

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Cedar Falls Council Chambers

April 4, 2022

The City Council held a work session at City Hall at 6:00 p.m. on April 4, 2022, with the following persons in attendance: Mayor Rob Green, Gil Schultz, Susan deBuhr, Daryl Kruse, Simon Harding, Dustin Ganfield, Dave Sires, and Kelly Dunn. Staff members from all City Departments and members of the community attended the meeting.

Mayor Green introduced the only item on the agenda, Standing Committee Structure. He stated three possible outcomes of the discussion: keep things as they are; make modifications that would be experimental; or lock in the current processes and change the ordinances to reflect the same. Mayor Green opened for Council discussion. Councilmember deBuhr asked about public input requirements in Work Sessions; Mayor Green stated Work Sessions must be accessible but public input is not required; City Attorney Kevin Rogers affirmed, and stated public comment is required at public hearings, but it's general practice to also allow a public forum at Council meetings; Councilmember Kruse requested public input at Work Sessions. Councilmember deBuhr stated historically the Committees were where discussion occurred, and the setting was more "intimate" than Council setting, there were questions of transparency and televising so different formats were tried, leading to current setting; she stated many previous meetings that would have been Committee meetings are now discussed at Work Sessions and returning to Committee meetings would give Councilmembers opportunity to be Chair persons and add back public input; she stated from a Staff perspective it would be more beneficial to have committees of 7 not 5 but expressed concern that the public might view this as decisions being made in Committee as opposed to Council meetings. Councilmember Dunn expressed concerns about inefficiency, use of the time of City Staff and Councilmembers, transparency, and the potential for Councilmembers to overstep boundaries; she stated seeing benefit in educating Councilmembers about City Departments. Councilmember Harding stated if Committees had 5 members, something could be seen to "pass" in Committee at 3-2 but still fail in Council 4-3; he expressed support of Councilmembers gaining experience as Chair persons and building stronger relationships with staff and understanding of how departments work. Mayor Green also expressed support of Councilmembers as Chair persons and that he sees value in the committees, they could create a different type of conversation. There was discussion between Mayor and Councilmembers about when Committee meetings would be held; it would be during the current Work Session and Committee of the Whole meeting times, prior to regular Council meetings. Councilmember deBuhr stated in the past there was sometimes confusion on which Committee to refer an item to. Councilmember Sires spoke about the history of the committees, number of committees, and number of committee members. Councilmember Dunn shared a recommendation she received from a citizen regarding establishing committees to promote education about City operations and provide oversight to City functions with Councilpersons as Chairs and to provide reports from departments on progress goals from strategic planning and goal setting. Councilmember Harding asked if there would still be possibility of Committee of the

Whole meetings in addition to standing committees; Councilmember deBuhr stated yes, the difference is who runs the meeting, and which committee hearing it is decided based on agenda item(s). City Attorney Rogers and Councilmembers discussed hearing of employee grievances; currently heard by Administration Committee per Union contract, or by the Civil Service Commission; there are some employees who are not Union or Civil Service, it falls to City staff; remedies for employees include the Civil Rights Commission, Public Employees Relations Board (PERB), the courts. Discussion was held among Councilmembers regarding items that “die” in committee; they can be put on Council agenda other ways. Council discussed the number of committee members; Councilmember Kruse asked if determination of committee would be vote or consensus; Mayor Green responded that with 7 members it would be a vote, but the recommendation still forwarded to Council for final decision, which would be weighted similarly to Planning & Zoning Commission recommendations to Council. Councilmember Schultz asked when committee meetings would be held; Mayor Green responded at the same time current Work Session or Committee of the Whole meetings, and if more than one standing committee had an agenda, one would be held right after the other. Council discussed clarification of having Committee of the Whole with all 7 Councilpersons versus three specific standing committees with all 7 Councilpersons; standing committees are led by Council Chairpersons and offer public input. Mayor Green asked for consensus of utilizing the three existing standing committees with 7 Councilmembers each; Councilmember Kruse asked for clarification on public notice, is it still 24 hours and meeting materials and agendas; Director of Finance and Business Operations (FBO) Jennifer Rodenbeck stated the committee materials would be at the front of the Council packet, and if more than one committee for the date, in the order held; Mayor Green asked who sets the agenda; City Attorney Rogers stated Administrative Policy 7 says the Mayor sets the agenda(s). Mayor Green asked when Council would like to start the standing committees and recommended July, the start of the City’s new fiscal year; Council discussion was held and determined to start with the three current standing committees with 7 members each, with Public Safety matters heard by the Administration Committee and the option to revisit the structure, change the ordinance and Administrative Policy 7 as needed for ordinance and policy to match process, with Committee of the Whole and Work Sessions to be held only for very specific items or items not falling under a standing committee.

There being no further discussion, Mayor Green adjourned the meeting at 6:57 p.m.
Minutes by Katie Terhune, Administrative Assistant