



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, June 24, 2014

Council Session

Item G-2

Approving Minutes of June 17, 2014 City Council Study Session

Staff Contact: RaNae Edwards

CITY OF GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA

MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

June 17, 2014

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 June 17, 2014. Notice of the meeting was given in the *Grand Island Independent* on June 11, 2014.

Mayor Jay Vavricek called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The following Councilmembers were present: Vaughn Minton, Mike Paulick, John Gericke, Mitch Nickerson, Chuck Haase, Linna Dee Donaldson, and Kent Mann. Councilmembers Mark Stelk, Peg Gilbert, and Julie Hehnke were absent. The following City Officials were present: City Administrator Mary Lou Brown, City Clerk RaNae Edwards, City Attorney Robert Sivick, City Treasurer and Finance Director Jaye Monter, and City Engineer and Public Works Director John Collins.

The PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was said.

SPECIAL ITEMS:

Recognition of 2013-2014 Community Youth Council. Public Information Officer Wendy Meyer-Jerke introduced Rebecca Riley, Marlena Ramirez and Kennedy Martinez who gave an update and video of activities the CYC students participated in the past year. The Mayor and City Council recognized the following Community Youth Council (CYC) members: Rebecca Riley, Jimmy Riley, Hannah Price, Allie Richardson, Diana Molina, Marlena Ramirez, Kennedy Martinez, and Regan Dimmitt; and Board Members – Erin Blauhorn, Craig Garrett, Maria Lopez, Ramona Otto, and Randy See. Those not present were: CYC students Hannah Sugita, Joe Huston, John Albers, and Kerrigan Anspauch; and Board Members – Jennifer Cramer, Dan Burchess, and Jared Stockwell. The “Above and Beyond Award” was presented to Marlena Ramirez and Kennedy Martinez.

Mayor thanked the CYC students and Public Information Officer Wendy Meyer-Jerke for their work over the past year.

Consideration to Modify Racquet Center/Tennis Association Lease Agreement. Parks and Recreation Director Todd McCoy reported that in May of 2010 the City Council approved a lease agreement with the Grand Island Tennis Association to operate the City owned Grand Island Racquet Center located at 2204 Bellwood Drive for one dollar per month to operate and maintain the facility for tennis activities and improvements to the property. The Tennis Association had maintained the Racquet Center property along with several improvements to the indoor facility.

The Tennis Association would like to partner with the City to build a new outdoor tennis complex at Ryder Park for public use. The Tennis Association was offering to support the project by providing \$160,000 of the anticipated \$300,000 to \$350,000 needed to build six new tennis courts. If Council supported the Ryder Park tennis project the lease agreement would need to be modified.

Tennis Association members: Phil Maltzhan, 1203 West 2nd Street; Jeff Bogner, 3007 State Street; Ron Bender, 1434 Howard Avenue; Kara Heim, USTA Tennis Service Representative for Nebraska, Lincoln, NE, and Matt Westfall, 2003 West Division Street gave a presentation and spoke in support of a modified agreement.

Discussion was held regarding courts per capita compared to surrounding towns. Maintenance and upkeep would be the responsibility of the city. City Administrator Mary Lou Brown answered questions regarding insurance on the racquet center building.

Platte Valley Industrial Park East – Community Development Block Grant Update. Finance Director Jaye Monter reported that in July of 2010, the City through its LB-840 funds granted \$575,000 to the Grand Island Area Economic Development Corporation (GIAEDC) to be used for infrastructure improvements for the 280 acres of undeveloped area known as Platte Valley Industrial Park East owned by GIAEDC. The GIAEDC requested the City apply for and it received a \$925,000 Community Development Block Grant from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (NDED) to help with the total estimated project costs for water and sewer improvements of \$2,200,000. The \$575,000 of LB 840 dollars would be committed and used to help achieve a portion of the 1:1 match requirement of the grant.

In 2012, the actual costs for water and sanitary sewer infrastructure activities were running below the estimated costs. As a result, the City requested and was granted an amendment to the grant contract to allow for the paving of Blaine Street as an additional grant activity. In February 2013, Council also approved the use of the \$575,000 LB-840 fund dollars to assist in the matching fund requirements of the paving of Blaine Street grant activity. With the Blaine Street paving complete, a contract amendment was requested and granted to reallocate excess funds reserved for the paving project back into infrastructure costs to ensure grant funds were utilized in its entirety.

The Economic Development CDBG-Platte Valley Industrial Park contract term runs six years from the date of signature which was March 25, 2011. Two requirements fall into this six year term with the first having been met and the second in progress:

1. Two (2) years to complete the public infrastructure improvements which comprise the Project.
2. Five (5) years to have an eligible Benefiting Business occupy a business facility site within the Spec Park and create at least 37 new, full-time positions. At least 51% of the jobs created must be held by, or made available to, low-to-moderate income (LMI) persons. The 37 positions must be maintained for one year from date of original hire for each of the jobs. This requirement does not indicate that the same individual must occupy the position during the one year time frame, but the 'position' remains filled with any individual that qualifies under the LMI requirements for Hall County, NE.

If the second requirement had not been met by the contract deadline or an extension request had not been granted from the State of Nebraska; all or a portion of the \$925,000 would need to be repaid.

Randy Gard, President of GIAEDC presented an update regarding the business development and marketing plans in progress surrounding Platte Valley Industrial Park East. Water and sewer infrastructure are in place. Currently fiber optic infrastructure was in the process of moving south

from Central Community College to the Platte Valley Industrial Park. Mr. Gard stated they were pursuing every lead with a couple businesses looking very promising. Mr. Gard agreed with Mayor Vavricek's recommendation that a written agreement should be put in place regarding the repayment of the grant monies in the event the conditions of the grant are not met.

Downtown Presentation. Councilmember Linna Dee Donaldson reported that the Downtown BID had invited Councilmember Donaldson and Hehnke to their meetings. Introduced was Tom Ziller from the Downtown BID 2013 board who gave a PowerPoint presentation of the history of downtown. In the 1980s 56 condos were developed, in the 1990s 18 apartments were developed or renovated, from 2000 – 2008 six units were developed, but from 2008 to 2014 there were zero housing projects. The Downtown BID 2013 goal was to create 50 new housing units by 2020.

Mr. Ziller requested \$100,000 for each of the next 5 years from the general fund to implement a new Life Safety and Infrastructure Program that would be designed to promote upper level housing. An additional \$100,000 per year for each of the next 5 years is being requested from the CRA's Façade Program to be redirected to the newly formed Life Safety Program. Also requested is that the Façade Program be limited to historic buildings in the downtown district. It was recommended the CRA administer the newly formed program.

The following people spoke in support:

- Amos Anson, 4234 Arizona Avenue
- Randy Gard, 123 No. Locust Street
- Brad Mellema, Convention Visitors Bureau

Comments were made regarding reactivating the Master Plan, investing in the downtown, and the right time and place.

Council recessed at 9:20 p.m. and reconvened at 9:35 p.m.

2014-2015 City of Grand Island Budget Proposed Fee Schedule. Finance Director Jaye Monter reviewed the changes to the 2014-2015 fee schedule for the Administration Department. Parks and Recreation Director Todd McCoy commented on the cemetery fees. These were increased to keep up with the private cemetery fees. Aquatics and water park fees were presented. Golf course fees were in conjunction to help pay for the irrigation system. The Heartland Public Shooting Park fees were reviewed.

Discussion was held regarding the golf course fees and the capital maintenance fee. Mr. McCoy stated there was not a separate fund for the capital maintenance fund. Explained was the law enforcement training fee in the amount of \$1,700.00. This included the Grand Island Police Department, State Patrol and County Law Enforcement.

Public Works Director John Collins stated the special events fee would be actual cost. Discussion was held regarding what a special event would be. Comments were made concerning not having this in the fee schedule and whether or not to have a fee at all for special events.

The Wastewater Treatment increased fees were reflected from the rate study as presented in September 2013. A 20% surcharge would be added to the Wastewater rates for customers outside the City limits. Wastewater Plant Engineer Marvin Strong explained the monthly sewer bill for commercial/industrial customer without metered City water.

Fire Chief Cory Schmidt commented on generating fees to off-set costs as compared to other cities. They were proposing a \$165.00 fee if someone cut a gas line. Technical rescue fee proposed of \$500.00 per hour was due to the special equipment, training, and time involved. Commercial false alarm fee of more than three in 12 consecutive months would be \$165.00. This was an effort to get property owners to maintain their systems. Explained were the following fees: special burn permit fee - \$100.00; special display fireworks permit fee - \$100.00; pyrotechnics fee - \$200.00; environmental site assessment fee - \$25.00; inspection callback fee for code violation requiring three or more visits - \$50.00; engine company run fee - \$100.00; and motor vehicle collision response fee - \$500.00. All fees were to cover some costs of the Fire Department.

Mike Nolan, 1415 Gunbarrel Road spoke in opposition of the fee increases.

Comments were made by Council that some of the fees were reasonable such as false alarm, special burn permit, and inspection callback, but others such as motor vehicle collision response were regressive fees and not citizen friendly and would cause more work for city staff. Chief Schmidt stated the Fire Department was not in the business to make money but to off-set costs. Division Chief Russ Blackburn answered questions concerning the increased fees for the ambulance division. Collection rate last year was 52%.

Discussion was held regarding a fee for paying by credit card. Ms. Monter stated they would review that fee with the new system. Comments were made concerning this fee not being in the fee schedule.

2014-2015 City of Grand Island Budget Proposed Full-Time Equivalent Employee Changes. Finance Director Jaye Monter reviewed the changes to the 2014-2015 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) positions and dollar impact of those requests. Reviewed were Emergency Management, Building Department, Fire Department, Parks and Recreation Department, Electric Utility, and Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Chief Schmidt explained the request for another Life Safety Inspector and benefits of having that position filled. Division Chief Fred Hotz commented on the number of inspections completed by the current Life Safety Inspector.

The following people spoke in support of the additional Safety Range Officer at the Heartland Public Shooting Park:

- Brad Mellema, Convention Visitors Bureau
- Steven Hayes, 4316 Clausen Road
- Jean Simons, 418 West 13th Street

Discussion was held regarding the cost of this position and what was supported by the fees and what was supported by the tax payers. Mr. McCoy stated there would be more revenue and this position would help grow the park. Mayor Vavricek commented on the number of volunteers and the size of the park.

Human Resources Director Brenda Sutherland explained the Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator I/II. Mr. Collins stated the Senior Equipment Operator position was no longer needed and the individual currently in this position would be best utilized in the Operator I/II capacity.

By making this change the Wastewater division would be able to reduce overtime, while ensuring the plant was always staffed.

Ms. Monter stated the total dollar amount increase in the FTE changes would be \$129,988.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 11:31 p.m.

RaNae Edwards
City Clerk