



NORTH BRANCH —Minnesota—

Kevin Schieber
Mayor

Robert Canada
Councilmember/Acting Mayor

Travis Miles
Councilmember

Kelly Neider
Councilmember

Peter Schaps
Councilmember

**CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR AGENDA
TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 2024 @ 6:30 PM
CITY HALL, 6408 ELM STREET, NORTH
BRANCH, MN 55056**

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
3. ROLL CALL
4. WORKSESSION ITEMS
 - a. Priority & Goal Setting Discussion for 2025

INFO

5. ADJOURNMENT

Since we do not have time to discuss every point presented, it may seem that decisions are preconceived. However, background information is provided to the City Council on each Agenda item in advance from Staff and appointed Commissions; and decisions are based on this information and past experiences. In addition some items may also have been discussed preliminarily at Council Work Sessions. If you are aware of information that has not been discussed, please raise your hand to be recognized. Comments that are pertinent are appreciated. Items requiring excessive time may be continued to another meeting.



Prepared By:
Jason Ziemer, Community Development Director
Presenter: Jason Ziemer, Community Development Director
Date: 04/12/2024

Board & Commission: City Council

Subject: Priority & Goal Setting Discussion for 2025

Overview / Background

Rhetorically – all of us are really good at talking about priorities, goals and outcomes. It is a simple topic. We talk about them daily in both our personal lives and in the work place. Truthfully, this is not a simple topic. Doing those things are more about visualizing the means to their end. We need to identify, create, and implement, requires us to visualize the ‘why’ that drives these topics and – most importantly – the resources necessary to be successful. Essentially, they require us to act and follow through, and be accountable.

In his book *The 8 Pillars of Trust*, David Horsager defines those 8 Pillars as to how we build trust. This is a great book and simple read. It would be a great topic for a future Council-Department Head retreat. For the purpose of our April 16 worksession, I am leveraging the topic of Clarity.

Per Horsager, we need to be clear about our mission, purpose, expectations and daily activities. He said, “When we are clear about priorities on a daily basis, we become productive and effective.” His discussion on Clarity focuses on Difference-Making Action Strategies (DMAs). Although he generally ties DMAs to personal life, the DMA approach is a perfectly tied to the topic of budgeting. And, this is our exercise for Tuesday.

DMAs are not a Strategic Plan. They are not necessary priorities or goals. Yet, DMAs are a good way for us to shape how we see what is important, and the why behind them. Thus, they can become priorities. This is also good practice for helping us to shape our discussions around budget priorities, and future strategic planning efforts. If you are thinking we are not talking about dollars and cents – you are correct. This exercise is not about expenditures and revenues, percentages or rates. There are no numbers involved, and as hard as it is – I am asking we not discuss numbers. Numbers will come in due time. Numbers are always inevitable. This step in the process is about visualizing what we see as

important – from each other’s perspective.

Quoting Horsager again...

Clarity is having vision and purpose, communicating expectations and giving focus to daily actionable tasks. Difference-Making Actions is a method for having and keeping daily clarity.

DMA Approach

Why a DMA approach?

Our outcome is to have DMAs that are focused, clear and quantifiable, and realistic.

Focused >> DMAs are the important actions.

Clear and Quantifiable >> DMAs should focus on the activities, not outcomes, so we know exactly what we need, or need to do or are going to do.

Realistic >> DMAs need to be realistic to be effective so we can actually do them.

DMA Exercise

So, what is the exercise? How do we create Difference-Making Action Strategies?

Take out 3 to 5 pieces of paper. (Note: You are only allowed 3 to 5 DMAs – hence why only 3 to 5 pieces of paper.) At the top – write down what you see as the most important priority / goal for the City. Then, number 1 through 5 down the page. Next to 1, write the most important thing we need to accomplish that priority / goal. Next to 2, write the second most important thing, and so on through 5. Repeat this exercise for all 3 or 5 of your priorities.

You have now identified a Priority / Goal and the five (5) most important things we need to do to accomplish that goal and fulfill our organization’s mission, for each priority / goal. Those five (5) things are effectively action steps and resource needs.

The idea is for each of us to share our top 3 or 5, discuss and see if there is consensus. We may or may not be able to do them all. If something is not budget specific, but is a priority, we can discuss that. However, the purpose of this exercise is budget-oriented, not policy based, for example. From this point, City staff can use these as part of their work on the upcoming budget work and mix into the other general optional items. It also gives us common points to continue to revisit throughout. Again, I will reiterate – as hard as it is – please do not focus on numbers, such as levy, percent increases/decreases, tax rates, etc.

As I noted above – it sounds easy, but can be challenging as this exercise forces you to think of things differently and also forces you to think through processes – how do we accomplish that priority. The thing I like about this exercise is that it prompts us to think through this from the perspective of how we ‘make a difference’ for the community – together.

I have successfully used this process as a great starting point for budget conversations as it introduces the subject of priority / goalsetting in simple terms and a realistic approach. I have also found it is great practice for the larger effort to create a Strategic Plan. So, this is a great first step and starting point.

Voting Requirements:

INFO