



NORTH BRANCH —Minnesota—

Kevin Schieber
Mayor

Robert Canada
Councilmember/Acting Mayor

Travis Miles
Councilmember

Kelly Neider
Councilmember

Peter Schaps
Councilmember

**CITY COUNCIL
WORKSESSION AGENDA
TUESDAY, JUNE 11, 2024 @ 6:00 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. Continue Discussion Regarding Selection of Executive Search Firm for City Administrator Recruitment INFO
 - b. Discussion Regarding Initial Immediate & Long-Term Staffing 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: Kevin Schieber, Mayor
Date: 06/05/2024

Board & Commission: City Council

Subject: Continue Discussion Regarding Selection of Executive Search Firm for City Administrator Recruitment

Overview / Background

On June 4, 2024, the City Council interviewed three (3) executive search firms regarding their proposals to assist the City Council with the recruitment and hiring of the next City Administrator. Those interviewed were: South Central Service Cooperative, GMP Consultants and Baker Tilly. The City Council adjourned the June 4 worksession without a decision, and to continue their discussion at the June 11 worksession and take action to hire a firm during the June 11 regular meeting. City staff reached out to the search firms, requesting contracts for service pending Council direction. The contract for the selected firm will be provided to the City Council at that time.

Staff Recommendation

None.

Recommended City Council Action

Finalize conversations surrounding executive search firms and select a firm to assist with the recruitment and hiring of the next City Administrator.

Voting Requirements:

Voting Options Simple Majority



Prepared By:
Jason Ziemer, Community Development Director
Presenter: Jason Ziemer, Community Development Director
Date: 06/05/2024

Board & Commission: City Council

Subject: Discussion Regarding Initial Immediate & Long-Term Staffing

Background & Analysis

The City of North Branch has had different iterations of a long-term, strategic staffing plan over the years. Those previous versions included 2015-2019 (adopted), 2017-2021 (adopted), and 2022-2026 (incomplete draft). As part of this current budget process, City staff remain focused on long-term strategic efforts. On April 16, the City Council met with Department Heads to discuss identified priorities and action steps. Those priorities were organized into key strategic themes (attached), which were presented to the City Council at the May 21 worksession. That night City staff also reviewed the updated equipment/vehicle replacement strategy, and capital investments related to parks and streets/utilities, as well as the current debt repayment schedule.

The purpose of our June 11, 2024 work session is to present an initial staffing plan that addresses what City staff identify as an immediate and long-term approach to staffing, based on immediate needs and long-term growth projections. We not asking for the City Council to vote on this plan or positions, but this conversation is critical as Department Heads move forward with preparing their initial budgets.

I offer the focus of staff was not only to identify their ideal department structure, based on numerous factors, including those above, but also a practical approach to staffing. The underlying theme here is an attempt to start right sizing the organization and improve the efficiencies of City staff, better align work, and reduce staff workload. As discussed at the May 21 Council worksession, gaining efficiency is not always process improvement but often the addition of resources (i.e. staffing). Thus, the focus has been improved internal and external (public) customer service.

The information herein provides a snapshot of current staffing for each department; proposed staffing for 2025, which includes current staff; and the projected full

complement of staffing per department in 10 years (2034). There is also a brief description of the immediate need. The attached spreadsheet provides the detail. Setting a projection allows us to incorporate staffing into future budget drafts for planning purposes.

Administration

Current Staffing	2
Proposed 2025 Staffing	4
Projected 2034 Staffing	6

Immediate 2025 Staffing Need(s):

- 1. Administrative Services Director / Human Resources**
- 2. Customer Service Specialist**
- 3. Deputy Clerk (2026)**

Explanation of 2025 Staffing Need(s):

A major point of conversation by Department Heads and City Council, alike, is the need for a dedicated Human Resources person. The responsibility is assigned to an employee that currently has at least two (2) other high-priority assignments. This need and function has become increasingly complex, requiring more personal attention and support for employees and Department Heads. The City needs a hiring process from posting hiring notices to onboarding to managing staff through their time as employees with the City. And, then there are things such as benefits administration, union contract supervision, etc. The list goes on. The concept of an Administrative Services Director also means this person would also supervise administrative functions of the City, including the City Clerk's office, IT, elections, communications, etc. There are also other opportunities, such as general contract and project management, etc. The person hired should be a Human Resource professional.

The Customer Service Specialist position would be the new face of City Hall and focused on customer service. The position would be the first point of contact for customers coming to City Hall, handling all payments (i.e. permits, utility billing, etc.), and be responsible for answering phones and redirecting general emails sent to the City. It would allow current staff responsible for the front desk to focus on their primary duties. City staff have continually noted the need for more help with general administrative tasks. The added benefit of this position is it could help Administration, Community Development, Finance, Parks and Building Inspections with various administrative tasks. The City previously had a similar position.

State Statute identifies once cities reach a population of 15,000 people the City needs a Deputy Clerk to support the City Clerk. Although North Branch is not going to be at 15,000 people in the immediate future, there are some potential factors – notably elections – that may require more immediate consideration of the position. The City

current has three (3) voting precincts. If voter count exceeds certain numbers, Chisago County may require the City to add a fourth voting precinct, which will change the employee needs. The County also handles absentee ballots for the City, but increasing population and voter count could trigger the County to no longer do that function for the City. A Deputy Clerk would have other duties beyond elections.

It is my opinion that the City could benefit from a full-time Communications Specialist. The community desires a high-level of engagement and information sharing. The City should seize that and refocus much of its efforts that direction. This person would be responsible for the City Web site and social media, at a minimum. I would suggest the City eventually go back to a mailed community newsletter.

Finance

Current Staffing	3
Proposed 2025 Staffing	3
Projected 2034 Staffing	4

Immediate 2025 Staffing Need(s):

1. Assistant Finance Director (position adjustment)

Explanation of 2025 Staffing Need(s):

A major focus of the Finance Director is risk management by stretching the department structure to increase segregation of duties to reduce concerns of risk by further separating processes and tasks, and ensuring no single person has complete control over entire processes. Audit and GASB standards continue to evolve and increase in complexity, and there continues to be greater, high-level tasks requiring staff with greater experience and education. The staffing adjustment for 2025 shows the first step as an internal positional advancement with a future additional account clerk or senior accountant.

Community Development & Planning

Current Staffing	1
Proposed 2025 Staffing	2
Projected 2034 Staffing	4

Immediate 2025 Staffing Need(s):

1. Associate Planner

Explanation of 2025 Staffing Need(s):

The development and planning/zoning function of the City is beyond busy. The current single position bears significant responsibility from high-priority community

development and Economic Development Authority efforts to general planning and zoning related items, such as zoning letters. Just the workload warrants the need for an additional position to handle general planning and zoning duties and assist with development project review. Hiring an Associate Planner would allow the Community Development Director / EDA Executive Director to focus more on strategic initiatives and be more active and involved in the development arena. The Fiscal Year 2024 budget does include funding to support a consultant planner. I am working on bringing on a planning firm to help with those general zoning items. However, there is far more work and ever-increasing contact by residents, realtors, etc. greater than what a consultant planner can do in a few hours a week. Thus, having an on-staff planner will allow the City to provide better customer service.

As the City continues to grow, at a certain point the City will need to hire a City Planner, which is like a more senior level position that oversees the planning and zoning side of the Community Development Department.

Building Inspections

Current Staffing	3
Proposed 2025 Staffing	4
Projected 2034 Staffing	8

Immediate 2025 Staffing Need(s):

- 1. Code Enforcement & Zoning Officer**

Explanation of 2025 Staffing Need(s):

Like Community Development and Planning, Building Inspections staff are equally as swamped, even more so with the added duties and responsibilities for code enforcement. It had been a routine staff discussion the past two (2) about the need for a separate Code Enforcement and Zoning Officer. The position is as much about allowing our building inspectors to focus on the demand for permit plan review and inspections, as it is code enforcement. But, code enforcement activity remains busy. The workload is not just receiving complaints, but following up on them, which occupies much of the time and attention of staff, as many issues are not immediately resolved. This position could also handle reviews, issuing permits and inspections for zoning permit items. Zoning permits include projects that do not require building permits, but do require a inspections, such as fences, sheds less than 200 square feet. The idea of zoning permits is to make sure these smaller projects meet setbacks, etc.

Although not identified as an immediate need for 2025, an ongoing conversation has to do with the City likely needing to start rental housing licensing (and inspections) and fire inspections. Housing construction remains strong, but as we build new homes, our existing homes and residential properties are aging. An early result of the rental housing study identifies the need for maintenance of existing housing, notably older rental housing, creating the need for a rental housing program and routine

inspections. Cities are devoting more efforts toward rental housing licensing programs and rental inspections, in an effort to ensure rental properties are maintained and safe, at a minimum. These programs also improves our access to and relationships with property owners. It is common that such positions are “housed” in the Fire Department, which gives cities the added benefit of also having fire staff able to respond to calls for emergency.

In addition to the likely addition of a Rental Housing & Fire Inspector, or two, and a related inspections program coordinator, it is identified the City may need a third building inspector at some point in the near future.

Parks

Current Staffing	1
Proposed 2025 Staffing	0.5
Projected 2034 Staffing	3

Immediate 2025 Staffing Need(s):

- 1. Community Programs Specialist (PT)**
- 2. Contract GIS Technician**

Explanation of 2025 Staffing Need(s):

The current solo Parks Department employee wears many hats, given the expectations of the job and associated duties beyond just Parks. The Parks Director has identified the immediate need for a part-time, seasonal employee that can assist with community programs, such as concerts and movies in the park, helping with marketing and social promotion of the City’s recreational programs and assets, and assisting with general parks inquiries (i.e. park reservations). Long-term this position would need to shift to full-time, especially if the City grows its parks and recreational programming, as has been brought up in different commission and community conversations.

The contract GIS technician position would provide for an immediate budget that would allow the Parks Director to assign out some of the work responsibilities to a contract GIS person to handle many of the projects requiring GIS work, allowing the Parks Director time to focus on other priority project. Like the part-time community programming specialist, long-term there is a need for a full time GIS person that would be shared between Parks, Public Works and Utilities, as well as support Community Development and the City Engineer.

The topic of a Community Center continues to surface. The staffing plan notes community center staffing, but pushes those positions out to at least 10 years (2034).

Police

Current Staffing	16
Proposed 2025 Staffing	17
Projected 2034 Staffing	23

Immediate 2025 Staffing Need(s):

- 1. Patrol Sergeant (promotion)**
- 2. Patrol Officer**

Explanation of 2025 Staffing Need(s):

With the most recent hire, the Police Department will be one (1) officer short with the retirement of Officer Sean Huset. Officer Huset is an example of the Department losing many of its long-timer officers as they retire and move on. Thus, the Police Department is rapidly getting younger, which has benefits. But, with that “youthful movement,” comes the need to enhance supervision. Patrol Sergeants are “working sergeants” but also have many administrative responsibilities, notably supervising their shift staff. The need for additional supervision extends into the overnight hours, allowing the Department to ensure it has 24/7 supervisory coverage. Having property supervision is also a safety matter. The promotion of a Patrol Officer to Patrol Sergeant would require the Department to backfill the Patrol Officer. Chief Dan Meyer has indicated the Department needs to take this approach each of the next three (3) years – add additional supervisors and additional patrol officers. Chief Meyer noted if the Department was able to reach its projected maximum staffing by 2031, the Department would be in a good position, and could likely hold at 23 for several years without the need to add.

Important Note: According to Finance Director Sharon Wright, the Police and Public Works Department combined to have more than \$200,000 in overtime. High overtime is typically an indicator of not enough staffing resources. Overtime can lead to absenteeism, lower employee morale, decreased productivity, increased accidents, and increased cost. Because employees (may) work high overtime, this means employees are not likely able to take leave to rest and recover. On the Police side, specifically, it is essential to allow employees time away for both mental and physical health. That is also true of staff across the organization.

Public Works

Current Staffing	12
Proposed 2025 Staffing	14
Projected 2034 Staffing	21

Immediate 2025 Staffing Need(s):

- 1. Public Works Maintenance**

2. Public Works Maintenance

Explanation of 2025 Staffing Need(s):

Much like the other Departments, Public Works needs people to help take on the ever-increasing workload. The initial Fiscal Year 2024 Budget included an additional Public Works employee, funded through reductions to overtime costs; ultimately, it was not approved. With the City's steady growth, Public Works is inheriting many more miles of streets and utilities, and parks, requiring more maintenance attention. For 2025, Public Works is asking for an addition of two (2) Public Works Maintenance staff. Long-term, as the City continues to grow, many of its Public Works facilities (i.e. water and wastewater) will increase in size with expansion of those facilities, requiring more staff attention and management of those operations. Those positions are not immediate, but are shown as likely with the 10-years timeframe. As the organization grows, so will the equipment and vehicle inventory, meaning the City will need an additional mechanic at some point.

Recap

The information above shows 7.5 total new positions recommended for Fiscal Year 2025. That number does not tell the story as to the need and specific outcomes associated with those additions. Each of the positions identified for 2025 are a priority for different reasons, and have a very direct benefit to the internal customers and community service in general.

Again, this is an initial presentation and discussion as to the updated staffing plan. But, this conversation is critically important as we shift from priority review to working through the numbers.

Staff Recommendation

None.

Recommended City Council Action

Review an initial staffing plan, and discuss immediate and long-term staffing needs by department.

Voting Requirements:

Discussion only.

STAFFING PLAN MATRIX - ADMINISTRATION

Position	Department	New Hire	2024 Base	Years >>>									
				2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
Current Staffing		2											
Customer Service Specialist	Administration	+1		2025									
Administrative Svcs Director / HR	Administration	+1		2025									
Communications Specialist	Administration	+1			2027								
Deputy Clerk	Administration	+1			2026		2034						
Full Staffing		6											
				1 YR	<5 YRS>					<10 YRS>			
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

STAFFING PLAN MATRIX - FINANCE

Position	Department	New Hire	2024 Base	Years >>>									
				2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
Current Staffing		3											
Assistant Finance Director	Finance	+0			2026								
Accounting Clerk	Finance	+1						2029					
Full Staffing		4											
				1 YR	<5 YRS>				<10 YRS>				
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

STAFFING PLAN MATRIX - COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Position	Department	New Hire	2024 Base	Years >>>									
				2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
Current Staffing		1											
Associate Planner	Cmty Development	+1		2025									
Economic Development Specialist	Cmty Development	+1			2026								
City Planner	Cmty Development	+1											2034
Full Staffing		4											
				1 YR	<5 YRS>				<10 YRS>				
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

STAFFING PLAN MATRIX - BUILDING INSPECTIONS

Position	Department	New Hire	2024 Base	Years >>>									
				2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
Current Staffing		3											
Code & Zoning Officer	Building Inspections	+1		2025									
Inspections Program Coordinator	Bldg Inspections / Fire	+1			2026								
Rental Housing & Fire Inspector	Bldg Inspections / Fire	+1			2026								
Building Inspector	Building Inspections	+1				2027							
Rental Housing & Fire Inspector	Bldg Inspections / Fire	+1						2029					
Full Staffing		8											
				1 YR		<5 YRS>					<10 YRS>		
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

STAFFING PLAN MATRIX - PARKS

Position	Department	New Hire	2024 Base	Years >>>									
				2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
Current Staffing		1											
Community Programs Specialist (PT)	Parks	+0.5		2025									
Community Programs Specialist (FT)	Parks	+1					2028						
GIS Technician	Parks / Public Works	+1		2025			2028						
Community Center Director	Parks / Community Ctr												2034
Community Center Staff	Parks / Community Ctr												2034
Full Staffing (Excl CCtr)		3											
				1 YR		<5 YRS>				<10 YRS>			
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

STAFFING PLAN MATRIX - POLICE

Position	Department	New Hire	2024 Base	Years >>>									
				2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
Current Sworn Staffing		14											
Current Non-Sworn Staffing		2											
Patrol Sergeant (Promo)	Police +0	+0		2025									
Patrol Officer	Police +1	+1		2025									
Patrol Sergeant (Promo)	Police +0	+0			2026								
Patrol Officer	Police +1	+1			2026								
Lieutenant (Promo)	Police +0	+0				2027							
Patrol Officer	Police +1	+1				2027							
Administrative Assistant	Police	+1					2028						
Patrol Officer*	Police +1	+1						2029					
Patrol Officer	Police +1	+1							2030				
Patrol Officer	Police +1	+1								2031			
Full Sworn Staffing		20											
Full Non-Sworn Staffing		3											
* Tied to 3rd Investigator Assignment				1 YR	<5 YRS>					<10 YRS>			
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

STAFFING PLAN MATRIX - PUBLIC WORKS

Position	Department	New Hire	2,024 Base	Years >>>	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
Current Staffing		12												
Public Works Maintenance	Public Works	+1		2025										
Public Works Maintenance	Public Works	+1		2025										
Public Works Maintenance	Public Works	+1			2026									
Mechanic		+1				2027								
Public Works Maintenance	Public Works	+1						2029						
Public Works Maintenance	Public Works	+1								2030				
Public Works Maintenance	Public Works	+1									2031			
Water Lead (Assignment)	Public Works	+0							2029					
Wastewater Lead (Assignment)	Public Works	+0							2029					
Streets & Parks Lead (Assignment)	Public Works	+0							2029					
Utilities Technician (Water)	Public Works	+1												2034
Utilities Technician (Wastewater)	Public Works	+1												2034
Full Staffing		21												
				1 YR			<5 YRS>					<10 YRS>		
				1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

STRATEGIC THEMES

CONNECTED CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

GOAL 2: Increase quality of information made available to the community through enhanced community outreach and engagement efforts, and awareness campaigns, using existing and new mediums and methods.

GOAL 5: Broaden E-Commerce solutions to enable online submission and completion of all City-issued permits, licenses and job applications for City customers.

GOAL 6: Build staff capacity by ensuring access to resources available and/or needed to ensure successful performance of assigned duties and customer service / experience and delivery of services.

GOAL 9: Enhance customer options and enhance sales of Craft Beers by increasing store capacity to provide cold options for Craft Beer product at Store #1.

GOAL 10: Enhance customer experience and sales by activating online sales through Square Point-of-Sale (POS) system.

SAFE, ATTAINABLE HOUSING & LIVABLE NEIGHBORHOODS

GOAL 3: Facilitate existing neighborhood vitality through education, engagement and home preservation initiatives specific on maintaining and reinvesting in Naturally-Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH).

GOAL 15: Encourage active living and healthy lifestyles by becoming a walkable and bikeable community.

MULTI-USE COMMUNITY SPACES & PLACES

GOAL 4: Establish and implement a Downtown Improvement Master Plan, featuring creative placemaking that fosters an environment of economic and employment opportunity for Downtown North Branch.

GOAL 14: Complete Strategic Parks, Trails and Open Space Plan.

GOAL 16: Enhance access to and utilization of community parks and shelters.

MOBILIZED & INVESTED WORKFORCE

GOAL 7: Develop an employee recruitment and retention program that focuses on career advancement of staff through job-specific training to expand skill sets, expanded staff education, and increased staff responsibilities and defined paths for internal upward career mobility.

GOAL 8: Enhance organizational attractiveness to job seekers and boost employee retention through employee wellness programs that promote employee health and encourage employee morale and workplace satisfaction.

GOAL 11: Enhance technology and integration between permitting software for field inspections for use by building inspectors and public works for building and development inspections.

GOAL 13: Continue technology investments to improve Department automation for maximum efficiency, reporting, compliance and accessibility.

SMART RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

GOAL 1: Establish reliability regarding the management and replacement of equipment and vehicles by providing adequate funding to ensure timely replacement of equipment and vehicles to and enable budgetary consistency overtime.

GOAL 12: Create digital archive of existing commercial plans and files.

GOAL 17: Implement City-wide GIS implementation strategy and GIS integration across departments to improve employee efficiency and service delivery.