

**INVER GROVE HEIGHTS CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
MONDAY, APRIL 6, 2026, 6:00 P.M. - 8150 BARBARA AVENUE**

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The City Council of Inver Grove Heights met in regular session on Monday, April 6, 2026, 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: Gliva, Murphy, Scales, and T’Kach.

Staff In Attendance: Interim City Administrator Hiniker, Finance Director Hove, Parks & Recreation Director Lares, Human Resources Manager Norwig, Associate City Attorney Sathe, and Deputy City Clerk Malott

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Motion to approve agenda by Scales, second by Gliva.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0 Motion carried.

3. DISCUSSION ITEMS:

A. Human Resources Department Overview

Interim City Administrator Hiniker stated that the Council is revisiting a staffing request discussion from last month, focusing on three previously identified items, including the Human Resource Coordinator position that was funded in last year’s budget. She introduced Human Resources Manager Norwig, noting that she has quickly become an asset to the leadership team and has accomplished a significant amount since being hired earlier this year, and invited her to share her background, experience, and observations to help guide further discussion.

Manager Norwig introduced herself, noting she brings approximately 25 years of HR experience, primarily in school districts, most recently with St. Paul Public Schools where she led HR operations, along with prior experience at Xcel Energy and U.S. Bank and certifications in senior HR, payroll, and project management. Since starting, she has been reviewing current processes and documenting observations, identifying several outdated or incomplete policies that need updating, some of which, such as ESST and paid medical leave, have already been addressed.

Her review found that roles and responsibilities are not well aligned, with some tasks being handled at the wrong level, leading to inefficiencies and underuse of staff skills. Many processes are manual and duplicated across systems that do not integrate, particularly in payroll and HR functions, resulting in inconsistent data and repeated data entry. She noted that improvements such as system integration and clearer alignment of duties could increase efficiency, accuracy, and timeliness, emphasizing these findings as opportunities for improvement. It was also observed that there is currently no clear strategy for recruiting or retention, with efforts largely limited to standard job postings and no consistent effort to understand why employees leave. Exit interviews had not been conducted previously, but an offboarding process has now been implemented to begin collecting that information.

Additional observations included a lack of training and resources for supervisors, who often face employee performance, leave, or accommodation issues without clear guidance or established processes. Strengthening

support and training for managers was identified as an important step to improve consistency and effectiveness across the organization.

It was noted that bottlenecks occur during peak hiring periods because one HR coordinator is responsible for managing the entire process. During times when many employees are being hired in a short period, this creates delays and slows down operations, which can negatively impact both the new hires and the departments involved.

Mayor Dietrich asked what that looks like in practice when things get bogged down, specifically questioning which tasks or processes tend to fall behind or get missed during those periods.

Parks and Recreation Director Lares explained that during peak seasonal hiring, the City may need to onboard 100 to 150 employees at once, particularly for summer roles, which creates significant strain on the process. Previously, much of the work was done manually, leading to delays that can cause candidates to seek jobs elsewhere. He noted that employees cannot start until all documentation and background checks are completed, which further slows things down. While recent automation has begun to improve efficiency and early feedback has been positive, there is still room to strengthen the process to better support departments during high-demand periods.

Council Member Scales asked how long the onboarding process takes, specifically from the point an offer is made to when a new employee can start working.

Director Lares explained that onboarding for benefited part-time and full-time employees typically takes up to two weeks after council approval, assuming all required steps are completed on time. However, the timeline often depends on the employee, particularly younger or first-time workers who may need additional assistance completing forms and documentation, which can slow the process.

He noted that large seasonal hiring periods, when 100 to 150 employees may be onboarded at once, create added challenges and can significantly extend timelines. While the shift to electronic onboarding has improved efficiency and reduced the need for staff to walk each employee through paperwork, the process can still vary depending on the role. Positions like aquatics require additional certifications, safety training, and compliance steps, which add time, whereas smaller hiring groups or less complex roles can be completed more quickly.

Manager Norwig explained that efforts are being made to improve onboarding by incorporating short instructional videos, such as how to complete forms like a W-4, recognizing that many younger employees may be unfamiliar with these processes. This approach helps reduce the need for managers or HR staff to repeatedly answer the same questions, especially during large hiring periods. By providing these resources, the goal is to better support employees in completing required steps more efficiently and help streamline the overall onboarding process.

Director Lares added that onboarding also requires incorporating updated regulations, such as new FMLA rules and other requirements, which adds complexity to the process. He noted that while many younger employees are primarily focused on starting work and pay, staff still must take the time to walk them through these requirements to ensure compliance, as the City is obligated to meet all regulatory standards.

Manager Norwig explained that one of the first priorities was updating the onboarding process, which was previously lengthy and included outdated materials. Working with the HR coordinator, the process has been streamlined to a few clear pages with key benefit information and optional links for more detail. This has improved the candidate experience and made the process easier for both new hires and managers.

Manager Norwig shared that the employee wellness program is currently underdeveloped but presents a strong opportunity, noting that when done effectively, wellness initiatives can help control health insurance costs. Initial efforts include introducing services like an on-site dental clinic, exploring mammogram screenings, and offering new programs through HealthPartners to support employees with substance use or habit-related challenges. She also highlighted a lack of overall strategy in benefits, emphasizing the need to better align offerings with employee needs and retention goals, including exploring additional options like voluntary benefits, retirement plans, and on-site or at-home healthcare services.

She added that there is significant opportunity to improve the workplace by building a more supportive and attractive environment for employees. Progress has already been made in areas such as simplifying onboarding, implementing an offboarding process, creating a structured first 30-day experience, and improving access to information on the intranet. Additional priorities include strengthening compliance measures like ADA processes and HIPAA training, improving role alignment between HR and payroll, and developing clearer employee guides for leave and retirement.

Further improvements being explored include better tracking of terminated employees to prevent rehire issues, evaluating cost-saving opportunities such as reducing background check expenses, and updating outdated requirements like unnecessary employment physicals. Overall, these efforts are aimed at increasing efficiency, reducing costs, and making the organization a more effective and desirable place to work.

Council Member T'Kach asked where job openings are currently being advertised, particularly for part-time and seasonal positions. She noted that while these roles are often filled by students and provide valuable first-time work experience, she has heard concerns that positions are sometimes filled by the same individuals repeatedly rather than being broadly advertised to attract new applicants.

Manager Norwig explained that all job openings are posted on the city's website and automatically shared to LinkedIn through a feed. She noted that beyond those platforms, there are currently no additional recruitment or outreach efforts being used.

Director Lares explained that for youth and seasonal hiring, recruitment efforts include attending job expos, resource fairs, and visiting high schools and colleges, along with using social media and employee referrals. Many seasonal employees return each year, which is helpful, though it can also create a cycle where the same groups of workers continue to fill positions, making it important to consistently reach new high school candidates as older employees move on.

He noted that staff also conduct presentations at schools and career fairs to promote these opportunities and highlight them as potential career paths. While these efforts have generally been successful in bringing applicants to the City's website, there are ongoing challenges in competing with private employers offering similar or higher wages. As a result, there is a strong emphasis on promoting the work environment, experience, and opportunity to engage with the community as key benefits of these roles.

Council Member Scales asked how the City's seasonal pay compares to the broader job market, particularly fast-food employers like Taco Bell.

Director Lares explained that seasonal pay in Parks and Recreation varies by role, with aquatics positions often on the lower end compared to other seasonal employers due to the shorter, competitive hiring window. Youth programs like Kids Rock tend to be more competitive, generally falling in the middle range compared to other metro municipalities, though still below many private sector jobs.

He noted that because wages are not always the most competitive, the City focuses on creating a fun, engaging, and supportive work environment to attract and retain employees. Supervisors emphasize building relationships and making staff feel like part of a team rather than just employees. Word of mouth is also a key recruiting tool, as current staff often refer friends, which helps bring in reliable candidates, though it can still be challenging, especially with younger, first-time workers.

Manager Norwig added that the City of St. Paul has a higher minimum wage than surrounding suburbs, which makes it more difficult to attract younger workers who can earn more working there. She explained that the upcoming compensation and classification study will include a review of temporary, seasonal, part-time, and full-time positions to better understand where the City stands in the market.

She noted that this effort follows prior discussions with the Council and will also evaluate the current wage structure, including the City's 10-step pay system. Other models used by nearby communities, such as systems with defined minimums and maximums, will be explored to determine what approach may be most competitive and effective moving forward.

Council Member Murphy asked how these changes will be presented moving forward, specifically whether updates and recommendations will come to the Council through the City Administrator in a step-by-step process.

Manager Norwig responded that as progress is made, updates will be shared through regular weekly emails so the Council can stay informed. She added that items requiring formal approval, such as policy changes, will be brought to the Council for discussion, and emphasized that there will be ongoing communication to ensure there are no surprises.

Director Lares noted that from a Parks and Recreation perspective, where there are many seasonal and temporary employees, the focus is largely on process improvements and refining standard operating practices. Much of the work involves administrative adjustments and improving internal efficiency rather than actions requiring Council approval.

Council Member T'Kach asked whether the City has a formal internship program, particularly for high school or community college students, noting she did not see it listed and was unsure if it was an area of concern.

Manager Norwig responded that this has not stood out as an issue and has not been a focus so far. She has observed internships in certain areas, such as engineering, which have received strong interest from applicants, but has not identified a formal, structured internship program or policy. She noted that demand does not currently appear to be a problem, as applicants are still coming in.

Council Member T'Kach added that she is aware of a tri-district CAPS program that could potentially be relevant.

Council Member Gliva confirmed that there is a tri-district CAPS program, primarily for high school students, involving West St. Paul, Inver Grove Heights, Mendota Heights, and South St. Paul.

Director Lares added that Parks and Recreation has recently connected with the program and is exploring additional opportunities for involvement. He noted that while some CAPS roles may not always align with traditional paid positions, the City does have formal internship programs in departments such as Parks and Recreation, Engineering, and Finance. These are typically geared toward college students in their final years and are included in the City's budget process.

Council Member T’Kach commented that the CAPS program provides strong skill-based learning opportunities but does not heavily emphasize public sector careers, highlighting the value of increasing City involvement and representation.

Director Lares further explained that the CAPS program includes multiple career pathways, and the work of the City aligns with several of them, including areas like trades and natural resources, creating opportunities for student engagement.

Mayor Dietrich expressed appreciation for the list of initiatives and emphasized the importance of receiving ongoing updates, noting that the Council values the work being done and wants to recognize and celebrate the progress being made.

B. Staffing Request Discussion

Interim City Administrator Hiniker thanked staff for the discussion, noting it was helpful in providing the Council with a clearer understanding of the challenges the HR department has faced in recent years and the basis for recommending an additional staff position. She explained that, now that the department has had time to assess needs under current leadership, it is an appropriate time to revisit that request and allow the Council to better understand the role before considering formal action.

She also clarified that while three staffing-related recommendations are being brought forward at this time, additional requests may emerge as departments continue to evaluate their needs, particularly when vacancies or internal changes occur. As an example, she noted that the Engineering Department may bring forward a future reclassification request once their internal review is complete.

Looking ahead, she shared that staff are working to develop a multi-year staffing plan to give the Council a broader, more strategic view of anticipated needs rather than addressing them year by year. This approach is intended to support more informed decision-making during the budgeting process and provide better alignment with organizational priorities.

She concluded by emphasizing that the current discussion is intended to provide context for the requests before the Council, with the goal of bringing them forward formally soon, particularly those that are more urgent due to current staffing constraints.

Manager Norwig explained that the proposed position would mirror the current part-time HR Coordinator role, with responsibilities including job postings, hiring support, and other routine HR functions. In addition, the role would help share responsibilities with payroll, particularly around benefits administration, to improve separation of duties and provide better coverage so staff can take time off when needed.

She noted that shifting these administrative tasks would allow her to focus on higher-level HR priorities rather than routine functions like employment verifications and postings. She also referenced industry benchmarks from the Society for Human Resource Management, indicating that organizations of similar size typically have two to three HR staff per 100 employees, while the City is currently operating at a significantly lower level, making this position important for improving overall capacity and effectiveness.

Mayor Dietrich asked about the workload previously handled outside of HR, questioning how much had been taken off the department’s plate and whether it was comparable to a full-time position. She also sought

clarification on the current hours of the HR Coordinator role, asking if it was still a 0.5 position and noting she believed it had been increased. Additionally, she asked whether there is access to the current HR Coordinator's performance evaluation to assess how they are performing, and whether there is any insight into if the employee prefers to return to a 0.5 role or remain at their current level.

Manager Norwig explained that a significant amount of work previously handled outside of HR consisted of core HR responsibilities, including negotiations and other key functions, noting that it was a substantial workload even if the exact time commitment is unclear. She clarified that the HR Coordinator position is currently 32 hours per week, or approximately 0.6, and had been increased from three days to four days per week. While she has not reviewed prior performance evaluations, she shared that in her first few months of supervision, the current HR Coordinator has demonstrated strong performance and initiative, brought forward ideas and shown the capacity to take on more advanced responsibilities. She also noted that the employee is comfortable with her current schedule, which includes some flexibility with remote work and a day off each week.

Interim City Administrator Hiniker explained that the next item for discussion was a finance position impacted by an unexpected retirement, asking for clarification on the role and the proposed approach moving forward.

Finance Director Hove described that the Accounts Receivable Accounting Technician, who had been working part-time, recently decided to fully retire. The original plan had been to gradually increase the position from part-time to three-quarter time in 2026 and then to full-time in 2027, but given the vacancy and long-term needs, the recommendation is to move to a full-time position sooner. A full-time role would also attract a stronger candidate pool and better support internal growth within the department.

The Finance Department has historically been understaffed, requiring higher-level staff to take on duties that should be handled at lower levels. While reorganization efforts and staffing adjustments have helped, the department has reached a point where additional resources are necessary. Carryover funds from prior projects could be used to bridge the gap and support a full-time position for the remainder of the year, with a full budget request anticipated in 2027.

Plans also include restructuring responsibilities by combining accounts receivable and accounts payable functions into shared roles, while separating utility billing due to its distinct workload and skill set. The recent loss of an accounts payable backup due to another retirement has added urgency to filling the position and stabilizing operations within the department.

Interim City Administrator Hiniker noted that, from her perspective, both proposed positions would allow staff to focus more on higher-level responsibilities. While much of that work is already being done, there are important initiatives such as the long-range financial management plan that require additional capacity. She emphasized that internal service departments like Finance and HR play a critical role in supporting all other departments, and ensuring they are adequately staffed is a priority to keep broader City operations running effectively.

Director Hove expressed appreciation for that perspective and highlighted the volume of complex projects flowing through the Finance Department, including connection fees, AMI implementation, water treatment initiatives, and various grants. Much of this work has required her to take on tasks that would typically be delegated due to limited staff capacity. She noted that while these projects reflect positive progress for the City, they also place significant demands on behind-the-scenes departments that are not always visible.

Mayor Dietrich asked about the timeline for reducing duplication in payroll processes.

Manager Norwig explained that some improvements will come from better alignment of responsibilities, while others depend on developing system interfaces in coordination with IT. Building and testing those interfaces will take time, and timing also depends on updates to the Tyler system to avoid duplicating efforts. While an exact timeline is uncertain, this work remains a high priority.

Director Hove added that current staffing limitations have led to some important tasks not being completed as consistently as they should be, increasing risk in areas such as benefits administration and payroll accuracy. Greater coordination between departments and system improvements are expected to address these gaps and reduce inefficiencies over time.

Mayor Dietrich asked about the anticipated applicant pool for the proposed full-time finance position.

Director Hove responded that she is optimistic, noting strong recent interest in finance-related roles, including over 120 applicants for a current internship posting. Based on past hiring experience, she expects a solid pool of qualified candidates and expressed hope that the position could be filled relatively quickly.

Interim City Administrator Hiniker noted that Director Lares request will be included in next week's discussion, describing it as straightforward and emphasizing that it ultimately supports City Hall operations.

Director Lares stated that the item is part of the City's long-range planning. He explained that one maintenance worker had already transitioned into a City-wide lead role in anticipation of this position, and that this individual will likely be assigned duties throughout, including at the police station. He further noted that a custodial staff member will be retiring at the end of May, and as part of the planned staffing adjustment, the City intends to replace the retiring position with the full position described.

Mayor Dietrich inquired where the facilities maintenance worker would be positioned within the organizational chart.

Director Lares explained that the facilities maintenance worker would report under Aaron Fitzloff, who currently oversees the maintenance lead position. He noted that the maintenance lead role had previously been a City Hall maintenance worker position before evolving into the current structure and consideration of the new position.

Council Member Scales asked whether the City has explored outsourcing maintenance services, noting that many cities are moving in that direction. He stated that outsourcing could be considered as an alternative option, while also acknowledging that it is not automatically more cost-effective and requires careful evaluation of service needs and costs.

Director Lares stated that outsourcing maintenance would be challenging, particularly because of the number of facilities throughout the City, including City Hall, the police station, and the fire station. He noted that the City has not formally explored that option.

He explained that because operations are decentralized and not located within a single facility, outsourcing could create additional travel costs. He also noted that contract cleaning services would need to be available at multiple locations across the system, which could prove cost prohibitive or inconsistent with service needs. He

added that there would still need to be some level of oversight and management of contracted work, but stated that it could be explored further if that is an area the Council would like to focus on.

Mayor Dietrich requested that all Council members receive a copy of the current organizational chart. She noted that positions change frequently, especially with recent staffing changes, and stated that having an updated chart available would be helpful as the Council prepares for budgeting discussions.

Manager Norwig stated that the organizational chart process has been updated and will look somewhat different than in the past. She explained that the previous method involved manually creating and adjusting each position box, which was time consuming, but confirmed that an updated chart would be provided.

Interim City Administrator Hiniker noted that these staffing and organizational matters would come before the Council at a future meeting. She encouraged Council members to reach out with any questions or concerns outside of the meeting so they could be addressed in advance.

Council Member Scales asked when the Council could expect to see the engineering-related organizational changes.

Interim City Administration Hiniker responded that the engineering proposal, particularly related to streets, would likely come forward within the next couple of months. She explained that enough information had been gathered to estimate the cost impact, which would be approximately \$17,000 to reclassify the position. She noted that additional discussion is still needed to better define the role and consult with the new hire.

Council Member T'Kach asked how soon, if the proposed changes move forward, the City would be able to more closely evaluate the strategic budget and long-term finances, including capital plans and funding sources.

Director Hove explained that the proposed position would assist with entry-level work and represents only a 0.25 addition. She stated that budget-related work currently consumes nearly eight or nine months of her time each year on top of her other responsibilities. She noted that she is still considering whether to request another full-time position for 2027 because the proposed addition is only a small step toward meeting the department's overall needs.

She further explained that part of the challenge is the lack of an Assistant City Administrator position. As a result, she often takes on work that would otherwise fall to a second administrative position, including serving as a sounding board on strategic matters. She stated that while some of those discussions are important, they are not always directly related to Finance Director responsibilities.

Director Hove stated that the City has many of the necessary pieces in place but needs time to bring them together. She added that future long-range strategic planning efforts by the Council will help identify blind spots, establish priorities, and determine what resources are needed to achieve those goals.

Council Member T'Kach commented that the City team needs additional support to better position the City for the future, identify blind spots, reduce potential economic impacts, and improve long-term planning.

Director Hove agreed and stated that having a permanent City Administrator in place would help provide more stability. She added that the City may also need to consider another future position, such as an Assistant City Administrator, and noted that she continually evaluates what responsibilities can be shifted within her department.

C. City Administrator Review Process

Interim City Administrator Hiniker explained that the April 13 Council meeting will provide an opportunity for the Council to review candidates and select which individuals they would like to interview, typically narrowing the field to four to six candidates. She noted that Ms. Donabauer of DDA Human Resources Inc. would guide the Council through that process and would send the candidate materials and interview information to Council members before the meeting.

She noted that the process requires careful handling because Minnesota law considers information about candidates who are not semifinalists or finalists to be nonpublic data, while the Open Meeting Law still applies. This can make discussion difficult because Council members cannot identify candidates by name or by other identifying details. Guidance would be provided at the beginning of the meeting on how to discuss candidates appropriately.

Regarding the second part of the April 13 meeting, discussion would focus on planning for the interview process itself, including how the Council would like interview day to be structured. Council participation on the interview panel is expected, but there has also been interest from department heads and other staff members in participating in some capacity.

She explained that there are several ways staff involvement could be structured and said it would be helpful for the Council to begin considering those options. She also noted that a City tour is typically part of the process and said another topic for future discussion would be whether the Council would like to hold a meet-and-greet event and what that might look like.

Mayor Dietrich noted that meet-and-greet events appear to be becoming less common and asked what other approaches communities are using instead.

Interim City Administrator Hiniker explained that some communities now use smaller panel discussions instead of large public meet-and-greet events, allowing candidates to introduce themselves and attendees to provide feedback to the Council. She noted that meet-and-greet events may have limited value unless residents or Council members want additional interaction with candidates before a final decision is made.

Council Member Scales stated that a meet-and-greet could be valuable if the field is narrowed to two finalists rather than six candidates. He noted that seeing how finalists interact in public can provide additional insight beyond a formal interview.

Interim City Administrator Hiniker noted that the current schedule only includes one round of interviews and does not include a second interview date. She suggested that if the Council wants additional interviews or a meet-and-greet process, a second date should be scheduled.

Council Member Scales stated that he would prefer narrowing the field after the first interviews and then conducting a second round with two or three finalists before making a final decision.

Interim City Administrator Hiniker stated that she agreed a second interview is generally preferable, although the Council could move forward after one round if they felt they had found the right candidate. She noted that the current schedule only includes one interview date and suggested that could serve as the starting point.

Mayor Dietrich asked Council Member Murphy for thoughts on the process based on his leadership experience.

Council Member Murphy stated that he did not believe a public meet-and-greet was necessary but supported holding two rounds of interviews and reserving time for a second interview if needed.

Mayor Dietrich agreed that a placeholder for a second interview should be scheduled and noted that she had not heard much from constituents beyond questions about whether someone had been hired.

Council Member Gliva asked whether anyone had attended the School District Superintendent interview process, noting that it had included public meetings.

Council Member Scales stated that there had been limited public participation, but there was significant involvement from teachers and members of the business community. He noted that recordings of the interviews were also made available afterward. He added that he did not necessarily want to model the City's process after the School District approach.

Interim City Administrator Hiniker noted that a second round of interviews could create additional travel and lodging costs for out-of-state or distant candidates, although she stated that it may still be worthwhile.

Mayor Dietrich asked what time interviews would begin on May 5 and noted that she had an appointment that morning ending at 9:00 a.m.

Interim City Administrator Hiniker stated that it would be acceptable to arrive later because the Council panel would be the final portion of the interview process after candidates had already met with the other groups.

Council Member T'Kach asked whether candidates could be given an assignment as part of the interview process, such as responding to budget priorities or scenario-based questions.

Interim City Administrator Hiniker explained that the Council first needs to determine whether a second interview round would simply be a placeholder or a planned part of the process. She noted that if the Council intends to conduct two interview rounds, assignments or exercises could be incorporated.

Council Member T'Kach stated that this is an important position and that a second interview would help ensure the Council selects the right person with the appropriate skills and fit for the organization.

Mayor Dietrich asked whether Ms. Donabauer would guide the Council through the interview process.

Interim City Administrator Hiniker confirmed that Ms. Donabauer would guide the process and that she would provide additional feedback as needed.

The Council agreed to reserve May 18 for a second round of interviews.

Interim City Administrator Hiniker explained that for the first interview day on May 5, cities often use multiple panels, such as administrative staff, department heads, and the Council, along with a City tour. She noted that candidates could rotate through each panel during the day.

She added that the Council will eventually need to decide how it wants to receive feedback from those panels, whether through written summaries or in-person discussion.

Mayor Dietrich noted that in the past, summaries from the panels had been provided to the Council and stated that Ms. Donabauer would likely have a process for gathering and presenting that information.

Council Member Scales stated that department head involvement may be more appropriate once the field is narrowed to a few finalists rather than during the initial round with six candidates. He noted that a smaller group would make it easier to gather meaningful feedback without creating an overly large process.

Council Member Tkach supported the idea of multiple interview panels, noting that administrative staff, department heads, and the Council each bring different perspectives. She stated that department heads have unique insight into leadership style, staffing, budgeting, and working relationships.

Director Lares cautioned that having three panels, a tour, and a meet-and-greet could create a very long day for candidates. He stated that when he went through the process, there were only two panels, a tour, and a meet-and-greet, and suggested limiting the process to no more than two panels.

Director Hove stated that department heads would likely want an opportunity to interact with candidates more formally so they can better assess leadership style and day-to-day working relationships.

Interim City Administrator Hiniker noted that department heads can provide valuable feedback about how a candidate may fit within the organization, but their role would be to offer observations rather than formally rate candidates.

Council Member Scales stated that the Council should remain the primary decision-maker and that department head involvement should be limited to finalists rather than all six initial candidates. He noted that involving too many candidates in an extensive process could create unnecessary work for both staff and applicants.

Mayor Dietrich stated that she would value recommendations on what has worked effectively in other communities rather than creating an entirely new process.

Interim City Administrator Hiniker summarized that the Council appears to support two rounds of interviews, with some level of department head involvement, and that additional options for how that could work would be provided.

Director Lares noted that if second interviews occur on May 18, contract negotiations and notice periods could push the hiring timeline into July, particularly for candidates who are currently employed elsewhere.

Director Hove noted that budget work begins in May for staff and that the Council's major budget work session typically occurs in July. She also noted that May 18 had previously been viewed as an open week for department heads, so involving them in interviews that week could create scheduling challenges if they have already made other plans.

Council Member Gliva asked whether the first interview round could be moved earlier than May 5 to allow the process to begin sooner.

Director Hove stated that candidates have already been notified of that date should they be selected for an interview.

Interim City Administrator Hiniker stated that it may still be possible to proceed during the same week without waiting an additional full week and said she would seek Ms. Donabauer's guidance on the timing.

4. ADJOURN:

Motion to Adjourn at 7:36 p.m. by Scales, second by Gliva.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0 Motion carried.

Minutes prepared by Recording Secretary Tammy Greenlee