

City of Winsted  
City Council Work Session  
Vollmer Room  
Tuesday, March 2, 2021  
5:00 p.m.

Present: Council Member Mike Henrich  
Council Member Tom Ollig  
Council Member Bonnie Quast  
Council Member Steve Stotko

Absent: Mayor George Schulenberg

Staff Present: Mr. Adam Birkholz, City Administrator  
Ms. Raquel Kirchoff, City Clerk-Treasurer

Also Present: Winsted Volunteer Fire Department (WVFD) Members Mr. Troy Scherping, Mr. Jon Davidson, Mr. Jake Hertzog, Mr. Justin Hertzog, and Mr. Aaron Millerbernd

## **I. Call to Order**

Deputy Mayor Stotko called the Work Session to order at 5:00 p.m.

## **II. Winsted Volunteer Fire Department – Long Term Recruitment Strategies**

Mr. Adam Birkholz, City Administrator stated that Mr. Troy Scherping, Winsted Volunteer Fire Department (WVFD) Chief, has staffing concerns for the WVFD. The City Council discussed the concerns at the 2021 City Council Goal Setting Retreat, and suggested creating a sub-committee of two (2) City Council Members, Mayor Schulenberg and Council Member Stotko, along with several WVFD Members to research the issue. In the meantime, Mr. Scherping asked for input from WVFD members and the responses received were sent to the City Council Members. This Work Session will be some time to discuss the topic and formulate the next step for the sub-committee.

Council Member Stotko stated that he compiled some of the data from the responses into a format that may be more easily understood. He distributed that information.

Mr. Scherping stated that the WVFD Members that will participate on the sub-committee are Mr. Scherping, Mr. Jon Davidson, Mr. Justin Hertzog, Mr. Jacob Hertzog, and Mr. Aaron Millerbernd. This group has a wide variety of years on the WVFD, and are in the age group the WVFD is targeting for members.

Items discussed at the Work Session included:

- The disadvantages of raising the minimum call requirement. This may result in current members leaving.
- The hardest WVFD shifts to fill, to include weekends and nights from 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m., due to extracurricular activities of families.
- The make-up of WVFD calls, with 90% of calls as medicals.
- The large training requirement/commitment to be a WVFD member. The WVFD has been exploring more on-line and weekend classes to provide more options to complete the training.
- The concept of duty crews, which would assign a four (4)-man crew a certain set of hours to be on shift.
- The problem of the current twenty-three (23) member roster and not being able to fill calls, compared to a full thirty (30) man roster that would likely cover all calls.
- The paid per point call system and if it incentivizes members to join. More data for compilation and comparison will be available as more years go by with the system in place.
- Incentivizing more during the initial training to becoming a member, which is a large time commitment.
- The retirement vested period and different ways to handle retirement.

- Advertising more for members to include an electronic sign or billboard at the Fire Station, the City's website, and including the information that the department has a point pay per call system.
- Combining/sharing calls with other departments, like a system that the Winsted and Lester Prairie Police Departments are currently using on the weekends. This would require the different departments training together to know each other's equipment and procedures.
- Develop programs, like an explorer program, to educate high school students on what a WVFD member does and for them to experience WVFD member camaraderie, with the hope they will become a member in the future. Visit each high school in the district once or twice per year and have a retired member along to share the experience of many years with the department.
- The frustrations of younger members starting and the department spending the money for the training; however, the new member does not complete the training in the required time or leaves the department.
- Having a member reach out to their friends or people they know to recruit them.
- Creating a first responder group of members, a firefighters group of members, and a combination of both groups. This may be an incentive for people that are already in the medical field to become a member. They may not realize that the majority of calls for the department are medical calls.

Mr. Birkholz stated that the next step would be for the sub-committee to start meeting and formulate a recommendation for the City Council to consider in the future; the time to accomplish this is unknown.

### III. Other

#### a) 121 Baker Avenue East

Mr. Birkholz stated that City staff has been working with the Economic Development Authority (EDA) regarding a potential buyer for the property at 121 Baker Avenue East. The buyer has concerns regarding adjacent parcels. He continued by stating that City staff is working to find out if there is a sunset date on the property, after which, it will revert back to Minnesota State ownership.

#### b) Housing Developments

Mr. Birkholz stated that the EDA has also reviewed potential housing developments, which will likely take some incentive for the developers to finalize the developments.

### IV. Adjourn

**Council Member Ollig motioned to adjourn the meeting. Council Member Quast seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.**

The Work Session adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

*Steve Stotko*

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Steve Stotko  
Deputy Mayor  
City of Winsted

ATTEST:

*Raquel Kirchoff*

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Raquel Kirchoff, CMC  
City Clerk-Treasurer  
City of Winsted