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**- MINUTES -  
CHASKA CITY COUNCIL  
DECEMBER 5, 2022**

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Windschitl at 7 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Roll Call

Roll call was taken. Present: Mayor Windschitl and Councilmembers Grau, Hatfield, Hubbard, and Huang.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Matt Podhradsky, City Administrator; Noel Graczyk, Administrative Services Director; Kevin Wright, Communication Director; Elise Durbin, Assistant Administrator; Marshall Grange, Parks and Recreation Director; Nate Kabat, Community Development Director; Liz Hanson, City Planner; Matt Haefner, Water and Sewer Director; and Matt Clark, City Engineer.

4. Adopt the Agenda

Motion by Councilmember Hatfield, second by Councilmember Hubbard to adopt the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

5. Visitor Presentation

5.A. Lost and Found Cat Volunteer – Linda Hoffman

Linda Hoffman provided a presentation about lost and found cats. There is not currently a program in Chaska supporting lost cats and reunification. Police Chief Ryan Seibert provided information about a trial program the City previously attempted with cats.

City Administrator Matt Podhradsky stated he would take the information and research it.

Councilmember Hatfield noted she helped implement a similar program in Chanhassen. It was very labor-intensive and expensive. They have since moved to a Humane Society model with more collaboration.

Michelle McKune suggested contacting PetCo for a partnership as they are open everyday and have several cages. Alternatively, local vet clinics may be interested in a partnership.

Nicole Peterson added it takes two months to surrender a cat to the Humane Society. If the cat has an owner, it would only take a few days.

Councilmember Hatfield stated cats can pass diseases along to one another, especially feline leukemia. Ms. Peterson stated if a cat is neutered or spayed and has feline leukemia, it is very rare to pass along the disease.

Ms. Hoffman stated 4 Paws charges a flat fee of around \$500 to board a lost animal. Mayor Windschitl asked who would pay for the fee if the animal is a stray.

Mr. Podhradsky explained the City contracts with 4 Paws, and they have said they will not board cats. Also, dogs have a high return rate, unlike cats. The City pays the fee if there isn't a person who claims the animal. It is difficult to find a contractor who is willing to board cats.

Councilmember Hatfield added it could be helpful to offer creative measures such as spaying and neutering clinics, affordable chipping efforts, and the like to help with the population.

Councilmember Grau thanked Ms. Hoffman for presenting the issue to the Council and for her efforts in the community.

Marcy Zierman shared an experience with stray cats and returning them to their homes.

#### 6. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

#### 7. Consent Agenda

Councilmember Hatfield asked for more information on Consent Agenda Item D. Resolution 2022-141 in Support of a Pre-Development Application to the Carver County CDA.

Assistant City Administrator Elise Durbin explained the City will eventually annexing part of Lake Town Township, so there was a request for Chaska to review the sewer system. Other cities will also support the township in its efforts.

Mayor Windschitl asked if Consent Agenda Item B. Letters of Support for Corridors of Commerce Program—Highway 212 and Highway 5 is sent individually or as a packet. Mr. Podhradsky stated Staff sends the letters as both a packet and individually.

Councilmember Hatfield asked what happens with the outstanding business licenses in Consent Agenda Item C. 2023 Business License Renewals. Mr. Podhradsky stated they continue to reach out to the businesses asking them to apply. There is an ultimate deadline where the business would no longer be able to provide services without the license renewal.

Motion by Councilmember Grau, second by Councilmember Hubbard to approve the Consent Agenda Items A through E:

A. 2023 Development Fees, Planning Application Fees, Building and Fire Permit Fees  
Motion to adopt Ordinance 2022-1026, establishing the 2023 Development, Planning Application, Building Inspection, and Fire Fees.

B. Letters of Support for Corridors of Commerce Program—Highway 212 and Highway 5  
Motion to authorize the Mayor to sign letters of support for both the Highway 212 and Highway 5 applications to the Corridors of Commerce program.

C. 2023 Business License Renewals

Motion to approve the 2023 Business Licenses to include games of skill, refuse haulers, massage therapists, tobacco sales, solicitors/peddlers/transients and golf cart permits effective January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023.

D. Resolution 2022-141 in Support of a Pre-Development Application to the Carver County CDA

Motion to adopt Resolution 2022-141 in support of a pre-development application to the Carver County CDA.

E. Grant Application for Circle the Brick Regional Trail

Motion to adopt Resolution No. 2022-142 to pursue a grant as part of the 2022 Minnesota Active Transportation Infrastructure Program for the Circle the Brick Trail.

Motion carried.

## 8. Action Items

### 8.A. Truth in Taxation Public Hearing

City Administrator Podhradsky introduced the item to the Council and provided a presentation on it. Police Chief Ryan Seibert provided additional information.

Councilmember Grau noted retention and recruitment is challenging in law enforcement.

Mayor Windschitl added there is difficulty with the exits from the Police Department and could pose a safety issue if there were to be civil unrest.

Councilmember Hatfield pointed out there is an issue of equity with the location of the Police Department where they can respond more quickly to nearby neighborhoods. Mr. Podhradsky explained the Fire Department is central to the entire City, and there is enough room for both a Police Department and a Fire Department on that land.

Councilmember Hubbard asked if a collaborative public safety campus has been considered. Chief Seibert stated the two Departments have a good relationship, and there is opportunity for collaboration between the two. There would be opportunities for shared resources, storage, and training. Mayor Windschitl agreed there could be cost savings with a partnership.

Fire Chief Stephen Kraus continued with the Staff presentation.

Councilmember Hubbard asked if Chaska were to switch to a full-time duty crew, if the radius of where firefighters must live would increase. Chief Kraus stated that could be on the table. They are currently issues losing qualified firefighters because of moving outside of the 12-minute radius.

Fire Chief Kraus continued with the Staff presentation and provided more information on retention efforts.

Councilmember Hatfield noted the importance of the physical and mental health of firefighters.

Mayor Windschitl asked how long the training process is. Fire Chief Kraus stated the Department is down to a one-year probationary period.

Mr. Podhradsky concluded the Staff presentation.

Mayor Windschitl opened the Public Hearing at 9:49 p.m.

Jay Roe, 3621 Cavallo Pass, explained he has done door-knocking in the community, and he has heard concerns about the rising tax burden. The priority before the past year was City Square West, but the project wasn't funded. However, the City has now introduced a \$115 million project. The sum of several other recent projects pale in comparison cost-wise.

Mr. Roe suggested more information provided regarding the decision process and education on how the taxes impact individual households. The budget needs to drive the plan than listening to consultants. There are projects in the School District also impact taxes of residents. Ultimately, the Council should consider a neutral levy.

Renae Frensko, 1300 Valley Street, stated there was an increase in taxes in 2008, and this is a similar issue. Many community members are pained with the suggested budget. The Council needs to spend responsibly for its citizens.

Ms. Frensko asked what the partnership is between the Police Department and the libraries. Mr. Podhradsky stated Chaska has its own Police Department, so they don't contract with the County for services beyond the basics.

Mr. Podhradsky added the City did not increase the levy in 2008-2012. Ms. Frensko stated the taxes still went up.

Chris Pauley, 2151 Schindler Crossing, noted multiple entities receive a handout from the taxes. He added he didn't know how many issues there are with the Police Department, and it shows poor planning. The community members don't have the money currently. Chaska used to be more forward-thinking.

Mayor Windschitl explained the public safety building would have been built already if it weren't for COVID-19. A ten-year plan would cost the City more money, so they opted for a shorter plan.

Mr. Pauley pointed out the City Park for \$500,000 seems expensive. Mayor Windschitl stated all of the trails are in dire need of repair and the gazebo needs attention. At some point, the community will have to pay for the improvements, be it now or in the future.

Mr. Pauley noted either the assessed value or the market value of a home could be taxed on. Mr. Podhradsky explained sales data and home additions are used to assess homes, and the Statutes determine the process.

Mr. Pauley stated the current trends will push residents out of the community and lower the tax base. He suggested the City focus more on building up businesses than single-family homes.

Mr. Podhradsky noted businesses are a focus for the City, and upcoming projects will create around 5000 more jobs.

Mr. Pauley asked if the City will receive the local government aid. Mr. Podhradsky stated the State has said they will not provide the funds, even despite the surplus. He explained in 2004 the City used growth to accommodate the budget rather than levying for it. The City hadn't done anything to replace it, and it set them up for a difficult circumstances. In 2012, once the recession plateaued, they started to rebuild the fund. He explained the long-term planning process.

Councilmember Hubbard added the City is at a point in its growth to plan for the future population. Although the time isn't great in terms of finances, it is a great time in the scheme of the City's development.

Mayor Windschitl pointed out the process to find a location for the public safety center has allowed the City to learn about other programs that can be run more effectively and prevent other planned projects by using City-owned land.

Councilmember Hubbard stated there are informational videos about the issues in the current facilities that may be helpful.

Neil Whatcott, 287 Brickyard Drive, explained the valuation of a home isn't a bank account one can dip into. It is inaccessible until he sells his home. Just because the City can charge more in taxes doesn't mean it should.

Mayor Windschitl noted the Council's understanding of issues with the increased property assessments. They are also homeowners and are facing increases. However, there are issues with facilities that need to be addressed. Chaska has a bright future, and the Council is trying to plan for it.

Mr. Podhradsky added there is benefit to breaking up the project into four phases. If the City were to run into another issue such as COVID-19, the City can pause the projects between phases. Maple Grove recently passed a referendum for \$147 million for a community center. Chaska paid for their Community Center in 1991 for \$22.5 million, and it is now valued at \$145 million.

Mr. Palm asked if Costco was offered increment financing to build in Chaska. Mr. Podhradsky stated the City had responsibility for their portion of the roundabout. The City used tax abatement to pay for the roundabout, and Costco pays the same amount of taxes.

Mr. Podhradsky added the project will go out for bid in 2024, and a slowing market would benefit the bid process. The estimates were created in a hot market, and contractors are getting hungrier as the market slows.

Councilmember Huang noted inflation is hurting everyone. The longer they wait to do the bigger projects, the more exponentially the costs will increase. The Council has not taken the projects lightly as it impacts everyone in the community, particularly those with lower incomes.

Councilmember Hubbard stated it would be easier for the Council to not do anything. The perspectives of the public matter, but the Council has to be brave and forward-thinking.

Mayor Windschitl closed the Public Hearing at 10:33 p.m.

Councilmember Grau agreed some people leave communities due to taxes or increased costs, but people also leave cities due to issues with public safety. He explained it is a hard ask, but it is a worthy, well-planned ask. He thanked the commenters for their time.

Councilmember Hatfield thanked the commenters for representing the voices of their neighbors. The Council could take the more popular position by putting off the projects, but it is not the right position. She added her experience in talking with community members was not entirely unsupportive of the levy.

Councilmember Hatfield noted she has lost sleep over the impact on some people in the community, such as those with fixed income. Ultimately, the projects are the right choice for the Councilmembers in ten years and for the community long-term.

Councilmember Huang thanked the commenters for their participation and for creating meaningful conversations. The proposed levy will serve the community for several years to come.

#### 8.B. Temporary Transfer Authority Public Hearing and Resolution 2022-140

City Administrator Podhradsky introduced the item to the Council and Assistant City Administrator Elise Durbin provided a presentation on it.

Councilmember Huang asked why the funds are unobligated. Mr. Podhradsky stated the funds were obligated before going through the Housing Improvement Program. The funds came from three districts including the apartments by the Fire Station, the Clover Ridge neighborhood, and Chaska Heights near Kohl's.

Councilmember Huang stated the report implies the distribution needs to be determined before the end of the year. Mr. Podhradsky stated the distribution can be vague, so the State accepted the area of downtown as the distribution. The Housing Improvement Program can be used anywhere in the City. The goal is to create flexibility. The funds are available for two more years.

Ms. Durbin pointed out the plan was reviewed by an attorney and approved it.

Mayor Windschitl opened the public hearing at 10:55 p.m.

No one wished to address the Council.

Mayor Windschitl closed the hearing at 10:56 p.m.

Motion by Councilmember Huang, second by Councilmember Hubbard to adopt Resolution 2022-140.

Motion carried.

## 9. Bills

### 9.A. Accounts Payable Claims Roster 5-December-2022

The Council requested further information about bills on pages 5 and 9.

City Administrator Podhradsky provided further information regarding those bills.

Motion by Councilmember Huang, second by Councilmember Grau to approve the bills as presented. Roll call was taken. Voting aye: Councilmembers Hatfield, Hubbard, Huang, Grau and Mayor Windschitl. Voting nay: None  
Motion carried.

## 10. Other Business

### 10.A. City Administrator's Report

#### 10.A.i. Bi-Weekly Report 5-December-2022

Councilmember Hatfield:

- Stated Citizen's Academy is coming back on Wednesday nights January-March.
- Noted Coffee with a Cop is December 15 at Dunkin' Donuts, and the food distribution is the same day at noon.
- Pointed out Commission appointments are coming up and encouraged community members to apply.

Councilmember Hubbard:

- Noted she attended the Tree Lighting events.
- Added the Chaska Parks and Recreation guide is out for the winter and enrolment is open.

Councilmember Huang:

- Noted he also attended the well-attended Tree Lighting events.
- Agreed the Commissions are a great way to get involved with the community.

City Administrator Podhradsky:

- Pointed out the Metropolitan Council still has openings, and he encouraged members of the City Council to reach out to community members to represent Chaska on the Metropolitan Council. The current representative lives in Scott County.

Mayor Windschitl:

- Stated the City needs to plan for a new Christmas tree in the coming years.

DRAFT

- Suggested there be a raffle for residents to decorate the trees and be responsible for the whole process.
- Added the parade will be December 21, 2022.
- Noted the next few meetings are December 19, 2022, January 9, 2023, and January 23, 2023.

11. Adjourn

Motion by Councilmember Hatfield, second by Councilmember Hubbard to adjourn the meeting at 11:16 p.m.

Motion carried.