

South St. Paul City Council Work Session

Session Notes for August 11, 2025

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Francis called the City Council Work Session to order at 7:00 PM on August 11, 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, and Todd Podgorski.

Staff Present: Ryan Garcia, City Administrator, Clara Hilger, Finance Director, Joe Heimkes, Chief Building Official, Shelly Anderson, Assistant City Administrator/Human Resources Director, Shannon Young, Parks and Recreation Director, Howie Steenberg, Public Works Director, Michael Healy, Planning and Zoning Manager, Kelsy Gelhar, City Engineer, Ian Hardie, IT Director, Deanna Werner, City Clerk, Brian Wicke, Chief of Police, Mark Juelfs, South Metro Fire Chief.

2. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. 2026 Preliminary Budget, Tax Levy, Fee Schedule, Capital Improvement Plan Discussion

Mr. Garcia presented an overview of the preliminary proposed 2026 Budget, Property Tax Levies and Capital Improvement Plan. Mr. Garcia shared that the preliminary Budget of \$29,229,688 for all tax levy supported funds represented a 12.24% increase over the Revised 2025 Budget, and that a total 2026 Property Tax Levy of \$19,104,775 would represent an 11.72% increase over the Revised 2025 Property Tax Levy. Mr. Garcia also highlighted key items found in the preliminary proposed 2026 Capital Improvement Plan, totaling \$62,150,061 and relying on a number of different funding sources. Mr. Garcia acknowledged that the City, EDA, and HRA must certify a preliminary levy by the end of September, and a final levy by the end of December; as such the preliminary levy and budget will continue to be analyzed, refined, and discussed at public meetings throughout the rest of the year. Generally, the Council's consensus was that additional effort to reduce the proposed 2026 levy is expected.

B. City Administrator's Update

Mr. Garcia shared that the properties at 314 – 318 2nd Street North, which for decades served as a housing and service facility for Guild, is vacant. Guild does not plan to retain services or ownership of the property. Mr. Garcia advised that he will continue to work with Guild on their transition plan.

Mr. Garcia shared that the design phase for the replacement Public Works Central Maintenance facility was underway. Staff will look for an opportunity to arrange a tour of comparable facilities in late September for Council's information.

Mr. Garcia provided a recap of recent discussions with the developer of the first phase of the Wakota Crossing Industrial Park, highlighted by additional environmental due diligence revealing a lower site preparation and environmental mitigation cost for the project.

3. COUNCIL COMMENTS & QUESTIONS

There were none.

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 10:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
/s/: Ryan Garcia
City Administrator