



CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Richfield, Minnesota

City Council Work Session

January 28, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

The work session was called to order by Mayor Maria Regan Gonzalez at 5:45 p.m. in the Bartholomew Room.

Council Members Present: Maria Regan Gonzalez, Mayor; Edwina Garcia; Mary Supple; and Ben Whalen.

Council Members Absent: Simon Trautmann

Staff Present: Katie Rodriguez, City Manager; Chris Regis, Finance Director; Mike LaFond, Utility Billing Clerk; Russ Lupkes, Utilities Engineer; Jack Broz, Transportation Engineer; and Blanca Martinez Gavina, Executive Analyst.

Others Present: April Crockett, MnDOT Metro District, West Area Manager; and Aaron Tag, MnDOT West Area Engineer

Item #1	MNDOT PRESENTATION OF INFORMATION ON HIGHWAY 5 RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT FOR APRIL 2020 TO NOVEMBER 2020.
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City Manager Rodriguez introduced the item for discussion along with the members presenting the information.

MnDOT West Area Engineer, Aaron Tag, gave an overview of the project scope including multiple bridge repairs within terminal one interchange, project staging and detours. He then described the three stages involved beginning in April and concluding in September. Aaron also spoke of how this project differs from their usual ones due to the frequent use of the corridor and 20 to 30 percent of that use is airport travelers. These users may be from out of the area/state and not familiar with alternate routes. He continued on to clarify the entrance and exit to Terminal 1 from Highway 5.

Council Member Supple asked about the detour and crosstown (Highway 62) and whether it is working effectively to handle the detour process.

MnDOT West Area Engineer, Aaron Tag, stated there will be additional congestion but there are a number of areas within Highway 62 that will be marked as three lanes instead of two. He continued to explain they will advertise a three prong approach to communications: (1) Know before

you go; (2) Informed travel decision; and (3) Real time travel information to ensure the public has all the necessary information.

Council Member Garcia asked if the information would be on the City website. Transportation Engineer Broz confirmed there will be a strong push to all available communication channels during reconstruction.

MnDOT West Area Engineer, Aaron Tag, discussed the timeline for the project and what the 'around the airport' website will have in terms of content.

Council Member Whalen asked about the additional 25 minutes to the travel routes and if that is with or without the mitigation. Aaron confirmed that is with the mitigation of lanes.

Mayor Regan Gonzalez asked about other specific problem areas and being able to prepare those areas for the expected delays. MnDOT West Area Engineer, Aaron Tag, explained they are attempting to prepare backup plans in case delays are worse than expected.

Transportation Engineer Broz spoke of the communication with staff and residents and there will be various types of outreach.

Council Member Supple inquired if the project will impact the Fort Snelling Historical Society. MnDOT West Area Engineer, Aaron Tag, stated they have had meetings with the Historical Society and the worry is during the April-May months regarding school tours. They will be working together to make sure all necessary information is being provided to schools before their arrival to allow school buses required time for any delays.

Mayor Regan Gonzalez thanked Richfield staff, along with Aaron and April, for their time and energy as well as the continued communication around the project.

Item #2	CONSIDERATION OF IMPLEMENTING OWNER ONLY UTILITY BILLING
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City Manager Rodriguez introduced the item for discussion and staff presenting.

Director Regis spoke to the need to solve issues around communication and a way to be more transparent. He continued to state the responsible party will be receiving the bill instead of renters. Director Regis also stated that traditionally, property owners come to prefer this process because it puts them in control. It is the hope this process will also reduce cost and time spent by employees to remedy incorrect billing.

Council Member Supple asked if this owner only billing concept is only applicable to single family homes that are rented. Director Regis confirmed that it will only be applicable to single family homes, duplexes, and commercial buildings.

Utility Billing Clerk LaFond spoke to how in larger units, they are billed as one unit.

Council Member Whalen agrees with the process but expressed frustration about a trend in which the experience for renters can be perceived as an afterthought. He approves with moving forward with the process but would like to ensure that the experience of residents is the priority of consideration.

Director Regis confirmed that the process will be no different from what our current renters are used to currently.

City Manager Rodriguez stated the owners can also be a resident and this procedure is a way to enforce the City billing process as it created consistency.

Council Member Garcia asked if the property manager would decide how much each resident pays and how it is divided. Director Regis explained this would be for rented properties that most likely have individual meters and renters can request a statement of bills to see how much they will be expected to pay.

City Manager Rodriguez clarified the owner will have the option of adding the utility to the rent or send it directly to the renter. Council Member Garcia agreed this process seems to be fairer.

City Manager Rodriguez summarized the key aspects in which there should be an inclusion of the impact on renters in future staff reports but overall there seemed to be a positive response to move forward with owner only billing. Mayor Regan Gonzalez agreed.

ADJOURNMENT

The work session was adjourned by unanimous consent at 6:31 p.m.

Date Approved: February 11, 2020

Maria Regan Gonzalez
Mayor

Kelly Wynn
Senior Office Assistant

Katie Rodriguez
City Manager