

CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA

Work Session – June 12, 2023

Pursuant to due call and notice, a work session of the City Council of the City of Bemidji, Beltrami County, Minnesota, was held on Monday, June 12, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. in the Conference Room of City Hall, Mayor Prince presiding.

Upon roll call, the following Councilmembers were declared present: Prince, Peterson, Johnson, Rivera, Eaton, Thayer-via WebEx from the Lobby of Canal Park Lodge, Duluth, MN.

Staff Present: City Attorney Katie Nolting, Deputy City Clerk Rachelle Barckholtz

Others: Aimee Gourlay – LMCIT Collaboration Services Manager

Mayor Prince stated that the purpose of the work session was to discuss Proposed Council Code of Conduct.

COUNCIL CODE OF CONDUCT DISCUSSION

Mayor Prince introduced Aimee Gourlay, with the League of Minnesota Cities as the facilitator and turned to her to start the discussion. Gourlay, started the discussion with the agenda she would be following for the evening. Gourlay spoke with Nolting, Miller, Prince and Rivera before the meeting to get input for the agenda. She also did her own planning by watching council meetings and reading local news articles. This meeting is a chance to have open dialogue outside the normal process. Aspirations for the meeting is what you want to see happening and not what is happening.

Each councilmember shared their thoughts on what Code of Conduct means to them and what actions they would like to see. Gourlay received feedback from six (6) elected officials and seven (7) staff members that are typically at council meetings, and came up with the following themes:

- Meeting efficiency could be improved
- Clear expectations for conduct could increase consistency
- Relationship with staff is important and could be improved
- It may help to discuss and clarify roles and responsibilities
- Trust level is low
- Communication could be improved

There are principles for seven areas often included in a Code of Conduct that Gourlay included in the agenda. Councilmembers were asked to rate (on a scale from zero (0) to five (5)) their level of consensus on each principle, zero being “no way!” and five being “this is great!”. The tone and behaviors of individuals, is another key point in a code of conduct. Gourlay outlined a few different points for behaviors:

- What behaviors demonstrate respect for each other during meetings? Outside meetings?
- What behaviors detract from a tone of respect during meetings? Outside meetings?
- Are there any expectations for behaviors you agree could inform a Code of Conduct?

The council decided to bring Aimee back for a second session on Code of Conduct. The discussion moved to what can be brought to the next Code of Conduct work session, so that nothing is overlooked. Gourlay gave the council homework to send her items that each councilmember would like to discuss at the next code work session.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, motion by Peterson, seconded by Johnson, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Rachelle Barckholtz
Deputy City Clerk