

Meeting of the Sandy Springs City Council was held on August 20, 2024 6:00 PM, Mayor Rusty Paul presiding.

I. Call to Order

Mayor Rusty Paul called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. Roll Call and General Announcements

Members Present: Mayor Rusty Paul, Councilmember John Paulson, Councilmember Melody Kelley, Councilmember Melissa Mular, Councilmember Jody Reichel, Councilmember Tibby DeJulio, Councilmember Andrew Bauman

III. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Rusty Paul led the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. Public Comment

1. **Bill Griffith, 9580 Roberts Drive, Atlanta - Roberts Drive Sidepath**

V. Approval of Meeting Agenda

Motion and vote. A motion was made by **Councilmember Tibby DeJulio**, seconded by **Councilmember John Paulson**, to approve the meeting agenda. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

VI. Consent Agenda

Motion and vote. A motion was made by **Councilmember Jody Reichel**, seconded by **Councilmember Melissa Mular**, to approve the consent agenda. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

- A. **2024-205** Meeting Minutes
August 6, 2024 City Council Meeting
August 8, 2024 City Council Special Called Meeting
- B. **2024-206** Request for Mayor and City Council Consideration of Acceptance of an Agreement to Purchase Fee Simple Right of Way on Property Located at 626 Lorell Terrace NE in Land Lot 71 of the 17th District, City of Sandy Springs (Tax ID #17-0071-0006-009-3); S2-193 Hammond Drive Widening Project

Resolution No. 2024-08-113

- C. **2024-207** Request for Mayor and City Council Consideration of Acceptance of an Agreement to Purchase Temporary Construction Easement on Property Located at 641 Hammond Drive in Land Lot 70 of the 17th District, City of Sandy Springs (Tax ID #17-0070-0001-004-2); S2-193 Hammond Drive Widening Project

Resolution No. 2024-08-114

- D. **2024-208** Request for Mayor and City Council Consideration to Accept the Dedication of Permanent Construction Easement on Property Located at 5131 Long Island Drive (Tax ID# 17- 0121-0001-050-2), Lying in Land Lot 121 of the 17th District, Fulton County, City of Sandy Springs, Georgia

Resolution No. 2024-08-115

VII. Presentations

- A. **2024-209** ISO Presentation

Mike Morash, Vice President, Community Hazard Mitigation Verisk/ISO said in September 2023 the Insurance Services Office (ISO) evaluated the City of Sandy Springs to receive a Public Protection Classification (PPC) ISO rating, which is based on discounts that insurance companies apply to residential and commercial properties. During that assessment period, we evaluated the Sandy Springs Fire Department and its participating members which includes the 911 Emergency Call Center and the water utility departments. From the evaluation, we determined the Sandy Springs Fire Department should have an ISO Class 1 rating. We have evaluated thirty-six thousand fire departments across the county and about 1% have this classification.

Congratulations to **Keith Sanders, Fire Chief** and all members of the Sandy Springs Fire Department. This is a benefit to the residents and property owners in the Sandy Springs community.

Mayor Paul said the City of Sandy Springs has one of the best fire departments in the world. This recognition reinforces what we have always believed, but it is always good to have the experts concur with our opinion. Thank you **Fire Chief Sanders** and staff, and all members of the Sandy Springs Fire Department for your efforts.

VIII. Public Hearing

- A. **2024-210** Request for Mayor and City Council Consideration of an Ordinance to Set the Ad Valorem Tax Rate of the City of Sandy Springs
Public Hearing 3

Eden Freeman, City Manager, presented an ordinance to set the ad valorem tax rate of the City of Sandy Springs.

This is the third and final public hearing required to establish the annual millage rate for the City of Sandy Springs for the 2024 tax year. The Georgia Taxpayers Bill of Rights, in effect since 2000, requires the City to advertise a millage rate as a property tax increase if this rate is not fully rolled back.

The impact of the reassessment and reevaluations this past year resulted in an overall property value increase, resulting in a tax increase of 2.18% following the “rollback” calculation that evaluates total revenue collected from property taxes year to year. This property value increase contributed to an increase in total net taxes levied of 4.17% from 2023 to 2024. The FY2025 Budget proposes the adoption

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of a millage rate of 4.731 mills, which is the same millage rate the Sandy Springs Charter permits. The millage rate does not increase, and the increase is a function in the increase in the values of properties in the City.

The rate established by the City's Charter is 4.731%. The millage rate combined with the homestead exemption results in a lower tax burden than most of its neighboring municipalities. By leaving the millage rate the same, the City continues to ensure superior, responsive customer service and the high quality of services to the residents of Sandy Springs. Notice has been advertised that the City of Sandy Springs held public hearings on Tuesday, August 6th at 5:00 p.m. and Tuesday, August 20th at 8:30 a.m. The City of Sandy Springs will set the millage rate this evening following this final public hearing and Council approval.

There being no public comment, **Mayor Rusty Paul** closed the public hearing.

Motion and second. A motion was made by **Councilmember John Paulson**, seconded by **Councilmember Tibby DeJulio**, to approve an ordinance to set the ad valorem tax rate of the City of Sandy Springs.

Councilmember DeJulio said it is a pleasure to vote on this agenda item for the nineteenth time. It is refreshing that the City of Sandy Springs is operating on a fiscally responsible basis. The City is a great example for the country.

Vote on the motion. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Ordinance No. 2024-08-12

B. **2024-211** 2023 Community Development Block Grant Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report Draft

Michele McIntosh-Ross, Planning & Zoning Manager, presented the 2023 Community Development Block Grant Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report Draft.

The Consolidated Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) is the compilation of the project activities and accomplishments associated with the City's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program over the previous fiscal year.

This report is necessary for the City's continued participation in the program. Staff has prepared a draft of the 2023 CAPER according to the requirements for the submission to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Funds received from the CDBG program have been designated to design and construct public facilities. This includes sidewalks along Roswell Road to benefit low to moderate income persons in the community, which meets the program's national objective.

The progress of the report during the reporting time period of July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023 has been in accordance with the goals of the 2023 Annual Action Plan. We are moving forward with the infrastructure projects which includes Phase III of the South Roswell Road Multi-year Sidewalk Project. These projects include the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) sidewalk ramps, street lights, and pedestrian lighting towards connecting the community, improving walkability, providing access to transit to work, school, medical facilities, and shopping conveniences, which is in accordance with the national objective.

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This is a required public hearing for the Consolidated Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). The draft 2023 CAPER has been posted to the City's website for public review since July 31. No comments have been received and no action by Council is required tonight. This item will be presented to Council on October 1, 2024, to authorize submission of the 2023 CAPER to HUD.

There being no public comment, **Mayor Rusty Paul** closed the public hearing.

IX. New Business

- A. **2024-212** Request for Mayor and City Council Consideration to Authorize City Staff to Submit a Supplemental Planning and Demonstration Safety Action Plan Grant Application to the United States Department of Transportation for the 2024 Safe Streets and Roads for All Grant Program; to Approve the Required Local Funding Match and to Authorize the City Manager to Execute the Application Documents

William H. Martin, Jr., AIA, Public Works Director, and Kristen Wescott, Transportation Unit Manager, Public Works, presented a recommendation to authorize City Staff to submit a Supplemental Planning and Demonstration Safety Action Plan grant application to the United States Department of Transportation for the 2024 Safe Streets and Roads for All Grant Program; to approve the required local funding match and to authorize the City Manager to execute the application documents.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Pub. L. 117-58, November 15, 2021) established the Grant Program and appropriated \$1.2 billion to be awarded by the USDOT for FY 2024 for the Grant Program. Funds for the Grant Program are to be awarded for planning studies and capital projects that improve roadway safety by significantly reducing or eliminating roadway fatalities and serious injuries, focused on all roadway users.

The City received a Safety Action Plan federal grant of \$360,000 on February 1, 2023, and the City provided the required 20% local match of \$90,000 for a total of \$450,000. The City is currently performing the grant scope of work, and this Safety Action Plan is scheduled for completion by June 2025.

Under the 2024 Notice of Funding Opportunity (“NOFO”), the City can pursue a Supplemental Planning and Demonstration Grant because it is currently undertaking a planning grant. Implementation grant funds will be available to the City once it has completed the Safety Action Plan. Planning and Demonstration Grant applications are due August 29, 2024 at 5:00 PM (EDT). In order to apply for an Implementation Grant, the City must already have an adopted safety plan that meets the plan requirements detailed in the Grant Program’s NOFO.

USDOT utilizes the Safe System Approach and sees transportation safety as something impacted by behavioral interventions (education and encouragement), roadway countermeasures (engineering), laws/policies/enforcement (enforcement), vehicle safety features and performance (engineering), and emergency medical care (emergency response).

A Safety Action Plan is an opportunity to bring multiple departments together to develop a comprehensive approach to improving roadway safety. This process includes staff from the Public Works, Police, Fire, Communications, and Community Development Departments. This improved coordination and exchange of ideas tackles the problem from different angles and targets the crashes that

have the most significant impact on people's lives.

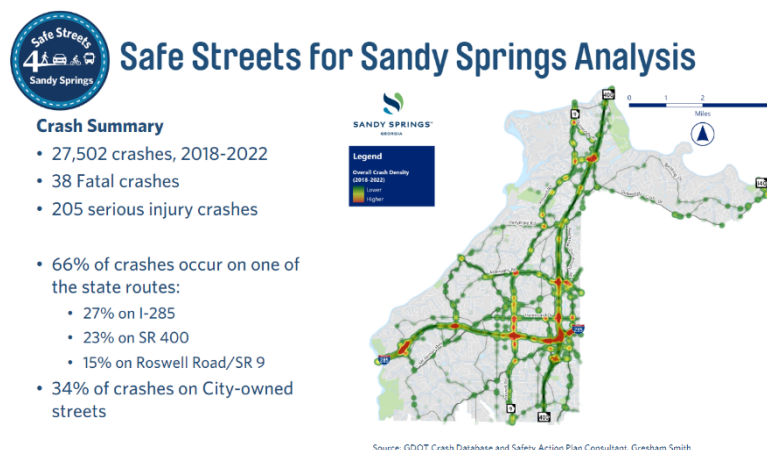
The proposed scope for the Supplemental and Demonstration Safety Action Plan Grant include:

- Analyze 2023 Crash Data (current Safety Action Plan analyzed 2018-2022 crash data) and Update the Safety Action Plan
- Road Safety Audit of Dunwoody Place
- Progress Reporting on Safety Action Plan Implementation
- Roundabout Feasibility Studies and a Roundabout Quick Build Demonstration Project
- Demonstration Project to Remedy Roadway Departure crashes
- Educational Campaign for Distracted Driving
- Pilot testing Ridesharing in an Area with a High Rate of Impaired Driving
- Wrong-Way Driving Warning Systems at Two Interchanges

The Supplemental and Demonstration Grant Activities total \$1,460,000.00. The federal share is \$1,168,000.00 and the required local match of 20% is \$292,000.00. The City has adequate funds under the Intersection Improvement Program (T7000) to provide the 20% required local match of \$292,000.00.

Kristen Wescott, Transportation Unit Manager, Public Works, said the Safe Streets for Sandy Springs Study is currently underway. A public meeting will be on Thursday, August 29. We hope to have a draft plan by October and a final plan in January.

These are some of the findings in the current study after review of where the crashes are occurring and where the severity of the crashes are.



With the current grant, there is additional funding to undertake supplemental planning and demonstration projects. Under the NOFO a demonstration activity is a temporary safety improvement and it does not involve any permanent roadway reconstruction. It is an opportunity for the City to review some of the findings from the Safety Action Plan to identify short-term mitigation strategies and evaluate to determine if they are successful before implementing. Eligible activities include:

- Supplemental safety planning
- Roundabout Feasibility Studies
- Demonstration project to remedy roadway departure crashes for dark curves

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- Test messaging of new education campaign related to distracted driving and car seat safety
- Pilot testing ride share or alternative transportation program in area with high rate of impaired driving crashes/fatalities
- Safety warning system at interchanges for wrong way driving alerts

We would specifically like to do the following under the Supplemental Planning and Demonstration Grant.

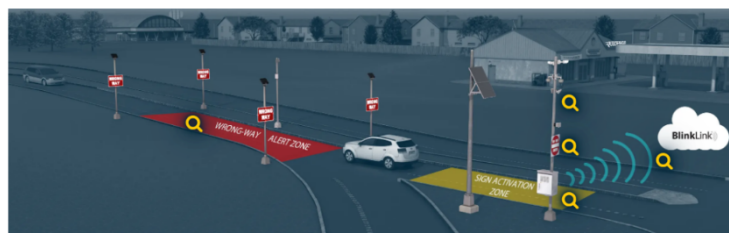
- Supplemental safety planning
 1. Current Safety Action Plan is based on 2018-2022 crash data. Analyze 2023 crash data and use to update the Safety Action Plan.
 2. Road Safety Audit(s)
 3. Progress Reporting on Action Plan implementation for transparency to local stakeholders (data dashboards & summary reports of projects and strategies implemented/to be implemented)
- Roundabout Feasibility Studies
 1. Quick build roundabout demonstration project
 2. Traffic calming mini roundabouts to reduce speeds on residential minor streets and collector roads
 3. Roundabout feasibility studies
- Safety warning system for wrong-way driving

This is an example of a quick build roundabout demonstration project in Jackson, GA.

- Proposed scope:
Study, design,
construct using
rubberized
materials, evaluate



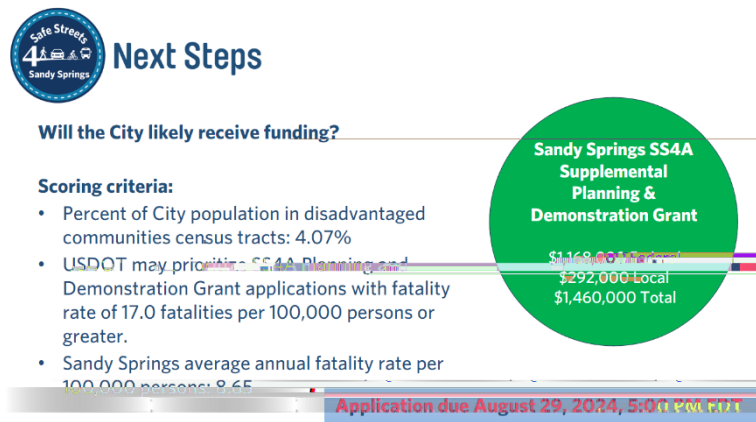
This is an example of a safety warning system for wrong-way driving.



Mayor Paul stated I have seen three wrong-way drivers on Northside within the last month and it is an ongoing problem.

Public Works Transportation Unit Manager Westcott said that is something we recognized in the Power Ferry Study.

Public Works Transportation Unit Manager Westcott continued to say if the City is awarded, we will return to Council with more results from our Safety Action Plan. It may take about six month to know if the City received the grant.



Motion and second. A motion was made by **Councilmember Jody Reichel**, seconded by **Councilmember Melody Kelley**, to authorize City Staff to submit a Supplemental Planning and Demonstration Safety Action Plan grant application to the United States Department of Transportation for the 2024 Safe Streets and Roads for All Grant Program; to approve the required local funding match and to authorize the City Manager to execute the application documents.

Councilmember Reichel said please describe what residents should be thinking about before attending the Open House next week.

Public Works Transportation Unit Manager Westcott said we have worked with our consultant over the past few months to analyze the data on 27,000 crashes from 2018 to 2022, with a focus on fatal and serious injury crashes. We also identified locations with high injury crash segments to determine some of the factors that are contributing to these crashes. This includes aggressive and distracted driving, and other elements that contribute to crashes. We want confirmation from the community that we are identifying the right things and projects. We also want feedback on where the City should focus its investments based on data analysis of identified problems.

The Safety Action Plan as part of the Safe Roads and Streets for All (SS4A) grant program is beyond engineering solutions and has much to do with our behavior. There are many other ways to change the trajectory of how people interact with each other whether walking, biking, driving, or riding transit. These plans are not just infrastructure projects, but we are also looking at how public safety partners can help parents and other caregivers properly install child safety seats, find the right seat, or have grant programs for low-income families for that. Children are some of the most vulnerable people in a vehicle. Our Safety Task Force meets quarterly and within this group is Communications, Public Works, Community Development, Police, Fire, IT, and GIS. We have discussed what the consultant uncovered and how to address of those trends.

Councilmember Melissa Mular asked does the diagram of a safety warning system for wrong-way

driving include technology that communicates with modules in new cars and comes across your vehicle?

Public Works Transportation Unit Manager Westcott said throughout the country many different crashes are being investigated for mitigating wrong-way crashes, especially on a controlled access facility like SR-400 or I-285 which often ends tragically. That example detects a vehicle heading the wrong direction. Currently all the City's interchanges have static signs that say do not enter, or wrong way, and hopefully people are paying attention. Often in wrong-way crashes, people that are impaired, sleep deprived, or other factors contributing to that behavior need something more to get their attention. Also, under investigation is tying that to a traffic management center so alerts are triggered, then dispatched to public safety officials to try to intervene.

Councilmember John Paulson said the information shows U.S. DOT will prioritize grant applications to cities that have seven fatalities per one-hundred thousand. The City is half of that. What are the chances of the City getting this grant if we are at half of the crash rate they are looking for?

Public Works Transportation Unit Manager Westcott said because the City is already a grant recipient, we are confident that in undertaking the Safety Action Plan we can turn it into a demonstration project. Also when the U.S. DOT created the program, the planning element was funded substantially and they will probably award money if asked. We are on the third round for this same grant but we were not far along in the study to identify the proper activities to take on.

Councilmember Paulson said your presentation described an awareness plan to stop distracted drivers. It was mentioned on the radio that a high percentage of the crashes are attributed to distracted driving. Let us not wait to get this grant to put this plan together. Whether or not the City gets the grant, can the program start tomorrow?

Public Works Transportation Unit Manager Westcott said I absolutely agree. This is why it is important to have all the different departments involved with our Safety Task Force. The City of Sandy Springs is over-represented with distracted driving crashes.

Councilmember Paulson asked does over-represented mean the City has more distracted driving crashes than others?

Public Works Transportation Unit Manager Westcott said that is correct as the City's crash evaluations are compared against statewide experience. To their credit, GDOT has developed fantastic analysis tools that local jurisdictions can use whether a city or a county, to see where those are occurring. We affect people's behavior through roadway design and marketing communications, and there are other ways the City can consider. For example, some communities are using message boards as safety tools for short-duration projects, such as deliberately advertising a fatal crash. The City needs a holistic plan for addressing these issues.

Councilmember Paulson said my request is rather than wait for the grant money, look at this now and begin implementing.

Public Works Transportation Unit Manager Westcott said we would like this input from Council at the Open House next Thursday for what those programs should look like.

Vote on the motion. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Resolution No. 2024-08-116

- B. **2024-213** Request for Mayor and City Council Consideration to Approve an Intergovernmental Agreement by and between the City of Sandy Springs, Georgia and the Fulton County Board of Education for the Use of City Facilities as Emergency Shelter or Evacuation Point by Fulton County Schools and to Authorize the Mayor to Execute the Agreement

Keith Sanders, Fire Chief, presented a recommendation to approve an Intergovernmental Agreement by and between the City of Sandy Springs, Georgia and the Fulton County Board of Education for the use of City facilities as emergency shelter by Fulton County Schools and to authorize the Mayor to execute the agreement.

The City recognizes a public benefit in making space available for use by the Board as an emergency shelter/evacuation point in the event of an emergency requiring evacuation of students and faculty. The proposed Agreement would allow for students and faculty of Fulton County Schools, located within the city limits of the City of Sandy Springs(the “City”), to utilize City owned facilities in the event of an emergency or disaster situation that would require immediate evacuation of the school.

The Agreement provides terms and conditions for the use of City facilities by Fulton County, including, but not limited to (i) reasonable care of the facilities; (ii) immediate notification to the City of any damages incurred to the facility; (iii) adequate supervision of any students utilizing the facility; and (iv) immediate and responsible effort of the City to provide a facility with minimal notice of such need. The use of City facilities by Fulton County will only occur in emergency situations.

Motion and second. A motion was made by **Councilmember John Paulson**, seconded by **Councilmember Tibby DeJulio**, to approve an Intergovernmental Agreement by and between the City of Sandy Springs, Georgia and the Fulton County Board of Education for the use of City facilities as emergency shelter by Fulton County Schools and to authorize the Mayor to execute the agreement.

Councilmember Paulson asked what types of facilities will be used, for instance City Hall and fire stations?

Fire Chief Sanders said fire stations can be utilized but it will primarily be City Hall. This would be a holding facility if a bad incident, such as a mass casualty, occurs until students reunite with their family members.

Eden Freeman, City Manager, said the actual request was for City Green to be utilized as a reunification point. Construction is being done at North Springs High School and the football field will not be available for children and parents to be reunited. This is why this request is before Council.

Councilmember DeJulio asked will the City or schools be responsible for the transport of any children to and from a safety facility?

Fire Chief Sanders said the schools would be responsible.

Vote on the motion. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

X. Reports

A. 2024-214 Mayor and Council Report

Mayor Rusty Paul said yesterday **Kenneth DeSimone, Chief of Police**, was sworn in as a member of the Georgia Homeland Security Board at the Capitol and **Eden Freeman, City Manager, Dan Lee, City Attorney**, and I were in attendance. Congratulations **Chief DeSimone** for your nomination by the governor. It is a great honor.

Last week I was on the annual Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) trip to New York City. Leaders from the metro Atlanta visit a different city every year and interact with their government officials to learn how they approach and solve problems. New York's problems are slightly larger than Sandy Springs but we discussed the same problems we face. For example, how to convert office buildings to residential, or creatively use zoning laws to facilitate redevelopment of areas that are blighted or deteriorating. While there, I visited Sandy Springs-based company the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE), and had an opportunity to go there for the closing bell on Friday. It was eye opening to spend the day talking to people from finance, economic development, and people from the region. Before leaving for the trip, I was on a panel of mayors discussing how we were approaching redevelopment and some of the challenges we face.

Two weeks ago was National Night Out in Sandy Springs. Thank you to the first responders and everyone involved in your efforts to make this happen. It was a great way for our residents and citizens to interact with our first responders to see what they do and build relationships. This is important when it comes to Public Safety.

Councilmember John Paulson said as a follow-up to the ISO presentation, what is the practical significance for the City of Sandy Springs to have a Class 1 ISO rating?

Fire Chief Sanders said the new rating was effective on June 1. If there is a change in the insurance premium, it will occur at the next renewal. Most insurance companies utilize Verisk and the ISO ratings and some do not to come up with premiums. Everyone is encouraged to check with their insurance provider. If you do not see a change, check the market to see if there are different premiums because it should have a dramatic impact on commercial insurance carriers or commercial properties within the community, especially with economic development. It may take about ninety days to get the information from Verisk.

Councilmember Paulson asked does Verisk send the new rating to all the insurance companies?

Fire Chief Sanders said that is correct.

Mayor Paul said the change would theoretically be a reduction but premiums seem to be increasing currently.

Fire Chief Sanders said if you are going to see a reduction, you should have seen it when we went from a 3/6 down to a 2 rating. Some insurance companies will recognize the Class 1 rating and give a significant premium reduction to homeowners, but it is predominantly in the areas where property owners own commercial properties.

Mayor Paul said the previous Fire Chief Jack McElfish is very ill. Please keep him and his family in your thoughts and prayers.

Councilmember Jody Reichel said this is a reminder that there is groundbreaking for the new North Springs High School on August 27, at 10:00 a.m. and everyone is welcome to come.

B. 2024-215 Staff Reports

There were no Staff Reports.

XI. Executive Session

Motion and vote. A motion was made by **Councilmember John Paulson**, seconded by **Councilmember Tibby DeJulio**, to recess from regular order and enter executive session for the purposes of real estate and litigation discussion. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Passed Yes 6, No 0, Abstained 0

Yeas: John Paulson, Melody Kelley, Melissa Mular, Jody Reichel, Tibby DeJulio, Andrew Bauman

Nays: None

The Executive Session began at 6:43 p.m.

Motion and vote. A motion was made by **Councilmember John Paulson**, seconded by **Councilmember Tibby DeJulio**, to adjourn the executive session and return to regular order. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Passed Yes 6, No 0, Abstained 0

Yeas: John Paulson, Melody Kelley, Melissa Mular, Jody Reichel, Tibby DeJulio, Andrew Bauman

Nays: None

The Executive Session ended at 7:43 p.m.

XII. Adjournment

Motion and vote. A motion was made by **Councilmember Tibby DeJulio**, seconded by **Councilmember John Paulson**, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.