

## EAST BETHEL CITY COUNCIL WORK MEETING

August 6, 2012

The East Bethel City Council met on August 6, 2012 at 6:26 PM for a work meeting at City Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob DeRoche Richard Lawrence Heidi Moegerle

MEMBERS ABSENT: Bill Boyer Steve Voss

ALSO PRESENT: Jack Davis, City Administrator  
Rita Pierce, Fiscal & Support Services Director

Call to Order **The August 6, 2012 City Council work meeting was called to order by Mayor Lawrence at 6:26 PM.**

Adopt Agenda **Moegerle made a motion to adopt the August 6, 2012 City Council work meeting agenda. DeRoche seconded; all in favor, motion carries.**

2013 Budget Discussion Davis explained that the 2013 Budget review will continue from the July 23, 2012 meeting and direction for sources within existing City funds for 2013 bond payments will be requested.

At this time we will start the budget review from of those items we didn't review at that last meeting. Davis, "We can start at the "Mayor and City Council" and go through the departments individually and see if there are any questions that you may have." DeRoche, "We pretty much already did this, didn't we?" Davis, "We pretty much already did the departments, but we didn't get to go through a few things. One of those things is under Mayor and City Council. It has been brought up and discussed about electronic packets. If you want to do that for 2013 now is the time to consider that so we can get that in the budget. We have done some preliminary numbers and checked on policies that other cities have. Ham Lake provides the little iPads. Some places, and what I think is best, is they give City council an allowance. So that way you can go out and purchase whatever you need, whether it be a laptop or a program. There is a number of ways to do it, but we have to decide if we are going to pursue this."

DeRoche, "What if the iPads are not necessarily the way to go. Because I think I heard from some Council Members at Ham Lake that there were some issues. When we talked to them they said there were some problems with running some programs on the iPads." Davis, "That is why we are asking you to consider what some of the other cities have done with a policy that allows the Council Member to get an allowance and purchase a laptop,(etc) or programs." Moegerle, "I really like having my laptop at the meetings. But, I wouldn't want a City laptop because I couldn't check my e-mail on there. The question is, "Is everything going to be electronic?" Because there are some spreadsheets we get from the City engineer that we may not be able to read if they are electronic. How would you deal with that? Would you have us print it out? Or, would you deliver that?"

Davis, "Everything wouldn't be electronic. Any oversize maps that need to be presented would still be prepared and delivered as a packet. Going electronic doesn't mean we are going totally paperless. There are things that couldn't be submitted electronically. And, if we had a Council Member say they didn't want to use this, then we would have to prepare a paper packet for them." Moegerle, "How much would we save from not doing paper packets?" Pierce, "I did a rough estimate looking at 30 packets a year, 200 pages each packet. Didn't put in paper, but put

in staff time and copy machine cost. It is about \$650 for each Council Member a year.” Davis, “Using the figure of \$650 per Council Member a year, which is \$3,250, not counting the paper cost. What we were looking at, is Ramsey has a policy where they allow the Council Members an allowance of \$800 per term. Or even if we did \$1,000 that is \$6,000 over four years.” Pierce, “The City of Ramsey does this, you can do the allowance, it is your property. It is taxable. However you want to set it up.”

Moegerle, “Let’s try this as an experiment for the first three months of 2013. Because we are speaking for at least two people that aren’t here. I think it is worth a try.” Davis, “We will add this into the figures and see how we will handle this.”

Moegerle, “While we are on page 9, I think you are aware of my dismay that two of the absent members here are going to get paid exactly the same amount as us. And they didn’t show up and they didn’t do a lick of work. And that is not the American Way. I understand this is a work meeting and it is to be compensated in the \$475 a month. Would I like additional meetings to be compensated in addition to that, yes I would like these meetings to be compensated, but our budget would go way high. It is a poor example that they can miss six meetings and still get paid as if they are attending all the meetings.”

Lawrence, “I talked with a gentleman who was talking about running for Council. He asked what it was all about. I said, “You average two meetings every month. Then you will be on some commissions that will be another one or two days a month. And then there is always a special meeting that gets called.” And you are right; it is an issue when you miss 20 some days of meetings.” Moegerle, “The thing of it is, is that if you work for a business you are given so many sick days. And when you are looking at six and you can’t attend, it gets to be bad. Because we need the input of everybody here. So, I guess my question is, “I have asked the City Attorney to prepare an ordinance so we can change the way we get paid so we get paid when we work. Is there any interest in this?” Which means when we show up and attend a meeting.”

DeRoche, “He doesn’t know about this. I think it sends a bad message out there that East Bethel can’t get enough people to attend the meetings. So now they have to create an ordinance to make sure they get people there.” Moegerle, “But it is a real simple change. It only affects the five of us and the taxpayer dollars. Do you not think this is an issue on Council?” DeRoche, “Well sure it is. But, I am probably in the hole as far as money goes for how many meetings I attend between Council and Commissions. But, I am not in it for the money.”

Moegerle, “What message does it send to the City employees when we have people who get paid for not showing up and they (employees) can’t get a raise. Because we are spending money paying them (Council members) for doing nothing and these people are out here working and we can’t give them a raise. Doesn’t that bother you?” DeRoche, “Well, we are talking about two individuals.” Lawrence, “Realistically, Mr. Vierling has said this is common practice by other cities. They do this.” Moegerle, “I would like consideration of it, because I want to send a message out that we are responsible for the monies that are paid to us. Just like we expect the employees of the city to be responsible for the monies.” DeRoche, “When I came in here, we have so many ordinances. And it seems like if you can’t get something, you make an ordinance to do it. If two more people came in and it was the same issue, then I could maybe see it.” Moegerle, “I just think it is a poor use of taxpayers’ dollars that people get paid for doing nothing. And we wouldn’t want our employees doing this. Why does Council get special privileges?” Lawrence, “Why don’t we have Vierling bring an ordinance back for us to look at?” Moegerle, “If you have to pay them to get here, and then let’s do it. This is policing for everybody.” Lawrence, “Get the information and we will look at it later.”

Davis, "Next item is the City Administration budget. Again this budget proposed is a 1.5% raise for city employees. Lawrence, "Is that for every employee?" Moegerle, "The current budget including union employees?" Davis, "That is correct." Lawrence, "The money we for City employees." Lawrence, "Is that for all employees, city-wide?" Davis, "That is correct."

Moegerle, "What is the total cost to the City of the 1 1/2%?" Pierce, "About \$23,250." Moegerle, "When was the last across the board increase given?" Pierce, "In 2011. There was a 1.5% increase." Davis, "In 2010 it was 0%, 2011 it was 1.5% and 2012 it was 0%." Moegerle, "I need to know more background of what other cities are doing at this point. I heard someone got 2%." Davis, "Did you get a chance to look at what I sent out on comparisons of what other cities were doing last year in your update? Everybody is in their budgeting process this year. Generally, most of those were in the 1 to 1.5% ranges. Some were a little higher. Some were even lower or nothing." Lawrence, "I look at it and realize it and it is averaging ¾% over a year."

DeRoche, "For veterans and seniors there wasn't a COLA for years." Davis, "I know they didn't get one, but there has been one. It has only gone up, it has not gone down. We can furnish those figures to you. In fact as part of the City's pay plan, the union raises used to be based on the COLA and the COLA started going up 3, 4, and 5% per year. So, they had to revisit that and they capped it at 3%." Lawrence, "That is great for the employees." Davis, "That would be wonderful if we could afford it. But, unfortunately, we are in a situation where we can't. As part of the justification for requesting a pay increase is we do have a reduced staff. People have been taking on additional duties, and we did come up with a \$250,000 budget savings at the end of the year last year. And we hope to come up with a significant savings this year. It is because of staff's hard work, which is one of the reasons we are proposing the increase. This is not something you have to approve, but it is reflected in the figures we are presenting." Lawrence, "I don't think it is out of line." Moegerle, "I am going to reserve judgment."

Moegerle, "One of the things we were talking about two years ago is we had top salaries. And so, is there a top to the top? Or does the top keep going up?" Davis, "A COLA is a little different. For the most part our salaries are pretty much in line." Moegerle, "I think we need to discuss this and have it completely laid out. We need to be able to say here is the justification." Lawrence, "It is important to have all the justification for the people." DeRoche, "Population isn't necessarily the best perimeter to set up. But they have a lot different tax base." Davis, "We have stressed that too. A lot of cities staff's are not doing what we are doing. They have staff members that just do certain job duties. Our staff has been very willing to take on other duties and other assignments and they have performed them admirably." Moegerle, "What conferences and meetings will you go to?" Davis, "Only ones that I can drive to, no overnight stays if it is anything like this year."

DeRoche, "How is it that Linwood can drop their police coverage even more? I would like to know from the sheriff if we are paying for their coverage because they are paying less." Davis, "We are paying the same except for that little increase." DeRoche, "Right, but they are paying less." Davis, "Right, but they are getting less service though." DeRoche, "Right, but that is my question. They are dropping service and if something happens, our guys have to go over there." Davis, "Remember when Nowthen was going to drop their service and the sheriff said they would only answer certain calls." DeRoche, "I would like to see what calls our deputies do in East Bethel versus other cities." Davis, "If you drop below a certain amount of coverage, they will only respond to certain calls." DeRoche, "Other cities are cutting their budgets and we are paying for them." Davis, "I know Oak Grove and Ham Lake didn't cut theirs. So Linwood would be the only one." DeRoche, "Simple math tells me if they are cutting their police budget, the police aren't going to say, "We aren't going to respond." Davis, "They aren't going to dispatch our deputies for a dog call. We need to ask about this." Moegerle, "Do we need to

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look and see how many calls were taken by East Bethel in Linwood?" Davis, "We talked with Orlando on this before. I thought they didn't have these records, but I will bring this up again."

Adjourn

**DeRoche made a motion to adjourn at 7:00 PM. Moegerle seconded; all in favor, motion carries.**

Attest:

Wendy Warren  
Deputy City Clerk