



## COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS THE CITY OF NEW BRIGHTON

Pursuant to notice thereof, a regular meeting of the New Brighton City Council was held Tuesday, January 25, 2022 at 6:30 pm in the New Brighton Council Chambers. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic this hybrid meeting was held both virtually and in person.

**Present:** Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas, Councilmembers Abdulle, Allen, Axberg, and Dunsworth  
**Absent:**

**Also Present:** Devin Massopust-City Manager, Sarah Sonsalla-City Attorney, Gina Smith-Finance Director, Ben Gozola-Assistant Director of Community Assets and Development

### Call to Order

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

### Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas led the Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### Public Comment Forum

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas opened the Public Forum for comments from the public. Teresa Crow, 463 Nineth Avenue SW, reported she attended the Northeast Dance Center which recently moved to Old Highway 8 in November. She questioned how long the gun shop has been in New Brighton and asked who authorized their license. She inquired what actions the City was taking to make sure this business was selling guns legally. She stated she did not support this business advertising mags or AR-15's from the sidewalk given the fact school children pass by this business. She asked if the residents of New Brighton could require this business to only sell hunting guns. Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas reported staff would be following up with Ms. Crow to get her questions answered.

### Approval of Agenda

Approval of the January 25, 2022 Council Agenda.

**Motion by Councilmember Dunsworth, seconded by Councilmember Abdulle to approve the agenda as submitted.**

**A roll call vote was taken.**

**5 Ayes, 0 Nays-Motion Carried**

### Special Order of Business

1. Economic Development Commission 2021 Year in Review

Chair Harry Carter provided the Council with a presentation from the EDC. He discussed the background

### Call to Order

### Pledge of Allegiance

### Public Comment Forum

### Approval of Agenda

Approval of the  
January 25, 2022  
Agenda.

### Special Order of Business

and purpose of the EDC noting the Commission had nine members. He thanked staff liaison Ben Gozola for all of his efforts on behalf of the group. He reported the EDC meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 7:30 a.m. He indicated the EDC's primary focus in 2021 was to launch the City's business outreach program. He explained the group also addressed a TIF District for the US Bank redevelopment, discussed public art and wayfinding, event tourism, housing and an addition for TUV SUD. He commented further on the response the City/EDC has had from its business outreach efforts. He then reviewed the 2022 work plan and anticipated activities for the EDC.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas thanked Chair Carter for his strong leadership on the EDC.

Councilmember Allen thanked all of the EDC members for their commitment to enhancing the City of New Brighton.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas suggested the Twin Cities North Chamber of Commerce should attend an EDC meeting. Assistant Director of Community Assets and Development Gozola noted he attended these meetings on a quarterly basis and reports back to the EDC.

### **Consent Agenda**

1. Consider Approval of Payments.
2. Consider Approval of City Council Minutes:
  - a. January 11, 2022 City Council Worksession Meeting Minutes.
  - b. January 11, 2022 City Council Meeting Minutes.
3. Accept Receipt of Commission Minutes: None.
4. Consider Memorandum of Understanding Between the City of New Brighton and Teamsters Local No. 320 Uniform Pants Allowance.
5. Consider Application for a Personal Service License (Therapeutic Massage) for Susan Bernhardt, dba Essence Ayurveda LLC.
6. Consider Authorizing Receipt of a \$30,000 Grant from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to enhance the New Brighton Phlebotomy Program.
7. Consider Request for Exemption from Lawful Gambling License – Irondale High School Band Boosters.
8. Consider Approval of Updates to Employee Handbook. *This item was removed and would be discussed as Item 3 under New Business.*
9. Consider Approval of Updated Contract with Community Partners with Youth.

**Motion by Councilmember Axberg, seconded by Councilmember Abdulle to approve the Consent Agenda as amended removing Item 9 for further discussion.**

**A roll call vote was taken.**

**5 Ayes, 0 Nays - Motion Carried**

### **Public Hearing**

### **Consent Agenda**

1. Consider Approval of Payments.
2. Consider Approval of City Council Minutes:
  - a. January 11, 2022 City Council Worksession.
  - b. January 11, 2022 City Council.
3. Accept Receipt of Commission Minutes: None.
4. Consider MOU Between the City and Teamsters Local No. 320 Uniform Pants Allowance.
5. Resolution to Consider Support for Ramsey Co. to Submit Old Highway 8 for a Met Council Bridge Fund Grant.
6. Consider App. for a Personal Service Lic. (Therapeutic Massage) for Susan Bernhardt, dba Essence Ayurveda LLC.
7. Authorize Receipt of a \$30,000 Grant from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to enhance the New Brighton Phlebotomy Program.
8. Consider Request for Exemption from Lawful Gambling Lic. – Irondale High School Band Boosters.
9. Consider Approval of Updates to Employee Handbook.
10. Consider Approval of Updated Contract with CPY.

None.

**Public Hearing**

**Council Business**

1. Consider Electric Vehicle Charging Station License Agreement with CSG EV, LLC.

City Manager Massopust indicated Community Assets and Development Director Schlichting would be presenting this item to the Council.

Community Assets and Development Director Schlichting stated in early 2021 the City was accepted to be part of an Xcel Energy pilot. The pilot feasibility study and assessment were completed shortly thereafter. This program would have covered all of the costs associated with the infrastructure upgrades (related to power), installation, design, permitting and labor for the installation of power facilities to support EV at City Hall. The City would have been responsible for purchase of the charging equipment and energy used following install. Using State Bid prices, it was estimated to cost \$84,635 for the equipment, cellular plans and installation.

Community Assets and Development Director Schlichting explained during this same time, the City was made aware of a private company that was working with Cities (i.e. Plymouth) to build an EV charging network with no upfront cost. The City contacted Energy Management Solutions (EMS) Inc., a local energy solutions group, to see how New Brighton could fit into their plans. EMS worked with the City of New Brighton and our Attorney to prepare the framework for an agreement with Carbon Solutions Group (CSG). This agreement includes CSG providing the City with 5 electric vehicles, and EV charging stations at multiple sites throughout the City. By electing to receive 5 vehicles, the City will forgo rental income for the stalls that are occupied with EV equipment for 10 years. The total term of the agreement is 10 years, plus 2 additional 5 year terms if mutually agreed to do so. CSG will own, operate and pay for all software and equipment upgrades. CSG will include a user electricity fee that is higher than the Xcel rate to pay for their upfront investment. The rate/kWh is designed to be at or below the equivalent cost for gasoline. City staff has selected sites throughout New Brighton that have parking facilities off-street. Staff will continue to work with CSG to install facilities where they make sense, and in locations that benefit all New Brighton user groups. Staff commented further on the proposed timeline for this project and recommended approval of the license agreement.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas inquired if staff had spoken to representatives from the City of Plymouth regarding this program. Community Assets and Development Director Schlichting stated he had not had direct conversations regarding deployment but noted he had met with County representatives regarding the proposed program.

Councilmember Abdulle questioned how many miles the City would be able to drive on the electric vehicles. He asked what the charge would be to use the EV charging stations. Community Assets and Development Director Schlichting reported the City would be able to drive 149 miles on a fully charged Leaf. He indicated the Tesla has a longer range.

Jody McDevitt, Energy Management Solutions (EMS) representative, discussed how the miles of range for electric vehicles was increasing each year as new models are introduced. He discussed what would be charged to drivers by the charging stations, noting this would include a kilowatt hour rate along with a demand charge component. He estimated the cost would be 25 to 30 cents per kilowatt hour, which was 20% to 25% less than gasoline.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas asked what role Xcel Energy would have with this project.

Community Assets and Development Director Schlichting reported the City was chosen to be part of a pilot program with Xcel Energy to implement EV charging stations. However the cost of this infrastructure was estimated to be \$30,000 and \$50,000 and charging stations would still have to be purchased. He explained this led staff to pursue a partnership with CSG. He reported Xcel Energy would be working directly with CSG moving forward on the placements of EV stations within the City's parks and at City Hall.

**Council Business**

1. Consider Electric Vehicle Charging Station License Agreement with CSG EV, LLC.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas questioned how maintenance issues would be addressed on the EV stations. Mr. McDevitt reported the agreement did not include performance language. He explained the EV stations would have smart technology and would notify the CSG team if there was a problem. He stated assistance may be needed from staff on occasion to flip a breaker and major issues with the EV stations would require CSG to hire a local electrician.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas inquired if this language should be included in the contract. City Attorney Sonsalla advised the contract does include duty to maintain station language. She reported the City does have the right to terminate the agreement for cause if the EV stations were not being properly maintained.

Councilmember Allen commented the Council discussed this item previously at the worksession meeting on January 11. He discussed how this partnership would provide the City with the best deal for providing EV stations throughout the community.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas believed this contract was a great opportunity for the City of New Brighton as it pursues actionable ways to reduce greenhouse gases in the community. She thanked staff for their leadership and for pursuing this opportunity on behalf of the City of New Brighton.

**Motion by Councilmember Abdulle, seconded by Councilmember Axberg to authorize the Mayor and City Manager to sign an approved Electric Vehicle Master License Agreement with CSG EV, LLC.**

**A roll call vote was taken.**

**5 Ayes, 0 Nays-Motion Carried**

2. Resolution to Consider Support for Ramsey County to Submit Old Highway 8 for a Metropolitan Council Bridge Fund Grant.

City Manager Massopust indicated Community Assets and Development Director Schlichting would be presenting this item to the Council.

Community Assets and Development Director Schlichting stated the City of New Brighton supports Ramsey County's efforts in its application for 'Bridge' funds to replace the Old Highway 8 Bridge over Minnesota Commercial Railway between 8th Avenue and 5th Avenue NW. Old Highway 8 supports local and regional traffic. The existing bridge is structurally deficient per the FHWA bridge rating system and is a load posted bridge. This stretch of roadway is a vital corridor for the City of New Brighton, and the bridge provides the most direct route to Interstate-35W for the ~6,000 vehicles/day that travel the corridor (including two recently approved affordable housing projects). If selected these funds are planned for 2026-27 deployment. If the bridge were approved for grant funds any remaining costs would be borne by the County. Staff commented further on the proposed bridge replacement along with the benefits of applying for this grant and recommended the Council support the Resolution.

Councilmember Abdulle asked if federal IIJA funds could be used for projects like this.

Community Assets and Development Director Schlichting anticipated this funding would help fund projects that were ready to go.

Councilmember Abdulle questioned if the County Road E bridge would be replaced in the future. Community Assets and Development Director Schlichting reported this bridge was under the railroad's ownership (a Canadian railroad company) and the replacement timeline was unknown. Councilmember Axberg stated she supported the City offering support for this grant application.

Councilmember Allen commented he also supported this bridge grant application and encouraged staff to reach out to the railroad authority in order to raise the City's concerns regarding their bridge considering the future plans for this corridor.

2. Resolution to Consider Support for Ramsey County to Submit Old Highway 8 for a Metropolitan Council Bridge Fund Grant.

**Motion by Councilmember Axberg, seconded by Councilmember Dunsworth to Authorize the Mayor and City Manager to Sign a Resolution of Support for a Metropolitan Council Grant Application.**

**A roll call vote was taken.**

**5 Ayes, 0 Nays-Motion Carried**

**3. Consider Approval of Updates to Employee Handbook.**

City Manager Massopust discussed the proposed updates to the Employee Handbook. He reported an internal benefits committee meets quarterly to review the handbook and benefits for all employees. The most notable change had to do with the 80 hours of paid parental leave for City employees.

Councilmember Axberg indicated she was a working mother with four children. She discussed how important it was to have family friendly work benefits. She appreciated how the City was looking at health matters as family issues and not strictly women's issues. She commented on how the proposed benefits assist with motivating and retaining employees. She stated one of her concerns was with how the benefits were proposed in a piecemeal manner and questioned if the City would be better served by considering legacy benefits. She requested further information on how sick leave was accumulated. City Manager Massopust described the sick leave accumulation tiers as noted within the employee handbook.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas questioned how many employees make it to 20 years with the City of New Brighton. City Manager Massopust estimated this was probably one in four employees that reach the 20 year mark.

Councilmember Allen stated he supported the proposed changes because it brought the City more in line with other companies and municipalities.

Councilmember Abdulle thanked staff for all of their efforts on the updated employee handbook. He discussed the paid parental leave that he was offered from his employer when his children were born and stated this benefit would be valuable to the City's employees. He stated he was very excited about the proposed change.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas commented she fully supported the Council bringing in an outside consultant in order to complete benchmarking for the team, while also looking at an overall benefits and compensation model for the City. She discussed how difficult it was for employers to retain employees at this time.

Councilmember Axberg recommended the employee handbook be amended to eliminate the part that addresses expanding the percent payout in the new tier for sick time.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas stated it was her understanding this language was put in place to make non-union employees more closely align with union employees. City Manager Massopust reported this was the case. He asked that if this language was removed that action on the item be tabled to a future meeting to allow staff to discuss this matter further.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas asked how the Council wanted to proceed.

Councilmember Abdulle recommended the employee handbook move forward as recommended by staff.

Councilmember Allen supported the document as proposed by staff.

Councilmember Dunsworth agreed.

**Motion by Councilmember Abdulle, seconded by Councilmember Allen to Approve the Updates to the Employee Handbook as proposed by staff.**

**A roll call vote was taken.**

3. Consider Approval of Updates to Employee Handbook.

**4 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Abstain (Councilmember Axberg)-Motion Carried**

**Commission Liaison Reports, Announcements and Updates**

**Devin Massopust**

City Manager Massopust reported the Council would be holding a worksession meeting on Tuesday, February 1 and would be discussing accessory dwelling units and single family rental regulations. He stated a citizen survey would be going out to the public in the coming weeks.

**Graeme Allen**

Councilmember Allen reported the Public Safety Commission would meet next on Monday, February 14.

**Abdullahi Abdulle**

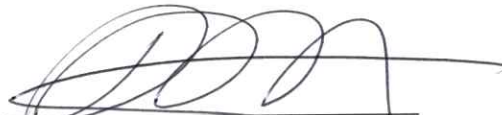
Councilmember Abdulle reported he would like the Council to speak with State elected officials related to affordable housing in the City. He wanted to see the City Council advocating for this topic because it was really challenging. He commented he would like to see a portion of the State's surplus used for affordable housing.

**Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas**

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas reported the Equity Commission met on Thursday, January 20 where the group received orientation from staff. She invited the public to attend the campfire and luminary walk at Hansen Park. She noted rail safety had been included in the North Metro Mayors Association legislative priorities. She congratulated Sam Hentges for being named to the US Men's Ice Hockey Team.

**Adjournment**

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas adjourned the meeting at 8:12 p.m.

  
 Kari Niedfeldt-Thomas, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
 Sandra Daniloff, Deputy City Clerk

**Commission Liaison  
Reports,  
Announcements and  
Updates**

**Adjournment**  
 The meeting adjourned  
 at 8:12 p.m.