

## COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS THE CITY OF NEW BRIGHTON

Pursuant to notice thereof, a regular meeting of the New Brighton City Council was held Tuesday, March 8, 2022 at 6:30 pm in the New Brighton Council Chambers. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic this hybrid meeting was held virtually.

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

**Also Present:** Devin Massopust-City Manager, Sarah Sonsalla-City Attorney, Terri Spangrud-City Clerk

### 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.

### Approval of Agenda

Approval of the March 8, 2022 Council Agenda.

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

**A roll call vote was taken.**

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

### Special Order of Business

1. Approve Resolution Recognizing Service of City of New Brighton Commissioners.

City Manager Massopust reported in the past, City Commissioners were thanked for their service at the City's annual volunteer recognition dinner. However, the City has not held such a dinner in the past two years due to the pandemic. While the staff liaison of each commission and individual Council Members thanked outgoing commissioners for their service privately, outgoing commissioners have not been formally recognized for their work and contribution to the City by the City Council in a public forum. Starting with this year and going forward, all outgoing commissioners will be formally recognized for their service via a Resolution and an official letter thanking them for their service. Outgoing commissioners who have served 6 or more years will receive a certificate recognizing their service. Outgoing commissioners who have served 12 or more years will also be made a City Ambassador.

### Call to Order

### Pledge of Allegiance

### Public Comment Forum

### Approval of Agenda

Approval of the  
March 8, 2022  
Agenda.

### Special Order of Business

1. Approve Resolution Recognizing Service of City of New Brighton Commissioners.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas read the Resolution in full for the record and thanked the City's outgoing Commissioners for their significant contributions and dedicated service to the community.

Councilmember Axberg stated she was pleased the City was taking the time to recognize these individuals and she passed along her thanks.

**Motion by Councilmember Axberg, seconded by Councilmember Allen to adopt a Resolution Recognizing Outgoing Commissioners.**

**A roll call vote was taken.**

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

2. Appointment of Erin Nichols-Matkaiti as a City Ambassador for her 12 years of service.

2. Appointment of Erin Nichols-Matkaiti as a City Ambassador for her 12 years of service.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas read a proclamation in full for the record appointing Erin Nichols-Matkaiti as a City Ambassador and thanked her for her 12 years of dedicated service to the City of New Brighton. Councilmember Abdulle stated he really appreciated all of the work the Commissioners do on behalf of the City. He indicated these were unpaid positions and Commissioners took time away from their families each month to prepare for their meetings. He indicated it has been an honor to serve with Erin Nichols-Matkaiti on the Planning Commission.

Erin Nichols-Matkaiti stated it has been wonderful serving the City on the Planning Commission. She discussed how her position on the Planning Commission has helped her grow as a person and she has truly enjoyed being involved in the community. She thanked Ben Gozola for all of his efforts on behalf of the City. Amina Ghouse congratulated Erin Nichols-Matkaiti on 12 years of service to the City of New Brighton. She understood the Planning Commission was one of the hardest working Commissions in the City. She stated it has been a joy to be a part of this City. She thanked the City for recognizing the Commissioners for their service and encouraged those who want to know the community better to consider serving as a City Commissioner.

**Consent Agenda**

1. Consider Approval of Payments.
2. Consider Approval of City Council Minutes:
  - a. February 22, 2022 City Council Worksession Meeting Minutes.
  - b. February 22, 2022 City Council Meeting Minutes.
3. Accept Receipt of Commission Minutes:
  - a. February 2, 2022 Parks, Recreation and Environmental Commission.
4. Consider Authorization to Rebuild Well #5.
5. Consider Authorization to Purchase Fire Hydrants for Project 22-1, 2022 Street Rehabilitation.
6. Consider Approval of Agreement with Willie McCray for Adult Softball Official Services.

**Consent Agenda**

1. Consider Approval of Payments.
2. Consider Approval of City Council Minutes:
  - a. February 22, 2022 City Council Worksession.
  - b. February 22, 2022 City Council.
3. Accept Receipt of Commission Minutes:
  - a. February 2, 2022 PREC Commission.
4. Consider Authorization to Rebuild Well #5.
5. Consider Authorization to Purchase Fire Hydrants for Project 22-1.
6. Consider Approval of Agr. with Willie

Motion by Councilmember Axberg, seconded by Councilmember Dunsworth to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

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McCray for Adult  
Softball Official  
Services.

A roll call vote was taken.

5 Ayes, 0 Nays - Motion Carried

### Public Hearing

### Public Hearing

None.

### Council Business

### Council Business 1. Update on Redistricting Process.

#### 1. Update on Redistricting Process.

City Manager Massopust indicated City Clerk Spangrud would be presenting this item to the Council. He explained staff would be reviewing this item with the Council this evening and the item would be formally approved on March 22.

City Clerk Spangrud stated the purpose of the decennial U.S. Census is to ensure that the representation of each state is apportioned fairly in the U.S. House of Representatives. This apportionment process does not affect representation in the U.S. Senate since every state receives two seats regardless of population. Once this reapportionment work is completed, each state uses the census population counts to redistrict its congressional and legislative districts. The Special Redistricting Panel appointed by the Minnesota Supreme Court released Minnesota's redistricting plan in mid-February. Previously, the entirety of the City of New Brighton was represented in Congressional District 4 and State Senate District 41. The southern half of the City was in 41B (Precincts 1 – 4) and the northern half of the City was in House District 41A (Precincts 5 – 8). The newly released redistricting plans keep the entirety of the City of New Brighton in Congressional District 4. However, the plans moved the House District boundary north and placed a new Senate District boundary line in the middle of the City. The northern half of the City is now in Senate District 40 and House District 40A while the southern half of the city is in Senate District 39 and in House District 39B. Minnesota State Statute 204B.14 subd. 3(e) requires cities to reestablish their precinct boundaries and designate polling places by March 29, 2022. In order to meet this deadline, the City Council will need to approve New Brighton's redistricting plan at their March 22, 2022 business meeting. Staff commented further on the redistricting that would occur in the City and reviewed an updated precinct map (Plan A, B and C) with polling places with the Council. It was noted staff was seeking a contact at the Church Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints for Precinct 3. The next steps for staff and Ramsey County were discussed. It was noted a postcard would be sent to voters to notify them of the proposed changes.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas thanked staff for all of their efforts on this. She asked if the elementary schools could be used for polling locations. City Clerk Spangrud indicated staff has reached out to the schools in the past and was told they do not have the space or sufficient parking.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas supported staff reaching out to the schools again because the back entrance at Irondale High School goes directly into the library and this could be a great polling location. She noted another option would be the former auditorium at Irondale which has been transformed into a multi-purpose room and could be accessed from the front entrance. She understood Bel Air has also been renovated and may be an option. She suggested staff also consider using a community room at the new apartment complexes in the City. She asked if TUV SUV or APi had been approached as a polling location.

Councilmember Abdulle thanked staff for the detailed presentation. He asked if the park shelters could be used for polling places. He requested further information on how combined

polling places work. City Clerk Spangrud described how there were separate ballots and machines for combined polling places. She noted Option C was not ideal because it would combine polling places.

Councilmember Abdulle requested further information regarding the difference between precincts and wards. City Clerk Spangrud reported New Brighton does not have wards. She explained charter cities are allowed to have wards and a ward is a geographical location where elected officials represent the people within that ward. She indicated New Brighton was a statutory City and all Councilmembers serve at-large, which meant each Councilmember represented all members of the City. She commented further on how State law required cities to keep similar or like voices together.

Councilmember Abdulle thanked staff for this information stating this was helpful. City Clerk Spangrud discussed how she worked with DCAD and Mark Suggs to map out all affordable housing within the community and communities not found on a map in an effort to keep their voice together.

Councilmember Dunsworth inquired if the majority of the apartments were in the southern portion of the City. City Clerk Spangrud stated the southern portion of the City had a larger population, not more apartments.

Councilmember Dunsworth commented she was concerned with unintended voter suppression having the polling places so far north in the precincts that have a high population of renters (Precincts 1 and 2). She understood the redistricting was a monumental task but asked that staff consider this concern further. City Manager Massopust reviewed the locations of the apartment complexes in precinct 1 and precinct 2. He explained the southern most portion of precinct 1 was more industrial uses. He indicated the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints would be a better option for precincts 2 and 3.

Councilmember Dunsworth stated she understood staff was doing their best with the facilities that were available. She commented she just wanted to see greater access provided to polling places through their physical location, with the understanding there was a void in one precinct. She requested staff find a polling location in precinct 2 to help serve this part of the City.

Further discussion ensued regarding the previous polling locations for precinct 2 and 3.

Councilmember Abdulle reported he lived in precinct 3 and could support the proposed location, but recommended a separate polling location be found within precinct 2. He suggested Totem Park be considered. City Clerk Spangrud noted this was considered, but it was found the park shelter was too small and had insufficient parking facilities.

Councilmember Abdulle questioned if staff had considered using a polling location in Roseville or St. Anthony, or perhaps the community room within the mobile home park. City Clerk Spangrud stated staff believed this would be confusing for New Brighton residents if asked to drive outside the City to vote for New Brighton elections.

Councilmember Dunsworth stated she preferred to keep the polling places within New Brighton. She indicated she was concerned about change fatigue for voters who have had their precinct or polling locations changed for the last three elections. City Clerk Spangrud reported it was the intent of staff to get these polling places set and then to not have them change until the next census.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas suggested Fox Trot Marketing be considered as a polling location. She noted this may be an easier location for precinct 2.

City Manager Massopust requested City Clerk Spangrud speak to the security measures that have to be in place for polling locations. City Clerk Spangrud explained the day before election day, staff brings out election materials and secured election materials, which meant there had to be a dedicated, secured space that was locked and not accessible to any employees or members of the public. She reported on election day, polling places have to be available at 5:45 a.m. and the members of the public arrive from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., but judges may remain onsite until 9:30 p.m. or 10:00 p.m. She explained public works staff then returns to the polling sites the following day to pick up any remaining materials.

Councilmember Axberg thanked City Clerk Spangrud for all of her efforts. She explained she has served as an election judge in the past. She asked if the City has received any negative feedback from existing residents and the precincts and could these concerns be addressed in this plan. City Clerk Spangrud stated this was a really good question. She indicated she has not received a lot of feedback from people in the southern part of the City who were having to drive north. She understood this didn't mean they weren't feeling it, but they have not verbalized it to staff. She stated she does hear from the seniors who live in the housing across the street from the NBCC who were upset that they cannot vote at the Community Center. She explained this would be changing for the seniors because the House District boundary has moved north and these seniors would now be able to vote at St. John's or the NBCC. Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas supported the Council discussing the lack of City/public spaces in the southern portion of New Brighton at a future worksession meeting.

Councilmember Dunsworth questioned if voting could occur at the Eagle's facility. City Clerk Spangrud explained polling places were required to be smoke and liquor free and could not be next door to a liquor service area.

Councilmember Abdulle estimated it would take precinct 2 residents five minutes to get to their polling location. He noted there was no public transportation available which meant people would have to drive or carpool.

City Clerk Spangrud thanked the Council for all of their feedback and stated she would appreciate a contact to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

City Manager Massopust explained staff would be working on the plan per Council's direction and this item would be coming back to the Council for consideration on Tuesday, March 22.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas thanked staff for all of their efforts on this and for taking into consideration all of the viewpoints from the community.

### **Commission Liaison Reports, Announcements and Updates**

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#### **Devin Massopust**

City Manager Massopust reported on Wednesday, March 23 at 5:00 p.m. the City will be hosting an open house at the NBCC to discuss the Old Highway 8 road project. He noted 1,600 letters were sent out for the open house. He commented the Community Center has its highest number of visitors last week since March 6, 2020, which was a great sign. He thanked the Council for their time and the conversations that were held at the strategic planning session on Saturday, March 5.

#### **Graeme Allen**

Councilmember Allen reported the Public Safety Commission will meet next on Monday, March 14 at 6:30 p.m. He explained he appreciated the conversations that were held at the strategic planning session and thanked Barb Strandell and all staff members for their efforts at this event. He thanked Ramsey County Attorney John Choi for attending the Council worksession meeting this evening and for providing the Council with a detailed presentation on crime and crime initiatives.

#### **Emily Dunsworth**

Councilmember Dunsworth reported PREC met on Wednesday, March 2 where the group discussed implementation of the parks comprehensive plan which included plans for a splash pad at Lions Park, and upgrades to Totem Pole Park and Sunny Square Park. She commented the Cable Commission Executive Committee was meeting on Thursday, March 10 to discuss the next steps to finding a new Executive Director. She explained she would be at the farmers market on Wednesday, March 9 from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. She encouraged the public to stop by and say hi.



**Pam Axberg**

Councilmember Axberg reported she attended the Economic Development Commission meeting last Wednesday where the group discussed business outreach and the benefits of local partnerships. She indicated the group also reviewed the items that were completed in 2021 and commented on its goals for 2022. She noted the group nominated Harry Charter as Chair and Jacqui Sauter as Vice Chair. She indicated now was the time for residents to get out and purchase Girl Scout Cookies and noted this could be done at Cub Foods.

**Abdullahi Abdulle**

Councilmember Abdulle reported the Planning Commission would be meeting on Tuesday, March 15 at 6:30 p.m. He noted he would be attending the Ramsey County League of Local Government meeting on Friday, March 11.

**Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas**

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas thanked staff and the Council for all of their efforts at the recent strategic planning session. She appreciated all of the conversation and ideas that came out of this session. She reported the community was now at the two year anniversary of the COVID pandemic and she sent a huge thank you to City staff for all of their leadership during this time. She understood the pandemic has been a huge strain on the community and encouraged the public to focus on what the new normal would look like going forward. She discussed a conversation she had with County Chair Trista MatasCastillo. She reported the Equity Commission would be meeting next on Thursday, March 17.

**Adjournment**

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas adjourned the meeting at 8:09 p.m.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.



Kari Niedfeldt-Thomas, Mayor

ATTEST:



Terri Spangrud, City Clerk