

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a Council Workshop of the North Mankato City Council was held in the Municipal Building Council Chambers on December 18, 2017. Mayor Dehen called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. The following were present for roll call: Mayor Dehen, Council Members Steiner, Norland, Freyberg and Whitlock, City Administrator Harrenstein, Pamela Whitmore, League of Minnesota Cities, Tim Madigan, Ambassador, League of Minnesota Cities, Dave Bartholomay, Bureau Mediation Services & Mayor, Circle Pines, and City Clerk Van Genderen.

Meeting Management Discussion Let by the League of Minnesota Cities

Mayor Dehen welcomed the Council, facilitators, and the public to the meeting stating the purpose of the collaborative process was to help provide insight into meeting and agenda processes and to assist in developing ideas for process amendments. Council Members reviewed the reasons they ran for Council which included to serve the citizens, to be involved, help the City grow and to move things forward with development.

Attorney Whitmore requested clarification from the Council Members as to why the meeting was called. Council Member Steiner reported he believed recent changes made to the Public Comment period were too restrictive. Council Member Freyberg stated Robert's Rules of order need to be followed and the public commentary period should not be used to beat up on staff. Council Member Norland noted the Public Comment period has become destructive and very harmful. Mayor Dehen indicated he believed the Public Comment period should allow the free exchange of ideas not become a platform for personal agendas. Council Member Whitlock stated he felt the Public Comment period had been taken advantage of and citizens have tried to run the City from the podium. Tim Madigan indicated this was not an unusual struggle for cities and the City needs to ensure the process works, so the will of the majority is fulfilled while the rights of the minority are protected. Dave Bartholomay stated the Public Comment period must be structured providing an opportunity to speak while ensuring the public knows of alternative ways to have their questions answered such as talking with staff as most questions are administrative not policy related. Mr. Bartholomay also suggested continuing to update the Public about requests made to the Council to increase awareness that the issue is being addressed.

Attorney Whitmore requested further clarification from Council Members concerning the Public Comment period. Council Member Steiner stated he would be amenable to one comment period with the strict three-minute time frame, but it should be open to anything the citizen wanted to say. Mayor Dehen stated one issue is the repetitiveness of citizens who try to dominate the meeting. He reported that some residents continue to harass the Council even after the Council has directed action by staff or have determined that no action will be taken. City Administrator Harrenstein indicated he respected Council Member Steiner's view but could not agree with anything being open to comment as personal attacks on developers have occurred and it is not appropriate. Council Member Freyberg reported he frequently speaks with businesses and developers that bring projects to the City and they would prefer to not sit through the Public Comments, they would prefer to have their actual business with the City managed. He indicated that if the City wants to grow, professionalism needs to be a part of the City Council proceedings. Dave Bartholomay stated people love conflict and it is often reported in the papers and the news, but it makes the community look bad. He noted the Council needs to determine the purpose of the Public Comment period and determine where it belongs on the agenda. Mr. Bartholomay reported there are different ways to manage the public comment period, move it to the end, not record the public comment period, this may determine if the citizen is concerned about an issue or if they just want to be seen on TV. Tim Madigan stated it might be that the City needs to move into a customer service approach and focus on responding to citizen concerns even if they may seem silly. City Administrator Harrenstein stated Council and Staff are very responsive and respond to

requests and questions as quickly as they can. Mayor Dehen indicated that more staff reports may be needed to ensure Council knows items are being managed. City Administrator Harrenstein reported City staff would only address issues that they have received explicit direction from Council to review. Council Member Whitlock indicated the work by staff is not respected by some citizens who argue they did not do their work or do it correctly.

Attorney Whitmore stated if citizens continued to speak after their three minutes were up, Council could take a break. Dave Bartholomay stated Council Members need to step up and assist the Mayor in managing the meetings. Tim Madigan reported additional assistance from Council Members would allow the Mayor time to think to answer questions. He stated two items need to be clarified for Public Comment periods: comment periods are not a time for discussion and Council will not act on comments. Mayor Dehen stated he is working on using the three-minute time frame consistently throughout all public comment time periods. Continued discussion occurred concerning maintaining consistency, allowing obnoxious people to speak and not letting them control the meetings or Council, and respect.

A brief discussion concerning Roberts Rules of Order was held reviewing Point of Order, Calling the Question, Point of Personal Privilege, and Point of Information. Attorney Whitmore directed Council to the Jurassic Parliament website for additional information.

There being no further business, on a motion by Council Member Norland, seconded by Council Member Whitlock, the meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Mayor

City Clerk