

**INVER GROVE HEIGHTS CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
MONDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2023 - 6:00 P.M. - 8150 BARBARA AVENUE**

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

The City Council of Inver Grove Heights met in regular session on Monday, December 11, 2023, in person. Mayor Dietrich called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**2. ROLL CALL:**

Present In-Person: Mayor Dietrich; Council Members: Murphy, Gliva, T’Kach, Scales; City Administrator Wilson, City Attorney McCauley Nason, City Clerk Kiernan, Public Works Director Connolly, City Engineer Merchlewicz, Police Chief Chiodo, Deputy Fire Chief Eric Bergum, Finance Director Hove, Assistant Finance Director Hosszu, and Parks and Recreation Director Lares

**3. PRESENTATIONS:**

Heather Stevenson, Assistant Director for Dakota County libraries, Inver Glen Library presented an update on expanded hours at Dakota County Libraries starting on Monday, December 18, 2023. Self-service hours will be 6 am to 11 pm seven days a week. Users can pick up holds, use computers, Wi-Fi, and use self-service check out services for materials such as books, movies and more. It will not replace staff but will make the library convenient for users.

Users can sign up for an access card to be able to use for when the library is not staffed by visiting [www.dakotacount.us/library](http://www.dakotacount.us/library) and search self-service.

**4. CONSENT AGENDA:**

- A.** Minutes of the July 24, 2023 City Council Meeting
- B.** Minutes of the September 11, 2023 City Council Meeting
- C.** Minutes of the September 25, 2023 City Council Meeting
- D.** Minutes of the October 2, 2023 City Council Work Session
- E.** Minutes of the October 9, 2023 City Council Meeting
- F.** Approval of Disbursements **Resolution 2023-303**
- G.** Personnel Actions
- H.** 2024 City Council Meeting Schedule
- I.** 2024 Advisory Commission Meeting Schedules
- J.** Resolution adopting 2024 Fee Schedule **Resolution 2023-304**
- K.** Resolution Ending Plot Sales at Union Cemetery **Resolution 2023-305**
- L.** Resolution Accepting Bids, Awarding a Contract and Approving Budgets for Seidls Lake Shoreland & Trail Project, **Resolution 2023-306 & 307**
- M.** Agreement with ASHLink Health for Fitness Memberships at the VMCC
- N.** Resolution Approving a Variance to Allow an Accessory Structure within the Side Setback at 2694 96<sup>th</sup> Street **Resolution 2023-308**
- O.** Resolution Approving a Variance to allow a covered entrance and cantilever within the front setback at 6940 Craig Avenue **Resolution 2023-309**
- P.** Resolution Approving a Conditional Use Permit for a Contractors Yard at 6840 Dixie Ave **Resolution 2023-310**
- Q.** Adoption of Paid Time Off Policy for Paid-on-Call Firefighters to comply with State Earned Sick and Safe Leave Law

- R.** Contract with SEH for the Rock Island Swing Bridge Lighting Preliminary Designs
- S.** Resolution Approving Revised Repayment Schedule for Golf Course Loan **Resolution 2023-311**
- T.** Resolution Accepting State Appropriation for Heritage Village Park and Authorizing Submission of Application for Disbursement of Funds **Resolution 2023-312**
- U.** Authorization to Contract for Appraisal for Potential Park Property
- V.** Approval of Summary Publication Resolution for Ordinance Amending Development Fees and Utility Connection Fees **Resolution 2023-313**
- W.** Exempt Gambling Permit for Ducks Unlimited.

**Motion by T’Kach, second by Scales, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.**

**Ayes: 5**

**Nays: 0      Motion carried.**

**5. PUBLIC HEARING:**

**A. Public Hearing for Additional 2024 Tobacco Sales License Renewal Applications**

There were 6 tobacco licenses brought forward for approval: Cameron’s Warehouse Liquors, Holiday #438, Holiday #71, Market Liquor, Arbor Point Liquors and A & M Liquor.

Major Dietrich opened the Public Hearing. No public hearing comments were received.

**Motion by Gliva, second by T’Kach, to close public hearing.**

**Ayes: 5**

**Nays: 0      Motion carried.**

**Motion by Scales, second by T’Kach, to approve additional Tobacco Retail Sales for 2024.**

**Ayes: 5**

**Nays: 0      Motion carried.**

**6. REGULAR BUSINESS:**

**A. Rental Housing Licenses**

City Administrator Kris Wilson presented one Rental Housing License for approval. Staff finds it to be in order. It appeared as rental address, 8871 Branson Dr, property owner, Dublin Investments LLC and property manager Erik Eveland of St Michael MN.

**Motion by Scales, second by T’Kach, to approve the Rental Housing License as presented.**

**Ayes: 5**

**Nays: 0      Motion carried.**

**B. Approve Final Adoption of the 2024 Budget & Tax Levy**

Finance Director Hove presented the Budget and Tax Levy for 2024.

#### 2024 Budget Calendar - Key Dates

- September 11, 2023 - Council adopts preliminary 2024 general fund budget and tax levies
- Week of November 13, 2023 - Dakota County mails out Proposed Tax Notices (2024 tax estimates based on proposed tax levies)
- December 4, 2023 - Public meeting to discuss 2024 budgets and tax levies (also referred to as Truth in Taxation Meeting)
- December 11, 2023 - Council to approve final 2024 budgets and tax levies
- December 28, 2023 - Deadline to certify final levies to Dakota County

#### 2024 Budget Summary

- Fund Budgets (26)
  - General Fund
  - Special Revenue Funds (5)
  - Capital Project Funds (2)
  - Debt Service Funds (6)
  - Enterprise Funds (8)
  - Internal Service Funds (4)
- Revenues
  - Tax Levy = \$32,741,394
  - Other Revenues = \$60,257,042
- Expenditures = \$90,184,381
- Net/Addition of Fund Balance = \$2,814,055

Citywide Tax Levy by Fund overall impact of 7.9% Citywide Tax Levy Increase on Median Valued Residential Property (\$342,800) equals an annual change in City taxes of \$75.37.

#### 2024 Key Budget Investments

- 3% general wage increase
- 10% increase to health insurance costs
- 4.0 New Staff Hires
  - 1 Assistant Fire Chief
  - 1 Street Maintenance Worker
  - 1 Parks Maintenance Worker
  - 1 Utility Billing Coordinator in Finance
- \$75,000 towards the expansion of mental health and physical health support services for Police & Fire
- SAFER Savings Plan - an additional \$200,000 set aside to prepare for end of the grant funding
- Additional \$145,000 (5%) levied for the Pavement Management Program; total 2024 tax levy investment of \$3,045,000
- Added \$50,000 into Parks budget for Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) - will continue to be an annual expense

Fund Budgets were shown as charts.

Council is asked to adopt 3 Resolutions

1. Set Final Citywide Levy
2. Set Final Special Taxing District Levy
3. Approve Fund-Level Budgets

**Motion by Scales, second by Gliva, to adopt all three resolutions: Resolution 2023-314 adopting the Final Citywide Tax Levy for Payable 2024; adopt Resolution 2023-315 adopting the Final Storm Water Special Taxing District Tax Levies for Payable 2024; to adopt Resolution 2023-316 adopting Final 2024 Budgets.**

**Ayes: 5**

**Nays: 0      Motion carried.**

### **C. Resolutions Establishing 2024 Water, Sanitary Sewer, and Stormwater Utility Rates**

City Administrator Wilson presented this item by defining the different utility systems the City has.

#### **3 Utility Systems**

- Water
- Sanitary Sewer
- Stormwater

#### **Primary Funding Sources:**

- Rates (paid monthly or quarterly by current users)
- Connection Fees (paid primarily by developers)

#### **Funds**

- Recently created one Operating and one Capital fund each for the City's Water and Sewer Utilities (i.e., "the checking account" and "the savings account")
- Stormwater Utility continues to have a third account that segregates development-related fees from the NWA

#### **2024 Water Rates**

Rates had been on "auto-pilot" – with little or no correlation to rising construction costs or saving for major rehabilitation needs starting out with 2016 at 2% and at present is approximately 5%. 2023 rates implemented a restructuring recommended by the City's utility rate study – so there was not a simple across the board percentage increase, however the new rate structure was anticipated to yield a 5% increase in water revenues, assuming the City sold the expected number of gallons of water in the year.

#### **Aging Infrastructure**

Utility Infrastructure has a finite lifespan

- 70 -100 years for Watermain
- 60 - 100 years for Sanitary Sewer

Oldest City Utilities Constructed in mid-1950's

- Approaching the lower limits of life expectancy
- More watermain will reach that life expectancy each year
- Will move into years of heavy replacement over the next two decades – need to build up reserves in order to avoid taking on debt for this work

Forecasted Water Rate Increases is a fixed charge and a volumetric charge each 2024 – 2028 of 10% each

Finance Director Hove went over 2024 Water Rates with a 10% increase for all of the metrics for single-family and Commercial/Industrial/Institutional classifications.

The estimated 2024 Water Bills for a single-family residence that quarterly using 10,000 gallons of water would be \$40.24 or an increase of \$3.68; using 18,000 gallons of water would be \$65.76 or an

increase of \$6.00; using 25,000 gallons of water would be \$90.65 or an increase of \$8.27 from 2023 rates.

Councilmember T’Kach brought up that she read that water hookup charges are not keeping pace with the actual cost. Administrator Wilson stated that hook up charges are were set with developer fees by ordinance. This is for utility rates, and we may want to look into in more in 2024.

### **2024 Sanitary Sewer Rates**

Sanitary Sewer Utility collects wastewater from individual properties and transmits it to the regional system. It pays the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES) to treat the wastewater at one of their 9 plants in the metro area. The fees paid to MCES make up 51% of our sanitary sewer utility budget, MCES rates are increasing 6.8% for 2024 and IGH’s total payment to MCES projected to increase by 7.35% due to the combination of higher rates and being a greater share of the total regional volume.

Forecasted Sewer Rate Increases is a fixed charge and a volumetric charge each 2024 – 2028 that ranges from 7% fixed rate for 2024 down to a fixed rate of 4% by 2028. The volumetric rate ranges from 6% in 2024 down to a rate of 2% by 2028. Staff’s actual recommendation for 2024 differs from rate increases forecasted in last year’s rate study, due to a higher than anticipated Met Council increase and continuing declines in development activity – which means we need to plan ahead for upcoming debt service payments.

#### **Outstanding Debt – Sanitary Sewer Utility**

The intent was for connection fees paid by development to repay the debt taken out to extend utility service to the NWA, but connection fees can be difficult to predict and have been falling in recent years. The City’s payment obligation on its sanitary sewer debt extends through 2036 and totals \$11.2 million. Payments for 2024 through 2031 are just over \$1 million per year.

The estimated 2024 Sewer Bills for a single-family residence that quarterly using 10,000 gallons of water would be \$74.36 or an increase of \$5.16; using 18,000 gallons of water would be \$116.04 or an increase of \$8.04; using 25,000 gallons of water would be \$150.51 or an increase of \$10.56 from 2023 rates.

Councilmember T’Kach asked Administrator Wilson if the Northwest Area debt service of \$11,000,000 is being spread across all of the city or just the northwest area. Administrator Wilson stated that the City relies on our developer fees first to cover the debt service. When the fees fall short in some years, then the city will need to tap into other fee sources to cover that debt service payment. There was a surcharge for the northwest area, but it did not cover the debt service payment and the city does not consider that fair for all residents. This will come up in January when the city meetings.

### **2024 Stormwater Rates**

Stormwater Rates are paid by all properties in the City – as part of monthly or quarterly utility bills for those on city water and sewer; in a stand-alone annual billing for those not on city water and sewer. There is a dual rate structure - NWA and non-NWA rates. NWA rates are in the ballpark of those charged by other metro-area cities. The Non-NWA rates are notably lower. Working to bring them together – over several years will be 5% increases for NWA and a 25% increase for non-NWA.

Stormwater Operating Fund has converging rates with 5% to 25% increases depending on if you are in the NWA. The City will be working to get them closer together by 2026 and 2027.

Stormwater Operating & Capital Funds were previously reliant on the Pavement Management Fund (for capital projects) and "free" labor from the Streets Maintenance Division. This is also the one utility system that we assess property owners for when projects are done in association with a street project in their neighborhood. The fund is currently reliant on transfer from the Host Community Fund (for capital projects); starting to charge labor expenses for maintenance to Stormwater Operating Fund (80% of new Street Maintenance Worker).

The Host Community Capital fund transfers will be as follows: 2023 is \$1,000,000; 2024 will be \$1,100,000; 2025 will be \$1,200,000; 2026 through 2028 will be \$300,000 each year.

Once the transfers in from the Host Community Fund phase down, the funding in this account declines steeply. Building a steady and sufficient source of revenue is essential to funding planned projects (\*see 5-year CIP) and starting to address the unprogrammed backlog. The identified means of doing this is through stormwater utility rates.

The requested action is to move approval of the three resolutions contained in the packet, establishing 2024 utility rates.

**Motion by Scales, second by Murphy, to adopt Resolution 2023-317 establishing Water Utility Rates Effective January 1, 2024; adopt Resolution 2023-318 establishing Sewer Utility Rates effective January 1, 2024; adopt Resolution 2023-319 establishing Storm Water Utility Rates effective January 1, 2024**

**Ayes: 5**

**Nays: 0      Motion carried.**

Administrator Wilson mention that these rate increases will show up on their bills starting in March and stormwater bills will show up in December 2024.

#### **D. Resolution Authorizing Increase to Pension Benefit for IGH Fire Relief Association**

City Administrator Kris Wilson explained what the IGH Fire Relief Association is. It is a separate legal entity from the City. A Board of Directors guide the Fire Relief Association – 3 City representatives (Fire Chief, Finance Director, and a Councilmember) are on the board. Their primary purpose is to provide a pension to paid-on-call firefighters.

Funds for pensions come from: Existing Balance / Assets, Interest / Investment Earnings, Fire Pension Aid from the State, Voluntary City Contributions (\$92,475 in 2023), and mandatory City Contributions – if necessary. Full vesting requires 15 years of service, partial vesting at 7 years of service.

Setting Pension Amounts are initiated by the Relief Association Board and requires approval of the City Council. Projection for the next 10 years should show a fund balance at 105% or above and no need for a mandatory City contribution. The State sets the maximum pension benefit that is currently \$15,000 per year of service and has most recently increased for 2022.

The history of pension benefit in IGH has increase in the past 6 years, starting with \$8,050 in 2018 to \$13,875 in 2023. The request for 2024 is \$15,000 per year of service.

The financial projection with benefit increase and without voluntary city contributions will show as 118% funded. Staff recommends increasing the benefit to \$15,00 per year of service to be concurrent with the state's maximum benefit amount.

Councilmember Gliva asked for clarification that the voluntary contribution is already in the 2024 budget and Administrator Wilson confirmed. The City could amend the budget later in 2024 and use those funds for other items.

Councilmember Murphy thinks scenario 3 has the best modeling and asked who is the investment firm that the Relief Association uses of which Administrator Wilson responded Parr McKnight. He wanted to know why they did not present the analysis scenarios to the city rather than using Abdo to create those scenarios. He feels the association should have paid for these options to be brought forward to Council.

**Motion by Gliva, second by Murphy, to adopt Resolution 2023-320 approving a pension benefit increase for the Inver Grove Heights Fire Relief Association**

**Ayes: 5**

**Nays: 0      Motion carried.**

**E. Second Reading of an Ordinance Establishing a Minimum Rental Period for Rental Properties**

City Administrator Wilson brought forward the second reading of this ordinance. No changes were made to this ordinance from the first reading. As drafted this ordinance establishes a minimum rental period of 30-days for any property type not specifically excluded from the licensing requirement. Existing exclusions exempt owner-occupied housing and ADUs, as defined elsewhere in City Code. This definition of an ADU includes that it must be on a homesteaded property in order to be considered an ADU. Hospitals, nursing homes, hotels, motels, and student dorms are also excluded.

Requested Council Action is to consider the second reading of the ordinance and direct staff to include an effective date in the third reading to allow property owners time to transition the use of their property.

As far as the time frame for implementation, it was suggested that a one-year expiration of current operations would be acceptable by the majority of council.

Mayor Dietrich stated that she received a letter asking for council to grandfather those that already operate a short-term rental to continue operating. A grandfather clause would not be fair to those that reside next to those already existing short-term rental properties. It would also mean that the city would need to amend another section of city code if that is the wish of council. City Administrator Wilson would advise against this as it would prohibit new rentals, but the very folks that brought this to the city's attention would have to continue to put up with issues of the current short-term rental operations.

Mayor Dietrich asked what the recourse would be for those that do not comply with the proposed ordinance. City Attorney Nason stated that the City could proceed with three options.

1. If council adopts a 30-day minimum stay, those that have a license, the City could take adverse licensing action against the property owner via suspension, revocation or denial of existing rental license.
2. Would be to issue a citation of a misdemeanor for non-compliance of City Code.
3. Repeated violations, the city could seek an injunction from Dakota County District Court.

Councilmember Scales brought up that he still does not understand the difference between a business running a three-day rental versus a thirty-day rental. One is a business, and one isn't. What kind of length of time would the city give those that have short term rentals to end their business? It is already winter, and I'm sure that most of these rentals have reservations already in place for next summer. He would like to see a one-year expiration date.

Councilmember T'Kach has concerns about ordinance change. The City has a notion that if a property is homesteaded that they will be more apt to take care of their property and have less complaints about parties. She has been contacted by IGH residents stating that they own a second home with the intention of renting the property out for investment purposes. Would it be acceptable to move towards licensing these properties, rather than outright putting a ban on short term rentals? She would like to see a transition period of two to three years.

Councilmember Murphy says the path forward is to not have a business in a residential area. If there is a change, we should address by changing city code. Transitioning the business out of short-term rental within a year is acceptable.

Councilmember Gliva says she is in favor of the reading as it is. If council approves this ordinance, there may be additional investment businesses in the process of acquiring properties for rentals. Administrator Wilson said that the key would be to get the word out about the approval thirty-day minimum stays.

Public comment was received on this item

Jake Kappel, 9272 Tyne Ln, asked what section of city code is Councilmember Murphy quoting when referring to Short-term rentals not adhering to. City Attorney Nason stated Chapter 10-15-26. Home Occupations

David Kappel, 9272 Tyne Ln, states that the city needs to have legal look into where it states that short-term rentals are not allowed. Would like to see data from the police department of where these complaints are coming from and why aren't the owners being notified. The City should consider a buyout of these properties.

Anthony Verch, 7008 River Rd, wants to know why there are so many issues that were not been brought to his attention when they have occurred. He feels there are ordinances in place that already take care of the issues. He asks for regulations instead of complete banning of short-term rentals or be able to grandfather in those that already own these properties. Is there a path to move forward with licensing short-term rentals? He felt the issues have worked their way out and would like to see short-term regulation to move forward.

Steven Dick, 1630 52<sup>nd</sup> St E, stated that in the last reading that council separated the homestead owners from the non-homestead owners, which he feels is discriminatory. Mr. Dick feels that this ban is not fair for those that have invested in Inver Grove Heights. This is his primary income, and it solves the problem for those that want to come to town that do not want to stay at a hotel. His primary bookings are family gatherings. No one wants to have the party groups in their rentals. If you are dead set on a ban, please grandfather those of us that are here.

Councilmember T'Kach feels that council is being hypocritical since people use these rentals when they are out of town, but it is not good enough to have in Inver Grove Heights.

**Motion by Gliva, second by Scales to receive four emails into record.**

**Ayes: 5**

**Nays: 0      Motion carried**

**Motion by Murphy, second by Gliva, to approve second reading of an ordinance amending City Code, Title 4, Chapter 13, related to rental licenses to include a one-year termination of operation.**

**Ayes: 4**

**Nays: 1 (T'Kach)      Motion carried.**

#### **F. Third Reading of Ordinance Amending Weed and Grass Regulations and Summary Publication Summary**

City Attorney McCauley Nason discussed the 3rd Reading of this Ordinance. The city currently regulates weeds and long grass as public nuisances. City also requires establishment of turf grass lawns or other approved landscaping following issuance of building permit/certificate of occupancy. New legislation requires cities to allow managed natural landscapes on all private property.

The definition of Managed Natural Landscapes is a planned, intentional, and maintained planting of native or nonnative grasses, wildflowers, forbs, ferns, shrubs, or trees, including but not limited to rain gardens, meadow vegetation, and ornamental plants. Managed natural landscapes does not include turf-grass lawns left unattended for the purpose of returning to a natural state.

Other Changes to the Existing City Code is that the ordinance repeals and replaces existing regulations, makes additional changes to City Code related to required turf establishment, management of weeds, lawns, and natural landscapes. It clarifies that in all zoning districts, lawns or other vegetation shall not exceed 8 inches, except for vegetation other than turf grass that naturally exceed 8 inches. It prohibits noxious and nuisance weeds on all property, as well as unmanaged vegetation and volunteer trees.

Some key ordinance provision exemptions are property located in the A-Agricultural, E-Estate, and I-Industrial zoning districts, Pastures, parks, and areas previously maintained in a native state  
Natural areas and open space areas

In response to Questions/Council Direction Following Second Reading it is confirmed that current ordinance requires compliance within seven days of notification. It removed e-mail notification option. The city contacted County and made one minor wording revision.

The requested Council action is to consider third reading of the ordinance included in tonight's council packet (requires a 3/5ths vote). If the ordinance is approved, approve the attached summary publication resolution (requires a 4/5ths vote).

**Motion by Gliva, second by T'Kach, to approve third reading of Ordinance 1469 Amending City Code Sections 5-9-2 and 4(D) related to weeds and grass**

**Ayes: 5**

**Nays: 0      Motion carried.**

**Motion by Gliva, second by T'Kach, to approve Resolution 2023-321 approving Summary Publication.**

**Ayes: 5**

**Nays: 0      Motion carried.**

**G. Resolution Authorizing Application for the Mn Dept of Public Safety DWI Officer Grant**

Police Chief Melissa Chiodo is asking council to authorize staff to apply for the Mn Dept of Public Safety DWI Officer Grant. Chief stated the city has received this grant in 2021 and in 2022. This grant is awarded to cities that work toward zero deaths program on Minnesota roads. Officer Jacob Johnson was recognized two years in a row for being the top DWI enforcement officer in the state. In 2022, Minnesota had 446 traffic related fatalities, and the state reached out to the City to see if we would apply for the grant for 2024 because Dakota County has had 24 deaths and more than 2,000 injuries from traffic related incidents.

If Council approves the application has to be submitted by December 15 for it to take effect in January 2024. The fiscal impact would be \$112,500 dollars that could be applied to salary and fringe benefits of the officer appointed to DWI enforcement.

Councilmember T'Kach asked if we had a specific number of fatalities directly inside the City limits. Chief Chido stated that we have had several but do not have a specific number off hand. She would find out and report back to council.

**Motion by Scales, second by Murphy, to adopt Resolution 2023-322 authorizing IGH Police Department to apply for a Minnesota Department of Public Safety DWI Grant for 2024.**

**Ayes: 5**

**Nays: 0      Motion carried.**

**H. Dakota County Drug Task Force Discussion**

Police Chief Chiodo reported to Council that earlier this fall, the Council discussed the pros and cons of the Police Department rejoining the Dakota County Drug Task Force. Following that conversation, staff was asked to seek out additional information regarding the possibility of assigning an officer to the Task Force on a part-time basis.

Mayor Dietrich, Chief Chiodo and Administrator Wilson met with the Dakota County Sheriff and the Task Force Commander on November 27 to discuss this, and other topics related to the Task Force. Sgt Winget, who served as the IGH officer assigned to the Task Force from approximately 2016 to 2020, also participated in the meeting. During this conversation, Sheriff Leko and Captain Fahey stated that the Task Force is willing to have an officer assigned to it on a part-time basis.

However, that would most likely lead to the IGH officer playing a support or back-up role on cases centered in other cities. To be most effective in this environment, an officer needs to be all in - working full-time hours and then some. Assigning an officer on a part-time basis may send a positive message of participation, but the return on that investment would be minimal.

Captain Fahey has also said the Task Force is willing to have one of our department members attend the weekly intel briefings, the Chief - or her designee - attend the board meetings and the City pay whatever yearly dues there are for that year.

It remains staff's recommendation that the City not assign an officer to the Task Force at this time.

The IGH Police Department's priority at this time is building out our Strategic Response Group. This allows the IGH PD to devote resources to key local priorities, which include sex trafficking cases, predatory offender checks and alcohol, massage therapy and tobacco compliance - in addition to narcotics investigations. These may not rise to the level of a County-priority or likely prosecution and conviction for the attorney's office, but they are important to IGH.

Even without having an officer on this task force, the City's public safety departments continue to be active "team players" with other departments and agencies in the county, both in terms of financial support and assignment of personnel. The Police Department has consistently assigned officers to the Dakota County SWAT team. The Fire Department has long had members active on the Special Operations Team (SOT) and one of our police officers recently expressed interest in joining this group as well. Additionally, both Chiefs are active with their respective Dakota County Chiefs' associations and participate in the oversight of the Dakota 911 center. Notably, all of these joint efforts require the time and resources of City personnel, but on a part-time or supplemental basis. They do not require the assignment of an officer on a full-time, multi-year basis, as is the norm for the Task Force.

The police department realizes this does not rise to the level of county priorities or prosecution of local convictions from the County Attorney's Office, but they are really important to the residents of Inver Grove Heights. Additionally, IGH is not the only City without an officer currently dedicated to the Drug Task Force, and we do participate in some cooperative efforts that other cities do not (such as the SWAT team and Mobile Field Forces). Even without having an officer on the task force, the city's public safety department continue to be active in the community.

Mayor Dietrich stated the DCDTF was inceptioned 25 years ago. Only one year were there dues owed to participate, and this coming year would be paid for.

Councilmember Murphy asked what the advantages would be to be on the Drug Task Force. Chief Chiodo mentioned that it would be that our officers would get to know other officers in other communities. However, the City already has other meetings where officers know each other. It would give officers a deep dive into work that they would not normally be able to participate in. Officers would receive different training opportunities.

Chief Chiodo stated that the task force goes wherever the leads take you, and that may be out of the city. There are currently three cities that do not have a designated staff person assigned to this group. She recommend that the City not assign an officer to the Dakota County Drug Task Force, but seek to partner in other ways, as the Task Force is willing. The Sheriff reports that no annual dues are being levied for 2024, but the City may wish to make dues payments in future years, if they resume. Additionally, one of our investigators can be made available to attend weekly check-in meetings with the Task Force in order to share information and coordinate as appropriate. If the Task Force seeks the Chief's involvement with the Board, she would be happy to do so - understanding that this may not be desired if we are not dedicating an officer to the group. Our department would continue to be available to support the Task Force with any search warrants or work that they have in Inver Grove Heights.

Staff is directed to acquire the new Joint Powers Agreement and then to proceed with part-time involvement with an officer attending weekly and then either Chief Chiodo or designee to attend on the board with Dakota County Drug Task Force.

#### **7. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

#### **8. MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS:**

Councilmember Murphy inquired about re-opening the dog park. Administrator Wilson mentioned she had not been able to connect with the South St Paul gun range.

Mayor Dietrich wished everyone a safe and happy holiday season.

#### **9. ADJOURN:**

**Motion by Gliva, second by Scales, to adjourn the meeting at 8:29 p.m.**

**Ayes: 5**

**Nays: 0      Motion carried.**

Minutes prepared by City Clerk Rebecca Kiernan.