



**MINUTES  
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION  
October 17, 2023**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Pro-Tempore Dyvik at 5:05 pm.

**Present:** Council: Deirdre Kvale, Mike Feldmann, Jahn Dyvik, and Gina Joyce

**Staff Present:** City Administrator: Scott Weske; Public Works Director: Sean Diercks; Fire Chief: Mike Heiland; Finance/Utilities Officer: Amanda Nowezki; and City Clerk: Jeanette Moeller

**Absent:** Mayor: Charlie Miner (with prior notice)

**APPROVE AGENDA**

Council member Joyce asked to amend the agenda and begin the meeting with a surprise celebration of City Clerk Moeller who has served the City for 20 years.

*A motion was made by Joyce, seconded by Kvale, to approve the agenda as amended. Ayes: all.*

**OPEN CORRESPONDENCE**

No one was in attendance to address the City Council during Open Correspondence.

**BUSINESS ITEMS**

**Celebration for City Clerk Jeanette Moeller for 20 Years of Service**

The Council took time out of the meeting to honor City Clerk Moeller for her time with the City.

**Discussion of the Proposal for a Job Classification and Compensation Study to be Completed by DDA Human Resources, Inc.**

City Administrator Weske gave an overview of a proposal from DDA Human Resources, Inc. for a job classification and compensation study. He recommended the City complete a full classification and compensation study and explained that the outcome would also provide staff with more updated material for the employee handbook overhaul. He reviewed examples of other job classification and compensation studies that had been completed recently to offer an idea of what the City could expect to garner from a study.

The Council reviewed the examples and discussed key data points that they felt may be important for recruitment and retention.

Council member Kvale voiced concern that the proposal was quite expensive and suggested that some of the money may be better spent trying to recruit employees for the Public Works Department.

Council and staff discussed the current salary step and performance review system, positions and titles, expectations, addressing goals, continuing education, the basis for compensation raises, and limited recognition opportunities for employees that go above and beyond their official duties.

Council member Joyce stated that outside of lock-step type increases, she asked if the City should be building a career path forward for the employees. She mentioned the example of after a certain amount of time and accomplishing a set list of tasks, they could be promoted to manager or director of a certain area.

Mayor Pro-Tempore Dyvik listed some comparisons between the private sector and government sector jobs and expectations.

City Clerk Moeller shared her personal example of how the salary step increases can affect people. She explained that because of the tenure she has had with the City, she started at Step 1 or Step 2 and she reached the end of the salary step system after seven or eight years and was at the top of her pay range. From that point on, she was only eligible for any COLA that came to all the City employees, but never eligible for any other increase.

Council members discussed the pricing of the proposed job classification and compensation study options and how detailed they would need to be for the City.

Finance/Utilities Officer Nowezki noted that when she was first hired, she had a fair wage for her role; however, over the last few years her role has changed dramatically.

Weske noted that she had also mastered and exceeded her position in that time period.

Council member Joyce observed that was why she had suggested building in some type of graspable goals for promotions and titles.

Nowezki stated that she had also taken on Human Resources (HR) duties, which for a City with eight employees has not been terribly daunting, but explained that she has also been handling duties like insurance contract renewals and paperwork. She expressed concern because she was aware there are massive HR laws that will be impacting and changing operations beginning January 1, 2024.

Mayor Pro-Tempore noted that Long Lake is a small town and does not have a lot of employees, which gives them more of the benefit of evaluating things on a case-by-case basis.

Council member Kvale indicated she would support a case-by-case approach.

Nowezki noted that using her position title as an example, her wage was tied to her job title; so even though she'd already taken on many of the duties of a higher level Finance Director position, her title needed to change in order for her to be eligible for a wage reflective of her current duties and work level.

Council member Joyce explained that she sees this as the opportunity for everyone to be the expert and tell the Council what the steps look like for my type of role.

Moeller reflected that she believes the City needs to review the old salary step system that was created in 1997.

Council discussed different options that would bring value to the City as an employer.

Weske suggested that Council consider the option of approving the wage study at a not to exceed cost of \$8,900.

Mayor Pro-Tempore Dyvik noted that he still feels that \$8,900 is too high.

Moeller mentioned that perhaps staff could approach the vendor and request a better itemization of what would be included in the Option 2 proposal estimated at \$5,310.

Joyce commented that she did not think the Council was against doing a study, but was uncomfortable with the proposed cost.

Mayor Pro-Tempore Dyvik suggested that the Council pursue Option 1 and then after looking at the results, make a decision on whether to move forward on other options up to the not to exceed cost of \$8,900.

Weske noted that option, according to their information, will take 20-24 weeks to complete.

Council member Kvale raised her idea that staff come to the Council with a proposal for making these changes.

Weske responded that he does have wage data that would be needed for a staff-led proposal and has access to all wages in the surrounding area through the League of Minnesota Cities; however, in the past, the Council has not supported the information that had been presented by staff. He observed that third-party individuals that come before the Council tend to have more clout than employees.

Moeller added that she understood Weske's point, noting that third parties may be perceived as objective since they do not have a vested interest in the outcome.

Weske indicated that the Council could table this discussion and allow him to gather the data available to him and begin reviewing what the Council may be looking for.

*It was the consensus of Council to direct staff to gather available job classification and compensation data prior to making a decision on moving forward with a consultant for these services.*

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business was discussed.

#### **ADJOURN**

*Hearing no objection, Mayor Pro-Tempore Dyvik adjourned the meeting by general consent at 6:26 pm.*

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Weske  
City Administrator