

**MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL
GOAL SETTING SESSION
CITY OF ISANTI
January 26, 2015**

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/City Clerk Don Lorsung, Human Resources/Deputy City Clerk Karissa Henning, Finance Director Sarah Cotton, Liquor Store Manager John Jacobi, Economic Development Director Sean Sullivan, Community Development Director Roxanne Achman, Community Events Manager/ Parks Coordinator Josi Wood, Police Chief Gene Hill, City Engineer Brad DeWolf, and Public Works Director Nick Fleischhacker.

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 2011 - 2013 Top Goals

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

2011

- Restructure City Government – Joslin discussed Community Meetings/Outcome

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

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

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

Mayor Wimmer explained that he would like to hold community meetings again like the City did in 2011 for input on the pavement and asset management plans, the assessment policy and funding strategy. Mayor Wimmer indicated he would like to hold one daytime session and one evening session so all member of the community have a chance to provide input.

City staff gave reports on their departments, work plans, projects, and work load.

Chief Hill gave a report on the Police Department a few key topics Hill addressed were:

- Strengths/weaknesses of the Police Department
- Opportunities/Threats
- Need to continue training/mentoring for employees to move up within the Department
- Community Policing - Key Foundation to the Police Department
- Looking into grant funding for automated external defibrillators (A.E.D's) for all City Buildings
- Looking into grant funding for thermal imaging cameras
- Need for new technology/equipment in the investigation room such as cameras
- Gas prices are currently down, but ammunition prices have gone up

Public Works Director Nick Fleischhacker reported on the following:

- Water and long term planning
- Water process testing is done 1,300 times per year
- Sewer and long term maintenance needs
- Sewer process testing done 1,000 times per year
- Reporting for water/sewer and new legislation
- Streets - straight salt versus dirt makes an ease for clean-up in spring for streets
- Looking into paint that lasts for a longer term - currently re-paint yearly

- Streets are in pretty good shape if start to repair and maintain now - this will lead to a decrease in costs for road maintenance/reconstruction long term
- Parks and summer maintenance

Liquor Store Manager John Jacobi reported on the Liquor Store:

- 4.4% increase in sales over year prior
- Development in wines
- Great employees and ideas
- Backroom always over stacked/ over crowded
- EMV pay chip and pin credit cards
- Parking lot deterioration
- Plans for the future
- Hope for a new Liquor Store in future plans

Mayor Wimmer and the Council discussed that they do not foresee planning for a new Liquor Store for at least five more years.

Community Development Director Roxanne Achman reported on the following:

- Several potential commercial projects
- Code Updates
- Numerous calls on platting and adding on to homes/ businesses
- 2016 Comprehensive Plan
- Creation of a Joint Planning Board for the Comprehensive Plan with the City of Cambridge and Isanti Township
- Potential change to the make-up of the Planning Commission
- Need for GIS and Mapping software
- Succession Planning - Building Official position
- Code Enforcement/ Zoning Technician obtaining permit technician certification

Economic Development Director Sean Sullivan reported on the following:

- The Economy is improving from where it has been from the last 5 years. Isanti has an opportunity to grow again - we need to stick to our message
- Currently over 150 businesses in Isanti that employ over 1500 workers
- 38 permits for single family residential homes were pulled in 2014
- East Central MN Housing Study and Tourism Impact Hotel Feasibility Study were completed in 2014 and will be used to market to specific end users
- Demand for senior and residential housing for Isanti identified in East Central MN Housing Study
- Future Development Needed: Working on Hotel and Clinic and other CEDS Priorities
- Upgraded City Website 2014
- Need to consider potentially recruiting businesses from the North
- Continued development of City owned lots in Industrial Park
- Need for quality development along highway 65, beginning to see some push for development that doesn't maximize land on 65 and could be detrimental for future of Isanti (Do we want used car lots?)

- Monument Sign or Billboard on Hwy 65 for Isanti would be a great way to market community

Lundeen stated that a monument sign with an electronic billboard would be a great attraction.

Community Events Manager/ Parks Coordinator Josi Wood reporting on the following:

- Community Center - increase in rentals since 2014 improvements
- Numerous Community Center showings and renting
- Creation of new parks brochure
- Summer planning - farmers market and street dances
- Custodian position filled for cleaning the Community Center and Indoor Arena (home of Isanti BMX)
- Need for Community Center capital improvement replacement plan
- Family programming
- Playground audit
- Looking for grant opportunities
- Some DNR land issues with newly acquired park land - will need to clean-up/ work on

Mayor Wimmer talked about holding off on some of the improvements on the City Hall and Community Center parking lot project for the upcoming year.

Human Resources/ Deputy Clerk Karissa Henning reported on the following:

- Need to look into electronic records management system and future planning for such a system
- Creation of formal data practices policy
- Administrative Intern - tasks/ projects assigned
- Investigator and Building Inspector Search/ Building Official succession planning
- Personnel Policy updates (2014 law changes)
- Job Audit on office positions - 1st quarter of 2015
- Phone system research and replacement for 2015
- Licensing/ Pawn renewals and potential of the new strong beer and wine license for City Center Market's 'The Green Table'
- Safety Consultant Contract expires November 2015 - potential RFP for services
- OSHA Simulated inspections and OSHA Reporting
- Pay Equity Reporting
- Benefits Consultants contract up December 2015 - potential RFP for services
- Compliance with ACA requirements
- Monitor aggregate plan value in anticipation of Cadillac Tax (2018)
- Establish Look Back Policy - determine benefit eligibility and avoid future penalties
- Benefit renewals and commercial insurance renewals - Fall 2015
- Monitor claims and look for ways to decrease claim rating

City Engineer Brad DeWolf reported on the following:

- 2014 was a planning year in terms of improvements

- Asset Management Plan - invest for the future
- The City is ahead of many other cities in terms of planning and capital improvement replacement schedules
- Reviewed requirements for public works departments
- Wastewater requirements will continue to become more stringent
- The main lift station has exceeded it's useful life and the City needs to look at the replacement of this
- 2014 good work on traffic sign policies and sign retro-reflectivity
- Storm water pond maintenance
- Annual pavement maintenance and storm sewer and well head maintenance
- Re-alignment of credit union drive

Mayor Wimmer, the City Council, and Lorsung hosted a discussion on the difficulties that may be faced with the re-alignment of credit union drive and Lorsung noted that with the building of Family Dollar, this will alter how things will be re-aligned.

Finance Director Sarah Cotton reported on the following:

- Movement of Utility Billing in-house dramatically increased foot traffic at City Hall
- Importance of Payroll Clerk, Utility Billing Clerk, and Receptionist - front line staff; great customer service provided to citizens
- Review of what the Finance Department does
- 2015 utility rate study
- Funding for capital improvement projects
- Goal - credit card payments online for all permits

Mayor Wimmer reviewed the five year plan fund balance and discussed the City's long term plan. Mayor Wimmer touched base on planning for increases in payments to the Fire District and how the City may need to start levying for fire services due to the yearly increases. Mayor Wimmer noted fire services have increased around 10 % each year. Mayor Wimmer stated that fire service is the one thing within the City budget that the City cannot control.

Mayor Wimmer noted local government aid (LGA) will change and fluctuate. Mayor Wimmer touched base on a revenue shortfall and attributes some of the shortfall to undeveloped lots.

Mayor Wimmer touched base on the pavement management plan and noted the more the City can take care of on the front end, the less costly repairs will be later; this will save the City some money in reconstruction fees for streets. Mayor Wimmer stated there is a need to get caught up on street repairs now while the City is able to make minor repairs so larger repairs do not need to be made later. Mayor Wimmer noted the city will need to take a look at debt payments for the pavement plan. Mayor Wimmer emphasized the importance of a good road and utility system.

Mayor Wimmer touched base on potential franchise fees for utilities in public right-of-ways.

Mayor Wimmer talked about the downtown parking project and also again on how he does not recommend doing City Hall parking lot improvements in 2015.

Mayor Wimmer talked about a new liquor store and how he does not anticipate implementing a new liquor store in the next five years. Mayor Wimmer explained this is because if the City were to have a new liquor store, this would mean revenues would then not be able to go back to the City as it would be going to debt service payments.

Jacobi did note that the liquor store will plateau in terms of revenue generated for the City due to lack of space. Jacobi mentioned the store may have already hit its plateau and that in talking with the auditors and other cities it is surprising how much money comes out of sales for the store due to its size. Mayor Wimmer noted the City's budget does need the money generated from the liquor store for the next three to five years.

After a short break Mayor Wimmer touched base on/ followed up on a few remaining goals:

Mayor Wimmer noted again that he would like to hold community meetings one in the morning and one in the evening for the pavement utility and asset management plans.

Mayor Wimmer touched base on the assessment policy and asked the Council whether or not they wanted to review it and make changes. Cotton noted that if the Council keeps the current policy, this would not be a significant impact to the citizens in terms of cost. The Council was in favor of keeping the same assessment policy.

Mayor Wimmer touched base on having a rate study done for City utilities. Mayor Wimmer touched base on doing the housing study and marketing plan. Mayor Wimmer touched base on the desire to create a joint planning board for the comprehensive plan.

Mayor Wimmer noted that Henning will do a job audit of office positions in 2015.

Joslin asked for goals from the other Council members for the year 2015.

Collision

- Address storage room concerns for Liquor Store
- Police Department Interview Room technology
- Policy for Police Officers body cameras
- Entry sign into Isanti
- Concentrate on maintaining current parks and weed control
 - There was discussion on irrigated versus non-irrigated sections of parks and how nothing can be done about this due to the sand in some areas

Lundeen

- Fire District - do what the City can to make changes
- Finishing sidewalk on Whiskey road on east side
- Establish long range financial plan
- Continue economic development
- Streetlight infill
- Maintaining city standards

- Monument/ sign on north and south sides of City
 - Electronic billboard if can afford

Johnson

- Clean up the compost site

Bergley

- Work with Fire District on changes

Through the above discussions at City Council Goal Setting Session, the following was compiled for the 2015 City Council Goals:

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

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 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Clark A. Joslin, Facilitator
Isanti City Attorney