

COTTAGE GROVE CITY COUNCIL

12800 RAVINE PARKWAY SOUTH

COTTAGE GROVE, MN 55016

COUNCIL CHAMBERS - 7:00 P.M

December 4, 2024

1. CALL TO ORDER

The City Council of the City of Cottage Grove, Washington County, Minnesota, held a regular meeting on December 4, 2024, at Cottage Grove City Hall, 12800 Ravine Parkway. Mayor Bailey called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The audience, staff, and City Council Members stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

City Clerk Tammy Anderson called the roll: Mayor Bailey-Here; Council Member Garza-Here; Council Member Khambata-Here; Council Member Olsen-Here; Council Member Thiede-Here.

Also present: Jennifer Levitt, City Administrator; Tammy Anderson, City Clerk; Ryan Burfeind, Public Works Director; Zac Dockter, Parks and Recreation Director; Pete Koerner, Public Safety Director; Korine Land, City Attorney-LeVander, Gillen & Miller, PA; Gretchen Larson, Economic Development Director; Brenda Malinowski, Finance Director; Emily Schmitz, Community Development Director, Brad Petersen, Public Safety Captain.

4. OPEN FORUM

Mayor Bailey opened the Open Forum. As no one wished to address the Council, Mayor Bailey closed the Open Forum.

5. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion by Council Member Thiede to approve the agenda; second by Council Member Khambata.
Motion carried: 5-0.

6. PRESENTATIONS

A. Public Safety Board Presentation

Staff Recommendation: Recognize Panamint Capital for their support of the K-9 Program.

Mayor Bailey asked Julie Rice, President of the Public Safety Board, to speak on this, and invited the Council Members to step in front of the dais for this presentation.

Julie stated these three lovely ladies and myself are part of the Public Safety Board. A lot of people see our name, but they don't know what we do. Actually, we're a nonprofit citizens' board that works with the Department of Public Safety and the police liaison, Officer Ryan Pierre, and the Fire Chief to help promote the partnership

between the citizens of Cottage Grove and the Department of Public Safety to provide a safe community for our citizens. Our mission is to provide financial support for equipment, training, and programs to enhance the safety and provide crime prevention and safety information to the citizens of Cottage Grove.

In order for us to do that, we fundraise and accept donations from businesses in our area. When we fundraise, we have a member of our Board that designs special police patches for breast cancer awareness, autism awareness, the vets' memorials; there are all sorts of different patches that we sell. We also sell challenge coins, stuffed animals, and the Sparky Dog, a K-9 dog that represents all of our K-9 Officers.

So, in order for us to get extra money, businesses support us. We've had several in the past few years that have donated generously. Our purchases have included: The speed trailer that you might have seen on 80th Street or 70th Street, telling you to slow down, and other speed signs, thermal imaging and protective masks and hoods for the firefighters, pet chip readers, and other items.

Over the past ten years, we have received donations from Kent Ripplinger and his company, LSP, which is located by 3M; I would guess 99% of Cottage Grove residents don't even know where it is, but they're their own entity out there. So, they've been donating and we've been purchasing K-9 dogs for the City of Cottage Grove: It started with Blitz, then we got Gunnar, then Scout, and most recently we got Odin. So, all of our dogs have come from the help of generous donations from LSP.

This year, Odin did not have a ballistic vest. He was not able to go online and purchase one because he does not receive a paycheck from the City; so, he's only given a toy and accolades from everybody. With the help of LSP, we purchased the ballistic vest for Odin so that he's safe during his night shift because there are a lot of bad guys out there that want to hurt him, along with some of our officers. But now he's protected and we're happy about that.

Julie said I would like to introduce Kent and thank him publicly for the over ten years of donations from their business. So, thank you, Kent, and everyone applauded.

Kent said thank you; like Julie said, a lot of people don't know we're here, but we're an independent power producer, and we supply power to Xcel Energy and we also supply steam to 3M. I guess I'd like to say thank you for everything you guys do, the K-9 unit, the Police Department, the Chief, and I'm glad that I work for a company that supports the mission. Thank you. Everyone applauded.

Julie said next, I'd like to introduce Officer Matt Sorgaard and K-9 Officer Odin. Just a few months ago, they competed in a national competition for K-9s, so I'm going to have Matt speak about that, to tell everyone how they did and what they won.

Officer Sorgaard said we attended a national competition, a Patrol Dog I, it is our annual certification down in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, over about six days of training. We had competed against 67 dogs from across the country in things like obedience, apprehension work, article location, suspect finding, and we ended up taking second place overall, out of the 67 dogs; we lost to our trainer from Washington County, he's the guy who trained both of us. We took first place in our obedience and apprehension, overall combined scores for that. So, it was a good run for us, we enjoyed it, and we're looking forward to going back next year to southern Florida to compete again.

Someone asked are you going to get first place next year?

Officer Sorgaard replied we'll see. I lost the other by 4/10 of a point and if you know the scoring, that's a lot; I lost 2 points for a heeling thing, and that was my fault, not Odin's. So, we'll see next year.

Officer Sorgaard said as far as the ballistic vest, obviously we thank you; for those who aren't aware, Odin is assigned to the S.W.A.T. team with me. So, that's why his vest is green, as he does go on other deployments throughout the whole County, so not just in Cottage Grove. Everyone applauded.

Julie said we just want to thank the citizens of the community that purchase our stuffed dogs, our challenge coins, our patches; they're all available for purchase at City Hall during business hours. At some events, we are selling them to help keep the funds going so that we can continue to purchase items of need for the City of Cottage Grove. She noted that tomorrow night there will be a couple people from the Public Safety Board that will be inside City Hall, and they'll be selling the patches, the challenge coins, and Sparky, the little stuffed dogs. You can see a couple of them in the window across the way on your way out. Odin and Scout are the only dogs that we

have left because Blitz has been retired and Gunnar retired last year, so all those dogs have sold out. So, now we just have Odin and Scout dogs. So, thank you so much; everyone applauded.

Mayor Bailey thanked Kent and shook his hand. Obviously, you guys have done a great deal not only for the Public Safety Board but also the City of Cottage Grove through economic development and things like that, too. So, we're really happy with the support that you have continued to provide for us over the years. Obviously, we're excited, and maybe next year it'll be first place for Odin. I will say this, after seeing him chew on that toy, I don't think I want to be on the receiving end from him. Again, thank you, and thanks to the Public Safety Board for all that you do with the fundraising.

If the public is interested in donating financially to the Public Safety Board, reach out to me, one of the Council Members, or look them up on their Facebook page to see what you can do to help fund these types of things. You can also join the Public Safety Board. Mayor Bailey thanked all of them for being here tonight, and everyone applauded.

B. Eagle Scout Award - Cameron Rekstad

Staff Recommendation: Recognize Cameron Rekstad's accomplishment of Eagle Scout and award him with a plaque.

Mayor Bailey said one of the things we do in the City of Cottage Grove are presentations for both Boy Scouts Eagle Awards and Girl Scouts Gold Awards. Tonight, we have Cameron Rekstad here, and he's joining us this evening because we're celebrating the fact that he is another Eagle Scout Award winner from the City of Cottage Grove's Troop 286.

Just for the public to be aware, one of the reasons that we put so much focus on this is due to their giving to the community, obviously getting to the Eagle Scout or Gold Award level, you see a lot of public service people and electeds and so on that have had that opportunity. I've been lucky enough, as has one of my Council colleagues, Dave, that we have Eagle Scout and Gold Award winners in our families. What's really neat about that is we also have on a wall in the hallway here at City Hall where we list every single Girl Scout Gold Award winner and every Boy Scout Eagle Scout Award winner from Cottage Grove. It goes all the way back as far as we can see, and you can check it out there. So, my son's name is up there, also two sons and a daughter's name for Dave.

Mayor Bailey told Cameron in this particular case, we want to thank you for the great work in getting to this level. We want to present to you today a plaque, which Mayor Bailey read aloud. So, on behalf of myself, the Council, all of our staff, and the citizens of Cottage Grove, congratulations. Everyone applauded.

Mayor Bailey said what we always like to do to end the presentation is we love to hear about the project that you did. For those that don't know, there's usually a big project that they do before they actually obtain the Eagle Scout Award. So, I'm going to hand it over to Cameron and let him tell us what his Eagle Scout project was.

Cameron said thank you. So, back in May, I had like 25 helpers come out to the Cottage Grove Cemetery, and all we did was edged around the perimeter of the gravestones and then we brushed off the top to make it look nice and clean. There were a couple hundred of them that we did, and then on some of them, you couldn't even like see or tell that it was a gravestone, so it was a pretty cool transformation.

Mayor Bailey said thank you for doing that, and everyone applauded Cameron. Photographs were then taken of Cameron with his father, Mayor Bailey, and the City Council Members. Mayor Bailey said thank you again to Cameron, good job.

7. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approve the November 6, 2024, City Council Regular Meeting Minutes.
- B. Approve the October 21, 2024, Public Services Commission Meeting Minutes.
- C. Accept and place on file the minutes from the October 28, 2024, Planning Commission Meeting.
- D. Receive the response letter to Open Forum question (11-20-2024).

- E. Authorize issuance of a single-occasion gambling permit to St. Rita's Church to conduct bingo at 8694 80th Street South, Cottage Grove, on February 21-22, 2025.
- F. Authorize issuance of a temporary intoxicating liquor license to St. Rita's Church for their Cabin Fever Bingo Event held on February 21 & 22, 2025, at 8694 80th Street South, Cottage Grove.
- G. Authorize issuance of a temporary intoxicating liquor license to Kaitlyn Tobritzhofer, on behalf of the Cottage Grove Lions Club, for the Dust 'Em Off Vintage Snowmobile Show to be held at the corner of 70th Street South and Keats Avenue South on January 4, 2025.
- H. Adopt Resolution 2024-164 certifying delinquent utility bills to the property tax rolls payable in 2025.
- I. Approve the 2025-2029 Capital Improvement Plan and Adopt Resolution 2024-178, a Resolution Approving a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to the City's Comprehensive Plan 2040 to Incorporate the Capital Improvement Plan.
- J. Approve the issuance of rental licenses to the properties listed in the attached table.
- K. Adopt Resolution 2024-172 authorizing renewal of business licenses for 2025.
- L. Adopt Ordinance 1091, authorizing the implementation of fee changes, increases, and additions for the year 2025, effective January 1, 2025.
- M. Approve Resolution 2024-167 adopting the 2025 Parttime Firefighters Pay Plan.
- N. Adopt Resolution 2024-168 approving the 2025 Parttime Pay Plan.
- O. Approve Resolution 2024-166 adopting the 2025 Pay Plan and Benefits for employees not covered by a labor contract for the City of Cottage Grove.
- P. Adopt Resolution 2024-165 approving the updated Personnel Policy.
- Q. Approve the adoption of Ordinance 1088 for the Zoning Ordinance amendments regarding Cannabis and Lower-Potency Hemp Edibles, Ordinance 1089 for the Registration Ordinance Amendments regarding Cannabis and Lower-Potency Hemp Edibles, and Ordinance 1090 Enacting an Odor Ordinance.
- R. Adopt Resolution 2024-169 receiving and approving the City of Cottage Grove All-Hazard Plan.
- S. Authorize the Fire Department to apply for a FY24 FEMA AFG for \$367,656.80, which requires a match for 10% of the total cost of \$36,765.68.
- T. Approve the Letter of Understanding for Impound Housing Services 2025 between Animal Humane Society and the City of Cottage Grove.
- U. Approve the lease agreement with the Minnesota National Guard to use the Cottage Grove Armory parking lot for Holiday Train attendees.
- V. Approve the First Amendment to the service agreement through December 31, 2028 with Valdes Lawn Care & Snow Removal to provide outdoor maintenance services to City Hall, HERO Center, Central Fire Station, and Fire Station #4.
- W. Accept the one-year service agreement with Cintas to provide rented floormats and uniforms for the facilities owned by the City of Cottage Grove.
- X. Approve executing the Memorandum of Understanding with compensation for the easement in the amount of \$3,100, and the Permanent Utility Easement agreement with Jason and Jessica Sadek, to accommodate the watermain to be installed at 8532 Indian Boulevard South, as part of the High Zone Row Watermain Project.
- Y. Authorize service agreement with Webber Recreational Design, Inc. for the purchase and installation of playground equipment at Denzer Park for \$83,845.85.
- Z. Adopt Resolution 2024-175 awarding the Denzer Park Grading Project to the quote supplied by Miller Excavating, Inc. in the amount of \$24,245.00 and the appropriate officials are hereby authorized to sign all necessary documents to effectuate these actions.
- AA. Authorize staff to apply for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' No Child Left Inside Grant to purchase archery program supplies in the amount of \$4,940.00.
- BB. Staff recommends the approval of MemberSports 5-year software agreement as reviewed by the City Attorney and City staff based on the payment terms as outlined in the attached memo.
- CC. Adopt Ordinance No. 1085 amending City Code Title 3-15-3 and 3-15-9 to add language exempting short-term rental properties from requiring a crime-free lease addendum for tenants and the

unrelated persons maximum.

- DD. Adopt Resolution 2024-174 approving the Feasibility Report, establishing a December 18, 2024 Public Hearing date, and authorizing the preparation of Plans and Specifications for the 2025 Pavement Management Project.
- EE. Adopt Resolution 2024-173 approving the street name change for the segment of 100th Street South depicted on the Street Name Change Exhibit to Hamlet Avenue South in the Preserve at Prairie Dunes and Pine Glen 7th Addition.
- FF. Approve of the Joint Powers Agreement between the City of Cottage Grove and the City of Newport for Joint Responsibilities of Century/Geneva Avenue South.
- GG. 1) Adopt Ordinance No. 1086 approving the Zoning Amendment to rezone 38.85 acres of land from AG-2, Agricultural, to I-1, General Industrial District, and amend an existing PUD to include an additional 38.85 acres of land owned by NP BOGO Cottage Grove Logistics Park, LLC. 2) Adopt Resolution 2024-176 rescinding Resolution 2021-166 and approving an amendment to the Cottage Grove Logistics Park Master Site Plan to include and additional 38.85 acres of land owned by NP BOGO Cottage Grove Logistics Park, LLC, and approving a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a Data Center use over the Cottage Grove Logistics Park Master Site Plan under NP BOGO Cottage Grove Logistics Park, LLC ownership.
- HH. Approve the February 26, 2024 Cottage Grove Convention and Visitors Bureau Meeting Minutes.
- II. Approve the June 4, 2024 Cottage Grove Convention and Visitors Bureau Regular Meeting Minutes.
- JJ. Approve the Cottage Grove Convention and Visitors Bureau 2025 Budget.
- KK. Approve the Memorandum of Understanding between Rasmussen University and the City of Cottage Grove, providing a 20% tuition reduction (corporate grant) for City employees.
- LL. Approve the Vessel Rental agreement with Desotec for GAC treatment vessels at Wells 3, 8, and 10 Temporary Treatment Plants.

None of the Council Members wished to pull any Items on the Consent Agenda for further comment and/or discussion.

Motion by Council Member Olsen to approve the Consent Agenda; second by Council Member Garza.

Motion carried: 5-0.

8. APPROVE DISBURSEMENTS

- A. Approve disbursements for the period of 11-15-2024 through 11-28-2024 in the amount of \$2,716,222.73.

Motion by Council Member Olsen to approve disbursements; second by Council Member Thiede.

Motion carried: 5-0.

9. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A. Property Tax Levy Payable in 2025 and Adoption of the 2025 Budget
Staff Recommendation: 1) Adopt Resolution 2024-170, a Resolution adopting the 2024 Property Tax Levy Collectible in 2025. 2) Adopt Resolution 2024-171, a Resolution adopting the 2025 Budget. 3) Adopt Resolution 2024-179, a Resolution adopting the Housing and Redevelopment Authority Property Tax Levy.

Mayor Bailey said our Finance Director, Brenda Malinowski, will walk us through this tonight.

Director Malinowski said I have a brief presentation tonight regarding the property tax levy and budget before you hold the Public Hearing and adopt the resolutions that relate to that.

First of all, this is for the public to let everyone know that we've been working on this budget that's in front of you since January. City Council, this year you actually had five budget workshops regarding the budget, so thank you for your time. As you went through each piece of the budget, it's never an easy process as all these needs of the community come forward, so thank you for that. Our City staff, especially our Department Heads, our City Administrator, all parties spent countless hours as we looked through all those needs in the community and prioritized the needs and what we can fund within the constraints that we have.

Budget Accomplishments with the 2025 Budget

- Continue to provide the same exceptional level of services that we have to our community, not limited to those police and fire services, but also our parks and recreation services, snowplowing, street services, those sorts of operational-type needs in our community.
- Continue to demonstrate stewardship of our capital assets by including the replacement of not only our capital but also our City infrastructure that we've identified in our Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and in our Financial Management Plan (FMP).
- Maintained the distinction of being an employer of choice; we had contracts that settled for 2025 and 2026, and those financial obligations are included in the budget in front of you.
- Providing managed growth in staffing positions needed for a growing community by including a few new positions in our budget.
- Meeting the debt service requirements for all existing debt by funding these requirements with the property tax levy. We're making the principal and interest payments that we've issued in the past, whether they're for Pavement Management projects or to build things, such as our Central Fire Station.
- Establishing an HRA Levy for the first time in this budget; that will provide funds not only for housing, but also for redevelopment in our community.

Property Tax Levy History: Is shown here on the screen. It's important to note that this is a component of our City Tax Rate that we apply to an individual property. So, we take this City Property Tax Levy and we divide it by the Tax Capacity; so, here's a history of that since 2014. For 2025, we're at \$26.1 million. Tax Capacity History: This is for 2025, and as you can see on the screen, that's the second component that we use in calculating our City Property Tax Rate, it's really net neutral for 2025. However, I would like to point out that were we not growing and had new construction in the community, that would have went down for 2025; so, the City of Cottage Grove is fortunate that we're a growing community or that Tax Capacity actually would have went down for 2025. City Tax Rate: So, when we take that Property Tax Levy, divide it by the Tax Capacity, we come up with the City Tax Rate. For 2025, that's 37.177%. As you can see, it's consistent with what we had back in 2021 and 2022; in 2023 and 2024, we had some large appreciation in existing property, homeowners had sometimes 20% increases in their market value evaluation on their property, which drove that down. So, now we're back to where we were in 2021 and 2022.

Property Tax Levy Details: That \$26.1 million Property Tax Levy is a 12.98% increase. The majority of that increase is in our General Fund, that's our Chief Operating Budget in the City. That funds our Police and Fire services, our Parks and Recreation, and the Streets and Snowplowing services. General Fund: We've got a budget of \$28.4 million. As you can see since the General Fund does those operational-type services for our community, whether it's the Police, Fire, Snowplowing services, when we provide those services to our community, we're not sending them a bill when we go to a Fire call or a Police call. So, we need to generate revenue to fund those operations, and we fund that through property taxes. So, the General Fund is funded by about 76% in property taxes.

Since we are a growing community, licenses and permits are a large portion of our budget, 8.33%, and they help run our Building Inspection Department and the other departments that are involved with those new home building projects.

On the expenditure side, we're at \$28,446,310 for 2025. As you can see, it is the same amount as the revenues, so we have what is considered a balanced budget.

Since we provide those services that I talked about, whether it be Police, Fire, or Snowplowing through personnel, we say we're in the people business; so, 70% of the General Fund are those personnel services, and then we have contractual commodities and our budget contingency.

If we look at the General Fund expenditures for the last five years, you can see that Public Safety, our Police and Fire, is the largest component of our budget, just over 48%. Public Works, which is our Streets, Forestry, and Snowplowing, is about 19% of our budget. Our General Government is about 12.76%, then we have Parks and Recreation, just under 12%, and then Community Development comes in at 8%, and that's been consistent over the last five years.

Property Tax Statement on a Median Home

Our median home in Cottage Grove decreased in value by about 4.2% from 2024. So, for the 2025 budget, it has a value of about \$354,000. Our residents, our community, our property taxpayers received proposed property tax bills in the mail in November; with the budget meeting tonight, that's if they had questions about the City of Cottage Grove budget. On that median home, they received a property tax proposal of about \$4,344. It's important to note that the City of Cottage Grove is just one component on that property tax bill at 29% of that bill; in addition, there's the Washington County portion that is about 18% of that bill and then the School District is about 49% of the bill.

Based on the budget that's in front of you and the property tax levy, these are the impacts, not only to the median home but also four other sample properties that we look at here in the community. We did a ten-year FMP back in 2023; in that plan, we threw all the current operating costs and projected, we looked at our current debt, our future debt, based on Pavement Management projects and Street projects that would be done in the future. We looked at replacing that capital, and we need about a \$100 increase on that median home per year; that was the consensus that came out of that FMP report. So, based on the property tax levy and budget that's in front of you, on that median home we are within that target at \$58. Because we like to look at not only that median home but what other homes in the community look like, there are four other properties that we track. Because their market value may increase or decrease at different levels, and that's evidenced on here, if we look at the median home, that went down 4.2%, but Property 1, which had about the same valuation last year, only went down 2.29%, so it had a property tax impact of \$88. So, it depends on that market valuation change that's set by the Washington County Assessor's Office on what that impact is from year to year.

How Do We Compare?

We also compare to other cities in Washington County to see how we are doing against those other cities. So, here on this screen is a chart, and it shows the median home values in the other cities in Washington County with their tax rates, and it compares each community. No different than last year, we're second lowest, so we are able to provide excellent value to our citizens at that \$1,261, and there's only one other community in Washington County that is able to beat that number.

We also compare to median homes in growing cities over 40,000 in the metro. So, we also compare favorably on this metric, we are the third from the bottom; there are only two other cities when we look at the median home in those communities that can provide city property taxes at a lower amount.

Lastly, with our 2025 Tax Rates, we compare favorably there, too; we're not at the bottom, but there are only four other communities that are lower than the City of Cottage Grove on that City Property Tax Rate.

What Do My City Taxes Pay For?

Finally, on that median home that went down about 4.2%, if instead of paying property taxes on a yearly basis, if they sent the City of Cottage Grove a check each month, they would send us about \$105. We would take that check, as that's no different than a cable bill or a cell phone bill or a utility bill, but we would spend it as follows:

Public Safety Department (Police and Fire Services).....	\$ 45.20
Public Works (Snowplowing, Streets, & Forestry).....	\$ 14.78
General Government (Supports other functions: Paying employees, doing accounting for employees, or administrating those departments).....	\$ 13.69
Parks and Recreation (Maintains our parks).....	\$ 10.94
Community Development (Generates building permits).....	\$ 1.47
Debt Service (Pays for previous pavement management projects, building the Central Fire Station).....	\$ 15.54
Capital Equipment	\$ 1.29
EDA	\$.55
HRA	\$.55

Budget Contingency.....	\$ 1.07
Monthly Total	\$105.08

That is an increase from 2024 of \$58, or .16 per day, for those services.

Property Tax Relief Programs

Through the State, there are a number of Property Tax Relief Programs:

- 1) The regular credit refund, and that's based on income;
- 2) A Special Property Tax Refund program if your property taxes increased more than 12% and at least \$100, but it can't be because of an improvement you did on your property.
- 3) Senior Citizen or Disability Property Tax Deferral Program.

The website is <https://www.revenue.state.mn.us/property-tax-refund> or the Department of Revenue phone number, 651-296-3781. Otherwise, please just contact me, here at the City, as I'm always happy to talk to residents and citizens regarding those programs and help them navigate those programs.

Most importantly, watch for those Valuation Notices that are issued by Washington County in the spring, in April. On there, it lists Open Book Meetings. If you have a question about your valuation, if you think that it's wrong or have any questions, those are the meetings to attend to understand those valuations on your property.

With that, Council, I'm happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Mayor Bailey said thank you, Brenda, once again; it was another fine job by staff putting the budget together. My guess is maybe 30, 60 days from now you'll be starting on the 2026 budget, I know how that works. He asked Council if they had anything they would like to bring up.

Council Member Olsen said first of all, again, I echo the mayor's thank you to you and the staff. You know, we started this budget process actually in January when we had our Strategic Planning session, as we do every year. I can tell you, for those watching at home, the number was quite a bit higher at that point in time, but of course, we didn't have very much information either. As the year transpired, we've met a dozen times or so, maybe more, and every time we've kind of refined and refined and refined, based on the information.

There are a couple of pieces of information that I think were really critical this year, and I was hoping you might be able to just share a little bit about that. So, you mentioned earlier the value of property, the value of someone's home. There was a State law change as it related to property valuations that probably those with a valuation higher than I think it's \$513,000 saw on their Property Tax Statement. Could you explain that to some degree, just so that people kind of know what that was?

Brenda replied there was a change in the Homestead Market Value Exclusion, so lower-value properties received more of a change, an advantage on that program, but some of the higher-value properties did not. So, that had an impact and a shift, and we were watching that, too, especially the shift from residential to commercial; so, the residential properties saw a little bit of a savings, but those higher-value properties saw more of some of those increases.

Council Member Olsen said I think we saw that in the chart with the properties that we benchmark every year, and it is the same properties year after year after year, so it's very consistent; but I noticed that in some cases, properties that were under that roughly \$500,000 mark, they actually saw a decrease in valuation this year, and the teeter-totter went the other way for the folks that were above that \$500,000 or \$513,000 mark. Now, if they're concerned about that, if they feel like, hey, you know what, I don't know that that valuation is right, what should they do about that?

Brenda replied they should contact the County Assessor when that Valuation Notice comes out in the spring. If they think that their 2025 Proposed Property Tax isn't calculated right, they're welcome to contact me, or I can work them through that calculation and help them understand that calculation for 2024 vs. 2025.

Council Member Olsen said yes, okay, good, because certainly you try to apply it evenly, but as the valuations, whether it's a commercial business or a residential property, as those fluctuate, you're going to see a fluctuation in your overall taxes for every one of the Taxing Districts that's applied on the tax statement, so that's good.

The other thing that I want to talk about is the HRA Levy. I noticed that you had that on your chart as well, and maybe you could just tell the public at home what we chose to do this year with HRA vs. EDA.

Brenda replied yes, so in the current year, 2024, for the EDA Levy, we had \$275,000. During the financial management process, Council's consensus was to start doing a levy for HRA for housing and redevelopment in the community. Instead of leaving the EDA Levy at \$275,000, we took half of the EDA Levy; so the EDA Levy for 2025 is \$137,500, and the HRA Levy is \$137,500. So, the net effect is the same, no change from last year, we're putting it in an HRA Levy. The HRA Levy actually is more transparent to our property tax payers because it will be a separate line on the Property Tax Statement, it will say City of Cottage Grove HRA; so our property tax payers will understand the property taxes that they are going to pay the City for those housing and redevelopment activities.

Council Member Olsen said thank you for that, and I know that that is something that several of our neighboring communities have done for quite some time. I think as our community continues to grow, we have portions of the community where there's some aging infrastructure, those kinds of things; and these HRA funds can sometimes help us to maintain a little bit older infrastructure or it can help us repurchase a property that might be blighted or things of that nature. So, I'm glad that we're breaking that out so people can see it much more transparently, but the good news is its budget neutral, it doesn't change anything.

Council Member Olsen said the last thing that I wanted to ask is coming out of 2020, we all remember, probably not very fondly, the challenges of COVID and all the rest of it. There were a lot of recovery funds that were provided to communities, either by their states or by the federal government, and we're sort of at the end of that now. So, maybe you could just speak briefly about sort of when some of those funds sunset or have sunset, and then what that means going forward, because certainly we still have to maintain those things that were initially paid for.

Brenda replied yes, and I can specifically talk about our One-Time Public Safety Aid. So, at the end of 2023, the City of Cottage Grove received about \$1.7 million from the State, we were no different than other communities. What Cottage Grove is doing is we are doing a staged approach of using those funds; instead of using those funds in one year, we're using it over a three-to-four year period, so that when those funds are depleted, that we're not having large spikes in our property taxes. So, that is the importance of that long-term FMP that we do here in the City. One of the things that we didn't want to do is to have large property tax swings from one year to the other, and so we're doing that with those One-Time Public Safety Aid funds.

Council Member Olsen said I appreciate that. With battling inflation and the cost of goods and all of that, that everybody else does, taking that measured approach has been a godsend; that ten-year FMP, of course that's what gave us our AAA Bond Rating as well, and you can't get any better than that, so I guess we're doing something right. But I'm glad to see that we're taking that year-by-year, step-by-step approach rather than what I've seen some other communities do, which is they spend it all at one fell swoop; and then suddenly they're stuck with it, and they've got to pay for it the next year, and there's only one way to do that, and that's through a massive increase in property taxes. For a community like ours, that doesn't get Local Government Aid (LGA) to any large degree, as opposed to our friends in St. Paul Park who are right below us in Washington County tax per capita, we need to be very judicious and very careful, and we always are. But we can't count on those big influxes of money from the State or the Federal government to come our way every year, like some other folks do. So, I think that makes us a little better when we sharpen our pencil. That's all I've got, thanks so much.

Council Member Khambata said in your breakdown of our budget expenditures, you listed our cost of Debt Service, and I know since our bond rating was upgraded, we probably haven't had an opportunity to convert those bonds into lower interest bond sales. But do you have a rough idea of what the long-term net savings will be on having that upgraded rating? I know in projects that we've put out for bond since we've gotten that rating, did we notice a large enough or a noticeable drop in the rates that were being offered to us?

Brenda replied we did. I think we experienced that with that 2024 Bond Issue that we did at the beginning of the year. So, those interest savings on that debt issue for 2024, so we've got two bond issues now underneath us with that AAA Bond Rating, and those interest savings that we saw when we issued debt in 2024 was included in this budget in front of you, so in that \$15.54.

Council Member Khambata said additionally, I just wanted to say thank you to you for this year-long process that is our budget, but also to the directors; I know we asked a lot of our specific departments in terms of having them bring to us items that could be postponed or deferred, and again in January, there were a lot of unknowns. As the year kind of played out, we were able to assess kind of what budget line items needed to wait until next

year and what we could bring into the fold for this year on a priority basis. That's a heavy lift, and I appreciate all the work that you guys have put into this.

Brenda said and I did look tonight, and there's about \$125 more on that median home that could have been added for requests, and so we did our due diligence, City Council and City staff, on that. So, yes, another \$125 on that median home.

Mayor Bailey said it's funny, that's the first time I've heard you actually say that; I mean, we always look at those and we say no, no, we've got to wait on that. And then to hear what that dollar amount is, that's quite astonishing.

Council Member Thiede said I guess I just want to make mention that I totally understand, I tend to be a little bit of a, the one that tries to, well, let's just face it, I'm kind of cheap; my dad raised me to be pretty frugal. But there are definitely some things, and I know that a lot of people feel that burden of increases, even though we're saying well, it's not a very big increase, when you get about ten smaller increases, it all starts to add up. So, we do try to make an effort to hold the line on some of those taxes, some of the costs have gone up, we've seen some increases in labor costs and things like that. Like it or not, that's the biggest percentage of our costs and things of that nature. So, even though sometimes it doesn't seem like we're holding the line on things, I think we do have some pretty good data that says that we sit pretty well in comparison to other cities and so forth. And while I'll be the first to say that I'd love to always see my taxes stay the same or go down, it's kind of inevitable that the costs continue to go up. I do have to say that a lot of these folks in the City here kind of put up with me in terms of doing some things and cost justifications for equipment and things like that, that I know are kind of a pain to do sometimes, but I think it does give good visibility. I think that there is a lot of effort made to try to be more productive, to try to use equipment longer. Everybody knows that when somebody gives me a reason that they're replacing equipment is because it just came to the end of its life, that they need to have a little bit more information than that to convince me of the fact that that piece of equipment has to be replaced. I mean, one year they even brought me over and showed that there was a rusted hole in the bottom of one of the vehicles. But at any rate, so, even though it is a situation where we don't like to see the costs go up, I think we do a pretty good job.

Mayor Bailey thanked Brenda for her presentation.

Mayor Bailey opened the Public Hearing. As no one wished to speak, Mayor Bailey closed the Public Hearing.

Motion by Council Member Garza to Adopt Resolution 2024-170, a Resolution adopting the 2024 Property Tax Levy Collectible in 2025; second by Council Member Khambata. Motion carried: 5-0.

Motion by Council Member Khambata to Adopt Resolution 2024-171, a Resolution adopting the 2025 Budget; second by Council Member Garza. Motion carried: 5-0.

Motion by Council Member Olsen to Adopt Resolution 2024-179, a Resolution adopting the 2024 Housing and Redevelopment Authority Property Tax Levy, collectible in 2025; second by Council Member Khambata. Motion carried: 5-0.

Mayor Bailey thanked Brenda and the staff for putting this all together; you'll have a little vacation here and then you get to come back and start it all over again.

10. BID AWARDS - None.

11. REGULAR AGENDA

A. Park High School - Site Plan Review

Staff Recommendation: 1) Adopt Resolution 2024-177 approving the Site Plan Review for two additions to Park High School, located at 8040 80th Street South, totaling approximately 35,000 square feet and additional site improvements to property located at 8040 80th Street South and 7830 80th Street South. 2) Approve drainage and utility easements, right-of-way easement, encroachment agreement, and a stormwater maintenance agreement on property located at 8040 and 7830 80th Street South.

Mayor Bailey said Emily Schmitz, our Community Development Director, will take us through this tonight and welcomed Emily.

Director Schmitz said as most of you know, the School District had a successful referendum in 2023; therefore, there are several projects across the County, but there are also a couple here in Cottage Grove. For those of you who have the Ph.D. in your back pocket, I think you're thinking, oh, my goodness, finally, as we look at Park High School and a couple of improvements.

The Site Plan before you this evening is a little bit twofold, with a couple of building additions: One is the cafeteria on the rear of the building. It's my understanding that the cafeteria as it sits today is existing from when the building was built, so it's been around for a couple of years and is in need of a brand-new cafeteria. So, that addition, #19, as you can see on the screen, is a brand-new cafeteria. The second building addition is also to the CTE, or the Career Technical Education, portion of the building where they're expanding to have some additional opportunities for students to build sheds, larger projects that they'll be able to work into that area; that's #16 on your screen.

This Site Plan looks a little bit different, with Park High School and Crestview, the site is quite large. So, the minor scale of the addition, when we think about the Site Plan Review from a Zoning perspective, obviously, we usually look at parking, we look at landscaping, we look at all of those details. I really want to focus on the architectural materials as the minor impact of this addition to the site as a whole, making sure that I highlighted that the School District placed a large focus on making sure that this addition blended into the existing building as it is today. As you can see, 78% total of that is brick, glazing, and stone, which are those Class I materials that we typically require on commercial projects within the community. So, there are a couple of great renderings just so you can see that addition on the back side of the building.

My next slide is kind of that second part of the site, when we look at the site improvements, and this is kind of the flow and the access to the site. So, what I'll highlight is adding an additional access off of 80th, for most of you who know, who have that Ph.D. in your pocket or have students that attend Park High School, a lot of that activity right now is right in front of Park High School. So, the large focus of the School District was to see if we couldn't separate all of that activity into different locations within the site. Adding an access off of 80th Street is one of the first steps, that helps to separate traffic coming from both the east and the west into their own accesses into the site. That gives some additional stacking for folks who are dropping off at Crestview Elementary and gives some additional area for those folks to stack on the site, not onto 80th Street. The biggest change that you're going to see is that drop-off for kids at Park is going to be on the back side of the building, as opposed to the front. So, that goes back to that activity that you see in the front, we're proposing to split that out. So, your bus traffic will continue to be in the front, student drop-off will be in the back; student parking will remain in the student parking lot that they have today, and then you're got guest and staff parking in the front, which is also there today. But some additional parking is obviously proposed on the back side of the building. So, that also sends that traffic out onto Ideal Avenue, exiting onto 80th Street; again, separating out all that traffic activity that we see right now directly onto 80th Street, we're spreading that out across the site.

Finally, we are working with the School District to obtain easements that are needed to cover different utilities that exist on the site today to make sure that any of that public infrastructure the City has access to in the event that we would need to maintain it. In addition, some additional required right-of-way along 80th Street that we needed to encompass; if you're aware, there's an existing trail that extends along 80th Street, and we wanted to be certain that that was within our right-of-way so again we can maintain it long term.

With that, there are two separate recommendations before you. Staff is available, as well as the applicant, if there are additional questions.

Mayor Bailey thanked Emily, and asked if Council had any questions at this point.

Council Member Olsen said this might be for Ryan and it might be for the applicant, so whoever wants it can take it. When we saw this presentation, one of the things we talked about was the safe crossing areas on Hinton and on Ideal. I wondered if somebody could just spend a moment sharing with the public what will be changing in those areas to ensure that the crossing for those who walk will actually be safe; in fact, I believe it will be safer because I think we're going to take a lot of that traffic off of Ideal.

Ryan Burfeind, Public Works Director, said looking at Ideal specifically, you're right, a lot of it is probably less traffic just because hearing the School District's numbers, with the parent drop-off and pick-up, I think they average somewhere around 150. The student parking lot holds about 450 cars, so you should actually have less traffic on Ideal Avenue. We are looking at with them more of a marked crosswalk at 79th Street and then Ideal Avenue.

Council Member Olsen said that's been a sore spot for quite a while.

Director Burfeind said so, we'll be looking at that. Over at Hinton Avenue, really the designated crosswalk is at the traffic signal at 80th Street because that is a controlled intersection and that is the safest place to cross. I believe that is where the School District has their crossing guards as well. So, that's remaining the same as the designated crossing, and really, with the signal there, that is the best option. Over the years, discussions come up at 79th there, but that is not a good crossing point; as it's an undivided four lane, it's just not an ideal location to be crossing for children. So, directing them down to 80th is still the proposed plan.

Council Member Olsen said good, and then since I have you standing there, one of the other challenges that we faced was when people are coming into the Ice Arena and they're moving at a pretty good rate of speed, past the front of the arena, towards the back parking. There were some changes to that area as well, to try to mitigate some of those concerns. Do you feel comfortable speaking about those?

Director Burfeind replied I think those maybe I'd let the applicant speak to a little bit, as they're more familiar. I do know there's been some striping changes, some changes there, but maybe if they have any additional to add, I'll let them discuss that one.

Kevin Boll, a Civil Engineer working on the project with BKBM Engineers, introduced himself. Ultimately, we are going to have the additional parking on the back side of the school, which we think is going to help alleviate some of the congestion on the south side of the school. We anticipate that after-school activities or once school lets out, that'll be used for practice for football and whatever on the north fields, but then also used kind of for the Ice Arena parking and kind of eliminating some of that traffic on the south side there.

Council Member Olsen said the concern that most people have and have had for quite some time is let's say you have a big game, and I'll use Park, who's going to play East Ridge this week, on Friday night. East Ridge's home ice is at the Ice Arena and Park's home ice is at the Ice Arena. So, when they play each other, they play at the arena; it's just a question of which sheet of ice. When the buses come to drop off the teams, they park right in front of that arena. Then, when you have parents, who are driving to drop off their players or people who want to come to the game, they drop off at the front and then go park someplace. Right in front of the arena, that traffic going either way is problematic, and sometimes people move at a pretty rapid rate of speed. I've seen our law enforcement officers on several occasions actually ticket people for their behavior behind the wheel in that area. So, do you anticipate some of these changes are going to mitigate that? Is it going to slow some of that down, or is there anything else that you're aware of that may be going on?

Kevin replied I guess not specifically to that drive itself; you're talking about the drive directly between the Ice Arena and the high school?

Council Member Olsen replied yes.

Kevin said there may be some level of less congestion for people who are trying to go north through that parking area, they can now enter through the Crestview side of that. Similarly, there's the access off of Ideal, so you can kind of loop around to the north, if that makes sense, instead of cutting straight through the center. So,

there's probably some congestion relief because of that, but ultimately, there's no anticipated speed bumps or anything added in that area.

Council Member Olsen said well, the reality is that was the only way people could get in and out; so, now that they have a different access point, that may make a big change, but I just wanted to ask the question because we are approaching, tonight's the first game, and the girls played last night. So, it's going to be that time of year, and we want to try to make sure that we plan forward for next year and the year after and the year after. Thank you.

Council Member Khambata said I will just comment that when this was being presented at the Planning Commission meeting, which I am the Council liaison for, a question that I had, which was brought up by one of the Planning Commission members was how would you restrict traffic? So, now people who are dropping off their children are supposed to come around to the back of the building; how do you prevent them from going through the bus lane and continuing to cause congestion? And they said that they had planned to address that with using some cones to blockade vehicles and that that's been an effective method at other schools where they have to manage those two different types of traffic.

Mayor Bailey said I have two questions, and both of them were brought up during our workshop that we had, I believe a couple weeks ago. I think our Parks and Recreation director even brought it up, and it does involve that area between the Ice Arena and the school. The first is about the lighting; at the moment, the lighting over there is dark, and I guess I'd like to put a plug in because I know we have some on the Ice Arena itself, but it doesn't really get out to I'll say the travel lane or lanes that go by there. Then, of course, there's very limited lighting on the school, which actually doesn't really push down towards the sidewalk there; so, I would like to just put that out there as something that we should look at.

The other one, and I brought it up that night and I'll bring it up again here, is parking has been at a premium at that school. Council Member Olsen brings up the comment about if both high schools, even if they're not playing each other, they might be playing at the same time, plus there's basketball at the high school. So, when those events happen, parking is at a premium; you could literally be parking, I'm not kidding, on Ideal Avenue to walk all the way to the Ice Arena or to the school for basketball. And not that this is going to be the biggest of deals, but one of the things that was initially in your first plan was what used to be a warming house, that's behind the Ice Arena, was going to be moved. I know they're using it for storage for like the field facilities, and that was going to be additional parking. I believe that the reason that it was removed is cost factors, is that accurate? So, with that being said, I know what we do at the City is when there's a budget, which you have to have a budget, just like we do, if they do a Change Order where you could actually say okay, I'm going to bid this project out. Depending on how the costs come back, we can do a Change Order, which would be a possibility of somebody adding like the parking on the back there. And I just know, because between the lighting and the parking all around the high school, it's been a challenge. I do appreciate what you guys are doing, I like the idea, I like the design that you're trying to do and to split things up so there isn't so much craziness in the mornings, getting into the high school. But I would just like to make my plug once again for those two items, the lighting on the high school, and then of course, looking at what we could do with some additional parking. If you need to work with our staff, obviously, on placement of a new shed or a building, obviously I'm sure we could work with you on that to make it; I know you had it at another spot at one point. I'm not sure because of how the fields are working out that it had to be moved, or maybe it was us, I don't know. But I'm just saying let's see what we can do to work together to increase the parking opportunities there but also provide you with the needed space that you need for sheds. I would assume Council feels pretty confident on that, I know we brought it up during the workshop, so.

Mayor Bailey said so, this is just on our Regular Agenda; there isn't like a Public Hearing or anything. Is there anybody in the audience that wanted to speak on this topic at all, by chance? No one spoke.

Motion by Council Member Olsen to Adopt Resolution 2024-177 approving the Site Plan Review for two additions to Park High School, located at 8040 80th Street South, totaling approximately 35,000 square feet, and additional site improvements to property located at 8040 80th Street South and 7830 80th Street South; second by Council Member Khambata. Motion carried: 5-0.

Motion by Council Member Thiede to approve drainage and utility easements, right-of-way easement, encroachment agreement, and a stormwater maintenance agreement on property located at 8040 and 7830 80th Street South; second by Council Member Garza. Motion carried: 5-0.

Mayor Bailey said thank you and good luck. I know there'll be a lot of construction going on up there next year.

12. COUNCIL COMMENTS AND REQUESTS

Council Member Khambata said I am so excited to go and skate on a frozen pond, I'm beside myself. However, the ice is not thick enough, and so I'm just going to make a quick PSA that it sounds like we had a close call in Woodbury just a couple of days ago with a couple of teenagers who went through the ice. I know that there's been at least one or two other reports. If you go on the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources website, which is dnr.state.mn.us, they have a nice pictograph explaining how thick the ice needs to be to stand on it, drive on it, snowmobile on it. Please be safe, don't go through the ice trying to have fun with your kids.

Council Member Olsen said I know that Christmas is your favorite time of year, so I'm certainly not going to steal any of your thunder because there's a whole bunch of Christmas going on. But one thing that I did want to mention is this coming Sunday, December 8, we have got our Santa Breakfast for the Cottage Grove Lions, not to be confused with the Santa Breakfast that is taking place at River Oaks. Santa is amazing, he can be in two places at once, but this one is for the Cottage Grove Lions, from 8:00 a.m. until noon at the VFW Red Barn here in Cottage Grove. Santa will be there, along with Sparkles the Elf, and you might see some familiar faces wearing their Lions gear, as we're trying to serve some breakfast and drinks, and there'll be all kinds of fun things going on. The admission price is \$12 for adults, it is \$8 for children, and we would love to see you there. There is no rule that says you can't go to both; so, if you're already planning on going to River Oaks, I know that that was an order your tickets in advance sort of event, this is a pop in whenever you can sort of event. So, from 8:00 to noon, we'll be there; have your fun at River Oaks and then you come and see us and we'll put a little strawberry on top of the sundae for you, and it'll be just a beautiful day. You get to see Santa twice. So, I look forward to having a really nice crowd there.

Council Member Garza said just hopping on what Brenda said, she gave us a lot of great information regarding our taxes here in Cottage Grove and how we're spending our budget on all the things. I just want to give a friendly reminder to any of our new residents to Cottage Grove that may have purchased a home in 2024, make sure that you have homesteaded your home because that will help you with your taxes. So, if you have not or if you do not know, you can check with Washington County, I believe online, or you can give them a call. That's a really good and an important thing to do before the end of the year if you purchased this year.

Mayor Bailey said so as Council Member Olsen said this evening the wind is going nuts out there, and yes, a lot of my Christmas decorations are flying everywhere in my yard, even though they're staked, but yeah, it's not a pretty night for Christmas decorations outside. But staff is telling me that they've already talked to Mother Nature, and tomorrow night, when we have our Hometown Holiday Celebration here at City Hall, I encourage you to come, check out all the events. The last couple years that we've been doing it, it's gotten bigger and better every year. As a matter of fact, and yes, the tent is up out here and its holding very well, but there are a lot of decorations here at City Hall. Staff has done a great job of putting things together. Just as a friendly reminder, there are going to be food trucks out here, games, Santa and Mrs. Claus will be arriving, and then we'll do an official tree lighting for the City of Cottage Grove, I believe at 5:00 p.m. And then there will be some other decorations, some music, and things that are going to be happening out here. City Hall will be open, I think you might have heard that earlier, so if it is colder than what we in Minnesota would say is normal right now, there is a chance for you to stop inside here to City Hall and warm up, if necessary. We will have warming tents and such out in front of City Hall. So, there will also be Christmas movies inside. Like I said, it's a great event, it is tomorrow evening, which is Thursday, December 5, and you can start arriving as early as 4:30 p.m. There will be parking at both the Washington County

Government Center and the HERO Center, and you can take a wagon ride that will be provided from one of those locations to get you here to City Hall, and then you can take a ride back at that particular point.

Mayor Bailey said I was going to mention the River Oaks Santa Breakfast is completely sold out, so whether you're doing both, now that you don't have the option at River Oaks, we definitely want you to go down to do the Santa Breakfast at the VFW for the Cottage Grove Lions; we encourage you to do that.

Mayor Bailey said this coming Saturday, December 7, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., there is what we call a Fill Up the Fire Truck event; in the past in Cottage Grove we've done it at one of our parks or maybe Cub Foods. However, this year they decided they're going to do it down at the Friends in Need Food Shelf, 535 4th Street, in St. Paul Park; it's kind of down behind Carbone's, for those of us who know St. Paul Park. The purpose, of course, is because all the proceeds and such done through this event is going to be provided to the Friends in Need Food Shelf to support families in need. You might be asking what are they looking for? The items they're really looking for are toilet paper, paper towels, toothpaste, toothbrushes, diapers in sizes 4, 5, and 6, plastic and paper bags, deodorant, baby wipes, shampoo, and bar soap; or I would also suggest cash if you're so willing and able to do it because obviously that goes a long way if you can't or don't want to provide those items. Then it'll also give you a chance to take a tour, which is part of the reason why they're doing it down there; so, other than stopping and filling the fire truck, you can actually take a tour of the food shelf and see how they manage to put many, many, many people through there to support those in Cottage Grove and our surrounding communities.

Mayor Bailey said I want to mention about next Wednesday, December 11, we do have the CPKC Holiday Train that is going to be back in Cottage Grove here, right along West Point Douglas Road South, near the Youth Service Bureau. It is an amazing event. If you haven't seen it, I encourage you to swing down there. There are warming tents, there's going to be Santa, free glowsticks, cookies and cocoa, which is also free; obviously in limited quantities, but again, there will be food trucks, Holiday Train merchandise with all the proceeds obviously going to the Friends in Need Food Shelf. It is amazing to see, there is music that comes with the train, so a stage opens up, and I encourage you to stop down there. It starts as early as 3:30 p.m., and the train is expected to arrive around 5:15 p.m., and it's usually here for 15-to-25 minutes, tops, and then it moves on out. So, again, I believe our goal this year is \$100,000; if we do achieve that \$100,000, then over \$2 million would have been raised for just this Cottage Grove stop. By the way, from what we're hearing from CPKC Rail, we're one of the biggest and most profitable stops that they have. In other words, for donating to the local community, so that's pretty amazing both for our communities and the members of our communities, as well as all of the local businesses that help bring this to town. So, that is why they're back again: We're one of their biggest stops, we're one of their best stops, and they do really appreciate all the love and support that they get from the communities of Cottage Grove, St. Paul Park, Newport, and Grey Cloud.

Mayor Bailey said there is also the Holiday Lights tour; you can go to the City website or our Facebook page, and you can download the map, and it'll literally take you to every one as long as you want to do it throughout Cottage Grove. The last I saw, I think there were over 50 homes that are currently signed up. Yes, mine is one of them, hopefully it'll still be intact after this evening, but it is pretty amazing for what people are doing out in our community with holiday decorations. So, I encourage you to do that.

Mayor Bailey said our Public Works Director, Ryan Burfeind, just mentioned to me that one of the things that I mentioned in my Mayor's Moment on our local cable access is we're going to be trying out, if you will, we're going to be putting up four different Christmas decorations on streetlights; they're going to be down on Jamaica, basically between Highway 61 and Taco Bell, in that particular area. There's going to be a number or a letter on each of them for you to vote on which of those particular decorations that you would like to see in Cottage Grove in the future. The reason is that some of the decorations that we currently have are getting older, and on some of them the lights aren't working anymore; so, our goal will be to start replacing them and of course with the new lights that we've got down in the Jamaica Avenue area, by Target, those also require different brackets and things like that, too. So, we are going to need to upgrade some of these, and this is going to be your opportunity to help us choose. The last time we did this, the public I thought loved it, we got a lot of response from the public about which ones they liked or didn't like. We'll get the information from the public later on, as we get closer to Christmas, and we'll share with everybody what the selection is. So, stay tuned, in the next week or so you'll see the information go out there, and you'll obviously see the decorations go up shortly.

Mayor Bailey said we do have a Workshop tonight, which is Closed to the Public; I will just mention to the public that we will be closing the meeting pursuant to Minnesota Statute 13D.05 Subd. (3)a to conduct a performance evaluation of our City Administrator, Jennifer Levitt. Once we're completed with that, we will adjourn the meeting at that point.

So, we look forward to seeing everybody at the Hometown Holiday event tomorrow evening and then again next week at the Holiday Train. So, take care everyone.

13. WORKSHOPS - OPEN TO PUBLIC - None.

14. WORKSHOPS - CLOSED TO PUBLIC

- A. *Performance Evaluation - Jennifer Levitt, City Administrator*
Staff Recommendation: Close the meeting pursuant to Minnesota Statute 13D.05 Subd. (3)a to conduct a performance evaluation of City Administrator Jennifer Levitt.

15. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Council Member Olsen, second by Council Member Garza, to adjourn the meeting at 10:17 p.m.
Motion carried: 5-0.

Minutes prepared by Judy Graf and reviewed by Tamara Anderson.