

# EAST BETHEL CITY COUNCIL WORK MEETING

June 10, 2024

The East Bethel City Council met on June 10, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. for the regular City Council Work meeting at City Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kevin Lewis Brian Mundle Bob DeRoche  
Tim Miller Jim Smith

ALSO PRESENT: Matt Look, City Administrator  
Eric Larson, City Attorney  
Aaron Berg, Community Development Director

## 1.0 – Finalize ESST Discussion

Look stated at the last Council Work Meeting they had started this discussion. He asked what the Council wanted to do as it related to firefighters. He requested feedback from the Council and decide to either continue it or to stop it before it got too far and becomes a benefit that the firefighters would rely on.

Lewis noted it would be an extremely cumbersome way of doing just basically a pay increase. He indicated it did not make sense.

Look indicated that had been a pretty large increase in the pension plan for the firefighters which they were happy about. He noted Mr. Streich's report would be offering some other ideas to help with attraction and retention. Lewis stated he was anxious to see Mr. Streich's report.

DeRoche stated he would like to give the firefighters more money. Smith agreed and stated he wanted to see what the report had to say.

Mundle did not think they needed to make a final decision on this right away and they could look at all alternatives.

DeRoche asked when Mr. Streich's report was coming out. Mr. Look responded he did not have an exact date, but he was hoping it would be available by the end of summer.

## 2.0 – Jail Conversation

Look summarized the County's jail discussions noting that the Legislature had passed an allowance for Anoka County that they did not have to keep the jail in the County seat, so now the jail could be anywhere within Anoka County. He believed the jail and County were one and they could not have a jail remote from the courts. He stated this conversation was still at the County, but the City of Anoka was pushing back hard on this as they did not want the jail in their City.

Look stated that opened up the conversation as to where else in the County could it potentially go. He asked if the Council would be interested in a concept such as this, noting that development would be something notable.

Lewis responded it had been his observations that normally things like this were located centrally within the County where it was most convenient for everybody and if they looked at it that way, the central location would be Andover and not East Bethel.

Look noted the Anoka County Judges wanted something new as the current buildings were old and not efficient. He indicated the centrally located cities were pretty much built out already also. He stated East Bethel had more open land and could facilitate something like this a lot easier.

Lewis asked how many acres would be needed. Look responded the size of the lot in downtown Anoka was five acres, so he did not think they would need more than ten acres.

Mundle assumed they would need sewer and water connections also. Look responded they would need sewer and water.

Mundle stated if the County was interested in East Bethel that might help the City get sewer and water to a certain location and help with the City's infrastructure.

Look noted having the presence of the Sheriff would also be significantly more than normal and the City's costs might also go down.

DeRoche stated this would need to be run by the residents to obtain their opinion and he wanted to get the residents involved in this decision.

Mundle indicated he would be interested in putting the City's name in the hat and see what it would entail as well as getting more information as well as getting resident involvement.

Lewis asked if this would be put on the ballot, did it have to be a specific form. Look suggested some possible ballot questions.

Lewis asked if this would need City money involvement. Look responded it would be all County money.

DeRoche asked what kind of a timeframe were they looking at. Look responded the County already wanted to be under construction, so they were looking for something sooner rather than later once they choose a site.

Smith stated he was in favor of checking into this, but they definitely needed to let the residents know and let them voice their opinions.

### **3.0 – Abatement Discussion**

Larson discussed difficulties cities faced in enforcing city codes, particularly with repeat offenders, and the need for alternative approaches to address compliance issues. He noted the importance of authorizing civil abatement actions through a District Court Judge. He emphasized the importance of real-life circumstances before analyzing legal issues and he discussed the limitations of the criminal process to addressing property Code violations, citing the need for civil abatement actions to achieve compliance. He stated in some cities, civil abatement had faced challenges, including an unpublished opinion in the City of Ramsey, which highlighted lessons learned for future actions.

Larson summarized the City Code Enforcement and abatement actions.

Look stated some of the cases represent significant staff time and had gone on for years. He noted some of the challenges staff had were that social media facilitates a "group therapy for known violators." He believed it boiled down to the integrity of the City and Council. He stated the City had Ordinances that were expected to be followed, but some don't follow the Ordinances.

Look believed abatement was another tool the City could consider for those extreme situations where people refused to follow the City's Ordinances.

Lewis noted there were certain people who just did not care. He stated everyone in the City were residents with equal treatment under the law and the people who had purchased properties next to the problem properties had the same rights as everyone else, and they shouldn't have to put up with this. He indicated it could lead to health issues such as toxic fluids, vermin, and a reduction in

property value. He noted as a Libertarian, he understood property rights, but when impacting others, rights were surrendered.

Larson noted the City of Ramsey's problem helped create a road map for other communities also.

The Council discussed the importance of having a clear process for civil abatements and that it needed to be used carefully.

#### **4.0 – Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 6:48 p.m.

Submitted by:

Kathy Altman

*TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*