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MEMORANDUM

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: JOSHUA TETZLAFF, CITY ADMINISTRATOR
SUBJECT: CITY HALL HOURS
DATE: APRIL 4, 2025 (UPDATED APRIL 30, 2025)

Update:

At the last meeting, the City Council voted to table to the discussion on possibly changing City Hall hours during the summer for a meeting so that Mayor Jirik could share his ideas with me. Since that meeting, the Mayor did share his two ideas that he had. His ideas were:

- 1) To keep City Hall hours as they are, but to allow employees to work adjusted hours that still provide coverage at City Hall throughout the summer.
- 2) In the same vein, Mayor Jirik's second idea was to keep City Hall hours as they currently are and to allow employees to even possibly work four ten-hour shifts throughout the week, as long as coverage at City Hall for open hours.

Both of these ideas have been used in various forms in the past and will likely continue to be used. Department heads have worked within their departments to coordinate varying hours throughout the year depending on work that needs to be accomplished.

While some may view adjusted City Hall hours as a benefit, I would view it more as adjusting City Hall hours to become more accessible to the public. If City Hall hours are adjusted for the summer, there may be employees who do not prefer the adjusted hours due to their life outside work, such as though with kids in daycare. Because of this, my recommendation is based off of trying to make City Hall more accessible without adding to the workload of City Hall and potentially creating additional cost.

I would also like to reiterate that the reason this is coming forward is that it has been on the Visioning Document for a number of years now and as staff works through the document, we will be bringing forward items for the City Council to consider. This document acts as a guide for what the City Council would like to consider and accomplish on a year-to-year basis.

Recommendation

If this is something the City Council would like to consider, I offer the same recommendation. I am certainly open to other ideas, but I caution that this move should be made with the primary goal of making City Hall more accessible while not increasing costs.

Original memo:

For the last few years, the City has had exploring a change to City Hall hours on its approved Visioning List. As part of the process, I had research City Hall operating hours for surrounding cities as well as look into if cities do summer hours.

What was found was the in this area, summer hours for City Halls are not as prevalent as other parts of the State. In the southeast, a change in City Hall hours during the summer months is much more prevalent. In Le Sueur County, Le Sueur's normal City Hall hours include a shortened Friday and Montgomery has an abbreviated Friday during the summer. In Rice County, Northfield and Dundas have a shortened Friday year round and Fairbault has a shortened Friday during the summer. Scott County cities do not have any alternative schedules.

As I considered the benefits of a changed schedule, I believe it is important that City Hall is available to be able to serve citizens. While more of the cities business is taking place digitally, there are still some citizens who prefer in-person visits, whether for permits or to pay bills. To that end, I would like to make the following recommendation on City Hall hours for a trial period:

Memorial Day to Labor Day

Monday – Thursday: 7 am – 4:30 pm

Fridays: 7am – 11am

This schedule extends the hours City Hall is open Monday through Thursday by one hour and then shortens how long it is open on Friday to accommodate forty hours of staff time. The primary advantage of this schedule is that, in my experience, contractors like to get their permits early in the morning so that they do not have to take a break while on the job. By being open an hour earlier, it'll allow this to take place.

For non-contractors who may need to do work with City Hall, people who work during the day would be able to stop in to pay bills or apply for building permits before going to work during the week. This is different than now when City Hall doesn't open until 8:00 am and closes at 4:30 pm. Friday would continue to open at 7:00 am for continuity with the rest of the week and close by 11:00 for a forty-hour work week. When considering between those hours or having the time be 8:00 am to 12:00 pm on Friday, the hours of 7:00 am to 8:00 am seemed more valuable to serve citizens than 11:00 am to 12:00 pm.

The more often heard argument against alternative hours for City Hall is that those people who need to pay their utility bill on the last day before a late fee won't be able to come in on a Friday afternoon to pay. That would be true. But that same argument could be made about why City Hall should be open on Saturday morning for another opportunity to pay. In my experience, the first month of an alternative schedule takes the most getting used to, and then people adapt and those that would have made a last minute payment on Friday afternoon make their payment at another time to avoid a late charge.

Of note, there are three (3) holidays week to consider during this trial time period. Holidays would continue to be paid at their approved eight (8) hour increments, so additional time needed to "make the week whole" would need to be worked. These holidays are:

Monday, May 26th – Offices Closed

Thursday, June 19th - Offices Closed

Friday, July 4th – Offices Closed

Recommendation

Due to being on the Visioning Document for a few years, staff recommends approval of the City Hall 2025 Summer Hours on a trial basis from Memorial Day through Labor Day.