



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, November 8, 2016

Council Session

Item G-2

Approving Minutes of November 1, 2016 City Council Study Session

Staff Contact: RaNae Edwards

CITY OF GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA

MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

November 1, 2016

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a Study Session of the City Council of the City of Grand Island, Nebraska was conducted in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 100 East First Street, on November 1, 2016. Notice of the meeting was given in the *Grand Island Independent* on October 26, 2016.

Council President Linna Dee Donaldson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The following Councilmembers were present: Mitch Nickerson, Mark Stelk, Chuck Haase, Linna Dee Donaldson, Michelle Fitzke, Vaughn Minton, Roger Steele, and Mike Paulick. Mayor Jeremy Jensen and Councilmembers Jeremy Jones and Julie Hehnke were absent. The following City Officials were present: City Administrator Marlan Ferguson, City Clerk RaNae Edwards, Finance Director Renae Griffiths, City Attorney Jerry Janulewicz, and Public Works Director John Collins.

Council President Donaldson introduced Community Youth Council member Addisyn Dupler and board member Zach Shultz.

INVOCATION was given by Community Youth Council member Addisyn Dupler followed by the PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

SPECIAL ITEMS:

Presentation and Discussion regarding the Grand Island Fire Department. City Administrator Marlan Ferguson stated the Mayor and City Council had determined to have a balanced budget for Fiscal Year 2018. It was the administrations intent to review each department's operation activities to determine the level of service provided versus the cost of the service. The Grand Island Fire Department was the first of several departments to inform the council and public of what they do.

Fire Chief Cory Schmidt reviewed the history of the Grand Island Fire Department (GIFD). The fire department was organized in 1874 as a volunteer department. In 1921 GIFD changed from a volunteer fire department to a paid fire department. In 1980 ALS ambulance services started, in 2000 paramedics were assigned to engine companies, and in 2002 fire stations and crews began to specialize.

Currently there were 3 shifts which were 24 hours long. There were 21 personnel on each shift assigned to 4 stations with a minimum personnel staffing of 17 per shift. Total personnel for the Fire Department were 70. The reason for the 24 hour shifts was to reduce overtime costs and/or number of personnel.

There were four stations strategically located throughout Grand Island:

- Station 1, 409 E. Fonner Park Road (2007)

- Station 2, 1720 North Broadwell Avenue (1956)
- Station 3, 2310 South Webb Road (1987)
- Station 4, 3690 West State Street (1996)

Chief Schmidt explained the personnel changes over the years. In 1985-87 they added 6 firefighters when Station #3 opened. Another 9 firefighters were added in 1996 when Station #4 was opened and in 2000 they added 6 firefighters. Discussion was held concerning the number of employees over the last 10 years. In 2006 there were 69 employees.

Response times were reviewed with the average travel time of 3:34 for Fire and 2:57 for EMS. Explained was the rolling stock which included 7 ambulances and 7 fire/pumper trucks. The vehicle replacement plan for fire engines was 20 years of total service; aerials – 25 year service life; and ambulances – purchase one every other year, the goal was to have units not older than 14 years. Chief Schmidt stated they would need a fire engine within 3 years and an ambulance every other year.

There were three major divisions – Fire Operations and Training; Emergency Medical Services (EMS); and Fire Prevention, each under a Division Chief. Division Chief Tim Heimer explained the Fire Operations and Training division which consisted of fire suppression, hazardous materials, technical rescue, severe weather response, aircraft rescue and firefighting, medical responses (including vehicle accidents), service calls, public education, structure fires, motor vehicle crashes, automatic alarms, vehicle and grass fires, and medical calls. Training and recruiting were explained.

Division Chief Russ Blackburn explained the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) paramedic and EMT training. Explained were types of calls such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation, severe trauma, stroke, and ST segment elevation myocardial infraction along with response times. Discussion was held concerning private ambulances and staffing.

Division Chief Fred Hotz explained the Fire Prevention Division which consisted of code enforcement, arson investigations, and public education. He commented on the importance of fire prevention and the difference it makes. Explained was what they don't inspect, such as single and two family dwellings, multifamily residential property if no commons areas are under 11 units, buildings and structures on private residential property. What they do inspect are commercial buildings new and existing which includes: factories, mercantile stores, businesses, body shops, malls, restaurants, strip malls, hospitals, adult care, health care, child care, home child care, state fairgrounds, etc.

Mentioned were inspections of health facilities, liquor licensures, corrections facilities, and underground storage tanks which were delegated by the State Fire Marshal's office. In 2015 the Fire Department collected \$92,000 in permits such as commercial buildings to build and/or occupy, new occupancy permits in existing buildings, open burning, and fireworks stands/trailers. This division also does arson investigation, public education, and fire prevention education in the public schools.

Chief Schmidt stated the Insurance Services Office (ISO) evaluates fire departments and helps determine the fire insurance premiums for property owners in the department's jurisdiction. Currently GIFD has a rate of 3 on a scale of 1 to 10. The next scheduled evaluation was November 29, 2016.

The following issues for a volunteer fire department were mentioned:

- Recruitment and retention is very difficult
- Availability of volunteers during business hours
- Number of personnel available can vary
- Amount of time required substantial
- Level of proficiency is hard to maintain
- Trend in Nebraska, as cities grow, they tend to transition from volunteer to career departments
- Response times are critical
- Insurance rates

Reviewed were the personnel and operating budgets. Due to minimum staffing, terms of contract, rising insurance costs, and increased call volume in the personnel budget it made cost reduction difficult. Covered was the increased call volume since 2011. In order to meet future demands there was a need to staff an additional ALS ambulance.

Presented were cost recovery options such as fees for service, increased EMS transports, and the contract with Hall County which currently was \$196,200.

Discussion was held regarding the number of calls for EMS for each station. Station #4 calls were growing, but most of the EMS calls came out of Station #2. Comments were made concerning cost recovery such as long distance transfers, 24 hour shifts, peak staffing, and billing collection rates.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 9:18 p.m.

RaNae Edwards
City Clerk