

**December 3, 2024
Jackson, Minnesota**

The Jackson City Council met in regular session in the Council Chambers of City Hall and also by Teleconference and Zoom at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 3, 2024 with the meeting called to order by Mayor Marcus Polz. On the roll call, the following persons were present in-person, Mayor Marcus Polz, Alderwoman Sara Mix and Aldermen Mark Titus, Chris Naumann, Nathan Peterson and Joe Pell. Also attending in-person were Interim City Administrator Rick Almich, City Attorney Brad Anderson, Public Works Director Tony Oxborough, Jackson County Sheriff's Department Chief Deputy Kelly Mitchell, Pat Melvin of David Drown Associates, Dave Lovell of the Jackson EDA Office, Stephen Foster, Pastor John Schuetz of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Jackson, City Clerk/Council Secretary Dave Maschoff and Justin Lessman of the Jackson County Pilot. Joining the meeting via Zoom and Teleconference were Kari Brolsma of KKOJ/KUXX Radio, Jackson Ambulance Director Grant Landbo, Jackson EDA Administrative Assistant Shelley Pohlman and Mike Schwartz. (Alderman Brandon Finck was absent.) (A quorum of the City Council was present.)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Polz announced the Pledge of Allegiance would be recited before the City Council meeting was called to order. All those attending in-person and by Zoom recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRAYER LED BY PASTOR JOHN SCHUETZ OF OUR REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH IN JACKSON

Pastor John Schuetz of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Jackson provided an inspirational message and lead the Mayor and City Councilmembers and all those attending in a prayer prior to the start of the Council meeting.

CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Polz called the regular meeting of the Jackson City Council to order. He said the roll call showed all Councilmembers were present except for Alderman Brandon Finck.

PUBLIC HEARING: TRUTH IN TAXATION PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor Polz opened the Truth in Taxation Public Hearing.

Mayor Polz said it's been requested to postpone the Truth in Taxation Public Hearing to Tuesday, December 17th, 2024, at 6 p.m.

Mayor Polz said while no other public notice of the date change is legally required, it would be courteous if City Staff could notify the general public and post a written notification of the rescheduled Truth in Taxation Public Hearing at City Hall and also on the City's website and other means to notify the public.

Mayor Polz then closed the Truth in Taxation Public Hearing.

There were no Bid Lettings or Open Forum.

Unscheduled Guests:

Mayor Polz asked if there were any unscheduled guests in the Council Chambers.

Mayor Polz again asked if there were any unscheduled guests in the Council Chambers.

Mayor Polz asked for a third time if there were any unscheduled guests in the audience.

Hearing and seeing no unscheduled guests, Mayor Polz said the Council would move onto the Consent Agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Polz entertained a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

TITUS/PETERSON moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Council Discussion Items

PAT MELVIN OF DAVID DROWN ASSOCIATES WITH CITY ADMINISTRATOR SEARCH UPDATE

Mayor Polz noted that Pat Melvin from David Drown Associates had not yet arrived at the City Council meeting so the Council would move forward with the next Council agenda item.

CONTINUED REVIEW OF PROPOSED 2025 GOVERNMENTAL FUND BUDGET AND PROPERTY TAX LEVY

Interim City Administrator Rick Almich noted work continues finalizing the proposed 2025 Governmental Fund Budget and Property Tax Levy. He said some questions remain regarding proposed smaller projects that may be included in next year's budget. Almich also noted discussions that have been held regarding the future of the Economic Development Office and who will lead that office. He pointed out for now, Shelley Pohlman, Dave Lovell and Kent Bargfrede have been doing a tremendous job in the Economic Development Office. Almich said if that team could stay together indefinitely, that would be great.

Almich said he would have a much broader presentation for the Truth in Taxation Hearing on December 17th. He said he would have a memo and budget documents to present to the Mayor and Councilmembers prior to the December 17th Truth in Taxation Public Hearing. Almich said the memo and budget documents will also be available for the public if they're interested in looking at them.

With no other agenda items, Mayor Polz noted that the City Council was awaiting the arrival of Pat Melvin of David Drown Associates to get an update on the search for a new City Administrator. While waiting for Melvin to arrive, Mayor Polz said the Council would move onto “Other”.

Alderman Mark Titus

Alderman Mark Titus noted the progress that’s been made by David and Dusti Thorn on the construction of their new residence and gym on TV Tower Hill along Ballard Avenue.

Mayor Polz said he’s heard the Thorn’s are going to announce the dates for their first wrestling camps on January 1st.

Alderman Nathan Peterson

Alderman Nathan Peterson said he was curious regarding the delegation of Cannabis Registration Authority that was tabled at the November 26th Council meeting.

City Clerk/Council Secretary Dave Maschoff said he spoke with Jackson County Coordinator Ryan Krosch and more information is being gathered to be presented at the December 17th City Council meeting.

Alderwoman Sara Mix

Alderwoman Sara Mix asked about an update regarding the project plan for the swimming pool. She asked if there was a project plan.

Pell said there isn’t a project plan because there isn’t funding. He said you can’t have a project plan without funding.

Mix said you can have a project plan with proposed funding.

Pell said there is no project plan in place as of right now.

Peterson said it could be two years before State funding becomes available.

Peterson said project dates can be set for two years.

Mix said a project plan can be included for the future and normally is. She said the project plan outlines the steps you're going to take to get to that.

Peterson said we're waiting on the State for funding.

Mix said the general public has requested to know what the City's stance is and what the City's plan is. She said you can't say we're going to get State funding in two years and not do anything until that point. Mix explained in project management, you do a huge project and it's all on proposals and budget and slowly moves forward. She said it takes a significant amount of time to even put a project plan together. Mix said she thinks the City Council owes the citizens of Jackson information about what the City's timeline is and what the proposed budgets are. She said all of that are proposals included in a project plan.

Peterson said you can't do that until you have funding because you don't know how much the State is going to give you and what the amount of monies are going to be.

Mayor Polz asked Councilmembers to please speak one at a time for the minutes.

Mix said you can have more than one action item on your proposal of which route you're going to go. She said, for example, if the City receives "X", this is the plan we're going to go. But Mix said to do nothing for two years is not fair to the people of Jackson.

Titus said he heard a presentation by State Representative Marj Fogelman on December 2nd. He said Representative Fogelman is not at all positive about State Funding being available. Titus said Representative Fogelman said the State's surplus has been spent and now there's a State budget deficient projected. He said it's hoped to proceed with some private fundraising for the swimming pool as much as they can.

Mix asked if the City Council was going to work on a proposal on how private fundraising will be done or how that comes about.

Titus said private fundraising has been discussed, but the players haven't been put into place. He said the first thing is to find someone or a group that will provide the fundraising efforts.

Mayor Polz asked if that's a matter that needs to go back to the Pool Task Force.

Titus said the next Pool Task Force meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 18th at 5 o'clock.

Mix said her other question regarded the former Coast to Coast Building.

Dave Lovell said the Economic Development Office is ready to talk to the public on what will be taking place regarding the demolition of the former Coast to Coast building. He said meetings are scheduled to inform the public about the demolition and to also meet with contractors interested in submitting bids to do the demolition project. Lovell said that meeting will be held on Monday, December 9th. He said letters have been sent to surrounding property owners in the downtown area about the informational meeting that will be held on December 9th.

Mix asked Lovell if there's an estimated timeline of when it's hoped the building will be removed.

Lovell said the demolition may possibly be done in a couple of stages. He said the first step is to get the building down and then it will be picked up and the lot cleaned up.

Almich said the end of March 2025 was discussed as the completion date for the demolition project. He said nobody knows for sure that the contractor selected will start demolition in late December but may wait until after the holidays.

Almich said hopefully there will be a bid award recommendation for the demolition at the City Council's December 17th meeting. He said the process has taken a while, but it's moving along. Almich said the goal is to have the demolition of the former Coast to Coast building completed by March. He said there may be three contractors that are interested in the project.

PAT MELVIN OF DAVID DROWN ASSOCIATES WITH CITY ADMINISTRATOR SEARCH UPDATE

Mayor Polz welcomed Pat Melvin of David Drown Associates to the City Council meeting.

Melvin explained a number of candidates applied for the position of City Administrator in Jackson. He said in gathering information from the City Councilmembers, one of the things the Council wanted was somebody with City experience.

Melvin said he initially selected six individuals that he was going to forward onto the City Council for consideration. He said one of those candidates dropped out of consideration. Melvin noted there were still five candidates that were forwarded onto the City Councilmembers to evaluate. He noted Councilmembers and Mayor had received the candidate's video interview, resumes, cover letter and a work personality assessment for each of the five candidates.

Melvin said the City Councilmembers can have discussion about the five candidates if they wish. He pointed out because the names of the candidates are private, those individuals would be referred to by numbers during the Council's discussions. He said there are a total of five candidates that are being considered. Melvin said he was curious on hearing the initial thoughts from Councilmembers on the semi-finalists. He said the goal is to narrow the list down to three or four individuals that the Council to like to invite for interviews.

Councilmembers proceeded to discuss the semifinalists. Each Councilmember then ranked the five finalists to assist Melvin in determining the top three or four finalists.

Following discussion and based on the rankings each Councilmember and the Mayor provided, Melvin reported Candidate One received 21 votes, Candidate Two had 19, Candidate Three received none, Candidate Four had seven votes and Candidate Five had nine votes.

Melvin said it's pretty evident that Candidates One and Two should be invited to Jackson for an interview. He explained the reason why it's recommended to invite three or four candidates for interviews is due to the fact that the candidates may have other applications submitted elsewhere and maybe other offers will arise for them between now and when interviews will be held in Jackson. Melvin said it's ultimately entirely up to the City Council on how many candidates they would like to invite for an interview.

Melvin said the next phase in the process is obviously the interview. He said it's the City Council that's going to be making that decision. Melvin said there is also an option for a secondary interview which could either involve the City staff or additional people or whoever's input the Council would like to receive. He said those individuals would have a separate interview with the candidates and would ask their own set of questions and provide input to the City Council. Melvin noted those individuals would not be making the decision but would provide their thoughts about the candidates for additional input.

Mayor Polz said that's what was discussed originally. He said with the new Councilmembers, they would be participants in the interview process and the second interview process. Mayor Polz said ultimately it ends up being a Council decision that votes, but the incoming Councilmembers input would be received. He said whatever the Council is at the time of voting, that Council votes.

Almich said based on past City Administrator searches he's been involved with, one successful approach is asking representatives from the City's standing committees to be major players in the interview process such as representatives from the EDA, Planning Commission and the like. He said it depends if those representatives want to be involved. Almich said in many cases, they do, because they all interact with the City Administrator.

Melvin said that sounded like a good idea. He said it's always encouraged to have other people involved because obviously, if people feel they have had input in selecting that individual, there's also further commitment to help that person succeed.

Mayor Polz noted last time there was a City Administrator search conducted, there was a \$1,000 expense reimbursement towards any travel expenses or anything that was incurred by the candidate. He asked Councilmembers if they wanted to do something similar for the candidates this time around.

Following discussion by the Mayor and Council, Melvin asked for a vote of the City Council on which candidates they would like to have come to Jackson for an interview.

MIX/NAUMANN moved and it was carried on a three to two vote to move forward in contacting City Administrator Candidate Number One and City Administrator Candidate Number Two to both come to Jackson for an interview.

Voting in favor of the motion were Alderwoman Sara Mix, Alderman Mark Titus and Alderman Chris Naumann.

Voting against the motion were Alderman Nathan Peterson and Alderman Joe Pell.

Pell explained the reason he voted “no” is because he felt there should be three candidates brought in for interviews instead of just two.

Mayor Polz noted the motion carries to bring in City Administrator Candidates Numbers One and Two to Jackson for an interview.

Melvin then talked to the Mayor and Council about the interview format for the candidates. He said typically an interview by the Council of a candidate is about 50 minutes in length. Melvin asked Councilmembers if there was a secondary group that they would like to have conduct interviews and then provide input or would they like him to work with Almich in putting together some of those details.

Mayor Polz said he thinks having Melvin work with Almich in putting together the details for the second interview process is fine. He said he thinks City Department heads, leadership teams, like Public Works Director Tony Oxborough would be good to have involved in the interview process and making sure the incoming Councilmembers are able to review and critique the candidates as well.

Melvin said he can coordinate those details. He noted sometimes the interview process also includes a brief tour showcasing the City.

Mayor Polz asked Alderman Mark Titus if he would mind giving the candidates a tour of the City. He noted Titus is a historian of the town.

Titus said he would give the candidates a tour.

Melvin asked Titus how much time he would need for a tour.

Titus said he would like one hour with each candidate to give them a tour of the City.

Naumann asked when the incoming new Councilmembers would be sworn into office.

Mayor Polz said it would be on Tuesday, January 7th, the City Council's first regular meeting of the new year. He said typically the existing City Councilmembers would attend so there's a quorum and then the new Councilmembers are sworn into office.

Naumann asked when the City Administrator candidate interviews would be held.

Melvin said interviews will be held on January 6th.

Mayor Polz asked if the candidate interviews will require the City Council to have a special City Council meeting.

Melvin explained the interviews with the two City Administrator candidates will be an open City Council meeting, so anyone interested is more than welcome to attend and sit in the Council Chambers and listen to the interviews. Melvin said the public would not be speaking. He said the meeting would consist of the Mayor and City Councilmembers engaging with the two applicants. He said at the end of that, the applicants will leave, and the Councilmembers will have an opportunity to talk as a Council. Melvin said if the Council has a secondary committee that's also doing an interview, their input will be provided to the Mayor and Councilmembers before the Council talks about a decision.

Melvin said at the end, it will typically maybe be the Mayor and another individual that will work with him in starting negotiations with the first-choice candidate within the parameters set by the Mayor, another Councilmember or whoever is on the City's Negotiations Committee. Melvin said they try to work pretty quickly to get the person hired and confirmed.

Mayor Polz asked if January 6th would be posted as an open special City Council meeting.

Melvin said January 6th would be posted as a special City Council meeting. He said planning would begin to contact and bring City Administrator Candidates One and Two to Jackson for interviews. Melvin invited the Mayor and Councilmembers to contact him if they had any further questions.

Pell asked if the Council needed to approve the travel expense reimbursement amount for the City Administrator candidates.

Mayor Polz asked if a motion was needed to approve the travel expense reimbursement of \$1,000.

Almich said since it's a small amount, the travel reimbursement could be dealt with administratively.

Mayor Polz said if it can be dealt with administratively, he's fine with that. He said he thinks all of the Councilmembers, for the minutes, concur that up to \$1,000 was the proper amount for travel expense reimbursement.

Mayor Polz thanked Melvin.

Melvin thanked Mayor Polz and Councilmembers for their time.

Special City Council organizational meeting on January 2, 2025

Naumann said he isn't looking to dismiss his duties on the Council, but asked if it would make more sense to have the new City Councilmembers interviewing the candidates and voting on who to choose.

Mayor Polz said the date for the candidate interviews on January 6th would then need to be postponed since the first regular City Council meeting in January would be on January 7th.

Naumann suggested having a Special City Council meeting ahead of January 6th. He asked if that would make the most sense. Naumann suggested having a Special City Council meeting on January 2nd or January 3rd in order for the incoming new City Councilmembers to be sworn into office.

Almich noted some cities have a special council meeting after January 1st to take care of organizational items and have incoming new Councilmembers sworn into office. He said the City Council could schedule a Special City Council meeting before January 6th.

Mayor Polz said he was fine with whatever the City Councilmembers wanted to do. He said it makes logical sense considering it will be the new Councilmembers who will work with the individual that's selected as the new City Administrator.

Naumann said that was his opinion. He said he doesn't know what the rest of the City Councilmembers' opinions are. Naumann said he'd rather have incoming Councilmembers Mike Schwartz, Shawn Foster and John Weland make that decision because they will be working with the new City Administrator for the next four years. Naumann said if a new City Administrator is chosen on January 6th, he'd be working with that person for just one day.

Naumann said the new Councilmembers could be sworn into office on January 2nd so they can partake in the City Administrator interviews on January 6th.

Almich noted in addition to swearing in the new Councilmembers, the Council could also have their organizational meeting on January 2nd as well.

City Attorney Brad Anderson said the City Council could set January 2nd for their organizational meeting to have the new Councilmembers sworn in, deal with the committee assignments, the banks the City are going to use, the official newspaper the City is going to use, appoint the Mayor Pro Tem and all those organizational items and get them out of the way.

Mayor Polz asked Naumann if the existing outgoing Councilmembers would still have participation in the interview process of the City Administrator candidates.

Naumann said he would be willing to participate. He said the outgoing Councilmembers could still participate in the interview process. But Naumann said he feels, in his opinion, that making the final decision on who is selected as the new City Administrator should not be him.

Mayor Polz said it would be great if the existing Councilmembers could participate in the interview process from the standpoint that they have had the experience of working with a City Administrator. He said the existing Councilmembers would have some idea of what is being looked for, or what's going to work, in the City.

Titus asked if the new incoming Councilmembers will have all the materials regarding the City Administrator candidates along with other Council materials.

Mayor Polz said he's asked to have the new incoming Councilmembers to be included in receiving all Council agendas, Council packets, open communications, interviews and everything going forward.

Titus said Mayor Polz should inform the incoming new Councilmembers soon that they will be a part of the interview process so they can review the materials.

NAUMANN/PELL moved and it was unanimously carried to set January 2nd, 2025 as an Organizational meeting of the Jackson City Council.

Mix asked if the City Council had to exempt anyone out of the City Administrator hiring process because of the City's Conflict of Interest Policy.

Mayor Polz asked Mix what she was referring to.

Mix said as far as Alderman Pell picking his wife's new boss.

Pell noted he was involved in the last City Administrator hiring process.

Peterson said the City Administrator hiring process doesn't directly affect Alderman Pell.

Mix noted the City's Policy.

Pell said to Mix if you want me to sit out, I'll sit out, just say it.

Mix told Pell that she doesn't think he should pick his wife's new boss.

Peterson told Mix a Supreme Court case ruled differently.

Mix said she just asked a question.

Mayor Polz asked if he could refer the question to the City Attorney.

Mix asked for the City Attorney to refer to the City's handbook and advise on what it should be because there is a policy in the City's handbook regarding that. She said the City Council needs to know which route they should go.

Mix said if Alderman Pell is fine being involved in the new City Administrator hiring process, that's great. But Mix said there is a specific policy in the City's handbook about governing someone.

Peterson noted State Law says it's fine.

City Attorney Anderson asked Councilmembers if they would like him to provide a formal written opinion.

Mayor Polz said yes, please, then there's no question.

Mix said she's just saying the policy should be looked at.

Naumann said whatever City Attorney Anderson finds out is what the City's policy should be.

Mayor Polz said what the City Council will do is look to their City Attorney for an opinion on the matter.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Polz asked if there was any further business.

With no further business, PETERSON/TITUS moved and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the Jackson City Council meeting at 6:57 p.m.

Mayor Polz said the City Council meeting was now adjourned.

David A. Maschoff, Council Secretary

Marcus Polz, Mayor

