



**DRAFT**

Approved: October 24, 2022

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**CITY OF ARDEN HILLS, MINNESOTA  
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 26, 2022  
7:00 P.M. - ARDEN HILLS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

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**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, Mayor David Grant called to order the regular City Council meeting at 7:00 p.m.

**Present:** Mayor David Grant, Councilmembers Brenda Holden, Fran Holmes, David Radziej, and Steve Scott

**Absent:** None

**Also present:** City Administrator Dave Perrault; Public Works Director/City Engineer David Swearingen; Finance Director Gayle Bauman; Community Development Director Jessica Jagoe; and Assistant to the City Administrator/City Clerk Julie Hanson

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**MOTION:** Councilmember Holden moved and Councilmember Holmes seconded a motion to approve the meeting agenda as presented. The motion carried (5-0).

**2. PUBLIC INQUIRIES/INFORMATIONAL**

**Kaisa Eno**, 4132 James Circle, explained she has been a resident of Arden Hills since 2015 and has lived in the area since she was a young girl. She stated she has concerns regarding the intersection at US Highway 10 and Highway 96. She indicated this was a major artery in the community and the community's safety was a concern. She reported a week ago a 23 month old child was lost at this intersection due to a crash. She reviewed several photos of the intersection with the Council and encouraged the Council to speak with the County regarding safety at this intersection. She recommended the traffic lights be moved in order to provide greater visibility and that the flashing left turn yellow lights be eliminated.

**Brian Steele**, 5793 Churchill Street, stated he has lived in Shoreview for the past 35 years. He explained he agreed with much of what Ms. Eno has said. He noted he drives through the intersection of US Highway 10 and Highway 96 often and it was dangerous. He reported there has

been two serious accidents with three fatalities at this intersection. He recommended the flashing left turn yellow lights be eliminated. He asked the Council and Ramsey County to consider making changes at this intersection to improve driver safety.

**Megan Schletty**, 4137 James Circle, stated she supported all of the comments that Ms. Eno made. She reported she plans to be a long time Arden Hills resident and she has two young children. She indicated she would like the safety at the intersection of US Highway 10 and Highway 96 improved.

**Bill Gillies**, 1736 Crystal Avenue, commented on the US Highway 10 and Highway 96 intersection. He stated he taught AARP classes and did not believe the intersection needed to change, but rather believed people needed to be more observant while driving.

**Susan Steele**, 5793 Churchill Street in Shoreview, thanked Ms. Eno for sharing her concerns. She commented on how flashing yellow left turn lights were confusing to young drivers. She thanked Ramsey County for turning the flashing yellow off for the safety of the public.

### 3. RESPONSE TO PUBLIC INQUIRIES

None.

### 4. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

#### A. Ramsey County Update on Highway 96 and Old Highway 10 Intersection

**Brian Isaacson**, Public Works Director for Ramsey County, thanked the Council for its time. He stated this was a difficult time for him to be before the City. He discussed how Ramsey County was responsible for putting infrastructure in place in a human environment and that he would be working to make it better.

**Brad Estoehen**, Traffic Engineer with Ramsey County, explained transportation systems are complex and unfortunately something failed last Monday. He reported upon learning about the crash last Monday Ramsey County completed a site assessment and assisted with cleanup. He stated he knew the history of this intersection and anticipated there would be expectations or concerns expressed regarding the safety of the intersection. He indicated he immediately assessed if the signal was operating as anticipated. He found the signal was operating as intended. He explained Ramsey County staff made a determination to suspend the flashing yellow arrow on Monday afternoon while they further investigated the crash. He stated this was done out of an abundance of caution. He commented on other considerations that are being made for this intersection in order to improve safety.

**Mr. Isaacson** reported Ramsey County was still investigating the details of the crash and his intention would be to make changes after fully analyzing the intersection.

**Mayor Grant** indicated the flashing yellow arrow would no longer be on from 6:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. He questioned why the flashing yellow arrow was not eliminated all day long.

**Mr. Estochen** commented that MNDOT makes recommendations regarding flashing yellow arrows based on national standards and studies. He stated the amount of vehicles making a left turn was also considered.

**Mayor Grant** asked if there was adequate queuing in the left turn lane.

**Mr. Estochen** reported there was adequate queuing in the left turn lane for most operations. He noted there was some flexibility to adjust the timing for the signal for a longer green arrow. He indicated it was all about balancing the operations.

**Mr. Isaacson** stated this was part of the evaluation that Ramsey County staff would be further investigating.

**Mayor Grant** questioned if the location of the traffic signals was being reviewed by Ramsey County.

**Mr. Estochen** indicated this would be reexamined.

**Mr. Isaacson** explained some physical changes were relatively easily made and others were more complicated and would take more time. He stated as Ramsey County evaluates this intersection they would be looking at what were long term ideas versus what can be done in the short term.

**Mayor Grant** reported the safety of citizens was a high priority for the City Council. He questioned how long Ramsey County would be evaluating this intersection and inquired if Ramsey County would be willing to present the evaluation to the City upon completion.

**Mr. Isaacson** stated he does not have an exact timeframe and noted he would be willing to report back to the City Council when it was complete.

**Councilmember Holden** asked if the only change that was made to the intersection, at this time, was that the flashing yellow arrow had been shut off from 6:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

**Mr. Isaacson** reported this was the case.

**Councilmember Holden** stated when the girls were killed in 2016, the City was told by the County there would be a criminal investigation. She inquired if there had been an investigation on this intersection in between the fatal accidents. She commented there have been many other accidents at this dangerous intersection.

**Mr. Estochen** explained Ramsey County evaluates the performance of 1,500 intersections each year. He reported the whole system is evaluated along with individual details such as crash performance.

**Councilmember Holden** questioned who was responsible for the timing or phasing for this intersection, the County or MNDOT.

**Mr. Estochen** commented the intersection at Highway 96 and Old Snelling was operated by Ramsey County.

**Councilmember Holden** encouraged Ramsey County to consider all of the events that occur at the school which increases the amount of traffic using this intersection. She suggested Ramsey County speak with the school about timing for this signal in order to improve traffic safety.

**Mr. Isaacson** stated he has had conversations with the school.

**Councilmember Holmes** commented on how the first accident at this intersection occurred when it was dark. She noted the girls were turning left and the car that hit them was traveling 80 miles per hour. She believed turning off the flashing yellow arrow from 6:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday through Friday would not work. She recommended the flashing yellow arrow be turned off completely.

**Mayor Grant** discussed how there would be increased traffic in this area once development occurs at Rice Creek Commons. He encouraged Ramsey County to take this into consideration when completing their evaluation on this intersection. He stated this was a dangerous intersection and it was dangerous all day long.

**Councilmember Holden** recommended Ramsey County take into consideration the amount of school traffic that was using this intersection every day of the week, because events occur at the school on the weekends and after regular school hours. She stated she was disappointed that the Ramsey County Commissioner was not in attendance. She asked if she had been providing any direction or insight on this intersection.

**Mr. Isaacson** explained he understood where the City Council was coming. However, he noted he did not believe the City Council wanted Ramsey County rushing through the evaluation process. He stated it was his job to be deliberate and thoughtful when making infrastructure changes. He reported he has been in close contact with the Ramsey County Commissioner for this area to discuss the plan for the area.

**Councilmember Holden** indicated she would rather give up a minute of her life at this intersection than to lose another life at the flashing left arrow.

**Councilmember Radziej** thanked Ramsey County for acting quickly to address the concerns of the City at this intersection. He stated he looked forward to learning more from Ramsey County once their evaluation was completed.

**Councilmember Scott** thanked Mr. Isaacson and Mr. Estochen for attending this meeting and for speaking to the public regarding this intersection. He encouraged Ramsey County to seek a solution that was out of the norm in order to improve safety at this intersection.

**Mayor Grant** asked what would keep Ramsey County from turning off the flashing yellow arrow all day long.

**Mr. Estochen** reported as traffic volumes go down, the probability of a crash occurring with a flashing yellow arrow also goes down. He indicated it was then about managing the risk. He commented if 2% of the traffic was going through this intersection at 2:00 a.m. they had to determine if a managed green left arrow was required or if this could be completed on a flashing yellow arrow.

**Mayor Grant** stated the entire community was hurting right now. He explained he was in favor of waiting at this intersection for one more minute in order to improve traffic safety for the entire community. He encouraged Ramsey County to be thorough with its study and stated he looked forward to hearing back from Ramsey County regarding this intersection in the future.

**Mr. Isaacson** reported he understood the community was hurt and noted he was part of the community as well.

## 5. STAFF COMMENTS

### A. Transportation Update

**Public Works Director Swearingen** reported the Lexington Avenue reconstruction project was now open to traffic for one lane north bound and one lane south bound. He stated this would continue as work continues as the County continues work on the southbound lanes. He encouraged residents with questions or concerns to contact Ramsey County for further information.

**Public Works Director Swearingen** stated Ramsey County has closed New Brighton Road in both directions to replace a failing storm culvert. He reported the project should be completed and open to traffic by Monday, September 26.

### B. Clean Up Day Update

**City Administrator Perrault** stated Clean Up Day will be held on Saturday, October 1 at Recycle Technologies (formerly Green Lights Recycling) in Blaine from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. He reported further information and coupons for the Clean Up Day was available on the City's website.

### C. Election Update

**Assistant to the City Administrator/City Clerk Hanson** stated voting by absentee ballot was underway. She noted residents could vote by mail by visiting the Minnesota Secretary of State's website in order to apply for an absentee ballot. She explained residents could also contact the Ramsey County Elections Office to request an absentee ballot. If residents would like to vote in person, this could be done at the Ramsey County Library in Roseville or at the Ramsey County Elections Office in St. Paul and that additional locations would be available beginning November 1. She stated residents also had the option of voting at their designated polling place on Election Day, which was Tuesday, November 8. She encouraged people to visit the City's website for more information about elections or to call City Hall if they have questions.

**6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- A. August 15, 2022, City Council Work Session
- B. August 22, 2022, Regular City Council

**Councilmember Holden** reported she spoke with staff regarding changes she would like made to the August 22 City Council minutes.

**Councilmember Scott** explained he spoke with staff regarding changes he would like made to the August 15 work session minutes.

**MOTION:** **Councilmember Radziej moved and Councilmember Holden seconded a motion to approve the August 15, 2022, City Council Work Session meeting minutes as amended; and the August 22, 2022, Regular City Council meeting minutes as amended. The motion carried (5-0).**

**7. CONSENT CALENDAR**

- A. Motion to Approve Consent Agenda Item - Claims and Payroll
- B. Motion to Acknowledge Application of Catholic United Financial for an Exempt Permit to Conduct a Raffle with the Drawing Being March 9, 2023 with No Waiting Period
- C. Motion to Approve Resignation of Recreation Supervisor
- D. Motion to Approve Recruitment of Recreation Supervisor
- E. Motion to Approve Payment of Annual League of Minnesota Cities Membership Dues
- F. Motion to Approve Professional Services Agreement for the Little Lake Johanna and Pike Lake Stormwater Retrofit Analysis – HR Green
- G. Motion to Approve Payment No. 2 – Vinco, Inc. – Lift Station 10 Rehabilitation Project
- H. Motion to Approve Payment No. 2 – Bituminous Roadways, Inc. – City Hall Parking Lot Project
- I. Motion to Approve Amendment for Professional Services Agreement for Final Design and Construction Administration – SRF Consulting Group Inc. – Mounds View High School Trail Improvements
- J. Motion to Approve Quote for Hydrant Replacement on Grey Fox Road – Valley-Rich Co., Inc.

**MOTION:** **Councilmember Radziej moved and Councilmember Holden seconded a motion to approve the Consent Calendar as presented and to authorize execution of all necessary documents contained therein. The motion carried (5-0).**

**8. PULLED CONSENT ITEMS**

None.

## 9. PUBLIC HEARINGS

### A. Quarterly Special Assessments for Delinquent Utilities

**Finance Director Bauman** stated water customers whose accounts are 90 days past due were informed that the City intends to certify delinquent charges to Ramsey County to be collected with property taxes. These customers have the right to a hearing in front of the City Council to discuss this matter prior to certification.

**Mayor Grant** opened the public hearing at 7:51 p.m.

With no one coming forward to speak, Mayor Grant closed the public hearing at 7:52 p.m.

## 10. NEW BUSINESS

### A. Resolution 2022-041 Adopting and Confirming Quarterly Special Assessments for Delinquent Utilities

**Finance Director Bauman** stated delinquent utility amounts are certified to Ramsey County quarterly. A list of utility accounts with a delinquent balance was compiled and notices dated August 3, 2022 were mailed. These customers were informed of their delinquent status and were asked to make payment of the delinquent balance by September 19, 2022. Utility accounts with an unpaid delinquent balance would be certified to Ramsey County to be added to property taxes payable in 2023. The certification amount is equal to the unpaid delinquent balance plus an eight percent penalty. The City will request that Ramsey County levy the delinquent balances against the respective properties.

**MOTION:** Councilmember Holden moved and Councilmember Radziej seconded a motion to adopt Resolution #2022-041 – Adopting and Confirming Quarterly Special Assessments for Delinquent Utilities. The motion carried (5-0).

### B. Set Preliminary Levy and Establish Truth-In-Taxation Public Hearing Date for Proposed Taxes Payable in 2023

**Finance Director Bauman** stated State law requires that cities certify their proposed property tax levies to the county auditor by September 30th. The proposed tax levy that is given preliminary approval may be lowered but cannot be increased. Therefore, it is important that the proposed tax levy provides adequate revenues to finance the 2023 Budget. The City Council needs to decide the maximum levy that it is willing to approve and then adopt the proposed resolution. The final levy will be set in December 2022. A budget workshop was held with the Council on August 15, 2022. Staff was directed to provide proposed maximum levy increase options from 4% to 7%. There will be another budget workshop in either October or November, prior to the final levy and budget adoption meeting in December. Staff reviewed the proposed levy in further detail with the Council, commented on how the median value homeowner would be impacted and recommended the Council set a preliminary levy amount and set a date for the Truth in Taxation Hearing.

**Councilmember Holden** stated she has been told the City was not truthful in its presentation of the tax levy. She asked if the information presented was truthful.

**Finance Director Bauman** explained the information presented was truthful.

**Mayor Grant** reported the City has been awarded the MNGFOA audit award for many years, which was presented to cities based on their transparency in finances.

**Councilmember Radziej** thanked staff for all of their work on the preliminary tax levy and budget for 2023.

**Councilmember Scott** requested further information regarding how rental properties would be changing in 2023.

**Finance Director Bauman** discussed how the value of rental properties would be decreasing by 27% in 2023. She noted single family residential property values would be going up 15%.

**Councilmember Radziej** stated he was a little uncomfortable with underfunding the budget. He questioned why the City chose to underfund the budget each year.

**City Administrator Perrault** explained this was a policy decision by the City Council that stems from the conservative manner in which the City budgets.

Further discussion ensued regarding the City's previous budgets versus actual activity for the past ten years.

**Mayor Grant** commented on the percentage increase in the levy that was due to police and fire increases, which was \$117,590.

**Councilmember Holden** indicated the Fire Board was still working to finalize their budget for 2023.

**Mayor Grant** questioned how the Council wanted to proceed with the preliminary levy.

**Councilmember Holden** stated she supported moving forward with the 6% levy increase. However, after considering this further, she would recommend the Council move forward with a 6.5% or 7% increase in order to offer more COLA to City employees.

**Councilmember Holmes** explained she supported the 7% increase as well in order to provide a proper COLA increase for City employees. She reported the 7% was preliminary and this number could always go down between September and December.

**Councilmember Scott** indicated the economy was softening at this time and because of this he would support the 7% increase for the preliminary levy.

**Councilmember Radziej** agreed the 7% increase was the proper way to move the City forward for 2023.



**Mayor Grant** commented he was going to support 6%, but he understood inflation was a concern and noted he could support 6.5%.

**Councilmember Holden** discussed an article she read in the *Star Tribune* that described how increased property taxes were impacting low income residents of Minneapolis and how they were being forced out of their housing. She did not want this occurring in Arden Hills and she looked forward to further reviewing the budget before December in hopes of finding areas where reductions could be made.

**Councilmember Holmes** stated she believed it was better to raise taxes gradually than to propose large spikes.

**Mayor Grant** commented a lot of homes have turned over in Arden Hills and there were more young families in the community. He understood these residents appreciated the schools and low taxes. He stated he did not want the City stretching these families unnecessarily. He encouraged the Council to consider how these young families would be impacted, as well as the residents living in the City's affordable housing, which made up 40% of the City's housing stock.

**Councilmember Radziej** appreciated how the City was taking care of its residents by properly funding police and fire increases.

**MOTION:** **Councilmember Holden moved and Councilmember Holmes seconded a motion to adopt Resolution #2022-042 – Setting the Preliminary Levy for Taxes Payable in 2023 at 7% or \$4,785,770.**

**Mayor Grant** stated he would like to see levy reduced to 6.5%.

**Councilmember Holden** commented she believed it would be better to set the preliminary levy at 7% given the fact the Fire Board still has yet to set their budget and the Council would like to offer staff an increased COLA.

**Councilmember Scott** indicated he could support the preliminary levy being set at 7% and noted this number could always go down.

**The motion carried 3-2 (Councilmember Radziej and Mayor Grant opposed).**

**MOTION:** **Councilmember Holmes moved and Councilmember Radziej seconded a motion to adopt Resolution #2022-043 – Adopting Truth in Taxation Public Hearing Date for Proposed Taxes Payable in 2023. The motion carried (5-0).**

## 11. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

## 12. COUNCIL COMMENTS

**Councilmember Radziej** stated he attended an open house and ribbon cutting ceremony for the Royal Credit Union. He welcomed the Royal Credit Union to the community.

**Councilmember Radziej** reported he attended the North Chamber Business Council meeting at Dunn Brothers.

**Councilmember Scott** thanked all of the residents that spoke this evening during Public Comment. He also thanked the Ramsey County staff for attending this meeting.

**Councilmember Scott** noted Recreation Supervisor Joe Vaughan submitted his resignation and wished him well in his new position.

**Councilmember Holmes** thanked the residents who attended and spoke at this meeting. She also thanked the Ramsey County representatives for working to address the safety concerns on behalf of the community.

**Councilmember Holmes** stated she appreciated the improvements that were being made at the Mounds View High School and in their parking lots to address driver safety.

**Councilmember Holden** reported on Wednesday, September 28 at 5:00 p.m. the Fernwood Channel would be discussed.

**Mayor Grant** stated he also attended the Royal Credit Union grand opening.

**Mayor Grant** explained he also attended the Twin Cities North Chamber meeting at Dunn Brothers where local business owners discussed the work being done on Lexington Avenue.

**Mayor Grant** thanked the residents who spoke this evening and noted the Council would continue to work with the County to make the intersection of US Highway 10 and Highway 96 safe.

**Mayor Grant** thanked Recreation Supervisor Joe Vaughan for all of efforts on behalf of the community and wished him all the best in his position.

**Mayor Grant** commented on a parking complaint he received from a resident on Janet Court. He requested staff speak further to this matter.

**City Administrator Perrault** stated Janet Court was adjacent to Mounds View High School and their parking lot was currently under construction. He noted 30% of the parking lot was unavailable at this time. He explained the City was following up on parking complaints and would be posting “No Parking” signs along Janet Court. He reported it was his understanding the school would have the parking lot paved over MEA weekend.

**City Administrator Perrault** commented on the presentation that was made regarding the preliminary tax levy and budget and noted staff has a high level of integrity. He encouraged residents with comments or concerns regarding the City’s finances to contact him directly at City Hall.

**ADJOURN**

**MOTION: Councilmember Holden moved and Councilmember Radziej seconded a motion to adjourn. The motion carried (5-0).**

**Mayor Grant** adjourned the Regular City Council Meeting at 8:41 p.m.

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Julie Hanson  
City Clerk

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David Grant  
Mayor