

41 Council Member Rogers would like to see the request quantified to justify the added expense. He
42 requested more specific information showing how much additional programming and events
43 would be added, how the additional staff member would free up Everett's time, and any other
44 data that would help the Council be comfortable with the additional expense. Everett responded
45 saying quantifying programs can be hard to do, but she will do her best to provide more
46 information to help with an informed decision.

47 Rogers was wondering if the position could be hired early to help with the Parks Study. He stated
48 we have already allocated \$50,000 this year. Watson clarified that \$50,000 is dedicated to parks.
49 The money could go toward a handful of projects that were identified, but ultimately, it's the
50 Council's call. Rogers thought when the Parks Master Plan was discussed, \$50,000 would be
51 dedicated this year and \$50,000 next. Watson said that was the original idea, but it did not get
52 approved by the previous Council. Watson said that he will present to the Council how they
53 could pay for the Parks Master Plan and that may not necessarily be with the \$50,000. Rogers
54 said that he sees an opportunity with the position to save money and get someone acquainted
55 with the parks system. Council Member Doll Kanne stated that's an ambitious idea, but felt that
56 it wouldn't work out too well. She didn't think our consultants would welcome working with
57 staff in the process and questioned how much money it would actually save. Rogers felt it may
58 be better to hire the person when they are fresh out of college rather than wait until 2024. Doll
59 Kanne agreed, stating that people who are looking for a role like this are looking for them right
60 now. Doll Kanne stated that she definitely wants to hear more about this possibility. Krachmer
61 added that the sooner we are able to increase community engagement, the better.

62 **LEGISLATIVE VISIT**

63 Mayor Krachmer thanked MN Senator Gustafson for her presence at the meeting. Krachmer
64 asked her what she would like us to know that relates to our City. Gustafson stated that she could
65 tell them what she has been working on, but would rather hear from them. She continued sharing
66 about initiatives she has been focusing on including funding of schools, public safety, and small
67 business tax relief. She felt the northern suburbs have been overlooked and have not been
68 invested in, so the drawback of that oversight is that we are property tax heavy. She said they are
69 trying to fix this problem to help cities balance their budgets. She asked for input relating
70 concerns from the City's perspective. Gustafson commented that Vadnais Heights is her
71 hometown and she wants to make sure that the people in Vadnais Heights matter too.

72 Council Member Doll Kanne asked about Local Government Aid (LGA), stating that Vadnais
73 Heights gets nothing. She felt that Vadnais Heights is being overlooked, but maybe that's
74 because she doesn't quite understand the full intent of how it's calculated. Gustafson stated that
75 LGA is not her area of expertise as much as education. She stated that several other cities in the
76 northern suburbs are in the same predicament as Vadnais Heights getting next to nothing in
77 LGA. She does believe the LGA formula needs to be fixed. Rogers agreed, stating that Mounds
78 View, which is similar in size and demographics to Vadnais Heights, is getting \$850,000 and
79 Vadnais Heights gets nothing. Discussion followed about how LGA funds are used and allocated
80 to certain cities. Rogers wanted Gustafson to know how the LGA issue affects the residents. He

81 stated that the Council tries to keep taxes low and it's a shock to the system when they have to
82 raise them. Council Member Rogers stated that it's frustrating that our residents pay for this tax.
83 Watson stated that due to the budget surplus, the cities that get LGA are getting huge increases.
84 He stated that our housing stock is in rough shape so there is an argument to be made asking why
85 Vadnais Heights isn't getting some of that money. Gustafson said there is plenty of time to make
86 an amendment and asked for some information to help her do it. Watson said there's a page on
87 the League of Minnesota Cities website that could help. Gustafson guessed that the formula that
88 is used to calculate LGA is outdated.

89 Doll Kanne asked if they had any ideas how the City could improve community engagement and
90 outreach to under-represented groups and asked if there are any State resources available.
91 Gustafson said she was unaware of State resources, but could look into it. She has become aware
92 of younger people who are interested in engagement, but not aware of opportunities at a city
93 level. She said she could refer them to Watson.

94 Rogers said there is a mental health crisis. He stated that he attended a meeting with Ramsey
95 County and they are having problems with their officers having mental health issues. Even fire
96 departments are being stressed from so many mental health calls. He asked if there is anything
97 going on in the Senate to help with mental health issues since cities don't have enough resources
98 to help many of the people in crisis. Gustafson said there are couple of things that she is doing
99 relating to community health. One of them is with schools to give them resources to be proactive
100 in addressing mental health. She said they focus on schools because that's where families are
101 located and it's a good place to have more counselors to help students.

102 Rogers stated that the Vadnais Lake Blvd trail would be a fabulous project for the City, but it is
103 very expensive so this is another area where LGA would be useful. He asked how the bonding
104 process works relating to timeframe and process we'd have to go through for it. Gustafson said
105 the bonding year is next year, but you can submit now. Watson said the project would be a
106 County project. He said he doesn't anticipate it to be done this year. The County anticipates
107 2028-2029, but could do it earlier if funding was available. City Engineer Farrell gave some
108 more background on the project, stating that although it is expensive, it would be worthwhile
109 looking into it. Watson said the initial estimates were \$14M to add the trail.

110 Krachmer asked about housing. Gustafson said that she was willing to take concerns and give
111 them to the appropriate people. He said there is a Senate File 365 that limits corporation's ability
112 to buy single family homes that he'd really like to see passed. Doll Kanne asked if there have
113 been issues with foreign investments. Gustafson was unsure. She commented that it is nice to see
114 housing availability.

115 Rogers asked about massage therapists and commented there is no State certification. If people
116 come to get a license from the City, we don't know anything about them. Watson said the City
117 performs background checks, but there needs to be more robust oversight. Doll Kanne hoped that

118 the oversight could be done in such a way as to not penalize those who are trying to conduct a
119 legitimate business. Krachmer commented that some of these issues do not have easy answers.

120 Council Member Goebel said the Council would like some clear direction on how to regulate
121 cannabis. Gustafson asked that the City send her what regulations they would like to see by the
122 end of the week. Watson said they would just like to see some structure.

123 Krachmer thanked Gustafson for attending tonight's meeting and welcomed her to come again.

124 **FUTURE CITY COUNCIL REQUESTS**

125 Council Member Doll Kanne asked about the long-term schedule for the roads since she's been
126 hearing from residents. City Engineer Farrell gave an update on future street improvement
127 projects. He said he has received several calls on road conditions.

128 Council Member Rogers mentioned the City goals and asked if it would be wise to review the
129 2040 Comp Plan to see where we are and see what's happened in the last 8 years. He was
130 wondering if that's what cities do. Watson said the Comp Plan is redone every 10 years. Rogers
131 was wondering if there was a best practice about benchmarks and reviews. Community
132 Development Director Wall stated that cities treat the Comp Plan differently. Some cities review
133 it every 10 years. The last time we revised our plan, there weren't dramatic changes. However,
134 he said we could certainly take a look at it.

135 Mayor Krachmer said he does want to talk about the housing study and where we want to take it.
136 Watson said it is out for quotes and he will bring those quotes to a meeting for the Council to
137 consider.

138 **SUMMER SCHEDULE**

139 City Administrator Watson said a discussion was held last week about how we can supply a
140 benefit to employees and residents during the summer months. He has found that a lot of cities
141 adjust their hours during the summer months. In talking with the frontline staff, they preferred
142 that we open at 7 AM – 4:30 PM every day, with Fridays being from 7 AM – 11 AM since
143 Fridays are very quiet. Staff would still get their 40 hours in weekly, but be open a little earlier
144 for contractors. Council Member Rogers asked if staff was okay with starting work at 7 AM
145 since that time would be difficult for someone who is not a morning person. Watson said the
146 frontline staff were okay with the time. The Council had no problem with the request. Watson
147 said he would gauge the response to this change, but in talking to other cities, there hasn't been a
148 ton of push-back. He would add a formal resolution to the next regular meeting's agenda.

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151 **LIGHT POLE ITEM**

152 City Engineer Farrell stated that last May, we had a light pole that fell from County Road E onto
153 I-35E. Thankfully, it didn't land on the pavement. Following the failure, a forensic engineer was
154 hired to determine the cause of it. We wanted the risk to public safety to be addressed to
155 determine the suitability of other poles, what the risks are, and how we'd pay for repairs or
156 replacements. Currently, the tall poles and ornaments on the bridge have been removed. They are
157 not planning to put up flags or planters on the entire strip until they are assured that another pole
158 is not going to fall down.

159 **OTHER STAFF ITEMS**

160 None.

161 There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:50 pm.

162

163 Respectfully submitted,

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165 Kevin Watson, City Administrator