



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, June 14, 2011

Council Session

Item G2

Approving Minutes of June 7, 2011 City Council Study Session

Staff Contact: RaNae Edwards

CITY OF GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA

MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

June 7, 2011

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 June 7, 2011. Notice of the meeting was given in the *Grand Island Independent* on June 1, 2011.

Mayor Jay Vavricek called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The following Councilmember's were present: Larry Carney, Kirk Ramsey, Peg Gilbert, Mitch Nickerson, Linna Dee Donaldson, Scott Dugan, and Randy Gard. Councilmember's Chuck Haase, Bob Niemann, and John Gericke were absent. The following City Officials were present: City Administrator Mary Lou Brown, City Clerk RaNae Edwards, Interim City Attorney Jason Eley, and Public Works Director John Collins.

The PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was given.

MAYOR COMMUNICATION: Mayor Vavricek introduced Community Youth Council member Dan Carlson and board member Roy Swan.

City Administrator Mary Lou Brown commented on the flooding in the western part of the state. Today the Platte River was at 5.7'. Lake McConaughy was at 97% capacity. Timing for water to reach Grand Island would be 60 hours. Water Utilities had looked at the wells south of town and would not require sand bagging. Tomorrow there was a joint meeting with Hall County and Senator Adrian Smith regarding the flooding possibilities.

PRESENTATIONS AND PROCLAMATIONS:

Recognition of Craig Lewis, Building Department Director for 30 Years of Service with the City of Grand Island. Mayor and Council recognized Craig Lewis, Building Department Director for 30 years of service with the City of Grand Island. Mary Lou Brown commented on the duties provided by the building department and thanked Mr. Lewis for a job well done. Mr. Lewis was present for the presentation and thanked the employees of his department.

OTHER ITEMS:

Discussion Concerning Residential Clean-Up Cards. Jeff Wattier, Solid Waste Superintendent gave a PowerPoint presentation concerning the Residential Clean-Up Card Program. He stated from 1992 through 2002 the City provided a "Free Week" for disposal of garbage and debris with the intent to clean and beautify the community. The City continued this program after taking over from the County. Grand Island residents disposed of items for free at the Transfer Station one designated week per year.

The following "Fee Week" problems were mentioned:

- Labor Intensive

City staff planning and organizing, Solid Waste (SW) Division overtime, volunteer labor, Hall Co. inmate labor

SW Division staff basically playing “catch-up” all week

- Widespread abuse of the program
Residents would bring multiple loads for free disposal
Banned items such as tires, appliances, etc. would be disposed of due to hectic nature of program
Many would “stockpile” waste until Free Week
Major traffic congestion and long lines to wait in

The Residential Clean-Up Card (RCC) Program was implemented in 2003. This allowed residents to dispose of two free loads (up to 800 lbs. per load) at the Transfer Station. It started at 600 lbs. per load. The General Fund reimbursed SW Enterprise Fund tonnage value.

Benefits of RCC program vs. Free Week mentioned were:

- Residents can dispose of materials at any time throughout the year at their own leisure
- Reduced traffic congestion/frustration by residents
- Much more convenient/less time-consuming to dispose of items when needed throughout the year
- SW Division staff can manage waste much easier by spreading it out through the year
- Much less staff time spent on planning and organizing RCC program vs. Free Week

Problems with RCC Program were:

- Solid Waste Division – Abuse and Lost Revenue
- Various types of abuse to the RCC:
Residents obtaining and using multiple RCC received from friends, neighbors, family members, etc.
Use of the RCC as alternative to garbage service (i.e. stockpiling their trash to bring it to the Transfer Station twice per year in lieu of garbage service)
Contractors obtaining customers’ cards to dispose of construction/demolition materials from for-hire projects
Organizations/businesses using RCC program
- No revenue from RCC loads
- Lost SW Division revenues from 2009-2010 was \$72,158
- Issuing cards becomes a very time consuming program
.3FTE for issuing the cards/keeping track of database
PW went from two FTEs in 2005, to one FTE available for issuing RCCs
- RCC ranked a Quartile 4 program in PW General Fund and SW Enterprise Fund in both 2010 and 2011 program prioritization scoring

Total cost of program was \$76,300. Mentioned were other free program provided by the Solid Waste Division such as Clean Community System, surrounding community Clean-Ups, natural disasters/weather events, grass and leaf disposal, and CSOs use cards to encourage problem properties to clean-up.

Assistant to the City Administrator Shannon Oster presented the following alternatives to the RCC Program:

1. City-Wide Clean-Up Volunteer Event
One weekend during the year at two or three locations for free drop-off
Partner with Clean Community System for planning and hosting event
Volunteers critical – directing traffic, unloading vehicles, checking IDs, verifying the items are accepted for disposal
Estimated Cost: \$84,000
2. Free Weekend by Ward/Area of City Of Grand Island Utility Bill Insert
Bring back “Free Week,” but divide the City into two separate weekends by ward or address
Require a lot of public outreach so residents understand when is their assigned weekend
Estimated Cost: \$79,200
3. Utility Bill Insert
Include a RCC as a utility bill insert in January mailing
Require the person to bring the insert and bill to Transfer Station to drop-off their RCC load
Show ID with matching name and address to utility bill
Businesses would not be allowed a RCC load
Limit to one load per year
Estimated Cost: \$49,200
4. Online
Create an online form for residents to complete, and then pick-up RCC at City Hall when they show an ID
Still need to issue RCC traditional way to accommodate citizens that do not have a computer
Does not reduce staff time or other savings
Estimated Cost: \$76,300
5. Issue Week
Restructure how cards are issued by issuing cards only one week a year, at beginning of calendar year
Would require several people to assist during the period for high customer traffic
Residents still receive a free program that can be used throughout the year
Potentially reduce load to one per year
Estimated Cost: \$56,800
6. Issued and Administered at Transfer Station
Move issuing process out of City Hall to Transfer Station
Limited space leaves no room for customer service area at Transfer Station
PT Clerk would need to become FT for issuing cards
Estimated Cost: \$91,000

7. Additional Free Yard Waste and Eliminate Card Program

Expand free disposal to trees, branches, bushes, etc at Yard Waste Site

Currently free: grass and leaf disposal

Still provides a free service for residents used at their leisure throughout the year, while eliminating the timely/costly step of issuing and receiving a card

Approximately 50% of RCCs already are used for tree/branch disposal

Estimated Cost: \$13,000

Discussion was held concerning the increase of cost per ton to cover the cost of any changes. Mr. Wattier stated he didn't have those figures currently but could get those figures for Council. Cards with bar codes issued annually were mentioned as an alternative. Mentioned was Clean Community System issuing the cards. It was stated Clean Community System was not staffed to cover this program.

Public Works Director commented on the administrative assistant time to issue these cards.

Discussion Concerning Political Signs. Building Department Director Craig Lewis reported that Grand Island City Code 31-33 specifically addresses political signs and provides regulations for the size, location, and limits the amount of time they may be displayed. Last year the duration of time specified was questioned by the American Civil Liberties Union.

Constitutional law language, appropriate sign ordinances are "time, place, and manner" restrictions on speech, as opposed to restrictions on content. Courts use the following three-part test in reviewing the constitutionality of sign ordinances:

1. Is the ordinance content-neutral?
2. Is the ordinance narrowly tailored to serve a significant Governmental interest?
3. Given the restrictions in the ordinance, are there ample, alternative channels or communication of the information?

It was recommended that City Council amend the City Code to combine Section 31-31 Free Standing ground signs and Section 31-33 Political ground signs; into one section that regulates all "Yard Signs" as to size and location.

Discussion was held concerning yard signs which included garage sale signs, rental, business, etc. Permits for signs was mentioned but not encouraged by Mr. Lewis. Time frames for campaign signs were mentioned relating to the American Civil Liberties Union. Issues with enforcement, public property and public right-of-way were mentioned.

Interim City Attorney Jason Eley commented on the legal aspects of not having a constitutional ordinance which could cost the City hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Mr. Lewis stated this issue would be brought back to Council in ordinance form for Council consideration.

Discussion Concerning City Dewatering Wells. Public Works Director John Collins gave a PowerPoint presentation explaining the history of the installation of test and monitoring wells. An agreement with Central Platte Natural Resources District (CPNRD) was entered into on December 21, 1998 and amended on October 25, 1999 for 36 months. The final report was approved by Council on September 26, 2000.

The annual cost to power these wells were \$15,000, testing \$7,200, and repair \$5,000. These pumps were nearing the end of their 15 year design life. The City had powered these 5 wells without authorization from the Council. Only a few properties benefited (most dewatering wells were private).

The following options were presented:

- Continue to operate these 5 wells
- Add additional wells
- Reconsider the NRD's proposal

The following people spoke in favor of leaving the wells turned on:

- Doug Winder, 4355 Cambridge Road
- Mike Hargens, 4360 Sherwood Road
- J. J. Wohlers, 4251 Nevada Avenue
- Don Young, 2531 West Phoenix Avenue
- Roger Lindly, 923 East Phoenix Avenue
- Francis Sindelar, 2448 La Mar Avenue
- Wayne Schroeder, 2509 West Phoenix Avenue
- Harlan Knoepfel, 2132 Viking Place

Mayor stated two letters were received for the record from Stacie Goding, 4245 Nevada Avenue and Sharon Van Dyke, 4246 Nevada Avenue.

Kevin Prior representing Olsson Associates commented that no studies had been done since 2000.

Discussion was held concerning where the water drained from the wells. Mr. Collins explained the difference between sanitary sewer systems versus storm sewer systems. Mentioned was this issue was for Council to give the Public Works Department permission to continue running the wells. Mentioned was using floats so the pumps didn't run constantly. Upkeep of the wells was discussed.

Mr. Collins stated this issue would be brought forward to Council for action in the near future.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 10:03 p.m.

RaNae Edwards
City Clerk