

The meeting convened 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 Manager (Mr. Harmening), Deputy City Manager/Human Resources Director (Ms. Deno), Communications Manager (Ms. Smith), Community Organizer (Mr. Gray), Senior Management Analyst (Ms. Solano), and Recording Secretary (Ms. Pappas).

Guests: Scott Morrell, President & Consultant-Rebar Leadership; Larry Kraft, Nadia Mohamed.

1. Future study session agenda planning and prioritization

Mr. Harmening stated there will be a full agenda for the Dec. 9 meeting. He suggested to Councilmember Miller he could conference call into the meeting, since he will be out of town.

Councilmember Rog asked when the food access and security study would be coming forward. Mr. Harmening stated it will be on the Jan. 27 agenda.

Councilmember Mavity asked when the crime free ordinance would be discussed. Mr. Harmening stated staff has completed work on this, and it will be included in a community listening session, but the date is still yet to be determined.

2. Council communication discussion

Mr. Harmening introduced Mr. Morrell, President and Consultant with Rebar Leadership.

Mr. Morrell led a discussion with the council about the issue from this past summer, to discuss, debrief, and look forward. Mr. Morrell stated he had interviewed each council member individually before tonight's discussion and based on these conversations with council and staff, now is the right time to have this conversation with staff and the full council.

Mr. Morrell stated the purpose of the meeting is:

- To reflect on the summer 2019 experience together
- To model the way for effective governance behavior to one another and the community
- To start rebuilding process for effective trust among one another
- To heal, where necessary, past value(s) violations

The council reflected on the experience and noted the following experiences, ripple effects, learnings, what worked, what did not work, and action steps for future:

- Chaotic
- Like a hurricane
- Isolation, very unsupported
- Vulnerability
- Void of leadership, guilty, harmful to the community
- Helplessness, difficult
- A PR crisis and media created it
- Extreme impacts to staff
- Violation of council norms
- Saw people at their worst
- Staff angry and shaken, confidence in leadership shaken
- Mistakes made, failure
- Training needed on how to talk with media, on how to be Mayor Pro Tem
- When a decision is made, need to all stand behind it
- Follow due process, take risks, and do what we think is right, even if challenging – this process felt unbalanced
- This was a procedural decision, not an event, but lead to a policy decision ultimately
- Regretted not saying stop or slow down
- Became a difficult issue with staff, veteran employees, became political, staff was angered, shook foundations of confidence and trust in leadership
- Emotions still there, lessons learned for future, need to be better prepared
- Brought out the worst in people, turned into a race issue
- Concern for safety and security
- Anger and angst in community, great deal of passion, intense and difficult phone calls, voice mails and emails, biases and misogyny were evident
- Felt my safety at risk, frightening
- Still hurting, brought to tears
- Want to repair council relationship with staff, with veterans on staff
- Lessons to learn from crisis management, and having one voice
- Concerned about effect on St. Louis Park's communities of color and they may be feeling blame for this situation

Mr. Morrell, consultant facilitated the discussion with council on possible opportunities and action steps. This included communication and crisis management training, council norms, agenda process, slowing down and looking at various implications and impact, considerations regarding our own residents, messaging and media, legal considerations and what could happen in the future with a higher-level crisis.

Mr. Morrell stated the actions that will come from this discussion include:

- Staff will outline a city crisis communication process and report back to council
- The council will revisit and discuss norms
- A table top exercise will occur with a scenario related to crisis communication and how council will react

The council members stated they want to earn trust and respect back from staff, which will take time.

Mr. Harmening stated the one good thing that came of the issue is that staff learned about and prepared for keeping staff, council, and the public as safe as possible, especially when emotions are running high.

Council was in agreement with the summary provided by Mr. Morrell on the three actions listed above. Staff will work on those areas and get time set aside on council agenda as next steps.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Written Reports provided and documented for recording purposes only:

- 3. Community survey**
- 4. Snow and ice control policy update**
- 5. Oct. 2019 monthly financial report**

Melissa Kennedy, city clerk

Jake Spano, mayor