

**WORTHINGTON CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING, MARCH 17, 2021**

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. in City Hall Council Chambers by Mayor Mike Kuhle with the following Council Members present: Chad Cummings, Amy Ernst, Chris Kielblock, Larry Janssen.

Staff present: Jason Brisson, Assistant City Administrator/Director of Economic Development; Steve Robinson, City Administrator; Deb Olsen, Staff Account; Mindy Eggers, City Clerk.

Others present: Ryan McGaughey, The Globe; Justine Wettschrek, Radio Works; Alaina Kolpin, Honorary Council Member; Terry Gaalswyk, MN West.

MN WEST PRESENTATION - TERRY GAALSWYK

Terry Gaalswyk, MN West, gave a presentation to council outlining the colleges response to COVID and how they were able to mitigate it to keep transmission to a minimum. Students and staff fill out a self health assessment every day and the if there are instances of COVID the college does its own contract tracing.

He explained enrollment in down approximately 10% but attributes the decline to not having athletic programs last fall throughout the conference. Since then sports have returned to the campus and Worthington will host the Region 8 basketball tournament later this month. He said it is anticipated that enrollment will climb next fall.

Mayor Mike Kuhle said South Dakota is offering a scholarship program that encourages students to cross state lines for school that allows them to develop professional skills and then retains them in the workforce in their state. Mr. Gaalswyk said there is a lot of competition for talent right now. South Dakota offers a Build South Dakota Scholarship which if the graduate works for three years in South Dakota their schooling is paid in full. Iowa is starting the same type of program. The state of Minnesota has a couple of options that are going through the legislature right now.

Council Member Cummings asked if the need is still there for additional housing at the college. Mr. Gaalswyk stated that yes there is still a need for additional housing as enrollment increases. There were vacancies this fall but it allowed the Villas to offer housing in the community during a critical time in the pandemic.

Mayor Kuhle asked if the college had any long term construction plans. Mr. Gaalswyk said there are capital bonding projects slated to be presented to the legislature at a later date. The construction projects would be between the Granite Falls and Worthington campuses.

Mr. Gaalswyk said that the college has received federal stimulus packages which has allowed the college to offer a greater amount of money to students that have been financially impacted by the pandemic. He said the financial position of the college is strong.

COUNCIL VACANCY DISCUSSION

Mayor Kuhle referred to the memo he had sent to Council regarding the vacancy of Council Member Harmon. He stated that the appointment shall be by the majority Council vote with the Mayor voting in the event of a tie.

Mayor Kuhle said he would like to propose the following process:

- All residents of Ward II are given the opportunity to submit a letter of application to be considered for appointment to council. Applications would be due March 31st. Only written applications would be considered, written applications should be addressed to Mindy Eggers, City Clerk, Worthington, MN.
- Appoint a sub-committee of the Council to review the applications and make a recommendation to the full Council for appointment. The sub-committee should be made up of the current Council Member of Ward II and the Council Member at Large and possibly adding the members of the Nominating Committee as well.
- The goal is to have a recommendation to the City Council at the April 12th regularly scheduled meeting.

Mayor Kuhle said this process would give Council the most thorough and vetted outcome possible.

Council Members agreed that Council Members Ernst and Cummings would serve on the sub-committee.

Mayor Kuhle said that to be eligible for consideration of this appointment, a candidate must be eligible to vote in Minnesota, be at least 21 years of age, and a resident of Ward 2 for the past 30 days. Council Member Ernst said that something should be added to let applicants know that they would be required to also serve on sub-committees and required to attend up to 6-12 meetings per month in addition to the regular council meetings.

Consensus of the Council was to do a press release that includes the following information:

To be eligible for consideration of this appointment, a candidate must be eligible to vote in Minnesota, but at least 21 years of age, and be a resident of Ward 2 for the past 30 days.

Council members receive an annual salary of \$6,000.00 per year (pro-rated for partial year), regular Council meetings are on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month and extra meeting(s) compensation of \$50 per day. Sub-committee meetings could range between 6-12 meetings per month.

A written letter of interest must be submitted to Mindy Eggers, City Clerk at City Hall by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 31st, 2021. The letter of interest should include a short biography, why you want to serve on City Council, and the candidate's vision of the future of the City.

The press release will be sent to the press, added to social media platforms and sent directly to the individuals that have already inquired.

The sub-committee will meet on Thursday, April 1st at 2:00 p.m. to look over the applications.

WORTHINGTON FIRE WORKS DISPLAY DISCUSSION

Todd Wietzema, Public Works Director said traditionally the City had a fireworks display on July 4th of each year to celebrate the holiday. It has been a collaborative effort between the City of Worthington and the Chamber of Commerce. Each of these entities would pay 50% of the \$12,000.00 display. Mr. Wietzema said starting in 2015, the City of Worthington and the Lake Okabena Improvement Association, added a fireworks display on July 3rd at the end of the Beach Bash celebration. The City has contributed \$1,500.00 of the \$4,000.00 display and the Lake Association has contributed the remaining balance.

The Beach Bash was cancelled in 2020 due to Covid so there were no funds contributed by the Lake Okabena Improvement Association, to the July 3rd display. Staff decided that we would continue to have both displays and would use budgeted city money to fund the July 3rd display. Mr. Wietzema said in December of 2020, staff was informed that the Worthington Area Chamber of Commerce, was removing their contribution to the July 4th fireworks display, due to budgetary concerns.

Mr. Wietzema said there is \$6,500.00 in the budget right now, the total amount needed for the 2 night display would be approximately \$14,500.00. Council agreed that the fireworks are an asset to the community as it draws people from around the area. Steve Robinson, City Administrator, said that it is a very small percentage of the budget and staff would work to find the funds needed to have the 2 night display.

ADJOURNMENT

The motion was made by Council Member Janssen, seconded by Council Member Cummings and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 4:36 p.m.

Mindy L. Eggers MCMC
City Clerk