

**WILLMAR CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS**  
**COUNCIL CHAMBERS**  
**WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES BUILDING**  
**WILLMAR, MINNESOTA**

August 20, 2013  
4:45 p.m.

The special meeting of the Willmar City Council was called to order by the Honorable Mayor Frank Yanish. Members present on a roll call were Mayor Yanish, Council Members Denis Anderson, Ron Christianson, Steve Ahmann, Audrey Nelsen, Tim Johnson, Jim Dokken, Rick Fagerlie and Bruce DeBlieck; Present 9, Absent 0.

Also present were City Administrator Charlene Stevens, Police Chief David Wyffels, Finance Director Steve Okins, Planning and Development Services Director Bruce Peterson, Fire Chief Gary Hendrickson, City Attorney Robert Scott, and City Clerk Kevin Halliday.

The Council considered the recommendation of the Brimeyer-Fursman Organizational Study beginning with City Administrator Stevens review of Option A and B of the External Services. Ms. Stevens stated that Option B is closer to the current structure but calls for a "facilities maintenance" position, suggesting it could be an Assistant Engineer/Facilities Maintenance under the City Engineer (not Public Works Superintendent). Option A would offer a coordinated effort for External Services.

Council Member Ahmann said a job description, duties and responsibilities for the newly created Community Services Director were needed before creating the position, and that the City Engineer took care of all those duties in the past. He felt the present system has been working fine for years.

Council Member Anderson stated that the City needs a City Engineer that can do engineering work rather than administration and supervisory work. Mr. Anderson opined that the status quo is not where the City needs to be.

Council Member Dokken said job descriptions were needed and inquired as to how does the proposal mesh with the City's Mission Statement.

Council Member DeBlieck questioned why job descriptions would be written for positions under the different options that the City might not even fill. He favored looking at the basic structure and then creating job descriptions.

Council Member Christianson felt the Options created a centralized power and made for a top-heavy government. He said the present structure has worked for 20 years and that the Council was bullied into the study by outside forces within the City that are trying to run the City behind their backs and he didn't like it. Mr. Christianson said the City needs to hire an Engineer and Assistant Engineer and get the Department up to speed.

Council Member Nelsen felt the Council should step back and look at the big picture, stating work isn't being done like it was 20 years ago nor is it going to be done like that 10 years into the future. She stated the Council should be brave enough to look at this and to do something different, have faith, to look forward. Regarding Council Member Christianson's bullied comment, Ms. Nelsen said she didn't believe it is the opinion of the community nor the people who participated in the study.

Council Member Ahmann inquired as to the efficiencies. City Administrator Stevens stated Option A offers individuals working at the same level and they can go quickly from one to another and stay on the same playing level, not go up the ladder and that hiring a facility maintenance supervisor dedicated to all City

facilities will free up each Department Directors' responsibility for their building and it offers cross-training efficiencies.

Council Member Dokken stated we need research and facts that demonstrate to the Council we will be doing the right thing.

Council Member Johnson inquired as to the effect on labor contracts.

Council Member Ahmann inquired as to what the City would be changing with creating a new position and further reiterated that the City Engineer should be in charge of Public Works.

Council Member Johnson reminded the Council the Charter requires Council approval of Department Directors and doesn't want that changed. Secondly, he requested exploration of a Human Resource Director with Willmar Municipal Utilities.

Council Member Nelson stated opposition to the position that the City Engineer must be in charge of Public Works.

Council Member Christianson opined that a City with a 20,000 population is not a huge city and we don't need a complicated flow chart. No need for big change and opposed the City Engineer reporting to the Community Service Director.

Council Member DeBlieck questioned if, under Option A, the "Community Service Director" is the best title selection.

Mayor Yanish questioned how either option affected the City Administrator duties.

Council Member Christianson stated our job is to set policy, manage our managers and have faith in our department heads. Making department heads report to someone other than City Administrator is wrong.

Following a lengthy discussion, Council Member Christianson moved to leave the organizational chart unchanged, hire a City Engineer, Assistant City Engineer and fill the Survey Technician position, and to start discussions with the Willmar Municipal Utilities on a shared Human Resource position. Council Member Dokken seconded the motion which carried on a roll call vote of Ayes 5, Noes 3 – Council Member Anderson, Nelsen and DeBlieck voted "No."

Council Member Anderson recommended the Council consider a retreat to continue discussing needed direction for the City.

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m. upon motion by Council Member Ahmann, seconded by Council Member Christianson, and carried.

Attest:

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MAYOR

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SECRETARY TO THE COUNCIL