

# South St. Paul City Council Work Session

## *Session Notes for July 14, 2025*

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### 1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Francis called the City Council Work Session to order at 7:00 PM on July 14, 2025

No formal Council Action is taken at a work session meeting, this is a summary of discussion that took place.

Council Members Present: Jimmy Francis, Lori Hansen, Joe Kaliszewski, Matt Thompson, Pam Bakken, Tom Seaberg.

Council Members Absent: Todd Podgorski.

Parks Commission Members Present: Rich Dippel

Staff Present: Ryan Garcia, City Administrator, Clara Hilger, Finance Director, Shannon Young, Director of Parks & Recreation, Michael Healy, Planning and Zoning Manager.

### 2. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- A. Presentation of the City Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for the year ended December 31, 2024 by Jackie Huegel, Principal, LB Carlson

Ms. Hilger introduced Jackie Huegel to present the city's Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) for the year ended December 31, 2024. Ms. Heugel provided a summary presentation of the ACFR as detailed in the Report posted on the City's website. Mr. Huegel noted that the audit resulted in the issuance of an unmodified opinion by the Auditor, which she described as a "clean audit" with no findings or deficiencies in the City's financial statements, financial reporting nor any noncompliance with Government Accounting and Auditing Standards.

- B. 2025 First Quarter Financial Report and Budget Adjustments

Ms. Hilger provided a brief presentation on the City's 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2025 financial report, noting that no significant or otherwise notable variances in the City's operating funds were found. Ms. Hilger presented recommended budget revisions to the City Attorney and vehicle replacement charges in various departments. Ms. Hilger noted that the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Report and Budget Adjustments would be presented for formal approval at a future Council Meeting.

- C. Pool Feasibility Study Update

Nick Nowacki with reengineered and Adam Barnett with JLG Architects, the lead

consultants on the pool feasibility study, presented a preliminary schematic concept for the Northview Pool Replacement Project. Council had the following feedback:

- Councilmember Hansen requested clarification about the total size of the pool, suggesting that the total pool surface area should at least be of equal size to the existing Northview Pool, a notion supported by Council.
- Councilmember Seaberg encouraged continued inclusion of a diving board and the associated depth of the diving well to accommodate this activity, which councilmembers agreed was an important amenity.
- At a preliminary estimated cost of \$7,000,000 - \$8,000,000, Council discussed potential approaches to funding the project. Council's consensus was to exhaust potential state funding support (through a 2026 Capital Investment request and any other state sources), utilize the City's Abatement Authority to issue bonds, and remain open and engaged with potential corporate or other community partners for funding assistance.
- Councilmember Bakken and Parks Commissioner Dippel stressed the importance of maintaining a diverse array of amenities and destinations at the City's park, conveying that an "all-ages" / "all-abilities" aquatic facility will help to support that objective.

#### D. Compensation Philosophy

Mr. Garcia shared an overview of the process and purpose of maintaining a set of guidelines for the City to follow when making decisions about employee compensation throughout the organization. As the City continues to attempt to remain internally consistent and equitable, and competitive in the marketplace for employees, Mr. Garcia sought to confirm Council's support for maintaining a cohesive philosophy and approach to employee compensation. Council agreed that it was important to benchmark the City with other organizations in Dakota County, and similarly situated/sized Cities in the Twin Cities metro, and maintain a position that is competitive – but not necessarily "leading" (or "lagging" behind) the market.

### 3. COUNCIL COMMENTS & QUESTIONS

Councilmembers requested that Staff reach out to the City's Legislator's to provide a Capitol Update at a future Worksession. Council also suggested providing an informational update from the Engineering Department on the City's ongoing investments in Water Infrastructure (Radium Treatment, PFAS, Lead Service Line Replacement).

### 4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the City Council at the regular work session meeting, Mayor Francis declared the meeting adjourned at 10:01 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
/s/: Ryan Garcia  
City Administrator