

SPECIAL BROOKLYN PARK CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Monday, April 15, 2024
6:00 p.m.

Brooklyn Park Council Chambers
5200 85th Avenue North

CALL TO ORDER – Mayor Hollies Winston

PRESENT Mayor Hollies Winston; Council Members Xp Lee, Christian Eriksen, Tony McGarvey, and Nicole Klonowski; City Manager Jay Stroebel; City Attorney Jim Thomson; Police Chief Bill Barritt and City Clerk Devin Montero.

Mayor Winston read a statement regarding meeting via interactive technology.

PARTICIPATING REMOTELY: Council Member Maria Tran.

ABSENT: Council Member Boyd Morson

7.1 Resolution to Censure Council Member Boyd Morson for Violating the City's Respectful Workplace Policy, the Brooklyn Park Elected Officials Code of Conduct Policy and 2022 Censure Resolution.

City Attorney Thomson briefed the Council on the resolution to censure Council Member Boyd Morson for Violating the City's Respectful Workplace Policy, the Brooklyn Park Elected Officials Code of Conduct Policy and 2022 Censure Resolution.

Mayor Winston read the resolution of censure for the record.

Council Member Tran stated she would like to hear from Council Member Morson the reason why he was not there tonight to speak for himself. She thought that given the time of the action on the things that had been filed from last year and now the actions after he spoke about her abuse at work in March. She stated Council Member Morson didn't explain anything about it and should give him a chance before the Council went to the motion.

Mayor Winston stated the Council gave him multiple opportunities on the day they discussed it and they were also giving him an opportunity today. He stated there was ample time for Council Member Morson to prepare some type of a written statement.

Council Member Lee stated it was a disturbing pattern of behavior and thought it was the appropriate action from the Council. He stated it was unbecoming of a Council Member and hoped Council Member Morson took advantage of the opportunities that had been given to him to take the trainings and remedy the situation. He stated even in the past censure, Council Member Morson didn't show up and didn't show up for tonight's process. He thought it was the correct course of action, was disappointing and very unbecoming of a city Council Member.

Council Member Eriksen wanted people to be aware there was ample opportunities and methods for Council Members to address concerns about the conduct of city employees. He stated he had and assumed other Council Members had too, gone to the city manager and voiced concerns and received feedback in response from the city manager. He stated that was the appropriate way any concern a Council Member had about city staff. He stated none of the other options were right and probably not legal. He stated all Council Members had the ability to request the review of the city manager's contract with the city and there was a process for that

too and was not followed by Council Member Morson. He stated the Council Members had ample opportunity to address the behavior of anyone employed by the city through the appropriate channels. He stated Council Member Morson had not, refused to do so and carried out behavior like that put the city at great risk. He stated for that reason he was supportive of adopting the resolution tonight.

Council Member McGarvey stated the Brooklyn Park Elected Officials Code of Conduct in part, ensured that Brooklyn Park city staff had a respectful and safe workplace, free of harassment and in general, unpleasantness. He stated that as the individual with the most time and service on the Council and a veteran of the United States military, expected Council Member Morson to know and adhere closely to the Brooklyn Park Elected Officials Code of Conduct. He stated the evidence provided with tonight's agenda item and Council Member Morson's failure to follow through with remedies proposed in his 2022 censure, believed and proved that Council Member Morson appeared to have no qualms about violating the Brooklyn Park Elected Officials Code of Conduct regardless of how it affected the city staff, affected the perception of the city and the Council. He stated he had no qualms in supporting and voting to approve that measure as unpleasant that was.

Council Member Tran stated he was a veteran before they did anything. She stated he served in military for the nation, instead of punishing, the Council should study more about the veteran and post war PTSD. She stated after the Vietnam war there was lot of veterans having PTSD but society was still unfamiliar with it. She stated that just recently those veterans started to have a lot of things going on and not needed to be punished. She stated it was unfamiliar to society on the violence when they got back to society by the veterans and Council should think about that before the Council wanted to punish Council Member Morson for something he did not own. She stated the Council owed it to him because of his service. She stated he had something he was not aware of and the Council should help. She believed that even the time of that action, doubted it was not something called constructive criticism or discipline. She stated it looked like the things he spoke about her abuse in March and was not transparent of that action. She stated they should think more about if he needed help, he was on the Council and not treat him like they were pushing him out. She stated the Council needed to help him and give him a hand.

Council Member Klonowski stated the word service meant a lot. She stated she would like to recognize that public service and itself was a calling and was not a calling to run and get elected but also a calling among the people who chose a vocation. Going to school for it, studying for years and pass, had student loans, and came here and worked hard every day to make the city prosperous, safe and a wonderful place to raise children and have a family. She stated those staff deserved to have their service acknowledge and honored and should not be torn down on anyone's social media account for cheap political gain. She stated they worked hard and deserved a safe atmosphere to come to work in. She stated it was the council's duty and responsibility to ensure that. She stated service came in multiple different forms and not just being a veteran, and there were other veterans on the Council behaved appropriately and treated staff with respect. She stated the Council had been offered multiple opportunities to engage in team building and communications skills and the people that didn't show up were the people that specifically that could have benefitted the most from it. She stated there had been no lack of opportunity to remedy behaviors and looking at the previous censure, counseling was offered, modifications were offered to that previous censure if those conditions were met. She stated they had not been met and the council had seen continuous abuse of the staff. She stated what struck her when the council was having the conversations recently about the censure, in particular, was the city manager, who had worked hard in his career to get where he

had gotten to a position he had earned and was well respected. She stated he chaired an important board, his reputation was on the line and livelihood and for what, because someone didn't want to do the right thing and follow the proper processes. She stated if a council member had an issue with anything, had a question of the Council packet or any concerns, city manager and the Director of EDA called the council every Monday before the Council meeting to make sure if the council had any questions about the content, they could get them answered and listened to. She stated some people chose not to take that opportunity to do that and ignore those phone calls and show up at the council meetings and tried to embarrass people. She stated that was not respectful and if they were the worst employee at the city, even that person didn't deserve public beration and humiliation from an elected official. She agreed what the council members had said and the conduct was not befitting of an elected official for the city of Brooklyn Park. She stated she supported the censure.

Council Member Eriksen stated he would like to reread one of the items in the resolution to address concerns raised by Council Member Tran. The former censure from March 7 2022 still being in affect, meant there was an opportunity for the city to provide training, education and counseling for Council Member Morson. He stated if what Council Member Tran suggested that Council Member Morson did suffer from some service related mental health concerns that he would take advantage of that. He stated the city would support that choice on his behalf, which leads to the closing statement of the resolution, "Be it further resolved that the city Council sincerely hopes that Council Member Morson can modify his statements and behavior so that he can become an effective and productive Member of the Brooklyn Park city Council." He stated no one on the council denied the seriousness of mental health or disparages any military service but their actions regardless of a mental health conditions had consequences and that was what the council was discussing this evening.

Mayor Winston stated if Council Member Morson was struggling with any of those issues, his instinct would be, that would be something for him to speak to. He stated he would not wish for someone to speak that on his behalf. He stated when considering the censure, there were a couple of factors that pushed it. The first one, when a staff member made a complaint; the Council took that seriously. The other one was, working in safe work place. He stated he didn't that everybody knew what a lot of staff dealt with, and everyone thought their job was hard. He stated the council was there on a Monday and many staff would be here and they were sometimes there from 9, 10 or 11 p.m. and didn't mean on a Friday they took off the extra 6 hours. He stated the staff put in long hours and expected to attend the meeting tonight to maintain that type of commitment to a job. He stated the Council had to make it as safe as possible for employees and were responsible for that. He stated then, there was the legal liability. If they didn't address those issues, didn't take them seriously, opened themselves for legal liability as a city that could have financial implications. He stated the council addressed those things primarily for those reasons.

He stated one of the things about the censure that had not been brought up that made sense was that if, to Council Member Tran's point if Council Member Morson was struggling with things, it allowed for a 3 month review, meaning help could be sought, behavior could be changed, the censure could be lifted or reconsidered. He stated the process had been transparent. The staff brought forward the complaint, that complaint was considered in a work session and all evidence was brought to bear in terms of the resolution. He stated there was no special investigation needed as it was all on Facebook. He stated the council was not creating words, those were words that were publicly posted by Council Member Morson. He stated anyone could go on Facebook and look it up and if it had been taken down there were screen shots and people had evidence of it. He stated the Council, the vast majority, valued the staff,;

valued the city manager or employees, in the city of Brooklyn Park. He stated he wanted to make it clear to staff the council valued them and thought they operated at a high level. He stated there was a ton of complaints, people that were consistently unhappy that were going to continue to complain and staff had to deal with that on a regular basis, just like the council did but staff were the ones working through the complaints at a high level. He stated if people the staff was easy to come by it was not easy to find staff of that caliber for what they did. He stated he would make the motion.

7.1 MOTION WINSTON, SECOND LEE, TO WAIVE THE READING AND ADOPT RESOLUTION #2024-58 TO CENSURE COUNCIL MEMBER BOYD MORSON FOR VIOLATING THE CITY'S RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE POLICY AND THE BROOKLYN PARK ELECTED OFFICIALS CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY AND 2022 CENSURE RESOLUTION.

Mayor Winston called for a roll call vote.

7.1 THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY ON A ROLL CALL VOTE AS FOLLOWS: YES-KLONOWSKI, LEE, ERIKSEN, MCGARVEY, WINSTON; NO-TRAN.

ADJOURNMENT - With consensus of the Council, Mayor Winston adjourned the meeting at 6:39 p.m.

HOLLIES WINSTON, MAYOR

DEVIN MONTERO, CITY CLERK