



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, February 08, 2011

Council Session

Item G1

Approving Minutes of January 22, 2011 City Council Special Study Session (Retreat)

Staff Contact: RaNae Edwards

CITY OF GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA

MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL STUDY SESSION (RETREAT)

January 22, 2011

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 in the Council Chamber at City Hall, 100 East First Street on January 22, 2011. Notice of the meeting was given in the *Grand Island Independent* on January 17, 2011.

Mayor Jay Vavricek called the meeting to order at 7:47 a.m. The following members were present: Councilmembers John Gericke, Mitch Nickerson, Linna Dee Donaldson, Kirk Ramsey, Scott Dugan, Larry Carney, Chuck Haase, Peg Gilbert, and Randy Gard. Councilmember Bob Niemann was absent. The following City staff was present: Interim City Administrator/Finance Director Mary Lou Brown, City Clerk RaNae Edwards, Interim City Attorney Jason Eley, Former City Attorney Dale Shotkoski, Interim Public Works/Utilities Director Gary Mader, Parks & Recreation Director Steve Paustian, Regional Planning Director Chad Nabity, Building Department Director Craig Lewis, Emergency Management Director Jon Rosenlund, Library Director Steve Fosselman, Fire Chief Troy Hughes, Police Captain Pete Kortum, Human Resources Director Brenda Sutherland, Public Works Engineer Terry Brown, Public Works Project Manager Scott Gripenstroh, Public Information Officer Wendy Meyer-Jerke, and Assistant to the City Administrator Shannon Oster.

INVOCATION was given by Dan Naranjo followed by the pledge of allegiance.

INTRODUCTION:

Interim City Administrator/Finance Director Mary Lou Brown stated that today we would focus on strategic planning. The focus of Council was policy making to stand the test of time. Ms. Brown stated for the City of Grand Island – Strategic Planning was a science and art of planning and directing the political, economic, financial and employee forces into the most advantageous position prior to taking action, in other words “getting your ducks in a row”. Mentioned were the Platte Generating Power Plant, Heartland Events Center, and Island Oasis as decisions Council made years ago that had benefited the City.

The Goal for 2011 was “Financial sustainability of City policies and services to best serve the people of Grand Island”.

OPENING COMMENTS:

Mayor Vavricek commented on the uniqueness of this Council Retreat reflective in “Taking Flight”. The reason for having this retreat in the Council Chambers was the use of technology and GITV to have this meeting aired live. Change, life, a call of service, prepare for the future, dedication, and openness was the reason we were here. No decisions would be made at this meeting, as this was a Study Session.

Mayor commented that this was a team effort and listed the number of years of experience of each department director and the make-up of the current Councilmembers. Mentioned was the importance of the citizens of Grand Island when Council makes decisions.

Covered were the following predetermined projects:

- Progress on quiet zone with a 2012 completion date
- Create a plan that addresses the future of the Lincoln Park Pool
- Completion of the Veteran's athletic Complex
- Progress on the Wasmer Detention Cell
- Drainage construction from Central Community College to Wood River
- Northwest drainage
- Development of a plan that addresses aging sewer infrastructure
- Negotiation of seven union contracts for four unions

Covered were the numerous projected 2011 Study Sessions.

STRATEGIC PLANNING:

Mary Lou Brown introduced Public Works Project Manager Scott Gripenstroh (Grip) who presented the process for Federally Funded Projects through the Nebraska Department of Roads and the importance of money available. The current funding sources were presented:

- Surface Transportation Funds (STP) – Federal Aid Routes (80-20 Match)
- Transportation Enhancement (TE) – Trails, Historic Preservation (80-20 Match, max \$500,000)
- Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) – Transportation Safety Issues (Up to 90-10 Match)
- Highway Bridge Program – Replacement or Rehabilitation of Bridges (80-20 Match)
- Rail Safety Program – address safety for rail/roadway crossings (match varies 0% to 100%)
- Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) – enable and encourage K-8 students to walk/bike to school (no match, max \$250,000)
- Emergency Relief Program (ER) – restore eligible roads/bridges to “pre-disaster” condition 80-20 match)

Federal aid requirements, project delivery – initiation to letting and National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 were reviewed. Grip mentioned a Responsible Charge (RC) was required to apply for federal aid projects. He currently serves in that position for the City and stated part of the costs for the RC was reimbursable. The goal was to capture federal dollars for the City.

Discussion was held concerning matching funds and the amount received from federal funding on projects planned within the City. The amount of extra time for City staff to apply for these funds was mentioned.

The following projects were currently on schedule for federal funds:

- Wasmer Detention Cell Storm Sewer Improvements

- Walk to Walnut Safe Routes to Schools
- State to Capital Connector Trail Transportation Enhancement
- Morman Island Trail Bridges Transportation Enhancement
- Downtown Historical Lighting Transportation Enhancement
- Grand Island Quiet Zone Improvements (Phase I)
- Lift Station #7 Disaster Recovery

Interim Public Works Engineer Terry Brown reviewed the 1 & 6 Year Street Improvement Plan. Projects scheduled for 2011 construction year totaled \$1,657,000. Several projects previously planned were being moved to the 2012 construction year, which totaled \$3,121,000. The 2013 construction year totaled \$3,052,250; 2014 construction year totaled \$1,585,000, 2015 construction year totaled \$1,745,000 and 2016 and after construction years totaled \$25,176,000.

Discussion was held regarding continuing the Transportation Committee to work with the Public Works Department to review projects that would qualify for federal funding. Mr. Brown stated additional RC's were needed for the City of Grand Island to accomplish getting the most federal funding possible. He would be taking the test in May 2011 to become a RC.

Interim Public Works/Utilities Department Director Gary Mader reported on other Capital Projects: Wastewater, Water, and Electric and amounts budgeted for the next three years. Discussion was held regarding additional capital projects such as treating nitrate in the water from JBS and who should pay for this. Mr. Mader stated a rate study was being done. Renewable Portfolio Standard was explained. Dale Shotkoski explained the licensing permits for JBS and past issues.

Break: a.m. to 10:03 a.m. to 10:18 a.m.

Stewardship of City Owned Property:

Building Department Director Craig Lewis reported on the following 3 to 10 year needs:

- Council – Chamber lighting up-dates
- City Hall (CIRCA 1992) – replace roof, hearing and air conditioning, parking lot, building annex
- Fire – New fire station in NE area, expand existing stations to accommodate genders, exercise rooms, training facilities
- Finance – customer service center
- Library – HVAC renovations, automation
- Security – evaluate security in all City buildings
- Parks – Lincoln Pool, build-out for Vet's complex, updated Island Oasis & park restrooms and equipment
- Emergency Management – Alternate 911 site, new expanded center
- Public Works – shop garage
- Old City Hall
- New City Hall
 - 911 alternative site
 - Customer service

- One Stop Building and Lease

Parks and Recreation Director Steve Paustian reviewed the following existing Park Facilities that needed updates:

- Lincoln Pool – 1975
- Jack Rabbit Run Golf Course – 1977
- Stolley Restrooms – 1981
- Ryder Restrooms – 1984
- Island Oasis - 1993

Discussion was held concerning future planning for each of these projects. Mr. Paustian stated he was notified this week that the Lincoln Pool permit was granted for this year's operation with some requirements to be met. Mr. Lewis answered questions concerning the One Stop Building. Mr. Paustian answered questions concerning a north/south Hike Bike trail that was in the Parks Plan and whether the Racquet Club which had been leased was meeting their agreement.

Privatization:

Human Resources Director Brenda Sutherland gave a presentation on the viability of privatization. Current services that were privatized in Grand Island were Garbage Collection, Animal Control, Forestry, Economic Development, and Little League and Softball Programs.

The following were presented as viable alternatives to privatization:

- Expertise is not available with current staff
- Task is not a regular occurrence
- Expediency
- Need for specialized equipment
- Liability
- \$\$\$ - can be done for less than if the duties were handled internally

Reasons privatization is not a viable alternative:

- Loss of control
- Loss of quality
- Less flexibility
- Loss of other duties performed
- \$\$\$ - may not be less expensive when all things are considered
- Loss of transparency
- Loss of political responsiveness
- Public accountability

The following were services the City outsourced now:

- Heating and Cooling Repairs
- Turf maintenance – fertilizing, aeration, etc. (excluding Parks Dept.)
- Mechanical maintenance
- Specialized services such as legal counsel, surveys, etc.
- Snow removal

- Construction projects
- Engineering

Discussion was held regarding the responsibility of providing government services. It was suggested that a committee be formed and a policy framework form be created that the City would follow in deciding to privatize. Comments were made that some things currently outsourced needed to be brought back into the City such as Economic Development.

Annexation:

Regional Planning Director Chad Nabity reported on annexation. The following were reasons to Annex: to bring property that is developed near the City into the City limits; to allow the City to grow beyond the suburban development; to provide for the extension of City Utilities (increase customer base); and to increase the sales and property tax base of the City.

Mr. Nabity reported that when the City annexes it looks at the following: proximity to City limits, is it adjacent?; population, opportunities for growth, extension of services, and tax base – property tax revenue.

Break: 11:50 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

LUNCH WITH THE HALL COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

The meeting reconvened at 12:00 noon. The following Hall County Board of Supervisors were present: Pam Lancaster, Gary Quandt, W.P. Bud Jefferies, Dan Purdy, Stephen Schuppun, and David Ziola and County Clerk Marla Conley.

State Fair Overview and Update:

Joseph McDermott gave a PowerPoint presentation on the 2010 State Fair. Reviewed were attendance numbers for the Fair along with plans for 2011. State Fair RV Park was mentioned with 211 permanent pads. More signage along South Locust Street, parking, traffic, sidewalks along the entrance, and stop lights were a few of the items brought up to improve the 2011 State Fair. The food and beverage occupation tax would be required for the concession vendors at the 2011 State Fair. More Public/Private relationships would be focused on in the future.

Emergency Management Strategic Planning:

Emergency Management Director Jon Rosenlund presented the various programs shared by Hall County.

Recent Accomplishments were:

- Completed first phase of Alternate 911
- Completed 2010 Local Emergency Operations Plan
- 80% of Narrowbanding Infrastructure Complete - \$122,868.00 in Homeland Security Grant dollars
- Warning & notification systems – CodeRED & Sirens through grants
- Public Awareness & Involvement – CERT – 318 Training & Volunteer Hours and \$6,630.00 in benefits to the County

The following items were on the horizon:

- Complete Narrowbanding Upgrade & Migration
- Continue Warning Siren Replacement
- Alternate 911 Center Phase II
- Exercise of Emergency Operations Center
- 911 Phone System Replacement
- Next Generation E911 (text, SMS)
- Facility Needs

Discussion was held concerning joint Emergency Management services with other counties. Efficiency and effectiveness were mentioned as important issues to look at if the City was looking at adding or working with multiple counties. Consolidated dispatch through technology was mentioned.

Break: 1:11 p.m. to 1:21 p.m.

BARNSTORMING:

Mary Lou Brown presented additional revenue streams would either be Council enacted or voter approved.

The following were revenue generation ideas:

- Expansion of Emergency Management Interlocal Agreement
 - Provide emergency management services to additional counties
 - Results in lower fixed costs
- Convention center turnback tax
 - Recovers state revenue to offset potential state revenue reductions
 - Several issues to be researched
- Increase existing telephone and mobile telecommunications occupation tax
 - Increase the current rate 1%
 - Up to \$200,000 of additional revenue
- Naming Rights
 - Develop a policy related to naming rights and charge a fee for those rights
- Surcharge on State Fair Admission tickets
- Facility use fee
 - Fieldhouse
 - Tickets
- Public/Private cost sharing
- Impound and storage fee
- Airline enplanements surcharge
- Get our share of Federal dollars
- Grant writing expectations for each department
- Food and Beverage Occupation Tax
 - Level the playing field by including State Fair Vendors

- Allowance to defray related costs associated with hosting the State Fair
- Odor occupation tax
- Payment of fines to schools
 - Encourage legislation that allows cities to retain some portion of fines for citations
- Increase charge for City owned recreational facilities
 - Renegotiate usage revenue with education partners

Comments were made concerning the Odor Committee, which was an example of a public/private partnership. Dale Shotkoski answered a question concerning sales tax within the State Fair. This was being collected on items sold. Assistant City Attorney Jason Eley stated the current City Code allowed for the occupation tax and would be collected at the 2011 State Fair.

Discussion was held concerning allowing cities to retain a portion of fines for citations. Comments by council brought forward for increased revenues were leasing fiber optic space, gaming events, fees to cover actual cost for recreational facilities, ambulance fees for lift assists and patient transfers. Police Captain Pete Kortum commented on impound fees at the Police Department.

COUNCIL RULES OF ENGAGEMENT:

Roberts Rules of Order:

Sandy Olson, PRP presented a PowerPoint presentation concerning Parliamentary Procedure and “How to be an Effective Member”. Ms. Olson stated elected council members represent the citizens in deliberation and vote. Covered were deliberation, voting, decorum, debate, addressing remarks only to the Presiding Officer, and division of the question.

Rights of majority, minority, individual members, absentees and all of these together were explained. The following motions were explained in depth: amendment, commit, postpone definitely, previous question, lay on the table, reconsider, rescind, recess, and question of privilege.

Role of Council, Open Meeting Law, Executive Sessions, Conflict of Interest, and Census Redistricting:

Interim City Attorney Jason Eley reported the City Council was responsible for setting the policies that shape Grand Island. City Departments were responsible for carrying out the day-to-day operations of the City and implement the policies of the City Council. The Nebraska Open Meetings Act, Closed Sessions, Conflict of Interest, and Census Redistricting were presented and discussed. Discussion was held regarding the use of electronic media during Council meetings and the confidentiality of Executive Sessions.

Committee Liaisons:

Mayor Vavricek stated he wanted to have a discussion regarding the Boards and Commissions where City Councilmembers served as liaisons. He commented on those Boards and Commissions that were not required by City Code or Interlocal Agreements.

Discussion was held regarding which Boards and Commissions were not necessary. Comments were made regarding the BID Boards and the importance to have City representation. Regional Planning Director Chad Nabity encouraged a City representative on the Regional Planning Commission.

Mayor Vavricek commented on the Heartland Events Center board. Scott Zana is currently representing the City, which was appointed by the Mayor and approved by City Council. Discussion was held concerning Council representation on this board.

Mayor stated other boards that might have validity of Council representation were the State Fair Board and the Odor Committee. Council made comments that it was important to have Council, the Mayor or City Administrator representation on the State Fair Board. Comments were made that the Odor Committee was needed.

Council/Staff Communications, Study Sessions/Council Meetings, General Requests:

Mayor commented that Study Session packets would not have the detailed information that the Regular Meetings have. He stated we would have more Study Sessions in the future. Information for Regular Meetings would be provided to Council as in the past.

SUMMARIZATION:

Mary Lou Brown stated there would be one more retreat in a more typical retreat format to discuss in more detail the 2011/2012 budget. Ms. Brown thanked the staff for putting together the retreat and Council for attending.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS:

Mayor Vavricek commented on the teamwork and the foundation that were laid today. Looking at the big picture, using creative minds, and dedication were important. Mayor thanked everyone for attending and stated another Retreat was planned for March.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

RaNae Edwards
City Clerk