



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, April 14, 2015

Council Session

Item G-2

**Approving Minutes of March 28, 2015 City Council Study Session
(Retreat)**

Staff Contact: RaNae Edwards

CITY OF GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA

MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL STUDY SESSION (RETREAT)
March 28, 2015

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a Special Study Session (Retreat) of the City Council of the City of Grand Island, Nebraska was conducted at the Nebraska State Fair Building Board Room, 501 East Fonner Park Road, Grand Island, Nebraska on March 28, 2015. Notice of the meeting was given in the *Grand Island Independent* on March 20, 2015.

Mayor Jeremy L. Jensen called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. The following Councilmembers were present: Mitch Nickerson, Linna Dee Donaldson, Chuck Haase, Jeremy Jones, Mark Stelk, Mike Paulick, Roger Steele, Michelle Fitzke and Julie Hehnke. Councilmember Vaughn Minton was absent. The following City staff were present: City Administrator Marlan Ferguson, City Clerk RaNae Edwards, City Attorney Robert Sivick, Public Works Director John Collins, Interim Finance Director William Clingman, Utility Director Tim Luchsinger, Parks & Recreation Director Todd McCoy, Regional Planning Director Chad Nability, Building Department Director Craig Lewis, Emergency Management Director Jon Rosenlund, Library Director Steve Fosselman, Fire Chief Cory Schmidt, Police Chief Steve Lamken, Public Information Officer Wendy Meyer-Jerke and Assistant to the City Administrator Nicki Stoltenberg.

WELCOME AND OVERVIEW OF RETREAT:

Mayor Jensen welcomed and introduced everyone. He introduced Joseph McDermott with the Nebraska State Fair who thanked and welcomed everyone to the Nebraska Building.

OPENING COMMENTS:

City Administrator Marlan Ferguson welcomed everyone and thanked Mr. McDermott for allowing this meeting to be held at the Nebraska Building. Introduced was Bill Podraza who gave a PowerPoint presentation on team building.

TEAM BUILDING/COMMUNICATIONS:

Mr. Podraza gave a brief history of his background. He explained the forms of government in the Nebraska communities. Mentioned were the differences between Mayor/City Council versus City Manager. Reviewed were first impressions, delegation, elected vs appointed. The following reasons were given as to why a City could not be run like a business: C.I.R., open meetings act, profit sharing, no alcohol out of city dollars, accepting gifts, no preferential customers, Dillon Rules (enabling legislation), etc. The following instances were given where you could run the city like a business: electric utility, water utility, sanitary sewer utility, sanitation utility, and serving constituents like customers.

Reviewed were the rules of Councils: policy forming (sets the rules); ordinances and resolutions: advisory (suggests action); combination of the above. Councils needed to have a vision, a clear

view of their mission, values, strategy, personal objectives, and a sense of trust among the group. Trust was about keeping promises, no hidden agendas, keep working when things get tough, respect each other, understand others realities and appreciate differences, look out for each other's interest, support each other under fire, and measuring performance the same way.

The responsibilities of Council were to attend meetings regularly, keep in mind why we exist, show personal interest, think for yourself (express your opinions), work on communication skills, promote teamwork, stir up listless members, do your homework, be a peace maker, keep your sense of humor (develop one), give credit where due, prevent meetings from bogging down, show respect to other board members and staff, don't dodge thankless jobs, encourage not discourage, walk the talk, support decisions of group, and be aware of conflict in interests.

Council responsibilities were to lead, legislate, make known goals and objectives for year(s), be the confidant of the executive, counsel with the executive, be spokesperson for the organization, be enthusiastic, keep executive informed of their status with the Council, and support the professional growth of the executive.

Mr. Podraza covered conflict prevention guides and strategy. Council made comments regarding what they do well. Mentioned were open discussion, communication, respecting others, bringing forth what the citizens want, agree to disagree, and doing well representing the constituents.

Covered was what the Council could do better. Mentioned were doing more long range planning, unified message in where the community is going, team building with Council and community, engage the public more, work on image building, trust, be more open minded, not be afraid of controversy, include diversity, and value opinions of the constituents.

FOOD/BEVERAGE TAX:

City Administrator Marlan Ferguson reported that being proactive he would clarify the current expiration date, history, sunset, and timeline in going forward with the food and beverage occupation tax. Reviewed was the history of the August 19, 2014 Council meeting with discussion regarding the food & beverage tax and expiration date, no action was taken at that time. Mentioned was the tax would end with the lease purchase agreement on July 1, 2017, not December 31, 2015 as stated in the August 19, 2014 meeting. He stated there would be no benefit in paying off the lease purchase early. He stated several changes had been made over the years.

Discussion was held regarding LB 745 that stated new or an increase over (\$700,000) to the occupation tax would have to go to a vote to the people. Specific language would have to be put in the ballot language with regards to where the money would be used. The tax would sunset when the debt had been paid. In 2014 the City paid \$350,223 for the Nebraska State Fair Support & Improvement Fund.

The average annual collection was \$1,410,019. The recommendation was to go to a vote of the people at the General Election on November 8, 2016. There would be almost \$1,000,000 in excess cash after the debt payment. The following communities tax rate were mentioned: Grand

Island – 1.5%, Kearney – 1%, Lincoln – 2% (included alcohol), Norfolk – 2% (included alcohol), and Omaha – 2.5% (included alcohol). Discussion was held regarding a tax on alcohol. Mr. Ferguson asked for feedback on what the Council wanted to do. Comments were made regarding the confusion of the sales tax versus the food and beverage tax.

Comments were made regarding moving ahead with the vote at the General Election in 2016 and not paying off the debt early. Also recommended was to include the alcohol tax. It was mentioned there was a lot of work that needed to be done at the ball field at Eagle Scout Park and that the extra money could be used for that. Interim Finance Director William Clingman stated the \$1.6 million had been expended. Parks & Recreation Director Todd McCoy stated the total came to \$1.9 million towards the 4 ball fields and soccer fields.

Discussed were projects the continued food and beverage tax could be used for. Mentioned were: Eagle Scout Park ball fields, Fieldhouse, Island Oasis, Shooting Park, cemetery expansion, and marketing the State Fair. Comments were made regarding selling this to the public. It was stated that this was a fair tax and would not increase property tax. Quality of life issues to bring people into Grand Island were mentioned.

City Attorney Robert Sivick explained what the original food and beverage tax was for and how long it would be in effect. Discussion was held regarding the excess of tax and what it could be used for. He stated part of the money would be used for the lottery match.

Mr. Ferguson commented on marketing the food and beverage tax. He stated we needed to be specific with projects, debt service, etc. Mayor Jensen stated we would be looking at this further.

GROW GRAND ISLAND/GRANDER VISION:

Mayor Jensen commented on where we were going as a community. His priority was to combine the two studies Grow Grand Island and the Grander Vision which had been done. Assistant to the City Administrator Nicki Stoltenberg presented a PowerPoint presentation on Grow Grand Island/Grander Vision.

Representation from the Council was Mitch Nickerson and Linna Dee Donaldson. Reviewed was the background of Grow Grand Island which included collaborative, cooperative, and effective partnerships with existing businesses, entrepreneurs, image, workforce, and community assets. Background for the Grander Vision included live, work, play, learn, and unite with all communities in Hall County.

Grow Grand Island; a Grander Vision for the Heartland was created by combining the two studies. The goals for 2020 were: job creation, elevate standards of living, talent attraction & retention, improve educational attainment, increase volunteerism & community engagement, and help existing businesses grow.

Presented was an implementation schedule for 2015, 2016, the grid, and potential partners. Explained was the grid which included the projects of both Grow Grand Island and Grander

Visioning, potential partners, when it would start, and the cost. Currently they have over 50 people who have committed to working on committees.

WORKING LUNCH:

The following Hall County Supervisors were present: Pam Lancaster, Gary Quandt, Jane Richardson, Douglas Lanfer, and County Clerk Marla Conley.

Alternative 911 Location: Emergency Management Director Jon Rosenlund explained the current 911 situation and what a 911 dispatcher does. Presented were pictures of the current 911 center. The alternate 911 Center was located in a very small closet in Fire Station #1. The site was chosen due to its location, but with the small room mobilizing this equipment takes 30-45 minutes. Equipment differs from the main center (radios, phones, etc.), and is difficult to test and exercise regularly.

The following benefits of a true 911 alternate were: maintain our obligation for continuity of operations, provide geo-diverse 911 system for redundancy, provide full capabilities for 911 functions – radio, telephone, teletype, alarm monitoring and weather warnings, allow for expanded capacity in a disaster, and overcome the lack of “mutual aid” in 911.

One option to avoid these problems was to establish a new main 911 center and install an alternate 911 in City Hall. He suggested a new main facility be designed for a call capacity that would good through 2050 with an estimated population of 80,000.

Another option would be to build a new or renovate an alternate 911 location and continue the main 911 center in City Hall. This design would be for an estimated population of 60,000.

The following ideas were presented as to where a new 911 center could be located: either a stand-alone structure, addition to current City Building, adjacent to current City Building, or other areas likely to become City property. Other considerations were approximately 1 mile from City Hall, avoid flood plain, and connected to or near City managed fiber.

The final option was to remain with the current alternate 911 location which could not be upgraded and was not sufficient in an actual event.

Costs of equipment were estimated at \$600,000. The next step was to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for architectural design, including options for various locations and types of facility, receive recommendations from Interlocal committee, and forward recommendation to City Council.

Mr. Rosenlund stated the current situation was unacceptable and any solution would require serious investment. Most costs for equipment were static, regardless of the option. A majority of the construction/renovation costs were likely similar, regardless of the option chosen. Architectural drawings and price estimates would help guide the future plans.

Mr. Rosenlund answered questions regarding equipment changes in the future and changes regarding phone systems, etc. Mr. Ferguson stated we needed to look at branching out to other communities. Mayor Jensen commented on the need of a new alternate 911 center and the importance of that in case of an emergency.

Interlocal Agreements: City Administrator Marlan Ferguson commented on the Ambulance Service Interlocal with Hall County. It was to expire in 2015. He stated he would get with the Fire Chief to work that out.

UTILITY BILLING/BUDGET:

Interim Finance Director William Clingman gave a PowerPoint presentation on the new utility billing system. He mentioned there would be no fees for any type of payment. This would be open to the public on Tuesday, March 31, 2015. Utility Director Tim Luchsinger stated a lot of people pay on-line and we were getting up to speed with the electronic era.

Presented was a PowerPoint regarding the budget which was on the Grand Island web-site by a company named Socrata.

DISCUSS NEW COUNCIL LAPTOPS/TABLETS:

Mr. Ferguson explained the Council Chamber upgrade. The current drop down screen in the Council Chambers would be changed to an 80" HD flat screen. The other screen in the Council Chambers would be replaced with a 70" HD flat screen. The new laptops would be HD accessible. The recommendation was to purchase Dell surface laptops for Council that would be smaller than the current ones. The i-pad was not compatible with our system.

Discussion was held regarding the availability for printing items off the new laptop. The work in the chamber would happen within the next 60 days and the laptops would be ordered soon.

FUTURE STUDY SESSION TOPICS:

Mr. Ferguson asked the Council what future Study Session topics they would like to see. Mentioned were the Food and Beverage Tax, 2015/2016 Budget, and looking into a Bi-Annual Budget vs Annual Budget.

Upcoming Study Sessions would be Cemetery, Stolley Park Road, Tax Increment Financing, Food Manager Permits, and Bees.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

RaNae Edwards
City Clerk