

**CITY OF EXCELSIOR
Hennepin County, Minnesota**

MINUTES

**City Council Work Session
Monday, October 3, 2011**

6:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Mayor Ruehl called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

Councilmembers present: Fulkerson, Miller (arrived at 6:17 p.m.), Olson, and Mayor Ruehl.

Councilmembers absent: Caron

Also Present: City Manager Luger and City Clerk Johnson

2. Agenda Approval

Fulkerson moved, Olson seconded, to approve the agenda. Motion carried 3/0.

3. Interim Planning Services

Luger said that while the City is exploring options for planning services, an interim City Planner is needed to process applications, answer questions, and complete other planning-related tasks. The City has received three proposals for planning services.

The Council and staff discussed the proposals from the City of Shorewood and The Planning Company. The hourly rate from The Planning Company is higher than the hourly rate from the City of Shorewood, but there could be efficiencies gained by having both Planners from the same entity. If the City is looking for ways to share services with other cities then the Shorewood proposal may be the answer. However, the Shorewood Planner has not worked for multiple cities, so it might be difficult to balance the work for more than one city.

Mayor Ruehl said conceptually he has no problem contracting with the City of Shorewood, but staff should make sure that Shorewood's Planner has the time and interest.

Fulkerson said that originally staff was recommending that the Planner position become full-time. Luger said the goal this week is to assess the number of hours that are needed. Right now staff believes that 12 hours a week is the bare minimum of hours that is needed for planning services. Later in the meeting, the Council will be discussing what services to provide.

3. Interim Planning Services – (Continued)

If it is decided that the Council and community believe that planning-related tasks are a valued service, this position probably needs to be full time. In the down economy there are a lot of people out of work who could fill this position.

Mayor Ruehl said there is an opportunity to see if there is a possibility of having shared services for planning with Shorewood.

Olson said this would be a good opportunity to explore the shared services and also to measure public expectations. Fulkerson agreed.

Mayor Ruehl said another option would be to bring someone on board part-time that is currently unemployed.

Miller said he agrees that the City should go with the Shorewood proposal, but also realizes that the service level probably won't be as good.

The Council directed staff to pursue the contract with the City of Shorewood. Staff should meet with Shorewood's Planner to make sure that he can handle the work and is interested in doing it. It was noted that the Shorewood contract will require more management, so staff should put proper recording measures in place to track the work.

4. Evaluating and Prioritizing City Services

Luger reported that she would like to take some time and look at the services that City Hall is providing and evaluate which services the community values. The structure of City Hall should be based on the services that the community values, not what services City Hall can provide based on our current positions. Once there is an understanding of what services the community values, a decision can be made regarding which positions the City needs to fulfill those values instead of simply filling the City Planner position.

Luger said the City can go through this exercise with staff or with the help of a consultant. Staff has secured three proposals for assisting the City with this process in case the Council decides it wants to contract for this service; the proposals range in price from \$1,000 up to \$2,800.

Fulkerson asked Luger if she had a list of the services. Luger said she planned on going through the job descriptions and also the fee study to put together a list. At this time, she was recommending going through the services provided by the administration department.

4. Evaluating and Prioritizing City Services – (Continued)

Mayor Ruehl said another aspect of this might be to find out what services the community thinks is important. It would also be beneficial to have a cost comparison on staffing versus contracting for a service.

Olson said he thinks this is an important exercise to go through; looking at what services the City provides and how that service is delivered is an interesting topic. The City should ask if the consultants have done this exercise before; there must be an organization that has helped a City do this and do it well.

Luger said that Lynn & Associates has done this exercise before and has assisted in providing a cost analysis for contracting a service versus providing it in house.

Miller said he thinks it would be worthwhile to pursue a contract with Lynn & Associates because they have worked for the City and are familiar with our organization.

Olson said he would like to see a return on investment where the company has provided this service for another city.

Council directed staff to continue to pursue this item and bring back proposals that outline the tasks to be provided and references for similar work that the company has provided.

5. Other

None

6. Adjournment

Fulkerson moved, Olson seconded, to adjourn the Work Session meeting at 6:46 p.m. Motion carried 4/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheri Johnson
City Clerk