational marijuana beginning August 1st. The first being restricting cannabis use in public, with public being defined as City sidewalks or in front of businesses that are subject to public accommodation laws. He added that a local business owner has already reached out and expressed support for the City restricting cannabis use in front of businesses. Council Member Her asked if smoking is allowed in these businesses that are subject to public accommodation laws. Mayor Zabel responded that it is up to each business whether they allow smoking on their outdoor patio, but they will be subject to restrictions regarding the number of feet smoking is allowed away from the door.

Mayor Zabel clarified that the law recently passed by the legislature leaves it up to cities to regulate the public use of cannabis. Council Member Her asked about the current restrictions on tobacco smoking in public. It was noted that the City Code prohibits this within twenty-five feet of a public doorway.

Mayor Zabel asked the group if they would like to restrict the use of cannabis, including edibles or solely focus on smoking. Council Member Willenbring stated there is not enough information to make these decisions at this time. Mayor Zabel said the goal of the discussion tonight is to get a general sense of Council intent so that staff can look into other cities' examples and bring ordinance language back to a future workshop to continue the discussion in more depth. Mayor Zabel asked the Council if there was support for staff to devote time to this research. Council Member Her was in support of this suggestion, and said cannabis and tobacco should be regulated the same except for use while driving. Council Member Ingebrigtsen agreed with Council Member Her's suggestion stating the current regulations for tobacco should be applied to cannabis as well, if it is Council's intent to regulate the public use of cannabis at all. Mayor Zabel clarified that the moratorium he mentioned earlier was in reference to licensing, while the regulation of public use would involve a City Code amendment.

Council Member Her would like more information about the State law and hear staff's recommendation on the regulation of cannabis in public. Council Member Morcomb would also like more information before making a decision on the public use of cannabis, but is in favor of a moratorium on the business aspect.

Mayor Zabel asked if there was Council support for staff to research banning the public use of cannabis in public settings. Council Member Willenbring was not supportive of banning the substance. Council Members Morcomb and Ingebrigtsen were in favor, while Mayor Zabel and Council Member Her would like more information and sample language.

The second item that Mayor Zabel brought forward for discussion was smoking cannabis in public parks. Council Members Ingebrigtsen and Morcomb would not support the use of cannabis in public parks. Council Member Willenbring would support the use of cannabis in public parks as it is a legal substance. Mayor Zabel and Council Member Her would like to see sample language before making a decision.

The third item that Mayor Zabel brought forward was discussion about a moratorium on cannabis businesses. The Council was supportive of a moratorium with a specific end date.

Ms. Volkens provided information regarding a business whose THC consumable products license application was denied and whose appealing this denial to the Council. She will provide any necessary background information to Council Members Her and Morcomb prior to this appeal.

Mayor Zabel informed the group that a lobbyist reached out about the City changing the THC consumable products City Code to allow exclusive liquor stores to sell THC, specifically THC-infused seltzers. Ms. Volkens pointed out that numerous exclusive liquor stores in the City are selling this product despite the current City Code which does not allow this type of license to be issued to these establishments. Mayor Zabel asked if there is Council intent to change the City Code language now or wait until the State provides clarity. The general consensus from Council was to wait for the State to issue guidelines.

Council Member Morcomb brought up the Arts and Culture Commission within the City of North St. Paul, in reference to the possibilities of the City's own commissions. He suggested an Oakdale History Commission. Ms. Volkens stated that there has been an Oakdale Historical Society that focused on capturing the history of Oakdale. Mayor Zabel said he would be curious to know what the North St. Paul Arts and Culture Commission does.

Ms. Volkens asked the Council for their guidance on a current Economic Development Commissioner who does not reside in Oakdale, and who recently took a job outside of the City. The Council agreed that per the current City Code and City Policy MIS-013, the commissioner can no longer serve. If there is a desire to have a banking representative on the Economic Development Commission, staff can solicit recommendations.

Council Member Morcomb mentioned that he met with the Skyview Middle School principal and he is interested in looking for ways to engage with the City.

Council Member Morcomb reiterated his point from the last workshop about remaining respectful if Independent School District 622 Superintendent Christine Tucci Osorio attends a future workshop. Discussion continued about expectations for and Council intent on this topic. In conclusion, this item was tabled for another time.

Council Member Willenbring brought up several questions about the current Acorn Award process and suggested a discussion be had before the 2024 process begins, being that she and staff are new to the Committee.

Council Member Willenbring asked for clarity on the role of the council members in terms of bringing forth ideas and initiatives and seeking Council's intent. She stated that her understanding of the process is that ideas and initiatives are brought up during *Council Topics* at workshop, and if there is Council intent then staff is directed to move forward. Mayor Zabel

indicated that there are times he will ask staff for input prior to bringing the item to workshop to ensure that the information needed by staff is obtained at the time of Council's discussion. Ms. Volkens also noted that she has asked the Council to inform her of their council topics beforehand so she has a slight heads up going into the workshop. Council Member Her offered his understanding of the current process. Council Member Ingebrigtson thanked Council Member Willenbring for bringing forth that reminder. The consensus was to follow the process as outlined by Council Member Willenbring.

RECESS FOR REGULAR MEETING AT 6:58 PM

WORKSHOP RECONVENED AT 7:36 PM after the Regular Council Meeting

DEPARTMENT REQUESTED 2024 GENERAL FUND, SPECIAL REVENUE FUND, AND DEBT SERVICE FUND BUDGETS AND PROPERTY TAX LEVY

Finance Director Jason Zimmerman noted that the discussion would focus on the 2024 General Fund, Special Revenue Fund, and Debt Service Fund. He recapped prior workshop discussions which included a conceptual 2024 budget, the proposed 2024-2033 Vehicle & Equipment Replacement Plan, and the 2024-2028 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Between the May 23, 2023 and June 27, 2023 workshops, each department submitted completed budgets which have since been reviewed by Mr. Zimmerman and Ms. Volkens. He stated that the department requested draft budget is being presented to continue the dialog about the use of City resources and the alignment of these resources with current initiatives.

Mr. Zimmerman shifted to discuss the levy components and budget drivers via the Levy Summary in OpenGov. The components of the levy include the General Fund, Debt Service Fund, and Capital Project Fund. In comparison to the 2023 levy, the 2024 currently proposed levy reflects a 13.8% increase. The Debt Service Fund is projected to go down while the Capital Project Fund is projected to go up. The primary components of the General Fund increase include things like salaries, personnel cost-of-living, health insurance, supplies and equipment for various departments, software improvements, and election costs, however this is not an exhaustive list.

Mayor Zabel asked about the Washington County election fees as far as spreading them over two years instead of paying the entire cost every other year. Ms. Volkens indicated she has been advocating to Washington County for this model to offset these budget extremes. She was hopeful the County will move forward with this proposed model.

Mr. Zimmerman continued with an overview of the revenue components within the General Fund. Mayor Zabel asked for clarification on the three proposed police officer positions. Mr. Zimmerman stated this does not include the officer whose salary was covered by the Sex Trafficking Grant through Washington County. Council Member Her asked if the City has to make up for the loss of the grant. Ms. Volkens confirmed. Mayor Zabel questioned if one officer position should be pushed out an additional year. Council Members Willenbring and

Ingebrigtson were supportive of keeping the proposed Police Department positions during this budget cycle.

In response to Mayor Zabel asking about projected full-time employee requests for 2025, Ms. Volkers indicated with the growing development there is a known need for more Public Works employees, likely three, and then one employee within the Fire Department.

Council Member Her asked if there are positions accounted for to help support the Administrative Department as he wanted to ensure this department was sufficiently supported. Ms. Volkers responded that based on recent conversations with the Mayor and Council Members, one new administrative position similar to an Assistant City Administrator will be added as proposed.

Council Member Morcomb pointed out that the Debt Service Fund is decreasing over time, but asked if this fund is used to even out budget increases over time. Mayor Zabel noted that historically this has been a practice of the City. Council Member Morcomb followed up to ask if the debt service is still experiencing higher interest rates. Mr. Zimmerman stated that despite this, the City's amortization is exemplary.

Mayor Zabel asked for the tax capacity rate at the 13.8% levy increase. Mr. Zimmerman responded that he does not have that information yet due to not having the fiscal disparities information from Washington County. Mayor Zabel stated it is hard to give feedback without the numbers from the County. Mr. Zimmerman said the County has until the end of August to provide the fiscal disparities information to its cities. Ms. Volkers reminded the Council that the 13.8% number is an indicator, but the real number to reference is the tax capacity rate.

Ms. Volkers noted that a few of the budget requests could be covered using one-time funds. Mayor Zabel asked of the 13.8% proposed levy, how much of that is one-time expenses. Mr. Zimmerman and Ms. Volkers noted there are ways to turn some of the budgeted items into one-time expenses. Mr. Zimmerman stated that the fund balance at the end of the year was at 53% of the following year's expenditures; and that the Office of the State Auditor recommends 35-50% of the subsequent year's expenses. He noted that the current City Policy FR-019: Fund Balances, will need to be revised to conform to the auditor's standards.

Council Member Morcomb expressed support for adding an administrative position. He also brought up the increase in the Charitable Gambling Fund over the years as a source of one-time funding if needed. Mr. Zimmerman reviewed the lawful expenditures permitted for that fund as provided by the State of Minnesota, and also noted that the balance will depend on the funding requested by the Oakdale Summerfest Community Organization (OSCO). Mayor Zabel said in terms of funds to address one-time expenses, there is the Charitable Gambling Fund and the Special Projects Fund.

Chief Newton was asked to speak to the Police Department vehicle requests. He indicated that the current VEF request for 2024 (Mobile Field Force / SWAT Vehicle) and 2025 (Jeep

Grand Cherokee intended for the addition of the Police Commander position) could be swapped, with the command vehicle being purchased using the Charitable Gambling Fund. Mayor Zabel did not want to use the General Fund balance as it allows the City to fund operations for roughly nine months without tax revenue. Ms. Volkens suggested using the residual fund balance from 2023 to cover one-time expenses, particularly the administrative personnel discussed earlier. The Council was supportive of allowing staff to update the budget based on the conversations had thus far.

In response to Council Member Morcomb's question about setting a minimum balance for the Charitable Gambling Fund, Mayor Zabel said this has not been done in the past. Council Member Willenbring asked if the Fire Department's one-time expenditures have been included in the budget. Ms. Volkens said the Charitable Gambling Fund is a good source for those expenses.

Mayor Zabel suggested that staff bring back a full list of one-time expenses including things that are currently budgeted but can be shifted out, as well as new one-time items that are not part of the budget, and identify potential funds for these one-time expenses.

Mr. Zimmerman asked about Council's intent regarding the proposed number of personnel positions. Council was supportive.

To wrap up, Mr. Zimmerman noted that the revised CIP will be reviewed at the August 8, 2023 workshop meeting. Council Member Morcomb stated that the Parks and Recreation Commission Chair suggested moving up the Tanners Lake Playground improvement to an earlier date within the CIP. Ms. Volkens advised that the other Tanners Lake items within the CIP be considered within this same timeline to ensure efficiency.

ADJOURNMENT

The workshop was adjourned at 8:38 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Ludwig, City Clerk