



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, December 8, 2015

Council Session

Item G-2

Approving Minutes of December 1, 2015 City Council Study Session

Staff Contact: RaNae Edwards

CITY OF GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA

MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

December 1, 2015

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 December 1, 2015. Notice of the meeting was given in the *Grand Island Independent* on November 25, 2015.

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

Mayor Jensen introduced Community Youth Council members Brandeis Jensen and Emily Harders.

INVOCATION was given by Community Youth Council member Brandeis Jensen followed by the PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

SPECIAL ITEM:

Discussion - Cemetery Expansion. Mayor Jensen commented on the press conference today with Governor Ricketts regarding the Veterans Home property. During the press conference it was announced that the property would be given back to the City of Grand Island. Mayor Jensen gave a background of the process. Early in the process Governor Ricketts was concerned with the future of the Veterans Cemetery. It was negotiated that the City would maintain the Veterans Cemetery with the option of expanding the City Cemetery to the north of the Veterans Cemetery.

Parks & Recreation Director Todd McCoy stated they had reached out to the consultants to look at the Veterans Home site. There would be no cost in acquiring the land and there was good access to the property along Webb Road and Capital Avenue. They stated this would be a good site for a future cemetery.

City Administrator Marlan Ferguson stated this was one of several options and further discussion would be held. Mayor Jensen stated this would be held in two phases. The first phase would include all the property except for the Veterans Home site. The second phase would come after 2018 when the Veterans Home would be relocated to Kearney.

Requested was to have a comparison of all the sites and the long term cost of each to the City in the future. Comments were made concerning the City being in the cemetery business and this location being a positive site for the City to expand its cemetery.

Presentation – Food and Beverage Tax. City Administrator Marlan Ferguson stated this topic had been presented at the Council Retreat earlier this year. Assistant to the City Administrator Nicki Stoltenberg reported that the food & beverage tax would end in July of 2016. In order to continue the tax for an amount over \$700,000 per year, the Nebraska Legislature required a vote of the people. The continuation of the tax would allow Grand Island to grow and prosper and that it's a shared tax by Grand Island residents and all who visit Grand Island from out of town.

The following timeline was presented:

- 2008 A 1.5% occupation tax was initiated for the construction of the Community Field House which doubles as the 4-H, FFA Building during the Nebraska State Fair.
- 2009 Council added an additional \$1.6 million for the Veteran's Athletic Fields displaced by the Nebraska State Fair moving to Grand Island.
- 2011 State Law mandates that, as the home of the Nebraska State Fair, the City must contribute 10% of Nebraska lottery funds received by the State Fair. (2014 = \$350,223)
- 2012 The Legislature passes LB745 which prohibits communities to tax above \$700,000/year without a vote of the people.

The goal for 2016 was to put before the voters at the May 10th Primary Election the continuation of the existing 1.5% tax on all food and beverage that would begin following the sunset of the current tax.

The new language would include taxing the sale of alcohol along with food and non-alcoholic beverages. Mentioned was that Omaha, Lincoln, and Norfolk tax the sale of alcohol.

It was mentioned that the original tax was used to finance the Fieldhouse and the new tax would be used to invest in projects, programs and events that were important to Grand Island as well as visitors to Grand Island.

The following were proposals of the food & beverage tax:

- Annual financial commitment to the Nebraska State Fair as required by state law
- Promote entertainment, agricultural and livestock shows, trade shows, and similar events that would attract visitors to Grand Island
- Ongoing enhancement and development of recreation and athletic facilities such as hike, bike and recreational trails, ball fields and other community activity needs
- Invest in community development projects and activities that stimulate progress and growth for Grand Island

The following ballot language was proposed:

Shall the City of Grand Island enact a tax of one and one half percent (1 ½%) on the sale of all food and beverages presently subject to sales tax in commercial establishments such as restaurants, bars and clubs?

Mentioned was the Grow Grand Island initiative as collaborative, cooperative and effective partnerships. Mayor Jensen stated the food & beverage tax was a fair tax. He stated we had a long range plan for the City for many years to come through the Grow Grand Island initiative. It

was suggested that some of this money be designated to EDC for incentives to bring businesses to Grand Island.

Chamber of Commerce President Cindy Johnson commented on the Grow Grand Island initiatives and spoke in support of the food & beverage tax.

Presentation – 911 – EOC Center Report. Emergency Management Director Jon Rosenlund reviewed the options for the EOC Center both as a full scale building and as an alternative.

The full scale building plan was for 30+ years of operation; estimated growth of population & calls; modern functions of Operations, Planning, Logistics, Public Information; strength and durability of construction; redundancy & options for future growth; estimated 12,300 square feet; and was to start with the 911 Center & Radio Room.

Location preferences would be: 1 mile distance from City Hall; out of the flood plain; distance from railroad and major highways; proximity to City/County fiber optics; proximity to electrical substations; and buried utilities vs. overhead. The total estimated cost for a full scale operation was \$3,481,475 not including land acquisition.

The following alternate locations were presented: Fire Station #1, National Guard Armory, and City Hall. Cost of the Armory Alternate 911 was \$948,400 which did not include land acquisition and remediation and cost of Station #1 Alternate 911 was \$1,170,500.

The following land acquisition costs were presented:

- West Faidley \$300,000 - \$450,000
- 13th Street \$250,000
- Industrial Park \$ 30,000
- National Guard Armory Unknown
- Station #1 \$0

Construction comparisons were presented for a cost per square foot. Mr. Rosenlund stated some increased operating costs would be incurred such as utilities, sanitation, and janitorial/exterior maintenance estimated at an increase of \$84,000.00 split by the County and the City. The E911 Special Revenue Fund Year End FY 2015 balance was \$717,754.00.

Mr. Rosenlund stated he needed direction from Council on which direction to take: alternate or full scale and directions on location. He could then begin the RFP process to receive plans necessary for construction (Winter 2016) and approve plans and proceed to land acquisition (if necessary) and construction (FY 2016-2017).

Mr. Rosenlund stated we needed to do this once and that it would cover the next 30 years. The basement of City Hall would be used as an alternate if a new location was decided upon. Discussion was held regarding the fiber optics to the full scale and alternate sites. Conceptual plans were reviewed regarding the proposed 9 dispatcher positions. Currently E911 had 5 dispatchers.

Questions were answered regarding the use of the Burdick Station that had been discussed several years ago. At one time that would have been workable but at this time was not an option. Interim Finance Director William Clingman stated at this time we would either have to bond this project or use reserve money to pay for this. Mr. Rosenlund stated there was an option for a lease/purchase agreement.

Comments were made regarding thinking long term and the current low interest rates. Mr. Rosenlund stated the day-to-day operations of having a building in town made the most sense.

Mayor Jensen thanked all those people he had worked with over the past year.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 9:13 p.m.

RaNae Edwards
City Clerk