

**Hastings, Minnesota  
City Council Workshop  
April 18, 2022**

The City Council of the City of Hastings, Minnesota met in a workshop on Monday, April 18, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. in the Community Room at the Hastings City Hall, 101 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Hastings, Minnesota.

**Members Present:** Mayor Fasbender, Councilmembers Braucks, Folch, Fox, Leifeld, Vaughan

**Members Absent:** Councilmember Lund

**Staff Present:** City Administrator Dan Wietecha  
Assistant City Administrator Kelly Murtaugh  
Community Development Director John Hinzman  
Finance Manager Chris Eitemiller  
Communications Coordinator Dawn Skelly

Mayor Fasbender called the workshop to order at 5:35 p.m. and opened the conversation to review progress on the strategic initiatives. Wietecha explained that at two full quarters in, he would like to know how this process is working. The agenda provided a number of questions for councilmembers to reflect on.

Eitemiller provided the five-year budget simulation he built as a part of the strategic initiatives. The simulation tool can help identify how a change in staffing, revenue, capital equipment, etc. can carry through the budgeting process and help with projections long term.

Council discussion on the recent Finance Committee conversation about the timeline and expense of updating the parks. Discussion on prioritization of capital expenditures and how it helped understanding true priorities.

Next, Wietecha explained that diversity, equity and inclusion efforts may be part of the course correction within the initiatives. Two years ago, the City joined Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) to assist in training efforts for Councilmembers and employees. GARE then underwent some restructuring during the COVID years and has delayed training for government entities at this time. The City has expanded recruitment outreach to broader audiences to expand the candidate pools. Additionally, the City is doing an employee engagement survey soon that may offer insight for future training. The Building Remembrance group proposed a Community Investment Fund project to further explore a memorial for the Brown's Chapel. The City could utilize funds that were set aside for training to support the work around this project.

Council discussion on supporting a local group on a project that helps with reconciliation of the past. The project and training through GARE were two different objectives. There is a desire to review policies that create obstacles or identify specific outcomes that are needed. Council discussion about the Brown's Chapel memorial project may offer a visual representation that

helps the community see support from the City and possibly spark further community engagement around this topic. Further discussion on training opportunities and visible action from the City. In addition to training, a general understanding of specific opportunities (for example, signage and ADA website compliance) and a plan to address these is needed.

Finally, Skelly presented an overview of key accomplishments and facets of the external strategic communication effort. She has met with a number of city leaders, including Councilmembers. She shared some keywords, vision, and defined key audiences (taxpayers, families, business owners, diverse communities, tourists). Suggestions from the meetings include: improve timeliness of news, help residents/business owners understand how the City works, engage with diverse communities/history, focus on business, promote parks/trails/visitors, issues management/manage reputation, and build communication infrastructure (policies, event recognition, website processes, compliance).

Council discussion on the what events should be on a calendar and on Facebook. Criticism has come to the City about focus on downtown and riverfront—but that area is owned by the City. Visitor website owned by the Chamber should be the place where events are encouraged to be placed.


Skelly reported several accomplishments: the listening sessions will continue, the City Update is now weekly, Rivertown News is now quarterly, an editorial calendar has been created, improved internal staff/council communications, joint promotion of Tourism and downtown activities, pitching stories on development/housing, engaging DEI through the mural, PD/IDEA partnership, and sharing Thrive posts.

Council gave positive feedback on the City Update. Council discussion on how to help groups of businesses in various sectors in town to unite and connect with one another. Mayor Fasbender has met with some of the groups in various areas of the City, so some of the conversation is starting.

General feedback is that the report is appropriate and good for consent agenda. Helpful to get advance information and provide a more thorough understanding of some topics. Report can come off consent or could also be part of other conversations with the City Administrator or staff.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The workshop adjourned at 6:54 p.m.

  
Mary D. Fasbender, Mayor

  
Kelly Murtaugh, City Clerk