
City of Grand Island



Tuesday, March 02, 2004
Study Session Packet

City Council:

Carole Cornelius
Peg Gilbert
Joyce Haase
Margaret Hornady
Robert Meyer
Mitchell Nickerson
Don Pauly
Jackie Pielstick
Scott Walker
Fred Whitesides

Mayor:

Jay Vavricek

City Administrator:

Gary Greer

City Clerk:

RaNae Edwards

7:00:00 PM
Council Chambers - City Hall
100 East First Street

Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

A - SUBMITTAL OF REQUESTS FOR FUTURE ITEMS

Individuals who have appropriate items for City Council consideration should complete the Request for Future Agenda Items form located at the Information Booth. If the issue can be handled administratively without Council action, notification will be provided. If the item is scheduled for a meeting or study session, notification of the date will be given.

B - RESERVE TIME TO SPEAK ON AGENDA ITEMS

This is an opportunity for individuals wishing to provide input on any of tonight's agenda items to reserve time to speak. Please come forward, state your name and address, and the Agenda topic on which you will be speaking.

MAYOR COMMUNICATION

This is an opportunity for the Mayor to comment on current events, activities, and issues of interest to the community.



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, March 02, 2004

Study Session

Item -1

Discussion Concerning 1/2 Cent Sales Tax Ballot Language

Staff Contact: Gary Greer

Council Retreat Memo

From: Gary Greer, City Administrator
Meeting: March 2nd, 2004
Subject: ½ Cent Sales Tax Proposal
Item #'s: 1
Presenter(s): City Administrator Gary D. Greer

Background

On August 27, 2002 the City Council voted to put a measure on the 2004 ballot to consider a ½ Cent Sales Tax for the purpose of expanding parks and recreational opportunities, providing for infrastructure, and property tax relief. It was determined that many important capital projects can not be funded without additional revenue and that the voters should be given the chance to approve paying for projects such as a new fire station, library expansion, law enforcement facility with expanded sales tax. A great deal of discussion has taken place on the possible ballot measure.

In November of 2003, a survey was conducted to receive input from citizens concerning projects which have been suggested as needed capital projects. Six hundred and thirteen respondents prioritized projects in the following order:

1. Construction of 3rd and Broadwell Underpass
2. Replacement of Pine Street Fire Station
3. Police/Sheriff Public Safety Center Replacement
4. Expansion of the Edith Abbott Library
5. Fire Training Facility
6. Grand Generation Center Renovation
7. Expand Island Oasis/ Replace Lincoln Park Pool
8. Reduction of Train Noise
9. Hike/Bike Trail Expansion
10. Ammunition Plant Recreation Development
11. Northwest Park Pool

In order to continue the education process, study sessions were conducted to go more in depth with the projects. The following projects were studied:

1. January 20th Fire Station, Fire Training Facility, Train Noise
2. February 3rd 3rd & Broadwell Underpass, Aquatics, CAAP Development

Additionally, a fire Sprinkler system was approved for funding for the Grand Generation Center on February 10th.

On February 17th, the financial implications of the projects were explored and the idea of using some of the of possible sales tax proceeds for property tax relief was discussed.

During the annual retreat on February 21st the Council discussed the plan presented by City Administration and asked that the final ballot language be reviewed at the March 2nd Study Session before it is placed on a Regular Council Meeting for approval.

On March 9th the final ballot language will be approved to be sent to the Election Commissioner.

Discussion

The process we have been through has been enlightening, educational and thought provoking concerning the ½ Cent Sales Tax ballot measure. The Council has listened to the public, closely reviewed alternatives and brought greater understanding to the issue at hand. The public has had ample time and opportunity to review the proposed projects and to comment on their viability. It is prudent to move forward with the final stages of the process at this time.

Recommendation

In order to assist in the process City Administration has developed a recommended project plan and ballot language. The proposed plan and ballot language was discussed and evaluated by the City Council during the Retreat on February 21st. The draft plan that was presented during the Retreat has been changed due to new information obtained at the gathering and an error that was brought to light concerning the amortization schedule. Following is the proposed plan for the proceeds that is recommended by administration in the event the ½ Cent Sales Tax is passed May 11th.

How should the money be invested?

It appears that Grand Island residents are very concerned about the expansion of the property tax levy. Therefore, property tax relief seems to be a very wise investment of sales tax dollars. Sales tax is derived from a wider group of taxpayers and has been used effectively to provide property tax relief in the past in Grand Island and other Nebraska Communities.

It is recommended that ½ of the proposed sales tax proceeds be used to provide property tax relief and reduce the City's tax rate. It is estimated that the ½ cent sales tax would generate approximately \$4,000,000, allowing for \$2,000,000 in property tax relief.

The remainder of the sales tax proceeds are recommended to go for capital improvement projects to allow for the City to continually improve its facilities. The sales tax is recommended to not be used for operational or personnel expenditures. This would allow approximately \$2,000,000 to take care of the needs which have not been addressed and allow for future needs to be addressed in a more timely manner

What projects should be accomplished and how are they to be financed?

The projects on the board have been determined to cost approximately \$47 million to bring about. This number is somewhat staggering and would stretch a ½ cent sales tax beyond reasonable limits. Therefore, prioritization is necessary to bring about the best return on the public's investment. City Administration recommends the following projects be prioritized for the initial use of the approximate \$2,000,000 capital improvement proceeds:

Financed projects:

1)	Fire Station # 1 Replacement	\$3,000,000
2)	Fire Training Facility (Land, Building, Burn Building, Training Tower)	\$4,000,000
3)	Police/Sheriff Law Enforcement Center	\$3,000,000
4)	Library Expansion	\$7,000,000
5)	Aquatics Projects (according to Aquatics plan)	<u>\$3,000,000</u>
Total:		\$20,000,000

The aforementioned if amortized for 20 years at 5 % would create approximate annual costs of :

\$1,593,449.

Annual Cash Projects:

1)	Grand Generation Center Capital Fund	\$100,000
2)	Cornhusker Army Ammunition Recreation Development	\$125,000
3)	Hike/Bike Trail development	\$125,000
4)	Infrastructure Emergency Funds	<u>\$ 56,551</u>
Total:		\$406,551

Annual Grand Total: \$2,000,000

It is recommended at this time to suspend the Broadwell and 3rd underpass project (\$12,600,000) and the Railroad Noise Reduction project (\$2,000,000). It is further recommended that the upcoming Railroad Corridor Study be broadened to investigate long range alternatives up to and including re-routing the rail lines around the city. It is believed that a more comprehensive look at the Railroad issue may be in the best interest of Grand Island long term.

The Ballot Language

Attached is a proposed ballot for the ½ Cent Sales Tax measure for City Council review.

The City Council is asked to review the proposed plan from City Administration and discuss its various elements. After discussion it is appropriate to direct City Administration to make any final modifications that are deemed appropriate and to place the resolution with finalized ballot language on the agenda for the March 9th Council Meeting for approval.

R E S O L U T I O N 2004-__

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Grand Island have expressed their desire to provide property tax relief and to maintain and improve public safety within the community, expand parks and recreational opportunities; and

WHEREAS, an increase in the local option sales tax is the fairest and best means to fund the foregoing programs; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Council wish to place this issue before the voters of the City of Grand Island for their decision at the statewide primary election of May 11, 2004.

WHEREAS, on August 27, 2002, by Resolution 2002-270, the City Council of the City of Grand Island approved official sample ballot language for use at the May 11, 2004 statewide primary election; and

WHEREAS, it is recommended that such resolution be rescinded and the ballot language set forth below be adopted for the sales tax measure to be submitted at the statewide primary election scheduled for May 11, 2004.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA:

(1) Pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-27,142.02, in lieu of a separate special election, the following ballot shall be submitted at the statewide primary election on May 11, 2004:

(OFFICIAL SAMPLE BALLOT)
OFFICIAL MUNICIPAL ELECTION BALLOT

CITY OF GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA

Tuesday, May 11, 2004

Sales and Use Tax Proposal:

Shall the Mayor and City Council of the City of Grand Island, Nebraska, impose a sales and use tax in the amount of one-half percent (1/2%) in addition to the one percent (1%) currently in effect, upon the same transactions within the City of Grand Island on which the State of Nebraska is authorized to impose a tax and shall the City of Grand Island increase its budgeted restricted funds for fiscal year 2004-2005 by \$4.5 million over the current year's restricted funds with one-half of the proceeds collected therefrom to be used for

Approved as to Form <input type="checkbox"/> _____ February 27, 2004 <input type="checkbox"/> City Attorney
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property tax relief and one-half of the proceeds used for capital projects including, but not limited, to fire department facilities, police department facilities, library facilities, parks and recreation facilities, senior/grand generation facilities and infrastructure?

Vote for or against the foregoing proposal.

- ☐ FOR the proposal
- ☐ AGAINST the proposal

- (2) The City Clerk is directed to certify the above issue to the Election Commissioner by March 10, 2004 in the manner and form provided in Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-27,142.02.
- (3) Resolution 2002-270 approved on August 27, 2002, is hereby rescinded.

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Adopted by the City Council of the City of Grand Island, Nebraska on March 9, 2004.

RaNae Edwards, City Clerk



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, March 02, 2004

Study Session

Item -2

Finalizing City Council 2004 Goals

Staff Contact: Gary Greer

Council Memo

From: Gary Greer, City Administrator
Meeting: February 21st, 2004
Subject: ½ Cent Sales Tax Proposal
Item #'s: 2
Presenter(s): City Administrator Gary D. Greer

Background

During the February 21st City Council Retreat there was great discussion about the future of Grand Island. As part of this discussion, the City Council began developing several goals for the next year. After developing preliminary goals the Council asked that the priorities that rose to the top be discussed in a Study Session. Therefore, the list established at the retreat will be presented at the Study Session for final review and prioritization.

Discussion

Following is the list that was established at the retreat for Council review:

Public Safety

- Develop a Fire Training Facility and work toward other projects that help establish Grand Island as a “Training City”
- Replace Fire Station # 1
- Work on legislation that would be beneficial to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Law Enforcement
- Continue to develop and implement Community Policing programs
- Develop programs to address problems with Domestic Violence/Abuse
- Develop programs aimed at addressing issues with illegal Drugs

Economic Development

- Assist the Economic Development Corporation in creating and retaining quality jobs
- Establish opportunities for Grand Island to become “Training Center” for various groups
- Work with downtown to develop programs, policies that help the Downtown

- Develop a plan to transition Grand Island to 50,000+ population before April 2010

Infrastructure

- Create better, more accessible entryways to the City of Grand Island
- Develop a traffic plan that enhances traffic flow throughout the City
- Work towards legislation to bring more funding for the upgrade of Grand Island's infrastructure
- Finalize the Comprehensive Plan and assure for the long term planning of the city
- Plan for the annexation and development of new subdivisions in an orderly way

Government Efficiency

- Enhance Communication to the public by reinventing GITV and the City webpage
- Cooperate with Hall County on a study to seek interlocal partnerships that eliminate duplication and promote efficiency
- Streamline City services in order to reduce costs
- Shift the tax burden from property tax
- Develop a Information Technology plan and implement a streamlined system

Quality of Life

- Expand the Library and its services
- Support ethnic diversity programs
- Develop a Greenspace policy
- Develop more recreational facilities in cooperation with community partners
- Develop a recreational vehicle park at the Cornhusker Army Ammunition Plant
- Funding for the continuation of the Hike/Bike Trails
- Seek grant funds and implement programs to improve housing in Grand Island
- Conduct an Aquatics Study

Community

- Support programs geared for Youth Development

Public Health

- Explore the possibility of the development of a Regional Hazardous Waste Site in Grand Island
- Evaluate programs that enhance the quality of Housing in Grand Island
- Evaluate programs that minimize the usage of illegal Drugs
- Investigate the issue of banning smoking in public places

Recommendation

The City Council is asked to review the aforementioned goals and change/prioritize them to meet the needs of the Community. After the goals are reformulated they will be used to set the course of work for the Staff and City Council for the next year.