



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, January 27, 2004

Council Session

Item G2

Approving Minutes of January 20, 2004 City Council Study Session

The Minutes of January 20, 2004 City Council Study Session are submitted for approval. See attached MINUTES.

Staff Contact: RaNae Edwards

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS

CITY OF GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA

MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

January 20, 2004

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 January 20, 2004. Notice of the meeting was given in the Grand Island Independent on January 14, 2004.

Mayor Jay Vavricek called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The following members were present: Councilmembers Meyer, Whitesides, Pielstick, Gilbert, Nickerson, Cornelius, Pauly, Hornady, Walker, and Haase. The following City Officials were present: City Administrator Gary Greer, City Clerk RaNae Edwards, Finance Director David Springer, City Attorney Doug Walker and Public Works Director Steve Riehle.

RESERVE TIME TO SPEAK ON AGENDA ITEMS: One individual reserved time to speak on agenda items.

MAYOR COMMUNICATION: Mayor Vavricek mentioned the Heartland Events Center campaign. Presented were two promotions for the Heartland Events Center that would be aired on TV.

Discussion Concerning Use of ½ Cent Sales Tax for Fire Station #1 and Training Center. Fire Chief Jim Rowell introduced Fire Operations Division Chief Curt Rohling who reported that the replacement of the fire station at Koenig Street and Pine Street had been a proposed project for several years. This station known as fire station one was built in 1936 and had served the community for sixty five years. The design and location of the station were both appropriate for their time. Continued growth of the city and changes in the equipment and services along with deterioration of the building over time had brought this need to the forefront. It was the hope of the Fire Department to develop a plan for this replacement facility that would ensure that the new station would equal or exceed the value of the service the present building had given to the community.

A PowerPoint presentation showed the condition of Fire Station #1, street access problems, a brief overview of the Grand Island Fire Department, and pictures of fire stations from other states.

Discussed were the problems of exhaust fumes within the station, ADA accessibility, and location for a new station. City Administrator Gary Greer commented on the process of replacing this station. Councilmember Walker commented that whether or not the ½ cent sales tax passed, Council needed to look at replacing this structure for the safety of the firefighters.

Fire Training Division Chief Troy Hughes mentioned a Training Center for the fire department was an on going need. Training and education were of greater importance in the modern fire service than ever before. Mr. Hughes stated the Grand Island Fire Department along with every other fire department in the country was faced with ever increasing demand for service in a greater variety of situations. The use of chemicals and transportation of those chemicals in a variety of methods had prompted the development of Hazardous Materials Response teams. The need for specialized rescue teams for trench, confined space, vehicle extrication and others required more training and a need for space and facilities in which to learn, train, and practice those needed skills. The basic skills for fighting fires and emergency medical service were best learned and maintained in this type of a facility.

Mr. Hughes stated the vision was for a multi-use training facility to be used by many different agencies. The following were proposed to be included in this facility: classrooms/meeting rooms, offices, multi-story training tower, burn building, driving course, and access to lake and rail line. Mention was that this could be built in stages with the possibility of using grant funds. Location was discussed with regards to land availability and response times.

Discussion Concerning Use of ½ Cent Sales Tax for Train Noise Reduction. Public Works Director Steve Riehle reported that the community had discussed noise from train engine horns for a number of years. Kearney had closed crossings, built over and underpasses, and installed wayside horns on the Central Avenue crossing with the Union Pacific Railroad mainline tracks. Grand Island had not proceeded with the wayside horns because the railroads electronic circuitry needed up-grading, a cost the railroad expected the city to bear. A new rule change was recently approved by the Federal Railroad Administration that formalized the requirements regarding railroad crossings. They allowed the use of wayside horns and also “Quiet Zones”.

Mr. Riehle updated the council with a series of PowerPoint slides regarding the number of railroad crossings, railroad engine horns, timeline for horn rule change, wayside horns, and “Quiet Zones”. A “Quiet Zone” was where horns were prohibited (whistle ban) or horns would sound if a vehicle was in the crossing or a pedestrian was on the tracks. Discussion was had concerning a railroad corridor study which would outline a formal plan to reduce train noise and cost approximately \$125,000.

Presentation by the Humane Society Regarding Wildlife Damage Control. City Attorney Doug Walker reported that the Humane Society was interested in providing animal control services for wildlife such as trapping skunks and other animal species that may be a problem with the current rabies outbreak in the City and the surrounding areas. The Humane Society would provide this service through the end of the year. Mr. Walker stated this matter was being brought up for consideration at this time because the Humane Society would need to order additional traps to provide these services this spring when the skunk and rabies problem started to occur. The Animal Advisory Board had requested that the Humane Society make a proposal for performing these services because the Board felt that they would provide this service in an effective and humane manner.

Cindy Bishop representing the Central Nebraska Humane Society presented to council a PowerPoint presentation regarding skunk and rabies problems. Discussed were type of traps,

forms of euthanizing these animals, and a cost of \$2,500.00 for the cost of 15 additional traps and services. It was the consensus of the Council to move ahead with this issue.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

RaNae Edwards
City Clerk