

**Minutes**  
**Woodbury City Council**  
**Wednesday, January 10, 2024**

Pursuant to the due call and notice thereof, a regular meeting was duly held virtually and at the Woodbury City Hall, 8301 Valley Creek Road, on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of January 2024.

**Call to Order**

Mayor Anne Burt called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m., and she welcomed those attending the meeting both in person and virtually.

Mayor Burt explained that members of the public may attend the meeting in person and may also join the meeting using a computer, tablet, or smartphone. She stated public comments will be accepted during the meeting both in person and virtually. Virtual questions should be submitted via the online Q&A feature within the virtual meeting link. Questions regarding the meeting will also be taken between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. via email at [council@woodburymn.gov](mailto:council@woodburymn.gov) or at 651-714-3524. Questions received after 4:30 p.m. will be responded to in the next three to seven business days.

**Pledge to Flag**

Audience, staff, and Council pledged allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

**Roll Call**

Upon roll call the following were present: Mayor Anne Burt, Councilmembers: Kim Wilson, Andrea Date, Steve Morris, and Jennifer Santini. Absent: None

Others Present: Kimberlee K. Blaeser, City Clerk; Eric Larson, City Attorney; Clinton Gridley, City Administrator; Janelle Schmitz, Community Development Director; Michelle Okada, Parks and Recreation Director; Eric Searles, Assistant Community Development Director/City Planner, and Chris Hartzell, Engineering Director.

Mayor Burt noted that the City Council meetings will now be held at 7:30 p.m. instead of 7 p.m. because the Council has a workshop meeting before the City Council meeting begins. Moving forward, the workshop meetings will be held in the Cherry Conference Room. If there is no room available in the conference room, the meeting will be live streamed in Council Chambers.

Mayor Burt mentioned that there will be more professionalism in the meetings such as having Mayor Burt recognizing Staff and speakers before they speak. She added that more information would be coming regarding professionalism in meetings.

**Special Order of Business**

**A. K9 Ruby's Retirement**

Woodbury Police K9 Fund Founder and President Donna Stafford, 762 Lake Ridge Drive, thanked the Council, the supporters in the City, and the Public Safety Department for accepting the gift for all of the K9's. Due to medical reasons, K9 Ruby will go into retirement. She thanked officer James Stoffel for being Ruby's handler.

Sergeant Natalie Bauer recognized K9 Ruby and Officer Stoffel for their contribution and dedication to the Woodbury Police Department K9 unit over the last 4 years. Ruby has served the City with her work with patrol and SWAT team since she was certified as a police dog in 2020. Through Ruby's career, she has located suspects, evidence and illegal narcotics and has made countless situations safer for her human partners. She has taken part in nearly 100 public safety outreach or engagement events such as visiting children in schools, and meeting people at block parties. Officer Stoffel's time in the K9 unit will come to a close with Ruby's retirement. Officer Stoffel began his decoy career a decade ago. He became a K9 caretaker in 2019 and earned a spot as a handler in 2020. The City would like to thank the Woodbury Police K9 fund for fully covering the costs of K9 Buster and his end of life expenses, the purchase of K9 Ruby and Officer Stoffel's training. On behalf of the K9 Unit, she thanked Ruby and Officer Stoffel for their hard work.

Officer Stoffel mentioned that today was the last time that he and Ruby would go in the squad car together as partners. He expressed his gratitude for having this assignment with Ruby. He thanked the City and the Police Department for their support. He thanked Donna and the K9 fund since they make it possible to have the program in the City. He also thanked Sergeant Bauer for the opportunity to be a handler. He thanked his wife and kids for their support.

Councilmember Morris mentioned that a lot of people interact with the K9 program and that Ruby is the second highest selling stuffie. He added that Ruby is the first female K9 on the unit. He thanked the team for all that they do. Mayor Burt thanked Officer Stoffel, Donna Stafford, and Public Safety for all that they do for the community.

**City Council Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, January 10, 2024**

Ms. Stafford explained that the Doctor Jack Burt Family Foundation made a large donation in order to purchase Ruby and expressed her gratitude for that foundation.

**Open Forum**

The Open Forum is a portion of the Council meeting where a maximum of three persons will be allowed to address the Council on subjects, which are not a part of the meeting agenda. Persons wishing to speak must complete a sign-up sheet prior to the start of the meeting. Give the sign-up sheet to any staff person. Speakers are limited to two minutes each. The Council will listen attentively to comments but, in most instances, will not respond at the meeting. Typically, replies to the concerns expressed will be made via letter or phone call within a week.

**Consent Agenda**

All items listed under the consent agenda are considered to be routine by the City Council and will be enacted by one motion and an affirmative vote by roll call of a majority of the members present. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Councilmember or citizen so requests, in which event, the items will be removed from the consent agenda and considered a separate subject of discussion by the Council.

Mayor Burt noted that for Councilmembers, if they have a question for Staff regarding a Consent Agenda item it needs to be done by noon on Tuesday. If an item needs to be removed from the Consent Agenda it needs to be done by Tuesday evening before the meeting. Councilmember Date clarified that an item can be removed at any time but if a Councilmember wants a response from Staff they will need to do that by Tuesday.

- Item A            Approval of Council Minutes –December 13, 2023. **This item was removed the Consent Agenda and moved to the Discussion portion of the meeting.**
- Item B            South Washington Watershed District; Lease of Office Space – Public Works Building. **This item was removed the Consent Agenda and moved to the Discussion portion of the meeting.**
- Item C            To adopt the following resolution **Resolution 24-02**
- Resolution of the City of Woodbury, Washington County, Minnesota authorizing acceptance of City of Woodbury Water Treatment Plant and Pipeline Design Project Grant Amendment #2, Contract #223996 from Minnesota Pollution Control Agency in the amount of \$8,852,335 and approval of budget amendment to the Water and Sewer Utility Fund.**
- Item D            1. To adopt the following resolution **Resolution 24-03**
- Resolution of the City of Woodbury, Washington County, Minnesota authorizing the Mayor and City Administrator to Execute a Letter of Engagement with WSB, Inc. for Final Design Services, Ordering the Project, Authorizing Preparation of Plans and Specifications, and Authorizing Preparation, Acquisition and, if Necessary, Condemnation of Easements for the Woodbury Water Treatment Plant and Pipeline Project.**
2. To adopt the following resolution **Resolution 24-04**
- Resolution of the City of Woodbury, Washington County, Minnesota authorizing the Mayor and City Administrator to Execute a Letter of Engagement with Bolton & Menk, Inc. for Final Design Services, Ordering the Project, Authorizing Preparation of Plans and Specifications, and Authorizing Preparation, Acquisition and, if Necessary, Condemnation of Easements for the Woodbury Water Treatment Plant and Pipeline Project.**
3. To adopt the following resolution **Resolution 24-05**
- Resolution of the City of Woodbury, Washington County, Minnesota authorizing the Mayor and City Administrator to Execute a Letter of Engagement with Short Elliot Hendrickson, Inc. for Final Design Services, Ordering the Project, Authorizing Preparation of Plans and Specifications, and Authorizing Preparation, Acquisition and, if Necessary, Condemnation of Easements for the Woodbury Water Treatment Plant and Pipeline Project.**
4. To adopt the following resolution **Resolution 24-06**

**City Council Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, January 10, 2024**

**Resolution of the City of Woodbury, Washington County, Minnesota authorizing the Mayor and City Administrator to Execute a Letter of Engagement with Advanced Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc. for Final Design Services, Ordering the Project, Authorizing Preparation of Plans and Specifications, and Authorizing Preparation, Acquisition and, if Necessary, Condemnation of Easements for the Woodbury Water Treatment Plant and Pipeline Project.**

Item E To adopt the following resolution **Resolution 24-07**

**Resolution of the City of Woodbury, Washington County, Minnesota approving the construction services contract with Palmer West Construction Company, Inc., for the City Hall Reroof Project in the amount of \$561,300 and the associated budget amendment.**

Item F To adopt the following resolution **Resolution 24-08**

**Resolution of the City of Woodbury, Washington County, Minnesota accepting the SAP 192-589-001 Safe Streets for All (SS4A) matching fund grant and budget amendment.**

Item G To adopt the following resolution **Resolution 24-09**

**Resolution of the City of Woodbury, Washington County, Minnesota authorizing the acceptance of a Custom K9 Toy Drive Sign from Robert Thoreson Jr.**

Item H To adopt a motion designating CorTrust Bank as the City's depository of public funds for the year 2024.

Item I To adopt the following resolution **Resolution 24-10**

**Resolution of the City of Woodbury, Washington County, Minnesota for the Assessment of Utility Charges for Westwind.**

Item J To adopt the following resolution **Resolution 24-11**  
**Resolution of the City of Woodbury, Washington County, Minnesota reclassifying the Golf Course Superintendent position and Assistant Golf Course Superintendent position.**

Item K To adopt the following resolution **Resolution 24-12**

**Resolution of the City of Woodbury, Washington County, Minnesota amending Council Directive CD ADMIN-1.3 Health Care Savings Plan Policy.**

Item L The abstract of bills includes payments made from the operating or project budgets for expenses of the city. The expenditures are from all funds of the city. Any purchased contracts requiring signature of the mayor and City Administrator is hereby approved. Staff recommends approval of the abstract of bills for December 8, 2023 in the amount of \$2,807,758.13, December 15, 2023 in the amount of \$2,807,758.13, December 22, 2023 in the amount of \$1,748,132.88 and December 29, 2023 in the amount of \$999,359.70.

Councilmember Date moved, seconded by Councilmember Santini, to approve the Consent Agenda items with the exception of items 6A and 6B.

**Voting via voice:**

Kim Wilson – aye  
Andrea Date – aye  
Steve Morris – aye  
Jennifer Santini – aye  
Anne Burt – aye

**Public Hearings**

No items scheduled

**City Council Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, January 10, 2024**

**Discussion**

**A. Central Park Renovation Project; Award Contracts, Reject Bids, Amend Budget**

Parks and Recreation Director Michelle Okada provided a review and update on the Central Park renovation project. She displayed updated photos of the design. The objectives for the presentation include to review and approve the construction contracts and bid rejections, amend the budget, finalize the TIF, the playground contract, and the bonding with Central Park and Roadway Rehabilitation.

Councilmember Wilson noted that she does not remember doing a bid rejection in the past and asked why the Council would need to do so. City Engineer Chris Hartzell replied that it is not common to reject bids but this project has a specific work scope related to polishing the concrete. The recommendation is to reject the bid in order to tighten up the specification and make sure each contractor understands what they are bidding on and is not left for interpretation. Councilmember Wilson asked if it was a logistical move based on a low bid. Mr. Hartzell agreed and noted that in the past the Council would not hear about a nonresponsive bid but in this case, there were responsive bids. An advisor suggested rejecting bids since there were contractors who did not understand the bid package.

Mayor Burt asked Mr. Hartzell to explain how many contracts would be awarded. Mr. Hartzell stated that there were roughly 77 bids. There was no elevator responsive bid. The rejection of the bid is related to the polishing of the concrete. The Council is being asked to consider awarding 28 individual work scopes.

Mayor Burt asked how Staff would follow up with the two bids that would not be accepted. Mr. Hartzell replied that there would be internal discussions regarding the polishing of the concrete to see if there are any opportunities to look at any alternatives. It is likely that Staff will look into quote packages for the elevator scope and would fit in the existing appropriation.

Ms. Okada noted that a supplemental letter came to the Council. One of the lower bidders dropped out the previous night after reading the project scope. Staff have reached out to the second lowest bidder and confirmed that they do understand the project. Staff are asking for an increase for the contract but not an increase to the budget appropriation to accommodate the item. It will be accommodated through the contingency that is in place. There was a bid protest that occurred and will be pursuing litigation. Staff worked with the City's legal team the entire time. It is still Staff's recommendation to move forward with the bids as they stand.

Councilmember Morris asked what it means that the bid was contested and how that would affect the project. City Attorney Eric Larson replied that it is important to look at the responsive bids which is overseen by the construction manager. If there is a bidder that believes there are any anomalies in other bidders, they can go through the formal process of a bid protest. A bidder did a bid protest and recently raised it to a formal litigation. He mentioned that there is no basis for the claim as a matter of law and therefore will be defended accordingly. He added that he is confident that they will be able to proceed with very little hiccups to the project.

Councilmember Morris asked what the process was for a contested bid and if that would delay a project. Mr. Larson replied that it will not delay the process unless there was a court order that mentioned otherwise. In that case, the court would need to be convinced that there was a substantial basis based on the facts and matter of the law to get a restraining order.

Ms. Okada explained that Resolution 24-13 would be for the contracts. The bids came in higher than the cost estimate. Staff is requesting a slight increase. Staff have done exercises to reduce areas without changing the spirit of the Council direction. The fear of not receiving the increase is that the project will need to be adjusted in the beginning in order to maintain the majority of the contingency.

Mayor Burt asked how the value of the contingency was determined. Mr. Hartzell replied that the contingency is from the expertise of the construction manager and advisor. This project is a renovation project which usually has a higher contingency as well as an expansion project which usually has a lower contingency. On a new project there is usually a 5% contingency and a renovation typically has a 7% contingency. Staff landed on 6% contingency which would cover any unforeseen consequences or circumstances.

Ms. Okada noted that there was a slight reduction in the bond sale projection and the solar grant was about \$200 less than was originally rounded to. The main additional revenue that was added was the Ramsey Washington Watershed District.

Councilmember Wilson asked if anything would be excluded in Central Park to reduce the cost. Ms. Okada replied that Staff will continue to look at material choices and will still be able to produce the vision that Staff and the Council want. The design contingency is no longer needed so Staff were able to reduce it as part of the reductions.

Councilmember Wilson asked if it was an appropriate time to ask about the elevator. Ms. Okada replied that the elevator is not currently at a bid and will use dollars as a part of the overall appropriation. Staff do not anticipate that there will be a contract approval. It would become an owner cost within the appropriation.

City Administrator Clinton Gridley noted that if the Council approved the Resolutions tonight, the contingency would begin at a \$54,000 negative because it went from the lowest bid to the second lowest bid. Unfortunately it will be taxed. There is hope in the future to receive additional grant dollars.

**City Council Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, January 10, 2024**

Councilmember Morris asked what would happen with any unused contingency. Mr. Hartzell replied that it goes to the Community Investment Fund. Mr. Gridley added that the money would remain within the Community Investment Fund if the money is not used. The appropriation is the legal ceiling and cannot be surpassed. The end of the year fund balance will be slightly better than what is projected.

Councilmember Morris noted that the City is not levying for the capital project. Mr. Gridley stated that they are not adding to the tax levy thorough this project but instead is talking debt that is expiring and through the process of the debt creation will dedicate a portion to the project. He provided examples of how the City has worked to decrease taxes for tax payers. However, there will still be \$12 million worth of debt that the City will need to finance that will come through the taxes but it is already existing debt and levies that will have an endpoint.

Mayor Burt emphasized her gratitude for the State legislators and what they did to get some of money to help, including \$7.5 million in State bonding, a waiver on sales tax for materials that are used and the TIF.

Councilmember Wilson noted that her position on this has not changed over the past three years. She noted that while the levy is expiring, it will still be renewed and therefore tax payers will not know that technically the levy was supposed to come off. In essence, debt is being created for this since the levy should be going down. She agreed that Central Park needs to be updated and that there are repairs that are past due. She does not agree with the conference room addition or that it is stressed that additional meeting spaces are needed but the City continues to rent out the spaces to other organizations.

Councilmember Morris moved, seconded by Councilmember Date,

To adopt the following resolution

**Resolution 24-13**

**Resolution of the City of Woodbury, Washington County, Minnesota awarding construction contracts for the Central Park Renovation Project, rejection of all bids for the 03-D work scope, and authorizing the Mayor and City Administrator to sign said awarded contracts.**

**Voting via voice:**

Kim Wilson – nay  
Andrea Date – aye  
Steve Morris – aye  
Jennifer Santini – aye  
Anne Burt – aye

Councilmember Morris moved, seconded by Councilmember Date,

To adopt the following resolution

**Resolution 24-14**

**Resolution of the City of Woodbury, Washington County, Minnesota amending the Central Park budget, to accommodate bid results, owner costs, contingencies, and recognized uncertainties.**

**Voting via voice:**

Kim Wilson – nay  
Andrea Date – aye  
Steve Morris – aye  
Jennifer Santini – aye  
Anne Burt – aye

**B. Central Park Financing; Approving Laws of Minnesota 2023, Chapter 64, Article 8, Section 15, Relating to Tax Increment Financing District No. 13**

Ms. Okada explained that this item addresses the TIF aspect of the project. As part of the project and legislative priorities, the City was successful in extending the life of the TIF district. The Community Development team worked through the State process in getting approval from the County and the school district. Resolution 24-15 is the last portion of having the City's approval.

Councilmember Wilson stated that a TIF is a Tax Increment Financing which means that the properties are paying taxes but it is going into a special fund that goes into a special area. She noted that the school district and others have agreed to the extend it. She asked to clarify that the funds in the TIF were not being used for snow removal or road rehabilitation or anything like that. Ms. Okada agreed. Mr. Gridley added that the base remains part of the general value of the community benefiting all of the taxing entities but the

**City Council Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, January 10, 2024**

incremental growth of Stonecrest has gone into this fund, which was used to benefit the community by paying the cost of the skyway connection and the residual funds will go towards Central Park.

Councilmember Wilson asked when the TIF district was established. Mr. Gridley replied about 20 years ago.

Councilmember Wilson asked if the amount paid in property taxes in 2000 were going into the general fund. Mr. Gridley replied that the value is the total market value for the community and is secured. The value goes against the property taxes and affects the tax rate. Once the City adopts the TIF, the value amount is sealed. Councilmember Wilson asked if the growth was going into the TIF. Mr. Gridley agreed and that the base would stay within the total market value of the community.

Councilmember Santini noted that this project is a great example of the partnership in that the school district is benefiting from the improvements. Mayor Burt agreed and added that the County, Stonecrest and Central Park will all benefit as well.

Councilmember Morris moved, seconded by Councilmember Santini,

To adopt the following resolution

**Resolution 24-15**

**Resolution of the City of Woodbury, Washington County, Minnesota approving Laws of Minnesota 2023, Chapter 64, Article 8, Section 15, relating to Tax Increment Financing District No. 13.**

**Voting via voice:**

Kim Wilson – nay  
Andrea Date – aye  
Steve Morris – aye  
Jennifer Santini – aye  
Anne Burt – aye

**C. Central Park Lookout Ridge Playground; Contract Award**

Ms. Okada noted that the Central Park Lookout Ridge Playground is a part of the budget but requires specific Council approval because of the contract size.

Mayor Burt noted that Staff have seen the design and have been able to incorporate key components from the public feedback and asked Ms. Okada to share more details regarding that. Ms. Okada replied that Staff will continue to evaluate the project and will finalize the details once the contract is in place. Staff have been ensured through the contractor that community engagement feedback will be applied to the ultimate playground features.

Councilmember Morris noted that when the Council first saw the project, the original base project was \$450,000 and are now looking at \$488,000. He asked for clarification on the increase in price. Ms. Okada replied that the base project is \$450,000 and the responders for the request for the proposal had an opportunity to provide a voluntary flooring that could be part of their contract. The particular vendor that is being used provided a flooring proposal which increases the price to \$488,000. Mayor Burt noted that the flooring could have been a part of a separate vendor cost but instead is included in the base project cost. Mr. Hartzell added that there was a separate line item for the soft flooring which totaled about \$600,000. Ms. Okada has reduced the contingency to \$150,000 and this is within the overall appropriation that was originally planned for.

Councilmember Wilson asked there was a vision for the project and noted that she had not seen any designs since Woodbury Days. Ms. Okada replied that there are graphics online and can provide them for the Council as well. The finalization of the plan will come when the contract is approved.

Councilmember Wilson asked if they would need to approve the contract and then see what designs they can get. Ms. Okada explained that they will continue to work with the vendor like they have already been doing. They need to approve the contract to get the final renderings but there are current renderings online that include public engagement and are a part of the budget.

Councilmember Morris moved, seconded by Councilmember Date,

To adopt the following resolution

**Resolution 24-16**

**Resolution of the City of Woodbury, Washington County, Minnesota awarding the contract for the Central Park Lookout Ridge Playground Project to Commercial Recreation Specialists, with a net proposal of \$488,440, and authorizing the Mayor and City Administrator to sign said contract upon the approval of the City Attorney.**

**City Council Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, January 10, 2024**

**Voting via voice:**

Kim Wilson – aye  
Andrea Date – aye  
Steve Morris – aye  
Jennifer Santini – aye  
Anne Burt – aye

**D. Central Park Bonding; \$12,805,000 Taxable General Obligation Tax Abatement Bonds, Series 2024A; Roadway Rehabilitation Program Assessments; \$3,600,000 General Obligation Bonds, Series 2024A**

Ms. Okada explained that the City’s financial advisers presented the process through a letter. This item is the first step of the process which is calling for a public hearing on the proposed tax abatements for the purpose of issuing the bonds.

Mayor Burt noted that this item was simply to schedule the public hearing for February 14, 2024.

Councilmember Wilson noted that the Agenda Packet states that Staff recommend to set the public hearing date as March 13, 2024. Ms. Okada explained that the public hearing would be set for February 14, 2024 and the March 13, 2024 date would be for the proposal to award the sale.

Councilmember Date noted that the public hearing would be on Valentine’s Day and asked if that would limit the ability for individuals to attend. Mr. Hartzell explained that the bonding would be for the assessments and would be surprised if there would be anyone in attendance for it.

Councilmember Morris moved, seconded by Councilmember Santini,

To adopt the following resolution

**Resolution 24-17**

**Resolution of the City of Woodbury, Washington County, Minnesota calling for a public hearing on proposed property tax abatements for the purpose of issuing Tax Abatement Bonds to finance the Central Park Renovation Project and providing for the issuance and sale of General Obligation Bonds, Series 2024A, in the estimated aggregate principal amount of \$16,405,000, to finance the Central Park Renovation Project and the 2023 Roadway Rehabilitation Project.**

**Voting via voice:**

Kim Wilson – aye  
Andrea Date – aye  
Steve Morris – aye  
Jennifer Santini – aye  
Anne Burt – aye

Mr. Gridley asked for a moment to pause and noted that it was a big deal to start the process of the Central Park process since it has been worked through multiple City Councils involving the County, the school district, the Cable Commission and 18 different sources of money. This will be a free space that the community can enjoy. He mentioned that there have been many people involved in the process. He thanked the Council for their support.

Mayor Burt added that the building is 20 years old and the population has doubled since then and need to have an expansion and improvements in order to continue to grow in the community. It is also a space for the entire east metro to enjoy. She asked if there was going to be a video created for the project. Ms. Okada replied that the Cable Commission is working to put together a video to show the then, now and future of the project and will be presented at the construction kickoff.

Ms. Okada noted that the finances for the project are intricate. There may be need for inter loan fund transfers due to the nature of the reimbursements. They will all come before Council. There will be additional contracts and maintenance agreements and leases. She provided a graphic of the next steps of the project.

Mayor Burt thanked the Staff for their work. She asked when the building will be closed. Ms. Okada replied that they would like to keep the building opened and accessible for as long as possible. There will likely be portions of the building beginning to close in February in preparation for construction. There will likely be full closure to the public by March 2024. They will not know more until they meet with the contractors. Mayor Burt noted that the YMCA would remain opened and asked if the library would as well. Ms. Okada replied there will be a temporary entrance provided. The City will continue to work with the YMCA and library to communicate what access will look like.

**City Council Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, January 10, 2024**

Councilmember Wilson noted that the schedule mentions that construction will commence in quarter 2 in 2024 but asked if it would be in February 2024 instead. Ms. Okada replied that they will need to get the facility ready for construction at that time.

**E. Cooperative Agreement between the City of Woodbury and Washington County to Facilitate Transfer of the Woodbury License and Service Center Property**

Assistant Community Development Director/City Planner Eric Searles stated that the purpose of the cooperative agreement between the City of Woodbury and Washington County is to facilitate the transfer of the existing Washington County Service Center building. The transfer of the property will allow the City to use the land for the future Public Safety expansion which is planned for 2026. The proposed agreement will memorialize that in lieu of a cash compensation for the property, both the City and the County agree that the City's completion of the pedestrian connection on Woodlane Drive is a reasonable payment for the County to deed ownership of the Woodbury License and Service Center to the City.

Mr. Searles explained that the Washington County Board approved the proposed cooperative agreement during their December 18, 2023 meeting. During that meeting, numerous County Commissioners voiced their appreciation for the partnership approach between the City and the County. If the resolution is approved, the property would be transferred to the City of Woodbury by the end of 2025 or early 2026 following the de-commission of the building by Washington County. Design work for implementing the trail along Woodlane Drive would begin immediately with further Council funding actions requested via separate action sometime in 2024.

Councilmember Wilson asked if there were any estimated costs for the Woodlane Drive trail or sidewalk. Mr. Searles replied that the anticipated costs is somewhere in the range of \$1.5 million.

Councilmember Wilson asked if in essence the City was paying \$1.5 million for the property. Mr. Searles replied that she was correct. Councilmember Wilson asked if there was a previous agreement in place with the City and the County. Mr. Searles replied that the original agreement was executed in 1983 by which the City deeded the land to Washington County. There was an aspect of the agreement that identified that the City could reacquire the land through a first right of refusal and some land use approvals. As part of a collaborative approach between the Washington County and City staff, we identified that rather than going through many procedural items to walk through certain land use appropriations, it was determined, for the benefit of the taxpayer, this cooperative agreement was a better solution. Mr. Gridley added that there was going to be an appraisal process, with an unknown number. The cooperative agreement gave both the City and the County financial and deliverable certainty. He explained that since the trail or sidewalk is along a City road any right-of-way negotiations that would have been the City's responsibility, and that the City was able to better execute the trail or sidewalk because it is on a City road.

Councilmember Wilson asked if there is a vision or plan for the new Public Safety building. Mr. Hartzell replied that there is an upcoming workshop that will address that. They are currently in the first stages of collecting information. It is difficult to see a vision for the site without acquiring the Washington County site because it is a long linear parcel.

Councilmember Wilson asked Mayor Burt if she had any sort of design recommendations after attending the Mayor's Institute on City Design. Mayor Burt replied that she did not and that the Institute on City Design would help more with place-making such as enhancing the space and that there would be more information to come. Mr. Hartzell added that he is not ready to reveal any concept plans but that the Council is going to have an opportunity to weigh in on the designs at an upcoming workshop.

Councilmember Wilson stated that she struggles with the project because she likes things to be clean and crisp and to know what the deliverables are for what is being paid. She noted that she does not have clarification on where the funding source is coming from for each portion of the project. Mr. Gridley replied that the Council will have a financing approach presented once they are ready to launch on the design work. Mr. Hartzell explained that they have the appropriation for the design in 2024 but does not have the appropriation for construction which will be done through the CIP process.

Mayor Burt asked to clarify if the appropriation for the construction was for the trails and sidewalks. Mr. Hartzell agreed that it was for the trails and sidewalks.

Councilmember Morris asked Councilmember Wilson if she had a suggestion on how to proceed differently. Councilmember Wilson explained that she has had discussions to get an understanding on what the project looks like. She added that she likes to see things done in a more formal manner. She explained her concern about the sidewalk not being included with the Gold Line project and wondered if there were other items that were being overlooked. Councilmember Morris asked if Councilmember Wilson had a suggestion on how to proceed differently. Councilmember Wilson replied that she did not at this point.

Councilmember Morris moved, seconded by Councilmember Santini, to adopt a motion authorizing the Mayor and City Administrator to execute the Cooperative Agreement between the City of Woodbury and Washington County to facilitate transfer of the Woodbury License and Service Center property.

Councilmember Date mentioned that she is working to listen and understand the concerns presented, and noted she served on the Gold Line Management Committee for a short time. When it became time to submit the plan to the federal government, no changes could be made. In addition, there were restrictions on how far away a trail could be from a station and still be included. In some of the plans there were no parking facilities, and it could be a possibility that portions of the trail would not have fallen within the distance that the



**City Council Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, January 10, 2024**

federal government would have paid for the trail or a portion of the trail. She explained that when it comes to the Woodlane Drive trail, the City was planning on including that anyway and she sees the project as obtaining a free building.

Councilmember Wilson explained that she made the comment regarding the Gold Line to show what she has been wrestling with over the last couple of weeks.

**Voting via voice:**

Kim Wilson – aye  
Andrea Date – aye  
Steve Morris – aye  
Jennifer Santini – aye  
Anne Burt – aye

**F. Approval to Revise CD-Council-2.9 City Council Compensation**

Mayor Burt noted that there was a long discussion during the November 4, 2023 workshop regarding the item.

Councilmember Wilson stated that she did not attend the November 4, 2023 workshop meeting. She explained that she understood that it will be sent to Audit and Investment so they can take a look and decide if it will be approved or not. She asked if it was an appropriate way to do it or if Audit and Investment should come up with the compensation. She added that often times when the Council provides direction, it does not allow commissions to have more space to come up with an idea.

Mayor Burt stated that it has been something that has been discussed over the last few years. In this case, it has become clear that Audit and Investment needs a bit of direction. The Council came together and worked on this and wants to ensure that the compensation for Council and the Mayor are appropriate for the amount of time and effort that is put into the roles. Due to Covid, increases that are normally done were not done.

Councilmember Santini noted that it is difficult to discuss compensation. She noted that if it is passed, some of it will not be implemented until the next election cycle. Mayor Burt added that it would not go into effect until January 2025. Mr. Gridley stated that the Council was setting the policy. It is still the role of the Audit and Investment Commission to evaluate the policy to see if there are other improvements that should be recommended.

Councilmember Wilson asked that if the Council passed Resolution 24-18 then it would go into effect. Mr. Gridley agreed.

Councilmember Wilson asked if it went into effect in 2025 if the majority of the Council and the Mayor would fall under the new policy. Mr. Gridley replied that he believed all of the Councilmembers would receive the new policy.

Councilmember Wilson expressed her concern on the policy of having quite a bit of increase to the Mayor's benefits and salary. She explained that none of them ran for office for a paycheck. She noted that benefits such as vehicle usage, medical, and retirement are being raised for one position. She mentioned that Mayor Burt has been able to dedicate more time to the position and that it could be concerning in the future because it could exclude people who work full time from being able to be Mayor. She explained that it is using taxpayers' dollars for a position that is supposed to be part time.

Councilmember Santini mentioned that the Council has wrestled with Councilmember Wilson's concerns. She explained that by having more benefits and compensation, it could allow more people to feel secure in being able to run for Mayor. It could also set expectations and a commitment for the position.

Councilmember Morris agreed with Councilmember Santini's comments. He reminded the Council that they met to discuss the form of government change. Community feedback is also a part of the process. He explained that he sees it as reimbursement instead of compensation. He noted that it is a balance that the Mayor position would not be a barrier but money would not be the incentive as well. He mentioned that people who are in these positions deserve to be compensated appropriately for what the positions bring.

Councilmember Date stated that in the past, the Council has discussed providing and setting expectations when the Mayor seat is up for potential candidates. It is important to set the expectations on what the job entails.

Councilmember Morris moved, seconded by Councilmember Santini,

To adopt the following resolution

**Resolution 24-18**

**Resolution of the City of Woodbury, Washington County, Minnesota revising Council Directive CD-Council-2.9 City Council Compensation.**

Councilmember Morris stated that this does not change the Audit and Investment Commission's mission and direction and have the ability to offer recommendations.

**City Council Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, January 10, 2024**

Councilmember Wilson stated that she does not believe the directive gives the Audit and Investment Commission the ability to do anything other than what is in the policy. Councilmember Morris replied that it gives them the ability review the policy every other year. Councilmember Wilson asked if the Audit and Investment Commission would be able to recommend changes to the policy in a couple of weeks when they meet. Councilmember Morris replied that they would be able to. Councilmember Wilson asked if it would have been better if the Audit and Investment Commission looked at the policy first before the Council adopts it.

Mr. Gridley stated the Audit and Investment Commission is an advisory commission. It is not a mandate that they suggest any changes but it is up to the members to decide if they have other thoughts, ideas or concepts to the policy to offer.

Councilmember Wilson stated that in the past, commissions typically make a recommendation to the Council before approval. In this case, the Council is sending the approved policy to the Audit and Investment Commission and asking what they think after it is approved.

Councilmember Date stated the role of the Audit and Investment Commission, in this case, will be to look at the salary in relation to the policy that is written and to provide a recommendation within the policy. She added that the Council is expanding the range that the Audit and Investment Commission can consider when they make a recommendation about salary.

**Voting via voice:**

Kim Wilson – nay  
Andrea Date – aye  
Steve Morris – aye  
Jennifer Santini – aye  
Anne Burt – aye

**Consent Agenda Item 6A. Approval of Council Minutes –December 13, 2023.**

Councilmember Wilson pulled this item for discussion and asked that on page 7, paragraph 1 to include Councilmember Morris' comments of having a discussion or an official censure at the end of the paragraph. She added that it is important to add that since none of them are included in the policy and it will be relied on the minutes to see if someone brought something forward.

Councilmember Morris asked to table the item so that he could review the meeting since he did not remember making the comments.

Councilmember Morris moved, seconded by Councilmember Wilson, to adopt a motion to table Consent Agenda item 6A, Approval of Council Minutes for December 13, 2023, to the January 24, 2024 City Council meeting.

Voting in Favor: Wilson, Date, Morris, Santini, Burt  
Absent: None

**Consent Agenda Item 6B. South Washington Watershed District; Lease of Office Space – Public Works Building**

Councilmember Wilson pulled this item for discussion and expressed her concern that the City says they need more space and then continue to lease office space out to other organizations. She questioned whether the City continues to rent space out to other organizations when the City is lacking space themselves. She asked that the Council not approve this.

Councilmember Wilson moved to not adopt Resolution 24-01.

Mayor Burt declared the motion failed for lack of a second.

Councilmember Santini stated that the office spaces are resources and services for the residents and likes having the accessibility within the community.

Councilmember Santini moved, seconded by Councilmember Date,

To adopt the following resolution

**Resolution 24-01**

**Resolution of the City of Woodbury, Washington County, Minnesota authorizing the Lease Agreement with South Washington Watershed District for office space rental from commencement to November 1, 2030, at the Public Works Building.**

**City Council Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, January 10, 2024**

**Voting via voice:**

Kim Wilson – nay  
Andrea Date – aye  
Steve Morris – aye  
Jennifer Santini – aye  
Anne Burt – aye

**Transportation Report (2nd meeting of the month, May-October)**

No items scheduled

**City Administrator's Report**

Mr. Gridley noted that 2023 was a successful year for the Housing Development Authority. 26 loans were issued which is the most loans issued since 2016 and the third more loans issued in the last ten years. The loans are first generation ownership loans and involve helping people with their down payment, and making improvements.

Mr. Gridley stated that 2023 was a successful year in terms of the units being built. Woodbury continues to be a great City to build and people are coming to the community. A meeting is coming up with the bonding committee of the Senate to tour the temporary drinking water facility in hopes of getting support to build a new water tower. The New Year's Family Celebration was a success. He pointed out the Public Safety section of his report and noted that there are several cryptocurrency scams currently.

Mr. Gridley gave a verbal update of upcoming City meetings.

- January 22, 2024—Planning Commission Meeting
- January 23, 2024 – Economic Development Commission, 7:30 a.m., Public Works Building, 2301 Tower Drive, Carver Conference Room
- January 24, 2024—Council Workshop meeting
- January 24, 2024 – Public Hearing

Mr. Searles clarified that the Planning Commission meeting and the Public Hearings will be moved to the first week in February.

**Adjournment**

Mayor Burt moved, seconded by Councilmember Morris, to adjourn the meeting at 9:23 p.m.

Voting in Favor: Wilson, Date, Morris, Santini, Burt  
Absent: None

Respectfully submitted,



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Kimberlee K. Blaaser, City Clerk

Approved by the Woodbury City Council on January 24, 2024.