



# City of Grand Island

Tuesday, February 24, 2004

Council Session

## Item G2

### Approving Minutes of February 17, 2004 City Council Study Session

*The Minutes of February 17, 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

February 17, 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 February 17, 2004. Notice of the meeting was given in the Grand Island Independent on February 11, 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: No individuals reserved time to speak on agenda items.

MAYOR COMMUNICATION: Mayor Vavricek commented on the Comprehensive Plan books given to council, the upcoming Council Retreat scheduled for Saturday, February 21, 2004, and the results of the water contamination testing in the western part of the city, of which Case New Holland (CNH) was found not to be responsible. Mentioned were the efforts of CNH.

Mayor Vavricek recognized the family of Arthur "Pooch" Gulzow a former 50 year firefighter who recently passed away. Sharon Bigger and Marilyn Lueth, daughters of Mr. Gulzow were present to receive a Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of their father.

Discussion Concerning Financial Implications of Projects Relative to ½ Cent Sales Tax. Finance Director David Springer and City Administrator Gary Greer reported that on August 27, 2002 the City Council voted to put a measure on the 2004 ballot to consider a ½ cent sales tax for the purpose of expanding parks and recreational opportunities, providing for infrastructure, and property tax relief. It was determined that many important capital projects could not be funded without additional revenue and that the voters should be given the chance to approve paying for projects such as a new fire station, library expansion, law enforcement facility with expanded sales tax. A great deal of discussion had taken place on the possible ballot measure.

In November of 2003 a survey was conducted to receive input from citizens concerning projects which had been suggested as needed capital projects. 613 respondents prioritized projects in the following order:

1. Construction of 3<sup>rd</sup> and Broadwell Underpass
2. Replacement of Pine Street Fire Station
3. Police/Sheriff Public Safety Center Replacement

4. Expansion of the Edith Abbott Library
5. Fire Training Facility
6. Grand Generation Center Renovation
7. Expand Island Oasis/ Replace Lincoln Park Pool
8. Reduction of Train Noise
9. Hike/Bike Trail Expansion
10. Ammunition Plant Recreation Development
11. Northwest Park Pool

In order to continue the education process, study sessions were conducted to go more in depth with the projects. The following projects were studied:

1. January 20<sup>th</sup> Fire Station, Fire Training Facility, Train Noise
2. February 3<sup>rd</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> & Broadwell Underpass, Aquatics, CAAP Development

Additionally, a fire Sprinkler system was approved for funding for the Grand Generation Center on February 10<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Greer stated that during the annual retreat on February 21<sup>st</sup> the Council would be asked to discuss each project and begin to narrow in on the final ballot language. On March 9<sup>th</sup> the final ballot language would be approved to be sent to the Election Commissioner.

The following was a list of projects with the estimated total costs for each project. The figures listed included all costs and did not account for grants, cooperative agreements, or any other financing solutions.

<u>Projects</u>	<u>Estimated Cost</u>
1. Fire Station #1 Replacement	\$3,338,627
2. Fire Training Facility	\$7,870,000
3. Library Expansion	\$8,130,000
4. Lincoln Park Pool Replacement	\$2,000,000
5. Northwest Pool	\$1,500,000
6. Island Oasis Improvements	\$2,000,000
7. CAAP Recreation Development	\$2,000,000
8. Railroad Underpass	\$12,600,000
9. Railroad Noise Abatement	\$2,000,000
10. Public Safety Center	\$3,000,000
11. Hiker/Biker Trail Expansion	\$2,300,000
12. Grand Generation Center Renovation	\$ 500,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>\$47,238,627</u></b>

In addition to the projects that were on the table for sales tax, it was recommended that the City Council consider the possibility of creating a property tax relief element to the proposal. Reviewed was the sales tax relief of 1 cent implemented in 1989-1990 in Grand Island.

Councilmember Pielstick stated that since she had been on the Council, Fire Station #1 had been talked about but nothing had been done. Ms. Pielstick commented on the importance of public safety. Councilmember Hornady commented on the sales tax dollars coming from not only residents of Grand Island, but the surrounding area. Councilmember Gilbert commented on a meaningful property tax relief and the fact that the City's tax rate is one of the lower rates compared to other property taxing entities. Councilmember Meyer commented on the last sales tax ballot issues and why they failed. The fact that there was no specific direction of where the money would be used was mentioned.

Councilmember Walker stated that he would like to see 35% of the sales tax go to property tax relief. Councilmember Whitesides stated that property tax relief would be nice, but that we needed to start the projects that had been on the list for many years. Councilmember Nickerson stated that Council needed to make a decision on what was important to the community. Councilmember Pauly asked if this would have a 10 year cap. Mr. Greer stated he did not support a cap or sunset clause, but had no problem of reviewing the projects often.

Mayor Vavricek stated that accountability was important. Mentioned was a shift in taxes of which retail customers from the surrounding communities would also pay. Discussed was what would happen at the Council Retreat.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

RaNae Edwards  
City Clerk