



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, April 10, 2012

Council Session

Item G2

Approving Minutes of April 3, 2012 City Council Study Session

Staff Contact: RaNae Edwards

CITY OF GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA

MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

April 3, 2012

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 April 3, 2012. Notice of the meeting was given in the *Grand Island Independent* on March 28, 2012.

Mayor Jay Vavricek called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The following Councilmembers were present: Chuck Haase, Larry Carney, Bob Niemann, Kirk Ramsey, Peg Gilbert, Mitch Nickerson, Linna Dee Donaldson, Scott Dugan, and John Gericke. The following City Officials were present: City Administrator Mary Lou Brown, City Clerk RaNae Edwards, City Attorney Bob Sivick, Public Works Director John Collins and Finance Director Jaye Monter.

INVOCATION was given by Community Youth Council member AnnaJean Scarborough followed by the PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

Mayor Vavricek introduced Community Youth Council member AnnaJean Scarborough and Board member Liz Mayfield.

OTHER ITEMS:

Administration of Oath of Office to Vaughn Minton City Councilmember for Ward 1. City Clerk RaNae Edwards administered the oath of office to Vaughn Minton – City Councilmember for Ward 1. Vaughn Minton's wife LaNae Minton was also present.

Discussion on Mosquito Abatement. Mayor Vavricek mentioned that about a year ago a citizen made a future agenda item request regarding mosquitoes. Introduced was Jeremy Collinson with the Central District Health Department who explained the process used to mitigate the hazards presented by mosquito populations. A PowerPoint was presented explaining what the Health Department provided regarding mosquito abatement.

A brief review was made of mosquito biology. Two types of mosquitoes, floodwater and permanent water were mentioned and explained. There were approximately 50 species in Nebraska. Only female mosquitoes required a blood meal or bite. Depending on the species they could travel up to three miles. Wet weather and standing water draws mosquitoes.

Explained were the processes of larval control, surveillance activities, trap counts, and adult mosquito control. Mosquito control was determined by surveillance activities and spraying occurred during dawn & dusk when the mosquitoes were most active. Wind and weather determine if control could happen.

All products used were EPA approved and all staff was Certified Pesticide Applicators by the Nebraska Department of Ag. All equipment was calibrated yearly and staff followed all labels when applying chemicals.

Discussion was held regarding electric bug zappers. Mr. Collinson stated they had limited control. Costs of spraying depended on the weather but were around \$5,000 to \$6,000 for chemicals and staff time yearly.

Presentation Regarding Automated Meter Reading. Utilities Director Tim Luchsinger gave a PowerPoint presentation on AMR/AMI technologies. Automated Meter Reading (AMR) had been used by utilities to allow reading of consumption meters for electricity, water and natural gas by mobile or remote sites. Its successor, Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI), allowed remote meter reading along with additional communication to the utility and the consumer.

AMR was a one way communication and AMI was a two way communication. AMR was a radio that was used either in a walk-by or drive-by process. This would replace the manual meter reading. Lincoln and Fremont used AMR with installation at a cost of \$12,000,000 and \$2,500,000 respectively.

AMI was a two way communication that used radio, cable, fiber optics, Internet, or cellular phone. It had "Smart Grid" functionality with remote meter reading by utility and customer, disconnect and connect from a central location with a remote outage indication and pre-pay billing. Boulder, CO and Naperville, IL used AMI with an estimated cost of \$45,000,000 and \$22,000,000, respectively. Mentioned were issues with AMI of data security, data privacy, no standard protocol, and electric systems limited experience, usually funded by DOE grants.

Grand Island currently had 25,000 electric meters and 15,000 water meters. Capital cost would be \$8,000,000 to \$10,000,000 with a \$2,000,000 installation cost and a three year completion to allow meter reading benefits. Additional IT staff would be needed.

The following Cost/Benefits were presented:

Costs:

- \$8,000,000 capital cost
- Installation cost – contractor/in-house
- Additional IT staff – network provider/in-house
- Annual meter replacement

Benefits:

- \$325,000 meter reader staff reduction annual savings
- Connect/disconnect functionality – reduce account receivables
- Outage duration reduction – keep customers on

Cost/Benefit = 25 year payback

The following conclusions by staff for AMR/AMI were the conversion to automated metering was not solely supported by meter reading cost/benefit. Customer demand for AMI applications could be a primary driver. AMI standard platform was likely in the near term. There was a need

to monitor market and evaluate cost/benefit periodically. The City needed to evaluate technology starting with substations and large industrial customers.

Presented was the Merrick County Pilot Program:

- Approximately 180 customers
- Upgrade existing electric meters
- Water meters included with UPRR project
- Communication network to be determined
- Cost estimates have been requested

Discussion was held concerning cutting costs, being more efficient, effective and giving better service. Mentioned was the possibility of partnering with the gas company. Mr. Luchsinger suggested they could create a specification for bids to work with the Merrick County Pilot Program. Comments were made concerning the changing technology and not moving too fast.

Mr. Luchsinger commented that other cities had implemented automated meter reading through grants. Benefits to the consumer would be to better plan for the use of electricity during lower usage times in order to save money. Mentioned was that in the next three to five years we would see platforms becoming more standard and more cities moving toward the automated meter reading.

Mentioned was the next step would be to proceed with bids for the Merrick County Pilot Program and bring it back to Council for approval.

Discussion of City Property for Commercial Lease. Building Department Director Craig Lewis reported that in the past the City had been approached about private enterprises leasing city property for commercial uses. Currently there was no specific policy addressing these requests. The most recent requests had been to utilize a City park and a City fire station property to locate and construct a cell phone tower for coverage of a local cellular service provider.

Currently the zoning restrictions would apply as if privately owned property. Legal considerations would not limit the City's ability to lease these properties.

The following city properties were mentioned:

City Hall	Parks
Drainage	Trails
Fire Stations	Utility
Lift Stations	Well Sites
City Parking	Others

Chris Riha representing Viaero Wireless spoke in support of leasing property at Stolley Park for a mono-pole cell tower.

Mentioned was that the current procedure of treating each request on a case-by-case basis had worked and gave Council the flexibility to decide specific issues. A suggestion was presented to have City owned towers to lease space to limit the number of towers in the City.

Discussion on Fireworks. Fire Operations Division Chief Tim Hiemer reported that at the October 18, 2011 Study Session the following four main topics were discussed: 1) no New Year sales or discharge 2) review the current fee schedule for recovery of costs 3) shorten sales period and discharge times and 4) control the quantity of stands.

A PowerPoint was presented comparing five Nebraska cities with regards to: permit fees, days of sales, discharge times, and average number of stands. Grand Island had 39 stands in 2011. The City regulates the sale of fireworks through temporary stand by City Code. There was no limit on the number of stands. Inspections occurred several times during operation: when stocked, daily spot inspections during the selling period and after July 4 to insure the stands were properly removed.

Mentioned was the additional workload for the Fire Department, Police Department, Communications Center and Public Works Department along with approximately \$20,400 in related costs.

The following proposed changes were presented:

- Raise permit fee to \$650 (This will cover the additional cost to the city related to fireworks)
- Shorten sales to six days, June 29 through July 4
- Cap number of stands at 40 (previous permit holder given preference)
- Set application period deadline May 1st
- Shorten discharge times from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. to 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. except on the 4th leave as is from 8 a.m. to 12 a.m.
- Require \$1 million liability policy with City as additional insured
- Enforce NFPA 1124 code for storage of fireworks (will keep stored fireworks out of residential areas)

These changes resulted in fewer days and shorter hours for discharge of fireworks, a cap on the number of stands to 40, and adjusts revenue to offset additional cost incurred by the City.

The following people spoke:

- Marvin Kohler, 1739 Ingalls Street - opposed
- LexAnn Roach, 917 West 10th Street - support
- Tom Towne, 1609 Meadow Road – opposed shortening the days of sale
- Kenneth Enck, 4174 New York Avenue – opposed
- Dennis Berggren, 721 “B” Street, Central City – representing the Elks Lodge – opposed
- Margie Kohler, 1739 Ingalls Street - opposed

Comments were made by Council regarding constituent’s complaints as to the number of days fireworks were sold, noise, and trash. Number of stands at 40 was mentioned as being too many. Fees, insurance, inspections, and cost to the Fire Department were discussed along with non-profit organizations.

City Attorney Bob Sivick commented there was a liability to the City which was why the insurance requirement was proposed.

Safety was mentioned with regards to shortening the days of sale and discharge times. It was recommended that the number of stands be reduced to 30, no more than 35. Mr. Hiemer stated an inspection would take approximately 15 minutes by the Fire Prevention Chief.

Mayor commented on notifying those involved with fireworks stands regarding further issues to come before Council. Marvin Kohler stated the reason for the number of stands was due to location and clientele. The May 1st deadline would not be a problem. Mentioned was commercial displays would not be affected by the time change.

Police Chief Steve Lamken answered questions regarding the penalty for shooting fireworks illegally. Mentioned was any changes would take place in 2013.

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

RaNae Edwards
City Clerk