

**MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL
GOAL SETTING SESSION
CITY OF ISANTI
January 25, 2016**

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m.

Members Present: Mayor George Wimmer, Councilors Dan Collison, Steve Lundeen, Adam Johnson and Paul Bergley.

Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: City Attorney Clark Joslin as Facilitator, City Administrator Don Lorsung, Human Resources/City Clerk Karissa Henning, Finance Director Brenda Frechette, Liquor Store Manager John Jacobi, Economic Development Director Sean Sullivan, Community Development Director Roxanne Achman, Public Services Director Josi Wood, Police Chief Gene Hill, and City Engineer Brad DeWolf.

City Attorney Joslin welcomed the City Council and staff to the Goal Setting meeting.

City Attorney Joslin gave a brief introduction regarding the Goal Setting Session Agenda.

Overview of Prior Year Goals

Joslin reviewed the top goals from previous years and they were as follows:

2015

- Adopt a Long Range Revenue Plan
- Adopt Pavement Management and Utility Improvement Plans
- Complete a Utility Rate Study
- Create Joint Planning Advisory Board with City of Cambridge and Isanti Township - Comprehensive Planning
- Work on Sidewalk Infill on CSAH 23 and Heritage Boulevard
- Continue Marketing Plan and Economic Development Efforts to Diversify and Increase the Tax Base
- Maintain City and Development Standards

2014

- Police Chief Search - Internal Posting Process
- Change Sidewalk Snow Removal Policy
 - Formal Policy Change for Council Consideration
 - Purchase of new equipment
 - Hiring of one new full-time maintenance technician
 - Discontinue charging citizens for un-cleared sidewalks

- Create Joint Planning Meetings with Cambridge and Isanti Township - Compatible Land Usage/ Common Control Boundaries
- County Road 5 (Heritage Blvd) Traffic Study - Traffic Control/ Improvement
- Street Light Infill - Phased Plan for Budget Consideration
- Community Center Improvements / Parking Lot Improvements
 - Tie in Downtown Accessibly to City Hall/ Community Center through Downtown Parking Improvements, Access East of City Hall
 - Community Center Improvements
- Complete Implementation of City Website Improvements
- Continue Economic Development Efforts to Diversify and Increase the Tax Base
- Maintain City Standards

2013

- Community Center - Finalize Process/ Make it Financially Viable
- HRA Option - Evaluate
- CSAH 5 Aesthetic Standards / Traffic Flow Evaluation
- City Website Update
- Maintain City Standards
- Utility Billing - Pursue In House Billing
- Continue Economic Development Efforts to Diversify and Increase the Tax Base

2012

- Community Center Review – Citizen Task Force
- Capital Replacement Fund – Review Reserves
- Utility Billing Review and Recommendation
- CSAH 5 – Traffic and Congestion Issues
- Main Street Traffic Issues
- Continue Economic Development – Diversify and Increase Tax Base

Mayor Wimmer did note that the 2011 community meeting minutes and staff memo is also within the goal setting agenda packet. Mayor Wimmer indicated there were two community meetings held in 2015 to review the pavement and utility management plans; however, there were no citizens present at either meeting.

Mayor Wimmer reported that the City is on track from a financial standpoint. The City is building its fund reserve back up. It is recommended by the City's auditors that that City maintain minimally a 50% fund balance. Maintaining a 50% fund balance helps the City receive better bond ratings. Mayor Wimmer emphasized the importance of maintaining a 50% fund balance as the City will need to bond for upcoming street improvement projects.

Mayor Wimmer shared with the Council that he anticipates seeing savings in utilities as a result of the 2016 utility rate study.

Mayor Wimmer explained the City's financial plan has been reviewed at other City Council meetings and that once the numbers have been finalized from the 2015 audit, the financial plan will be updated.

There was discussion from the Council on bringing in the 108 unit apartment building to the northeast corner of Isanti; this should attract developers.

There was discussion on the asset management and pavement plans.

The Mayor indicated that he is going to try to hold more informal meetings with the public and business community. He will be trying to start up 'Coffee with the Mayor' for those interested in discussing City matters and providing him with their input. This is in attempt to receive a wider range of input from all citizens and business owners.

Review of 2016 Projects/ Goals

a. 2016 Elections – Dual Polling Locations

Mayor Wimmer indicated that as required by the County, the City is splitting into two polling precincts.

Lorsung explained that the City's two precincts would be divided by a line on the centerline of Heritage Boulevard that extends from the City's western boundary to its intersection with Hwy. 65. From there, the line extends south on the centerline of Highway 65. Precinct one would be at City Hall and serving those to the south of heritage, west of 65; precinct two would be at the Isanti Community Center, serving those to the north of heritage, east of 65.

b. EDA Marketing Plan

The City Council briefly reviewed the EDA marketing plan. More information will be provided once Sullivan is able to get final numbers. There was discussion on the more the City can do at the City level for businesses, the more likely the City is to bring businesses in. Credit was given to the development team for their great work in 2015.

c. Hotel Project

In review of past studies, having a hotel in Isanti is viable. However, the success of being able to bring a hotel to the City of Isanti may be contingent upon the City's level of involvement in a hotel project. There are three different ways the City could be involved in a hotel project: 1) wholly fund a hotel 2) partial ownership in a hotel 3) providing as many financial incentives as possible for a business interested in doing a hotel project. The Mayor noted that he believes a hotel will come in the next three to five years - into the area - however, 'area' does not necessarily mean a hotel will come to Isanti. The Mayor asked the Council if they would like to consider having any ownership stake in a hotel.

Bergley mentioned he would be willing to look at partial ownership with intent to sell to a private business.

Johnson concurred that he would be in favor of a hotel and some level of City involvement.

Lundeen noted he does not believe a City should own any business.

Collison made comment that he would be in favor of looking into a hotel and potential levels of City involvement, but would also want to see an end to the City's involvement; a hotel should not remain under City ownership.

Mayor Wimmer informed the Council that from a dollars and cents standpoint, it looks better to have whole ownership of a hotel versus partial. The Mayor continued to state though that he understands it is a big question as to whether or not a government entity should be involved in a hotel, and that is what the Council will need to decide.

Sullivan reviewed some tax advantages of having a hotel in the City of Isanti.

There was direction for Sullivan to gather more information regarding a hotel in Isanti and review with the EDA.

d. Hockey Rink Capital Improvements

Mayor Wimmer reported that the Youth Hockey Association is no longer able to maintain or assist in maintaining the hockey rink. The current rink is in bad shape. There was discussion on moving the hockey rink and pleasure rink to the south of the BMX building, and putting cement slabs down and using wooden boards. This way, citizens using the rinks can be closer to the BMX warming house, and the wooden boards can be taken down in the summer. Doing this would be a lot less expensive than reserving funds to build a new hockey rink. A new hockey rink could cost between \$30,000 and \$50,000 dollars.

There was discussion in regards to citizens using the rink and concerns regarding parking lot space for BMX.

There was discussion in regards to more storage being needed for public works and the police department. Having wooden boards on the rinks would mean another thing public works would need to store in the off-season.

Mayor Wimmer stated he wanted the Council to be aware of this as it is something the Park, Recreation, and Culture Board will be looking at.

e. 5th Street NE Road Extension

There was discussion on finding outside funding options for this extension.

f. New City Councilmember Orientation

Staff will be preparing a new City Councilmember orientation process and packet for new members. Councilmembers are to reach out to staff if they have any suggestions on how to make the onboarding process for new Councilmembers better. An orientation packet will come back to the Council for review.

g. City Comprehensive Plan Update

The Mayor indicated doing a comprehensive plan could easily cost \$50,000. There was discussion with staff on the best process for doing a comprehensive plan. Staff requested Council consideration of a facilitator to assist staff through the process and gathering data. Staff is to

bring back to City Council timelines for 2017 GIS needs and for a 2018 comprehensive plan update.

h. 2016 Collective Bargaining

Staff reported that preparation for collective bargaining will happen in late summer. It is anticipated that notices to bargain will be received in early to mid-fall and negotiations will take place in mid to late fall.

i. Department Head Salary Review

Mayor Wimmer stated that the City pays considerably less than other cities for department head positions. He would like to see a \$5,000 increase for all department head positions. Mayor Wimmer added that City staff is incredibly efficient; overall the City's administrative costs are 30-40% less than peer groups. There was discussion amongst Council about staff members wearing many hats and being great at what they do.

j. City Staffing Plan

Mayor Wimmer noted he would like to have a City staffing plan laid out and approved by Council so staff members can see how the Council foresees positions and departments growing. The Council agreed with this and felt doing so would empower staff and create commitment from staff members - as they can know that their positions or departments will grow overtime.

k. Purchasing Discretion – Finance Committee

Mayor Wimmer and Lorsung explained that a purchasing timeline for staff can at times take multiple weeks due to needing Council approval. The Mayor would like the Finance Committee to have the ability to allow smaller budget items be approved at the Committee level versus bringing it back to Council to save staff time.

l. Isanti Liquor Tastings Event - ICC

There was consensus among the Council that Isanti Liquor should hold its tastings in Isanti. Last year the annual liquor tasting event (hosted by the Chamber of Commerce) was held in Cambridge. The Council discussed the idea of holding an Isanti Liquor Store tasting and was in favor of it. The Liquor Committee will be working on this.

With the City Council's guidance, staff will direct all goals and action items discussed to the appropriate Committees for consideration.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Clark A. Joslin, Facilitator
Isanti City Attorney