

**OSSEO CITY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION MINUTES
January 29, 2024**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Duane Poppe called the work session of the Osseo City Council to order at 6:03 p.m. on Monday, January 29, 2024.

2. ROLL CALL

Members present: Councilmembers Juliana Hultstrom, Ashlee Mueller, Mark Schulz, and Mayor Duane Poppe.

Members absent: Councilmember Alicia Vickerman.

Staff present: City Administrator Riley Grams, Public Works Director Nick Waldbillig, Police Chief Shane Mikkelson and Interim Fire Chief Mike Cogswell.

Others present: Rebecca Kurtz, Ehlers & Associates; Dan Greuel, Oertel Architects.

3. AGENDA

Council agreed to discuss the work session items.

4. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. DISCUSS CITY FACILITIES NEEDS REPORT

Grams stated the Osseo City Council held a work session on July 31, 2023 to discuss the current state of the City's aging City Hall and Public Safety building. At that meeting, Staff discussed the myriad of issues surrounding the current facility, and the need to consider a rehabilitated or completely new facility in the very near future. The current building was originally constructed in the 1960s, and is outdated with aging utilities, inadequate ADA entrances and usable spaces, no windows in the Staff office area, a host of water drainage issues and not enough space to house the increased Police Department. Additionally, the Fire Department space does not fit the current industry standards, and the entire facility does not currently meet the service needs of the community, nor will it meet the future service needs of the community.

Grams reported the Council gave directions at that work session to bring forward a proposal to work with a local architecture firm to conduct a facility needs assessment. The Council approved a proposal from Oertel Architects, through local firm Rochon, to conduct the study at the August 14, 2023, Council meeting. Since then, Staff has met with representatives from Oertel Architects several times to begin the process of examining the current facilities, discuss with Department Heads the future requirements and service demands, and develop concept options for the City Council to consider this evening.

Grams explained we began by completing a comprehensive review of the existing City Hall, Public Safety spaces, Public Works building, and Sipe and Boerboom Parks to gain an understanding of how the current spaces are being utilized and where deficiencies and inefficiencies are. Next, we met with the City's Department Heads to discuss each Department's service requirements and general industry best practices for facilities. We talked extensively about the minimum needs for each Department, as well as a lengthy wish list of things that should be included in this project.

Grams stated we then toured several neighboring City Hall/Public Safety buildings to gain an understanding of how those communities either rehabilitated existing structures or built all new facilities to meet the needs of their communities. These were eye-opening tours, which included the cities of New Hope, Champlin and Fridley. Our group gained valuable insights and recommendations from those tours that we should consider and incorporate into our proposed project. We then met again in our large group setting to review and discuss the high-level concept options that Oertel Architects developed based on our previous discussions and tours, which we will review the Council on Monday night. Finally, we also toured the old Osseo Press building, which the City Council is considering for purchase for future public use.

Grams explained the recommendation is for the City Council to carefully explore the information presented in the work session and reach a general consensus about how the City should proceed with this project. My hope is that general direction will be provided so that Staff can narrow our focus and further explore the preferred option(s). At some point in the near future, the City Council will likely host another work session with Staff providing further context and more concrete information on whatever the preferred option(s).

Police Chief Mikkelson commented on the growing needs of the police department. He explained he concern was with the fact the department was adding five officers, which would grow the department out of its current space. He reported he currently shares an office with Lieutenant Kintzi and the police server. He noted he has an interview room, a roll call/training/multi-use room, an officer area, and all officers are doubled up with office/desk space. He stated he currently has 10 officers using six desks. He explained he recently ordered additional lockers for the locker rooms. He commented on the condition of the storage and evidence room, noting he was currently storing everything in one room. He commented on how important it would be for him and Lieutenant Kintzi to have their own offices. In addition, he would like to have an office for a detective and CSO's or reserves. He noted it would be nice to have a general area or space for each officer to have a desk or cube.

Police Chief Mikkelson stated he liked how the New Hope Police Department was laid out. He indicated it would be his focus to keep all of his officers together. He explained he would also like to have a dedicated defensive tactics room and roll call room. He reported he would need both a men's and women's locker room and a wish list item would be a workout gym. He commented on the benefits of having a workout room for his officers, noting the City currently pays gym fees for his officers. He indicated the police department should also have a dedicated bay for lock up. He further discussed how the department would need an additional storage area that would also serve as an armory. He asked that two interview rooms also be included in the new police

department, noting one would serve as a soft interview room for victims and children. A last item on his list was secure parking for personal cars for all officers.

Schulz asked if the City currently had an emergency operations center. Police Chief Mikkelson stated this space should be within the police department or at City Hall. He recommended this space be below ground for safety purposes. Grams reported this could be a shared space between City Hall and the police department.

Mueller asked if the Police Chief would prefer to have a standalone building. Police Chief Mikkelson explained this would depend on the options and how the police department is set up. He reported if the main operational part of the department was on the second floor, he would rather be by himself because he wanted to keep all of his officers on one level.

Interim Fire Chief Cogswell commented how the fire department was in need of more space. He reported the apparatus bay was not wide enough at this time. He stated all gear and equipment was quite cramped in the bay at this time. In addition, all of the gear all smelled of diesel because the gear was stored in the bay. He discussed how a gear room would greatly benefit the fire department.

Schulz recommended an exhaust containment system be installed in the fire department.

Interim Fire Chief Cogswell stated he would hope to have more office space with in the new fire department along with a larger training room and more storage. He explained it would be great to have a hose tower. He reported all apparatus was backed into the fire station at this time and commented on how beneficial it would be to have a drive thru station with room for two trucks. He agreed that a workout room would be great for his firefighters to have access to. He commented on how there was a need for dedicated parking for his firefighters. He stated locker rooms were another need for the department to assist with removing contaminants before firefighters go home from calls. He stated it would be his wish to have the fire department combined with City Hall and the police department.

Waldbillig reviewed photos of the exterior of City Hall with the Council. He explained the west ramp was in poor condition as was the railing He reported the concrete was sloped towards the entry door, which pushes water into the building. He commented further on how large rain events were troublesome for City Hall. He discussed how the building was lacking ADA entries. He reported the entrance from Central Avenue led to a split entry. He further reviewed photos of the interior of City Hall and described how the building was laid out. He discussed the areas within City Hall that have water damage.

Waldbillig then reviewed photos from the Public Works Facility. He commented on how the space surrounding the building was reduced when the 169 sound wall was installed. He indicated the fencing around public works needs work. He stated he believes he has adequate space at this time but would like additional cold storage space. In addition, he would like an on call area for his workers to watch the weather in the winter months and to have a functional locker room area. He indicated a portion of the Public Works Facility is used for Lions storage and he would like this space back.

Waldbillig commented on the plans for Sipe Park. He explained the building at Sipe Park needs to be replaced. He stated this may be a better place for the Lions storage items. In addition, the park equipment within Sipe Park needs updating. He noted the tennis court was currently striped for pickleball, but did need to be redone.

Grams stated he would like for his Staff to have windows and larger conference spaces for meetings. He indicated he would like to have Staff only restrooms and dedicated elections storage. He reported ADA compliant entrances and restrooms were also a need. He explained it would be nice to have a dedicated eating space for Staff. He stated the County would like to maintain a library space in Osseo going forward. He recommended a shared workout space be pursued for the new City Hall that could be used by all Staff. He indicated he would also like the Council Chambers updated and inviting.

Rebecca Kurtz, Ehlers & Associates, provided the Council with information on how a new City Hall facility could be financed. She stated the challenge would be that in Minnesota there are limited ways a City can issue debt and pay for projects such as this. She reported police, fire, City Hall and public works facilities are to be paid for through property taxes. She discussed how debt could be issued and explained if the City maxed out their taxing authority this would provide the City with \$13.6 million. She encouraged the Council to continue to explore grants and other funding opportunities for this project. She reminded the Council there was still outstanding debt on the police department expansion and this debt would be outstanding until 2035. She noted the balance remaining was \$680,000. She indicated this debt would have to be paid off prior to building a new City Hall on this site.

Schulz stated the Council would have to find a way to shrink the numbers by \$5 to \$8 million. Ms. Kurtz explained she would be working with Staff on this matter.

Dan Greuel, Oertel Architects, reviewed the preliminary facilities needs report and summarized the concept plans with the Council. He stated he created four options (A, B, C and D) for the Council to consider and noted the pros and cons for each option.

- Option A would remodel City Hall on the current site.
- Option B would create a new build on the current site.
- Option C would flip City Hall to Boerboom Park.
- Option D would flip City Hall to Boerboom Park and move the police department off campus.

Schulz recommended another option be consider that would remodel City Hall on the current site and moves the police off site. Mr. Greuel stated this could be considered.

Schulz indicated at this time he liked Option B with the police moving offsite.

Mueller asked if it would make sense to have police and fire both offsite. Mr. Greuel indicated he had considered moving both police and fire to the press building. However, with the size of the vehicles this would be impossible.

Schulz stated there were a lot of reasons the Council were looking into a new building and now the Council was having to consider the financial aspect. He reported realistically none of these options were viable at this point in time. He indicated the Council would have to find a way to think outside the box. He commented on how it would be nice to expand the fire department, but stated he believed the police department needs their own station. He reiterated that he would like to keep City Hall on this property and perhaps it could be done in phases, moving the police department offsite.

Mr. Greuel stated phasing would be an option for the City noting costs may be higher in the end.

Schulz explained he understood this may be the case, but noted this may be the only option for the City to move this project forward given the City's borrowing potential. He believed at this point in time, it did not make sense to remodel City Hall, which meant Option A was out. He was of the opinion moving over to Boerboom Park was too expensive.

Mueller indicated this option would allow the City to remain operational through the construction phase.

Mr. Greuel explained with Option B, he had put \$1.2 million into the budget in order to fund modifications to the press building for City Hall Staff and police members.

Grams stated his main concern was keeping police and fire services operational over a two year build timeframe. He anticipated finding office space for City Hall Staff would be easier to accommodate in the community. He commented on how a new build on Boerboom Park provides some advantages because City Hall would remain operational.

Schulz indicated this may be the case, but it would also cost the City \$5 million more. He understood the concerns of Staff, but at this time, he supported Option B with an offsite police department. He stated temporary accommodations for police and fire would have to be taken into consideration with each of these plans.

Grams stated one other complicating factor was if the current City Hall was not kept operational, the City would have to find a public meeting space to conduct and broadcast City meetings.

Schulz indicated the Council and Staff would have to get creative and could possibly use the public works facility for a short time.

Mueller reported for 2020 and 2021 all meetings were done remotely. Grams stated the same provisions may not be in place to allow for this.

Mr. Greuel explained he had rough plans for the police department in the press building noting this would include a sizeable garage addition to this building for the squad cars. He indicated this conversion would include a temporary placement of City Hall in this building.

Schulz stated this may be the best option for the City to achieve its short term goals. In addition, this building would provide adequate space for the police department going forward.

Hultstrom explained one of the things the Council has identified going forward was a municipal dispensary. She suggested this be included in the City Hall plans.

Schulz reported the dispensary would require 3,000 square feet of space. He noted there was only one vacant property on Central Avenue at this time. He discussed how getting a dispensary online first to market could assist with offsetting costs going forward.

Grams stated if allowable by the State, revenues from a dispensary could be used to pay down bond debt. He indicated another option for the Council to consider would be a local area sales tax, but noted there was currently a moratorium on this at the State level.

Mr. Greuel commented on the rough plans he had for the public works facility noting they were currently short on cold storage and office space. He stated a covered, three sided cold storage addition was being proposed.

Schulz indicated this was a cost effective solution.

Mr. Greuel discussed the site changes proposed for Sipe Park noting a 30' x 50' wood shed building was proposed for park and Lions storage space.

Schulz stated another option would be for the Lions to find their own storage space so public funds are not being used for private storage. He reported grants could be pursued for the playground equipment or charitable gambling funds could be considered for the park renovations. Mr. Greuel stated this would be an option for the City.

Schulz reiterated the City would have to find ways to think outside the box because the project could not be funded at this time. He reported the Council may have to look at other ways to bring revenue in. One way to pursue additional funding would be to speak to the legislature requesting bonding money. He stated another option would be to not move forward with this project.

Hultstrom indicated she did not like the idea of separating the police department from City Hall.

Mueller commented after listening to all the needs she questioned if there would be three or four separate break rooms, or would there be one break room. She had hoped that there would be more shared spaces. Mr. Greuel explained the police department would have their own break room and conference space/roll call room. He indicated there would be shared spaces noting the council chambers would serve as the emergency operations center. However, if the police department was moved off site, these spaces would not be shared.

Hultstrom stated she would like to keep police, fire and City operations together. She explained this may work best on the Boerboom Park property. She indicated the community center space would be easier to relocate than the police department.

Schulz questioned how many square feet the renovated community center would be. Mr. Greuel stated the community center would be just shy of 4,000 square feet and the current community center was 3,000 square feet. He proposed the new space have more storage and an updated kitchen.

Hultstrom indicated the press building may be the best option for the community center. She stated after reviewing all of these options, none of them work for her. She believed the plans were grandiose in design, but did not provide a proper solution for Osseo. She recommended the plans be reconsidered to excluding the community center.

Mr. Greuel questioned if the library should be removed, along with the community center.

Hultstrom believed this would be the best option for the City. She indicated it would be easiest to move these two operations offsite and have them placed in a renovated building. She believed it was in the best interest of the City to keep City Hall, police and fire in the same building.

Mr. Greuel stated moving the community center offsite would be a good option for the City.

Further discussion ensued regarding the option of moving the community center offsite and converting the current community center into additional police space.

Police Chief Mikkelson indicated he does not see how it would work to renovate the existing City Hall and community center space to create more police space given the current entry and exit points. He reported he needs additional garage space. He stated he could support a rebuild of City Hall with police and fire, moving the community center offsite. He commented further on the dedicated spaces he would like to have for the police department, which included office space, training and workout area. He noted he would like to have the police space to be all on one level.

Grams stated one option for the Council to consider would be to put a community center and library building in Boerboom Park. He indicated these uses coexist and this would make sense. He reported this change would free up space on the City Hall site, but the issue would still remain the cost of the overall project. He asked if there was an option that would keep the new police department addition and then a new City Hall and police space could be built around it with shared and combined spaces for City Hall, police and fire.

Hultstrom commented on how important it would be to share core spaces between the City operations, police and fire, versus building three separate spaces.

Police Chief Mikkelson reported if the police department addition were saved, he would still need another space to operate out of during construction. He discussed how the

press building would have to be renovated in order to accommodate a secure space for the police department. He indicated a temporary police space would be difficult to create, and it would be costly.

Grams stated that was why the flip flopping between the City Hall and park property was an option for the Council to consider.

Schulz asked how much space the police department would occupy on the new plan. Mr. Greuel stated the police department would occupy 18,000 square feet.

Hultstrom asked if the Police Chief wanted to remain connected to City Hall, or have an offsite police department. Police Chief Mikkelson explained he didn't have an opinion about this, noting his main concern was that his space remain on one level. He stated he could support remaining on the City Hall campus. He reported shared space between the police, fire and City Hall Staff would be limited given the security that was needed for his officers. He commented on how important it was for his officers to feel safe when they come to work.

Grams requested the Council provide him with direction on how to proceed with the concept plans.

Mueller asked if the footprint for Option C would be big enough to meet the needs of City Hall Staff, police and fire if the community center and library were removed. Mr. Greuel reported Option C would move the project over to Boerboom Park and there was much more space available on that site. He indicated the existing City Hall site had more constraints given the location of the water tower and the two commercial properties.

Schulz stated the Council could look at purchasing the two commercial properties on this block and possibly moving the water tower across the street. He explained he was having a really hard time with eliminating Boerboom Park. Grams indicated the park would be rebuilt on the City Hall property after construction of the new City Hall was complete.

Hultstrom supported the library and community center be moved offsite from City Hall. She commented on how many headaches would be created during construction and questioned where all the dogs in the City would be walked. Grams reported there would be headaches with any of the options. He reiterated that the greenspace would not go away permanently, but rather there would be temporary issues that the City would have to work through.

Schulz explained he did not support the flip flopping of City Hall onto Boerboom Park given the extra cost and loss of greenspace. He stated he was trying really hard to be patient to find a solution that keeps the police department on the City Hall campus.

Mr. Greuel stated he has heard two options from the Council that they would like to further consider. He explained Option 1 would be to remove the community center and library from the City Hall campus and constructing a new building on the park property, as well as moving the council chambers. He noted this option would include saving a portion of the police department. Option 2 would be to build City Hall, police and fire

across the street. He stated a park would then be constructed on the existing City Hall campus, along with a community center and library to the east.

Grams supported the Council further exploring both of those options. He suggested Option 1 include temporarily housing City Hall, police and fire at the community center/library building in Boerboom Park.

Schulz indicated he was trying to wrap his mind around how much money was being spent on keeping a library in the community that was not well utilized. He explained this may assist the City in reducing the amount of money that is spent on temporarily housing Staff during construction. He commented further on how the City would have to work to temporarily house essential services.

Poppe questioned if it would be beneficial to tear down the press building and use the site for temporary space versus trying to retrofit it. Mr. Greuel stated the press building has a clear span roof structure and all interior walls are partitioned.

Schulz stated he was having a hard time wrapping his head around having the community center and library across the street. He indicated this could make sense. Grams reported this option would keep the police on the City Hall campus, but this option would not assist in reducing costs.

Schulz commented the Council still had to find a way to fund this project. He indicated that one of the ways to assist with funding this project going forward would be to have a dispensary.

Mueller asked how big the library would be. Mr. Greuel reported the library would be 1,300 square feet.

Grams explained if the community center, library and council chambers were moved to the park property, there would be more than enough space to have a dispensary on the City Hall campus.

Mr. Greuel indicated this may be tricky because the dispensary would require parking. He noted the press building would be large enough for a dispensary and something else.

Schulz questioned where the fire trucks would be moved during construction. He asked if a temporary structure could be built at public works. Grams stated this was why the flip flop option would be beneficial.

Schulz stated while this would be an easier transition, it would cost the City \$5 to \$10 million more. He explained the press building would address many of the City's pressing needs. He recommended another option be considered moving police offsite with all remaining services remaining on the existing City Hall campus. While he understood the County wanted to keep a library in Osseo, he suggested future plans come with and without the library. He stated the County should be approached to assist with funding a new library.

Grams commented on how moving the Council Chambers across the street to the park may be beneficial because the community center would have ample parking.

Hultstrom believed the City had to look at other options, noting the community center could be used for office space on a temporary basis. She questioned if there was a way to keep the existing police addition in place.

Mr. Greuel explained this space could potentially be saved, but it could not be used during construction. He stated he understood this project was a difficult assignment.

Schulz appreciated that the Council was approaching options that would better meet the needs of the City.

Hultstrom recommended the priorities of the Council be further considered.

Grams stated he would meet together with the team in order to hone in on the needs and wants in order to come up with new plans for the City Hall campus.

Schulz recommended the Sipe Park improvements be completed as a separate project and that Staff pursue grants to assist with this project. It was his hope that improvements could be made in the park yet this year.

Poppe questioned how other cities have managed renovations or new City Hall projects. Mr. Greuel stated Columbia Heights moved across the street and Fridley moved down the street. He reported Hilltop would be building in the park and the existing building would then be torn down and a park would be built.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The Work Session adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Guenther
Minute Maker Secretarial