

**1. Call to order**

Mayor Spano called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Councilmembers present: Mayor Jake Spano, Tim Brausen, Steve Hallfin, Rachel Harris, Anne Mavity, Thom Miller, and Margaret Rog.

Councilmembers absent: None

Staff present: City Attorney (Mr. Mattick), CFO (Mr. Simon), Deputy City Manager/Human Resources Director (Ms. Deno), Natural Resources Coordinator (Mr. Vaughan), and Recording Secretary (Ms. Pappas).

Guests: Evergreen Award Winners

**1a. Pledge of allegiance**

**1b. Roll call**

**2. Presentations**

**2a. 2019 Evergreen Awards**

Mr. Vaughan presented the winners of the 2019 Evergreen Award. Mayor Spano, along with Mayor for a Day Lathan Harmston, presented each winner with a small evergreen plant. The winners are listed below:

- Rebecca & James Wesslund – 5926 W. 39<sup>th</sup> Street (Elmwood Neighborhood)
- Elizabeth and Joseph Muggli – 3029 Oregon Ave S (Oak Hill Neighborhood)
- Jennifer Dalquist – 2830 Webster Ave S (Birchwood Neighborhood)

**2b. Recognition of donations**

Athletic Business awarded up to \$450 for the registration fee for Recreation and Facilities Supervisor Kori Shingles to attend the Athletic Business Conference in Orlando, FL on November 13-16, 2019.

National Association of Government Web Professionals (NAGW) awarded up to \$2,500 for expenses related to Information Technology Manager Jason Huber's attendance at the 2019 NAGW National Conference in Salt Lake City, UT on September 18-20, 2019.

**3. Approval of minutes**

**3a. City council meeting minutes of Aug. 19, 2019**

Councilmember Rog noted a correction on page 7 and stated it should read "...She asked staff to review the letter and add language that acknowledges residents' concerns about safety in their area."

*It was moved by Councilmember Miller, seconded by Councilmember Harris, to approve the Aug. 19, 2019 meeting minutes as amended.*

*The motion passed 7-0.*

**3b. Special city council minutes of Aug. 26, 2019**

*It was moved by Councilmember Rog, seconded by Councilmember Brausen to approve the Aug. 26, 2019 special city council meeting minutes as presented.*

**3c. Study session minutes of Aug. 26, 2019**

Councilmember Mavity noted on page 4 it should read "...giving clear direction to staff and being committed to the policies and principles as we have been in the past."

Councilmember Brausen noted on page 2, the name PLACES, should be all capitalized, and added it should not read "light rail" but should read "SWLRT" when mentioned within the minutes.

*It was moved by Councilmember Mavity, seconded by Councilmember Brausen, to approve the Aug. 26, 2019 study session minutes as amended.*

*The motion passed 7-0.*

**3e. Study session minutes of Sept. 3, 2019**

*It was moved by Councilmember Rog, seconded by Councilmember Miller, to approve the Sept. 3, 2019 study session minutes as presented.*

*The motion passed 7-0.*

**4. Approval of agenda and items on consent calendar**

**4a.** Approve second reading and adopt **Ordinance No. 2569-19** amending the official zoning map under Chapter 36 of the St. Louis Park Code of Ordinances and approve the Summary Ordinance for publication.

Approve second reading and adopt **Ordinance No. 2570-19** amending Chapter 36 of the St. Louis Park Code of Ordinances relating to self-storage facilities and approve the summary ordinance for publication.

**4b.** Adopt **Resolution No. 19-106** approving acceptance of a monetary donation from the National Association of Government Web Professionals in an amount not to exceed \$2,500 for all related expenses for Jason Huber, Information

Technology Manager, to attend the 2019 National Association of Government Web Professionals National Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah.

- 4c.** Adopt **Resolution No. 19-107** appointing election judges for the Nov. 5, 2019 municipal and school district general election.
- 4d.** Approve a premises amendment to the off-sale intoxicating liquor license for Yayin Gadol, LLC dba Top Ten Liquors, located at 5111 Excelsior Blvd. in St. Louis Park.
- 4e.** Adopt **Resolution No. 19-108** approving bylaw revisions allowing for the transition of the telecommunications advisory commission to the community technology advisory commission.
- 4f.** Authorize the mayor and city manager to execute the North Cedar Lake Regional Trail cooperative agreement with Three Rivers Park District.
- 4g.** Adopt **Resolution No. 19-109** approving acceptance of a donation from Athletic Business in an amount not to exceed \$450 to cover the registration fee for Kori Shingles, Recreation and Facilities Supervisor, to attend the Athletic Business Conference in Orlando, Florida Nov. 13 - 16, 2019.
- 4h.** Adopt **Resolution No. 19-110** authorizing the installation of parking restrictions on the east side of Vernon Avenue from Minnetonka Boulevard to 2955/2957 Vernon Ave.
- 4i.** Approve the second reading and adopt **Ordinance No. 2571-19** pertaining to size limitations for retail and service uses in the C-1 zoning district and approve summary ordinance for publication.

*It was moved by Councilmember Halfin, seconded by Councilmember Brausen, to approve the agenda as presented and items listed on the consent calendar; and to waive reading of all resolutions and ordinances.*

*The motion passed 7-0.*

- 5. Boards and commissions – none**
- 6. Public hearings – none**
- 7. Requests, petitions, and communications from the public – none**
- 8. Resolutions, ordinances, motions and discussion items**
  - 8a. 2020 preliminary property tax levy certification. Resolution No. 19-111.**

Mr. Simon presented the report. He noted the budget review schedule through the end of the year, pointing out the possible Facebook meeting in November. Mr. Simon stated final budget approval will be at the Dec. 16<sup>th</sup> city council meeting, as well as adoption of the capital improvement budget.

Mr. Simon stated the maximum number, if approved this evening, will be a 5.61% increase in the tax levy, which covers council priorities of climate action and racial

equity. He added for the median home value, this is a change of \$6.15 per month on average.

Councilmember Harris asked Mr. Simon to mention some outreach tools being used to engage the public in this process. Mr. Simon noted the public can email the city with questions and concerns anytime throughout the year, and they will get a response. He added every staff report related to the budget is posted on the website, along with the Clear Gov interactive tool.

Mr. Simon added a property tax video was filmed and will be on the city's YouTube channel, which explains the various mailings that go out to homes during the year, related to the budget process and taxes. He also noted the Facebook Live meeting, which will be held in November, and be an easy to understand look at the numbers.

Councilmember Harris stated since she has been on the council, Mr. Simon and his staff have increased the number of pictures, pie charts, and graphs used to help convey information, and she thanked him for that.

Councilmember Miller stated he will not support the preliminary levy this evening, adding this is his fourth year running that he will not support the increase. He stated the general levy is not nearly focused narrowly enough on our strategic priorities. He added that certainly some parts of our budget are focused on our strategic priorities, such as the additional salaries for race equity and inclusion staff, and for sustainability staff, but there are other parts of our budget that are not as focused on our strategic priorities as they should be.

Councilmember Miller added going back 5 years, and looking at increases, the city has raised taxes 30%. He added in addition to this, there are county, school, and utility taxes to add on to that. He stated the city is layering increase upon increase, while 6% of those living in St. Louis Park live in poverty. He stated the city does have assistance and deferrals, but that is not helpful enough.

Councilmember Miller added the city has done a great job developing parcels and taxes, along with using TIF; however, he cannot support this levy, which he added is not focused enough on the strategic priorities.

Councilmember Rog stated the Clear Gov page on the city's website is interesting, noting folks can enter in their own tax bill and see how those tax dollars are being utilized in the city. However, she opposes the 5.61% levy and shares Councilmember Miller's concerns on strategic priorities. She stated it is not about if our staff provides a high level of service or whether she trust staff, but beyond the 2-3% increase tied to cost of living, she wants to know more about exactly what residents are getting for the 5.61% increase.

Councilmember Rog stated she has asked many residents how they feel about this and they always say it depends on what we are getting for paying this much. She asked what this increase will yield in outcomes and especially with low income residents. She stated

she understands this is the city manager's response to the council's directions and priorities, but it is not an outcome. She added she is hopeful the city can invest in outcomes vs. inputs and without knowing those, she will vote against the levy.

Councilmember Brausen stated this is his sixth year on the council and going through this process. He noted the process this year began earlier in April, and staff works on it prior to that, adding staff takes into account the premise of what council wants to do and then works on the most cost-effective way to get there.

Councilmember Brausen added that citizens have become accustomed to high level service, with streets maintained, snow cleared fast, infrastructure, and 37 park facilities that are maintained and made available to the public. He noted staff gets a standard increase of 3%, with benefits, along with the council's priorities of race equity, climate action, and other priorities, so the property tax will increase. He stated this is all done to make St. Louis Park a place that folks want to live in, and the rising city property values prove that. He noted this is a double-edged sword adding that the St. Louis Park tax levy increase is smaller than other cities including Hopkins and Edina.

Councilmember Brausen continued, city staff allocated resources effectively in a cost-effective manner, while the police department remains understaffed. He stated everyone must pay for what we want done in St. Louis Park, and he encouraged residents to reach out to their council members, and let them know what they feel they are not getting or what they might want to see discontinued.

Councilmember Harris stated the council has recently adopted a 10-year strategic plan and within that are 5 strategic priorities including the climate action plan and race equity. She suggested the city create a membership program where fees are paid in order to generate income. She added when she looks at the scope of council priorities, she will support the additional tax recommended by the city manager and finance department.

She also supports adding to the police force, noting she has done ride-alongs and learned about impacts police services provide. She added residents care about the responsiveness of police, fire, and snow plowing. Councilmember Harris also added as a council, they need to be forward thinking about a sustainable environment everyone can live in and she is proud of the city's goal to reach carbon neutrality in 25 years. She invited Ward 3 residents to reach out to her or Mr. Simon, adding she will support the preliminary tax levy of 5.61%

Councilmember Mavity stated she has been on council for 10 years, and pointed out in those 10 years, the city has never gone above the agreed upon levy in each respective year. She added in her recollection, every single year this was the case and was set out of an abundance of caution. She is hopeful the tax levy may even end up at a bit lower rate. She stated she will support this, noting this is always one of the most significant votes of the council each year. Councilmember Mavity added the budget reflects the city's values and comes down to where the money is allocated. She pointed out if the

council were discussing sidewalks this evening, there would be a crowd in the room. But tonight, for the budget discussion, there are 5 people in the room.

Councilmember Hallfin stated he too will support the 5.61% levy. He stated this is his eighth year on city council and he is sure that typically the rate starts higher and ends lower. He stated he respects staff on this process and looks forward to staff sharpening their pencils to see if it can go down a bit. He added he always looks at value for service, and he will support this.

Councilmember Rog stated she was intrigued by Councilmember Harris' idea that paying taxes is like paying membership dues. She noted though, that about 60% of visitors to the nature center are from outside St. Louis Park, so tax payers are in effect subsidizing their membership. She added she does not know if council knows everything the city is paying for, therefore, staff and council do not recognize ways to save or generate revenue or create more opportunity for housing. She stated there is a lot of opportunity for more scrutiny on the budget.

Mayor Spano stated he will support this levy increase at 5.61%. He thanked staff for their incredible creativity in how they spend money, and the careful and deliberate thought that goes into that. He stated staff works to achieve the goals of council, comes back with ideas, and if there is a savings in the budget one year, the money will be used the next year to keep from raising taxes to a higher rate. He added St. Louis Park shares various services and resources with neighboring cities, including a milling machine and specialized fire trucks, in order to keep taxes as low as possible.

Mayor Spano added public response he generally receives is that they like the services they get from St. Louis Park, and are very specific about what money is spent on in the city. He stated council has been clear on their priorities, and staff must be added as needed, as well as cost of living increases.

Mayor Spano noted there are cities that charge a local sales tax to pay for their needs, adding this might be another option to review, so folks from outside of the city provide revenue also.

*It was moved by Councilmember Mavity, seconded by Councilmember Harris, to adopt **Resolution No. 19-111**, approving 2020 preliminary property tax levy at 5.61%. The motion passed 5-2 (Councilmember Rog and Miller opposed).*

*It was moved by Councilmember Mavity, seconded by Councilmember Brausen, to set the budget public hearing date for Dec. 2, 2019.*

*The motion passed 7-0.*

**8b. 2020 preliminary HRA levy certification. Resolution No. 19-112.**

Mr. Simon presented the report.

*It was moved by Councilmember Miller, seconded by Councilmember Hallfin, to adopt **Resolution No. 19-112**, authorizing the 2020 preliminary HRA levy.*

*The motion passed 7-0.*

**8c. First reading of ordinance repealing and replacing city code Section 2-184 related to the TAC**

Mayor Spano stated this new name better reflects the work of the commission.

*It was moved by Councilmember Mavity, seconded by Councilmember Brausen, to approve first reading of ordinance repealing and replacing city code section 2-184 transitioning the telecommunication advisory commission (TAC) to the community technology advisory commission (CTAC) and set the second reading for Oct. 7, 2019*

*The motion passed 7-0.*

**9. Communications**

Councilmember Brausen stated on Saturday, Sept. 28, from 2-8 p.m. at the Roc, there will be the Roctober Fest, for all to enjoy. There is a \$10 fee to attend.

Mayor Spano noted the upcoming ranked choice voting mock elections to be held Tuesday from 4-8 p.m. at 4 locations around the city: Knollwood Place Apartments, city hall, the rec center, and Park Harbor Church. He recommended folks participate and learn about the process.

Mayor Spano also noted absentee ballots for upcoming elections will need to be requested in writing and are not able to be done online. Early voting starts Friday, Sept. 20, and details are on the city website.

Councilmember Rog noted an upcoming open house on Sept. 19 at 6 p.m. at city hall, regarding the Dakota Avenue bikeway from Minnetonka Boulevard to Lake Street.

Councilmember Harris stated Thursday, Sept. 26, is a Heart of the Matter community conversation from 5-7 p.m. at the Lennox Community Center, on childhood experiences and teaching resiliency.

**10. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

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Melissa Kennedy, city clerk

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Jake Spano, mayor