

**MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL
GOAL SETTING SESSION
CITY OF ISANTI
January 27, 2014**

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

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

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 and Parks Coordinator Josi Wood, Police Chief Ron Sager, Police Lieutenant Gene Hill, and Public Works Director Nick Fleischhacker.

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

Overview of 2010 - 2013 Top Goals

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

2010

- Economic Development Comprehensive Plan
- Downtown Plan
- Consideration of EDA to an HRA
- Continue work on Rail Industrial Park
- Budgeting without LGA
- Establishing a list of cuts and prioritize budget items
- Determine the percentage of general funds to reserve
- Restructuring bonded debt

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

It was indicated that utility billing is now in house and that a majority of the 2013 goals are completed and other goals are still moving forward as directed. It was also noted that the donation by the Ruby Johnson Trust Dated February 17, 2010 for Capital Improvements to the Isanti Community Center, accepted by the City Council on November 6, 2013, will greatly assist in the capital improvements needed.

Long Term Plan

Mayor Wimmer reviewed the five year plan fund balance, talked about the City's long term plan, how the City should stay strong with rental and nuisance ordinances to protect property values, and a desire to increase the commercial industrial tax base.

Mayor Wimmer touched on the City being in good financial shape and having a higher percentage of its operating expenses in its fund balance than other cities. The State recommends having around 35% - 50% of operating expenses within the fund balance. It is projected that the City will be able to be around 60% through 2018. Mayor Wimmer also noted the City has been subsidizing the fund balance around \$200,000 - \$300,000 dollars a year in order to maintain its service level to citizens without raising taxes.

Mayor Wimmer noted the Chief of Police submitted his retirement letter on January 21, 2014 and discussed with the Council moving forward with an internal posting for the position. There was consensus among the Council to do an internal posting and to first try to promote from within the Police Department.

There was discussion amongst the Council regarding all City sidewalks being cleared by Public Works staff, and what it would take to make that possible. Currently only 40% of City sidewalks are cleared. There was direction from Council for staff to take the necessary steps to proceed forward with investing in new equipment, hiring another employee, discontinue fining citizens who have not cleared sidewalks, and to change the sidewalk snow removal policy so that the City is to clear all City sidewalks (besides those exempt within the plowing policy and private sidewalks). The direction is effective from this date (01-27-2014) forward.

Collison discussed the need for a new Liquor Store and recommended that the store be relocated off of highway 65. Mayor Wimmer noted the Liquor Store is an economic development tool that can help support other local businesses in town on County Road 5 (Heritage Blvd) and Main Street. There was discussion regarding business being taken away from other businesses off of County Road 5 (Heritage Blvd) and Main Street if the Liquor Store were to move. Mayor Wimmer expressed that he felt that Liquor Store was still about three to five years away from expanding/being built. Mayor Wimmer indicated in order for it to be financially feasible, the Liquor Store would need to increase sales by around 1.5 million dollars. Jacobi noted that a cost study should be done to see whether

or not it would be feasible, at this point in time, to build a new store. Jacobi shared his concern that there is not enough space to house everything that the customers would like and that he does lose business because of this. There was consensus that the Liquor Store has most likely neared its potential for sales and that more space is needed in order for the store to grow and generate more money in sales. There was discussion for Sullivan and Jacobi to continue working together towards promoting economic development and the Liquor Store through joint signage. Mayor Wimmer directed the Liquor Store market study be placed back on the 2015 Goal Setting session for discussion.

City Finances Report

Cotton reviewed the updated capital improvement plan, capital replacement reserves and debt schedule. The City has a little over four million dollars in outstanding debt.

Mayor Wimmer stated LGA funds can be used to help with purchasing capital replacements.

Cotton recommended a rate study be done in 2015 for water and sewer.

City Council Discussion

Mayor Wimmer noted that in 2015-2016 the City should be taking a look at redoing the comprehensive plan, and that he would like to have joint planning meetings with Cambridge and the Townships regarding compatible land usage/ common control boundaries.

There was discussion amongst the Council that there is still a desire to have smooth traffic flow and for it to be aesthetically pleasing along County Road 5 (Heritage Blvd). Staff is to work with the City Engineer on possible traffic controls along County Road 5 (Heritage Blvd).

After a short break, there was discussion on replacing street lights, and for the Public Works Committee to review this matter and put together a phased plan for replacing the lights. Mayor Wimmer asked that the costs be reviewed and a plan to be in place by May 2014 for budgeting purposes.

Larson brought up the issue of frozen water pipes downtown. There was discussion that moving forward insulation should be put underneath the sidewalks or roadways without sufficient cover.

There was discussion on having Sullivan continue moving forward with updating the City website.

There was discussion on Community Center improvements, having the Community Center parking lot conjoin with an expanded City Hall parking lot, and for drainage issues to be looked at. Mayor Wimmer clarified that the donation of money received for the Community Center can only be used for the Community Center; any additional work done in conjunction with the Community Center improvements would be taken from other City funds.

Lundeen and Larson stated they would like to see continued support for economic development and the maintaining of City standards be placed back on as City goals for 2014.

Through the above discussions at City Council Goal Setting Session, the following was compiled for the 2014 City Council Goals:

1. Police Chief Search - Internal Posting Process
2. Change Sidewalk Snow Removal Policy
 - a. Formal Policy Change for Council Consideration
 - b. Purchase of new equipment
 - c. Hiring of one new full-time maintenance technician
 - d. Discontinue charging citizens for un-cleared sidewalks
3. Create Joint Planning Meetings with Cambridge and Isanti Township - Compatible Land Usage/ Common Control Boundaries
4. County Road 5 (Heritage Blvd) Traffic Study - Traffic Control/ Improvement
5. Street Light Infill - Phased Plan for Budget Consideration
6. Community Center Improvements / Parking Lot Improvements
 - a. Tie in Downtown Accessibly to City Hall/ Community Center through Downtown Parking Improvements, Access East of City Hall
 - b. Community Center Improvements
7. Complete Implementation of City Website Improvements
8. Continue Economic Development Efforts to Diversify and Increase the Tax Base
9. Maintain City Standards

Items to be reviewed at the 2015 Goal Setting Session:

1. Liquor Store Market Study
2. Water and Sewer Rate Study
3. Comprehensive Plan Update

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 10:14 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Clark A. Joslin, Facilitator
Isanti City Attorney