

**CITY OF SHOREVIEW
MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING
March 18, 2024**

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Denkinger called the workshop meeting of the Shoreview City Council to order at 5 pm on March 18, 2024.

ROLL CALL

The following attended the meeting:

City Council: Mayor Denkinger; Councilmembers Johnson, Myrland and Springhorn.

Councilmember Doan was absent.

Staff: Brad Martens, City Manager
Renee Eisenbeisz, Assistant City Manager
Tom Wesolowski, Public Works Director
Fire Chief Tim Boehlke
Assistant Chief Eric Nordeen
Assistant Chief Matt Sather

Mayor Denkinger explained to those in attendance that because of open meeting laws, she does not email council members, and councilmembers do not meet outside of scheduled public meetings. Council discussion of issues and decisions are done in open public meetings.

GENERAL BUSINESS

FOLLOWUP DISCUSSION ON ORGANIZED TRASH COLLECTION SURVEY

Presentation by Public Works Director Tom Wesolowski

At the direction of the council, staff reviewed the public response to the organized trash collection survey.

Eisenbeisz reported that staff will respond to residents who participated in the survey by thanking them for their participation and informing them of the council's discussion at the January workshop meeting and the follow up survey discussion at this meeting. A video link is provided on the website to the environmental quality committee (EQC) speaker series on trash

collection. A news item will be posted on the website that shows the results of the trash collection survey.

Over 600 residents responded to the survey, which is the city's highest response. Eight questions were asked regarding bin size, issues participants are concerned about with organized collection, rates. Approximately 53% strongly or somewhat support organized collection. Approximately 41% are strongly or somewhat opposed.

Wesolowski noted that rates of five collectors is reported for different size containers. Rates are subject to change. The cities in Ramsey County that have organized collection are Maplewood, Little Canada, St. Paul, Vadnais Heights, North St. Paul, White Bear Lake and St. Anthony Village and the rates vary. Rates for North St. Paul, White Bear Lake and St. Anthony Village include recycling. Information about organizing neighborhoods with trash collection will be in the *ShoreViews* newsletter, if residents want to organize on a smaller scale. Staff will continue to provide educational information to residents on this issue.

Mayor Denkinger noted a meeting with other local mayors where it was reported that even with the same service, surcharge fees might be different even with the same hauler. The EQC raised the issue of organized collection to the council mostly in response to terms of cost.

Myrland asked about administrative costs and staff time on the part of the city with organized collection. Martens responded that evaluation has not been done, but it would touch many departments.

Councilmember Springhorn stated that the results are similar to the last scientific survey on this issue. There is a small majority in favor, but what has not changed is the strong feelings on both sides. He is not sure the council needs to take on this issue when it is not necessary and because there are many other issues that cannot be put aside.

Councilmember Johnson added that the attendance at this meeting and the number of communications from residents indicates to her that this is not the right time to take on an issue that is not needed. It is important to recognize that Shoreview's leadership is transparent with decisions made at public meetings.

Councilmember Myrland agreed and expressed support for neighborhoods interested in working on this issue to move forward on their own. There are a lot of unknown city management costs that would eventually be part of the tax levy.

Mayor Denkinger stated that this is a nuanced subject that is complex with costs and fees outside the city's control. The council's interest is to get accurate information. One thing she has learned is the wide variety of differences in fees. She urged residents to call their hauler if they notice an increase in fees. The opinions are so strong whether in support or opposition, she does not see the city moving forward with an organized collection process. In order for the city to be involved, it has to be about saving people money. With a fire station to build, rising public safety costs and trying to keep taxes low, this is not the time. Results of the survey and information on this issue will be posted on the city website. She thanked all residents who were in attendance.

LAKE JOHANNA FIRE DEPARTMENT (LJFD) STAFF AND FACILITY PLANNING UPDATE

Presentation by City Manager Brad Martens

Background:

- LJFD provides 24/7 fire and emergency medical response services to Shoreview, Arden Hills and North Oaks.
- There was a 46.6% increase in calls from 2016 to 2023; and a 7.6% increase from 2022 to 2023. The average response time in Shoreview in 2023 was 5:07.
- The significant increase has required long range planning for both staffing and facilities.

Prior to 2024, primary responses were from stations 120, Hodgson Road, and 140, Victoria Street. The full-time leadership team responds from 130, Lexington Avenue. There continues to be more call overlap, which means increasingly calls come at the same time. In 2023, there were 752 times when two calls were received at the same time. There are two teams that can respond. There were 169 times when there were three calls at a time and 41 times when there were four calls.

To address these issues, Chief Boehlke proposed the following response options:

- Enhance part-time model and hire 40 to 50 additional part-time firefighters
- Hire full-time captains for station 130
- Transition to full-time career department employees

The LJFD board opted for six full-time captains option, which has been successfully implemented due to receipt of a SAFER grant in the amount of \$2.7 million which covered the costs through 2026. All six full-time captains were able to be hired. Chief Boehlke added that the pool for applicants has shrunk. It is a big commitment with time, training, and time on the job to become competent. It is not feasible to hire 40 to 50 part-time firefighters. Staffing a third station is necessary. In February staffing the third station from 8 am to 10 pm was implemented. Overnight staffing will begin this year. A graph was shown comparing current four-minute response and six-minute response times to what it will be with the new station. The changes at the third station are a game changer for northern Shoreview.

Chief Boehlke added that development on the west side of the TCAAP property will impact the third station. COVID has also been a game changer. Responses involve life support measures with firefighters staying on the scene until paramedics medical help arrives. Having a third crew is a huge help.

Mayor Denkinger asked about other cities adding services onto LJFD. Chief Boehlke responded that looks good on paper. A regional system could be implemented quickly with the Ramsey County dispatcher initiating all calls and the closest unit responding. The capability is there, but he does not believe it will be a cost savings. Operationally, this is the best service and LJFD offers services to neighboring communities. Staffing has to be more consistent with scheduling, structure and benefits before there is a regional structure.

Councilmember Johnson asked what neighboring communities are doing. Chief Boehlke answered that Vadnais Heights has two stations but staffs one station with part-time firefighters. The problem for them is if there is more than one call, they have to call everyone off duty. Vadnais Heights is planning to have two crews on duty. Little Canada has no plans for future staffing. The chief is elected. New Brighton has a public safety department for their city. Roseville has career employees. Centennial, is currently being managed by SBM Fire Department. Since 2012, there is not a fire department in the state that provides the level of service of LJFD provides using part-time people. Adding the six full-time captains has been crucial and has allowed staffing the third station. Councilmember Johnson responded that it is important to support LJFD and not have firefighters be stretched too thin.

Councilmember Myrland asked about response to a major event, such as a tornado. Chief Boehlke stated there was a tornado in 1998. Requests can be made to anyone in the state for help and equipment.

Martens continued with a facilities report. The long range planning study was completed in 2018 with the following findings:

- Station 140 at Victoria Street is deficient and unable to meet future needs
- Need for training facilities
- Need for emergency operations center
- Existing stations unable to accommodate future needs
- A new headquarters station property was purchased at 3535 Pine Tree Road in Arden Hills
- The cost originally estimated at \$13 million was very likely underestimated
- Costs are not included in finance plans because of the lack of needed financial assistance
- Requested \$9,375,000 in funds from State of Minnesota and were allocated \$6,370,000 in 2023.
- Project is now estimated at \$23 million with construction anticipated for 2025 with a finance gap of \$17 million
- Additional funds from the state are unlikely. Costs will only rise in the future so federal funds will be pursued.
- The project must proceed forward or risk the loss of state funds.

The \$17 million funding gap could be financed through debt issuance with payments over 20 years by the annual cost share formula: Arden Hills 24.4%; North Oaks 14.3%; and Shoreview at 61.3%. Debt payments would begin in 2025. This would result in a significant debt tax levy increase. Additional costs related to staffing (after the SAFER grant) are required beginning in 2027.

Recommended financial approach:

- Five-year phase in of the debt levy (less principle in initial years) - this would be \$500,000 over the 20-year term, but there will be more residents taking part in the later part of the debt service.
- Allocation of 2023 and projected 2024 surplus (\$450,000 and \$500,000) to the street renewal and capital asset replacement funds to lower needed levies in 2025, 2026 and 2027.
- Budget for incoming park dedication fees expected due to new development which would cover additional community investment fund costs (\$1.7 million).

These adjustments would go a long way to softening the levy increase for the new fire station.

Projected Impacts:

	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Planned Levy Increase:	6.02%	5.32%	9.66%	2.79%	5.87%
Draft Levy Increase:	6.86%	6.63%	8.32%	5.93%	6.07%

This projection does not include any changes to operational expenditures and does not include any potential revenue from the sale of station no. 140. It is to be noted that public safety costs for Shoreview are lower than peer cities—34.5% below average for cities. A capital budget would be included for any potential discussion.

Councilmember Johnson stated that more properties are being built in Arden Hills and North Oaks and asked how influential the city can be to shift the formula. Mayor Denkinger responded that the formula is based on the census. Martens stated that it would be difficult to change the formula. Even though Shoreview pays 61%, it has 28% of the vote. Development of TCAAP could drive Shoreview’s portion down to 55%.

Chief Boehlke stated that LJFD will have to go through the PUD process with Arden Hills and apply for building permits. He anticipates a 2025 construction start.

Councilmember Springhorn asked if there is opportunity for revenue with the anticipated training space. Chief Boehlke agreed that is possible. Charges have not been set.

Councilmember Myrland stated that she is in agreement to move forward. North Oaks, Arden Hills and Shoreview are growing. This station is needed.

Mayor Denkinger asked if federal funding were obtained a year or two in the future whether it could be used. Martens stated that the effort will be made, but the timing is not good with the federal government.

It was the consensus of the council to move forward with the new fire station project with the financial plan as outlined. Martens stated he will direct the finance department to draft an amended five-year operating plan and amended capital improvement plan.

Mayor Denkinger adjourned the meeting at 6:21 pm.