

**MINUTES OF THE WORKSHOP MEETING  
CITY COUNCIL  
LITTLE CANADA, MINNESOTA**

**MAY 12, 2021**

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof a Workshop meeting of the City Council of Little Canada, Minnesota was convened on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2021 in the Conference Room of the City Center located at 515 Little Canada Road in said City.

*In accordance with the requirements of Minn. Stat. Section 13D.021, the City Administrator has determined that an in-person meeting is not practical or prudent because of a health pandemic or an emergency declared under Chapter 12 of the Minnesota Statutes. Because of the health pandemic and emergency declaration, it has been determined that attendance at the regular meeting location by elected officials and members of the public is not feasible. Therefore, some or all of the City Council members may be participating by telephone or other electronic means. This meeting will be recorded in its entirety.*

*Members of the public may monitor the meeting on the CTV North Suburbs website (live stream) or use the meeting link provided on the city website prior to the meeting.*

Mayor John Keis called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and the following members of the City Council were present at roll call:

**CITY COUNCIL:** Mayor Keis, Council Members Fischer, Torkelson, McGraw & Miller.  
Absent: None.

**ALSO PRESENT:** City Administrator Chris Heineman, Parks & Rec/Community Services Manager Bryce Shearen, Public Works Director Bill Dircks, Community Development Director Corrin Wendell, Finance Director Brenda Malinowski, City Clerk/HR Manager Heidi Heller, and Fire Department Personnel: Fire Chief Don Smiley, First Assistant Chief Tim Boss, Secretary Bryce Shearen, Treasurer Pat Keenan, and Members-At-Large Mike Morelan and Nick Schwalbach

**ANNUAL JOINT MEETING WITH LITTLE CANADA FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Don Smiley, Fire Chief, stated that Steve Morelan retired in 2020 and was the longest serving member on the Fire Department. He reported in 2020, they took on 3 new firefighters in November, had 389 Calls for Service which was a record number, had \$257,000 in property losses and switched their on-going training to virtual in order to keep certifications current. He stated that even though the number of volunteer events was significantly down they still did over 150 volunteer hours, and there were more than the usual number of vehicle crashes on the freeway. Fischer asked if there were any noteworthy injuries due to fires. The Fire Chief stated there was one fatality but no other significant injuries from fires.

Chief Smiley reviewed the end of year results for the 2020 budget. He noted there was a little increased maintenance of the building and the worker's comp costs were higher due to a change

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in carrier and timing of when the premiums were paid. He reported that in 2021 they were able to decrease their overall budget about 3% due to savings from 2020 and some other reductions. He stated in 2020 the remodel of the fire station was completed and they started construction of the Firefighter's Memorial which is located behind the station, and is planned to be completed this summer. He stated that 2020 was the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Little Canada Fire Department so they are hoping to be able to do some events this year since everything was canceled in 2020. He reported they have the third fire chief's vehicle and new radio system in service now and Firefighter Chris Jaede was awarded the Firefighter of the Year. He explained the ladder truck replacement committee has started meeting, which will be about a year-long process to design and order a new ladder truck. He noted there have been several Fire Chief retirements in nearby communities over the last year. He stated they are still getting a good pool of candidates for their firefighter positions, and he is not aware of any upcoming retirements at this time.

Keis asked if they have any upcoming large expenses. Chief Smiley stated that nothing other than the ladder truck at this time, but they may look at some additional remodeling in the building. He noted that their charitable gambling was closed for several months, but it has bounced back and been doing really well. He stated they now have 28 firefighters and noted they want to stay around 30, so they may hire again this year.

**PRELIMINARY 2022 BUDGET DISCUSSION**

The Finance Director stated that work will begin on the 2022 budget in the next month and a survey was sent to Council for initial thoughts to help guide staff. The City Administrator showed past years of the City's property tax levy rate and would like to get preliminary discussion on what the Council's goals are for the General Fund, which is the day-to-day operating budget for the City. He reviewed a summary of the survey question results that were asked of the Council: 1) Do you feel the 2021 operating budget is in alignment with the City Council's priorities and strategic initiatives laid out in the 5-year Strategic Plan? 2) Do you feel the City currently offers the right level of services? 3) Given the current status of the unreserved fund balance and the additional one-time funding from the American Rescue Plan, should the City strive to reduce, maintain flat or moderately increase, the levy for 2022?

Keis stated he would look to spend the rescue funds on things that are a one-time expense rather than an on-going expense. The Finance Director explained that if the unassigned funds are used for operating costs, the Council will need to expect that a higher levy increase would need to happen in future years. The City Administrator explained that the American Rescue Plan Funds are anticipated to have specific guidelines for what it can be used for. The Finance Director stated that big tickets items that it is anticipated it could be used for are water, sewer, storm sewer and broadband. McGraw asked if there was an overall list of conditions and needs for stormwater systems. The Public Works Director stated there is not a list of the current status of the city's systems, but he could do that in the next couple of months and determine some preliminary costs. There was Council and staff discussion regarding one-time expense suggestions.

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**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.**

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John T. Keis, Mayor

Attest:

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Christopher Heineman, City Administrator