

Meeting of: COLUMBIA HEIGHTS CITY COUNCIL
Date of Meeting: March 6, 2017
Time of Meeting: 7:00 PM (Following the EDA Meeting)
Location of Meeting: Council Chambers
Purpose of Meeting: WORKSESSION

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL - The meeting was called to order at 7:14 PM

Present: Mayor Schmitt, Councilmembers Murzyn Jr, Williams and Buesgens
Also Present: Kelli Bourgeois; Human Resource Director/Assistant to the City Manager, Joe Kloiber;
Finance Director, Jackie Zillmer; Assistant Finance Director and Katie Bruno; City Clerk

Mayor Schmitt indicated staff has recommended amending the order of the agenda.

*Motion by Mayor Schmitt, seconded by Councilmember Murzyn, Jr. to amend the agenda as follows.
All Ayes, Motion Carried.*

1. Discussion related to interviews for Council vacancy

Judy Clerkin, 509 Mill St NE extended her support for Nick Novitsky. Clerkin indicated Novitsky was “nothing but greatness.”

Michael Novitsky, 5252 5th St NE described Nick Novitsky as a great asset.

Ann Novitsky, 5252 5th St NE described Nick Novitsky as very dedicated.

Jane Halek, 4602 Fillmore St NE described Nick Novitsky as kind and considerate, indicating his character speaks for itself.

Jenny Ketchum, 4600 Fillmore St NE stated that Nick Novitsky is good at connecting people and helping to get them involved.

Adam Davis, 3932 Central Ave NE #3 offered his support for Tim Utz, indicating he will work to find common ground.

Raquel Tabor, 4157 2nd St NE described Nick Novitsky as civic minded and possessing good moral character.

David Mitchell Shrauner, 4319 Fremont Ave N, Minneapolis offered support for Tim Utz, stating he is a well-informed, family, Godly man.

Nelson M.L. Moore, Sr., 1323 41st Ave NE described Nick Novitsky as a stand-up guy.

Stan Hoium, 1105 42 ½ Ave NE expressed concern with the process. Hoium indicated the Public Comment portion of the meeting was not included on the agenda, but was announced via Facebook. A video taken at the recent interview with a cell phone was also included on the internet.

Adrian Durand, 2127 Forest Dr NE described Sean Broom as energetic, creative and hardworking.

Andrew Macko, 4424 2½ St NE described Nick Novitsky as family and community minded.

Jared Hendrickson, 4340 Jefferson St NE stated he grew up with Nick Novitsky, and that he is involved and helpful.

Sean Broom, 4117 5th St NE indicated he is concerned with the lack of transparency in the appointment process.

Julienne Wyckoff, 789 Parkside Lane indicated she finds out her information from Facebook and thanked Mayor Schmitt for posting this meeting on Facebook.

Mayor Schmitt indicated the council will go through the 17 applicants and make comments as desired. A straw poll will take place following the council comment period.

Timothy Fitze

Councilmember Williams indicated he was impressed with Fitze, and would rate him high. Councilmember Murzyn, Jr. agreed Fitze was a good candidate. Councilmember Buesgens liked the fact that he has a background in working with youth as a teacher. Mayor Schmitt indicated she would like to learn more about Fitze.

Tim Utz

There were no comments.

Stan Hoium

Councilmember Murzyn, Jr. indicated he has known Hoium awhile, he interviewed well, and would like to see him considered. Councilmember Williams also felt Hoium should be considered.

Denelle Bing

Councilmember Buesgens appreciated her new perspectives.

Jerome Klein

Councilmember Williams rated him high, as he seems to know the City well.

Frost Simula

Councilmember Buesgens stated she thinks Simula is a great candidate, he attends meetings regularly, and has great ideas of where the City should go in the future.

Tammera Diehm

Councilmember Williams indicated he served with Diehm for several years on the council, and thinks she could bring the council together.

Christine Nelson

Councilmember Buesgens liked that Nelson has experience in working at the Capitol, and her interest in diversity and family first values.

Catherine Vesley

Councilmember Buesgens stated Vesley is very forward thinking and tenacious. Councilmember Williams agreed that Vesley would be a strong candidate.

Ted Landwehr

Councilmember Buesgens liked the fact that Landwehr has works for several years in the community. Councilmember Williams agreed, and pointed out he served on the School Board for many years.

Julienne Wyckoff

Councilmember Buesgens shared Wyckoff has a lot of energy and insight to the needs of the young families.

Councilmember Murzyn, Jr. agreed that Wyckoff would be good for the community.

Melinda Bak

Councilmember Williams stated she was well spoken, and knowledgeable about the City.

Councilmember Murzyn, Jr. indicated he was impressed with Bak. Councilmember Buesgens indicated she seems very organized and seems to be a good strategic thinker.

Barb Gertsema

There were no comments.

Missy Lee

Councilmember Williams indicated Lee served on the School Board.

Nick Novitsky

Councilmember Murzyn, Jr. stated Novitsky is a hard worker and devoted member of the Lions Club.

Councilmember Williams shard Novitsky is one his favorites, and is impressed with his tenacity and leadership skills. Councilmember Buesgens indicated Novitsky is good at getting things done.

Sean Broom

Councilmember Buesgens has been amazed at the energy Broom has, as well as his knowledge and background.

Bruce Nawrocki (Phone interview)

Councilmember Murzyn, Jr. stated it would be nice to have him back on the council.

Councilmember Williams stated Nawrocki is Mr. Columbia Heights, and has served the City for a long time.

Mayor Schmitt asked the councilmembers to indicate whether they think each candidate should move forward in the process.

		Murzyn, Jr	Williams	Buesgens	Schmitt
Nick	Novitsky	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Timothy	Fitze	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Melinda	Bak	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Sean	Broom	No	No	Yes	Yes
Tammera	Diehm	Yes	Yes	No	No
Jerome	Klein	Yes	Yes	No	No
Ted	Landwehr	No	No	Yes	Yes
Bruce	Nawrocki	Yes	Yes	No	No
Frost	Simula	No	No	Yes	Yes
Catherine	Vesley	No	Yes	Yes	No
Stan	Hoiium	Yes	Yes	No	No
Denelle	Bing	No	No	Yes	No
Tim	Utz	No	No	No	Yes
Julienne	Wyckoff	Yes	No	No	No
Christine	Nelson	No	No	Yes	No
Barbara	Gertsema	No	No	No	No
Missy	Lee	No	No	No	No

Nelson M.L. Moore, Sr., 1323 41st Ave NE commented that the Council has narrowed the pool down to the top two candidates, and should focus on the top two. Councilmember Buesgens reported the Charter has specific guidelines regarding the appointment process, and an appointment cannot take place earlier than March 27th. Mayor Schmitt indicated the Council will continue to discuss the applicants at future meetings.

2. Continued discussion of options for refinancing the 2007 and 2008 bonds

Finance Director Joe Kloiber reported the Council will need to make decisions regarding the refinancing of the Liquor Store and Public Safety Center bonds; whether or not to use the general obligation pledge. Kloiber suggested the council may want to coordinate long term goals with the EDA. At this point the goal is to obtain information and direction, and not use time and money preparing documents that the council would have no intention of approving.

Mayor Schmitt asked for a timeline. Kloiber indicated he will work with the City Manager and Bond Attorney to create a rough schedule. Kloiber stated he wouldn't expect to see a dramatic change in interest rates.

Kloiber reported the City's credit rating (AA+) is as good as it can be, due to property values related to population; noting values are increasing. Councilmember Buesgens requested a copy of the Anoka Country Property Value report.

3. Information on the 2017 effects of not assessing delinquent utility bills in 2016

Finance Director Joe Kloiber reported that because the Sun Focus failed to publish a required Public Hearing Notice the City was unable to levy special assessments to 2017 taxes, including delinquent utility bills. Staff is under the assumption Council's intent was not to include the prior year delinquent accounts when calculating the decision making process of shutting water off. Councilmember Murzyn, Jr. questioned how many shut-offs are possible, and if there are repeat offenders. Kloiber indicated there are about 140; some residents have figured out the system, and are deliberate. Councilmember Murzyn, Jr. reported that many cities no longer do shut-offs, as it is a long process.

Jackie Zillmer, Assistant Finance Director explained collections are time consuming, and customer relations are easier when dealing with current cycles. Zillmer gave an overview of the collection process, indicating there are 4-5 steps involved.

Mayor Schmitt stated she would like to see information from other cities regarding their policies. Councilmember Murzyn, Jr. requested the policy be discussed at an upcoming worksession. Kloiber suggested asking neighboring communities details regarding the terms of assessments as well as any narrative feedback regarding unintended consequences when the policy was implemented. Mayor Schmitt asked if there are financial assistance opportunities for residents. Zillmer stated that residents are referred to Anoka County for assistance.

Motion by Councilmember Murzyn, Jr., seconded by Councilmember Buesgens adjourn. All Ayes, Motion Carried.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:07 PM

Respectively Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Katie Bruno". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Katie Bruno,
Council Secretary/City Clerk