

**MAHTOMEDI CITY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION MINUTES
AUGUST 17, 2021**

Mayor Jud Marshall convened the City Council Work Session meeting at 5:30 p.m. with Council members Richard Brainerd, Jeff Charlesworth, Jeff Ledermann and Jane Schneeweis in attendance. City Administrator Scott Neilson, Finance Director Scott Schaefer, Fire Chief Terry Fischer, Deputy Chief Jake Tschida and City Clerk Jerene Rogers were also in attendance.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Jud Marshall called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Council member Brainerd moved and Council member Charlesworth seconded the motion, to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was unanimously approved.

DISCUSSION FIRE DEPARTMENT STAFFING

City Administrator Scott Neilson said at the Council Strategic Planning Session one of the focus points was on fire department staffing and what is best for the community. He said a lot of communities are moving away from paid on-call emergency responders. He said the Council has to decide what level of service they want for the City.

Fire Chief Fischer provided a power point presentation. He overviewed the staffing history, current staffing model for full-time personnel and the current staffing model for paid on-call staff. He discussed the challenges they have had with hiring and the amount of time commitment that is involved during the first year of employment. He then discussed their staffing proposals.

He said Proposal #1 would be to hire 2 full-time Firefighter/Paramedics giving them a total of 5 full-time employees. He said 3 of the paramedics would work 24 hour shifts allowing them to have at least 1 medic on every call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year. They would staff a second medic Monday through Friday from 3:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. making it possible to have 2 Firefighter/Medics on calls during this time period. They would also staff a Firefighter/Medic Monday through Friday 6:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. making it possible to staff 2 Firefighter/Medics during this time period. This person would also complete fire inspections. He indicated that the Fire Chief would work 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and respond to second medical calls and fires. He said the 11:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. shift would be covered by one of the Firefighter/Medics that is on their 24 hour shift and the paid on-call duty shifts. The weekends would work

similarly with a Firefighter/Medic working their 24 hour shift and 2 paid on-call members working duty shifts, as they do now.

Fire Chief Fischer said Proposal #2 would be to hire one additional Firefighter/Medic, giving them 4 full-time Firefighter/Medics. He said 3 of the Firefighter/Medics would work 24 hour shifts allowing them to have at least one medic on every call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year. They could staff a second Firefighter/Medic Monday through Friday 3:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. making it possible to have 2 Firefighter/Medics on calls during this time period. He said the Fire Chief would work 6:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and be the second Firefighter/Medic on calls during this time period. He stated all second medicals and Fire/Rescue calls would be all-calls. He said the 11:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. shift would be covered by one of the Firefighter/Medics that is on their 24 hour shift and the paid on-call duty shifts. The weekend shifts would be covered with one Firefighter/Medic working their 24 hour shift and 2 paid on-call duty crew shifts, similar to what they currently do now.

Fire Chief Fischer said Proposal #3 would be to not add additional Paramedics and put the current 3 paramedics on 24 hour shifts. This would give us at least one paramedic on every call. Create duty shifts consisting of 2 paid on-call Firefighter/EMTs that would run 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. Monday-Friday. The weekend shifts would be divided into 2 twelve hour shifts running from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. He said the crews would be available from home and respond with the Firefighter/Medic that is working their 24 hour shift. The paid on-call staff would get compensated \$75 plus any call compensation for being on shift. This would add \$70,200 to the temporary salary line item or \$35,100 split between both the fire and ambulance budgets. He stated the paid on-call staff would sign up for 14 shifts a quarter. This amount would vary with staffing levels. All second medicals and fire/rescue would be all-calls.

Fire Chief Fischer said Proposal #4 would be to change our ambulance license with the state from being a full-time ALS ambulance to part-time. Meaning we would have paramedics on calls from our service when staffed with full-time medics. EMS calls would be covered by an outside private ambulance service during the hours that we do not have full-time staffing. He stated fire staff would respond to EMS calls as 1st responders to assist the ambulance crew. Revenue for ambulance transports during that period would go to the private service. He explained that there would be no cost for private service to cover the area except for the 1st responders wages. The fire station would not be manned 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with an ambulance so response times could be extended depending on truck locations.

City Council member Charlesworth asked how they recruit for new employees.

Fire Chief Fischer said they use social media, Century College, the White Bear Press and they have a sign outside the fire station.

City Council member Brainerd asked how the time commitment has changed over the years.

Fire Chief Fischer said they only required Firefighter I class, now Firefighter II and Hazmat training are required.

Mayor Jud Marshall asked what Proposal #1 would do to the levy.

Finance Director Scott Schaefer said it would add \$250,000 to it.

City Council member Brainerd asked what the impact to the levy would be.

Finance Director Schaefer said right now the proposed 2022 levy increase would be 1.8%, with this added expense it would jump to 7- 7.5%.

City Council member Brainerd asked what an outside service would cost.

City Administrator Neilson said the City would have no cost. The outside service would bill the resident directly.

City Council member Schneeweis said she wants to live in a community where we have these services.

City Council member Brainerd said we added two medics a couple of years ago without much criticism. He asked if we need to hire a consultant to help recruit people going forward. He said why not hire one person next year and one the following year.

City Administrator Neilson said staff will add one full-time Firefighter/Medic in the budget presentation for the joint City Council/Finance Commission meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Council member Schneeweis moved and Council member Charlesworth seconded the motion to adjourn the work session meeting at 6:57 p.m. The motion was unanimously approved.

ATTESTED:



JERENE ROGERS
CITY CLERK

APPROVED:



JUD MARSHALL
MAYOR