

**Hastings, Minnesota
City Council Workshop
February 20, 2024**

The City Council of the City of Hastings, Minnesota met in a workshop on Tuesday, February 20, 2024, at 5:30 p.m. in the Volunteer Room at the Hastings City Hall, 101 East 4th Street, Hastings, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor Fasbender, Councilmembers Folch, Fox, Haus, Lawrence, Leifeld, Pemble

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: City Administrator Dan Wietecha
Assistant City Administrator Kelly Murtaugh

Mayor Fasbender called the workshop to order at 5:35 pm and welcomed councilmembers.

Mayor Fasbender acknowledged that mitigating PFAS is a high priority for Council and the City. Wietecha let Councilmembers know about recent conversations with legislators and that state funds may be difficult to access in the full amount needed—the state bonding project priorities will be needs over wants. The City can still “opt in” to the national funds by March 1. Wietecha indicated the desire to create a “one-pager” document to represent the top issues for the City from a legislative perspective.

Council discussion on the similarities between the LMC and Metro Cities priorities. Councilmembers discussed the various categories and high priority local projects and issues. While originally prioritizing the Civic Arena project as top of the list in June 2023 and reinforcing in October, the expected legislative focus on prioritizing health and safety and infrastructure now puts it PFAS mitigation at the top of the list of the City’s state bonding requests.

Council discussion on a one-pager to focus mostly on PFAS funding, but also reinforce those LMC/Metro Cities priorities that align with other City priorities. Local control, other bonding projects (Arena, City Hall), transportation (HWY 61), and EMS Delivery/Sustainability. Discussion about future potential use for local option sales tax after the state moratorium to review the practice. Staff suggested reinforcing support for amended School Resource Officer language and addressing copper wire theft.

After further review and discussion, priority topics include: PFAS, other bonding requests/Arena, local control, support for EMS task force/funding for service, local option sales tax reinstatement, public safety duty disability (ballooning expenses), sales tax exemption on construction (combine w/local option sales tax), SRO clarification, copper wire theft, transportation (HWY 61) or more funding for local roads. A future topic that may need Council engagement is access to rail transportation for Hastings residents.

Council discussion on the need for a strategic approach for seeking PFAS funding. Further discussion about the national PFAS lawsuit, other avenues for funding, and waiting on state agency actions or legislature funding. Council discussion on whether additional support is needed in this effort by way of hiring a lobbyist. A lobbyist may help offset existing work carried by existing staff. Wietecha summarized the actions taken so far in the PFAS funding effort: meetings with several legislators in various venues to discuss the issue; requested letters of support; commitment to include Hastings in upcoming environmental hearing; and working with PCA on phase II of the study.

Federal EPA levels for PFAS in drinking water should be finalized soon and could be released any day. Once released, the City would have 3 years to be in compliance with the new levels. It may take over 3 years to build the needed water treatment plants. Completing the feasibility studies and treatment plant planning puts the City in a position to start building as soon as funding is secured.

ADJOURNMENT

Pemble, Leifeld to adjourn the workshop at 6:54 p.m.

Mary D. Fasbender, Mayor

Kelly Murtaugh, City Clerk