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# City of Grand Island



**Tuesday, March 01, 2011**

## **Study Session Packet**

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### **City Council:**

**Larry Carney**  
**Linna Dee Donaldson**  
**Scott Dugan**  
**Randy Gard**  
**John Gericke**  
**Peg Gilbert**  
**Chuck Haase**  
**Mitchell Nickerson**  
**Bob Niemann**  
**Kirk Ramsey**

### **Mayor:**

**Jay Vavricek**

### **Interim City Administrator:**

**Mary Lou Brown**

### **City Clerk:**

**RaNae Edwards**

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**6:00:00 PM**  
**Council Chambers - City Hall**  
**100 East First Street**

## **Call to Order**

This is an open meeting of the Grand Island City Council. The City of Grand Island abides by the Open Meetings Act in conducting business. A copy of the Open Meetings Act is displayed in the back of this room as required by state law.

The City Council may vote to go into Closed Session on any agenda item as allowed by state law.

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### **Pledge of Allegiance**

### **Roll Call**

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## **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.

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## **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.

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## **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

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Study Session

## Item -1

**Discussion Concerning Commission of Industrial Relations (CIR)**

Staff Contact: Brenda Sutherland

# Council Agenda Memo

**From:** Brenda Sutherland, Human Resources Director

**Meeting:** March 1, 2011

**Subject:** Discussion Concerning Commission of Industrial Relations

**Item #'s:** 1

**Presenter(s):** Brenda Sutherland, Human Resources Director

## Background

Seventy-four percent of all regular status employees at the City of Grand Island are represented by a union. Currently there are seven labor agreements in force. Employees are represented by the following unions; AFSCME, Local 251, (American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO). This group represents employees in the Streets and Parks departments. The IAFF, Local 647, (International Association of Firefighters, AFL-CIO, CLC) represents employees in the Fire department. The FOP, Lodge No. 24 (Fraternal Order of Police) represents sworn employees in the Police department. IBEW, Local 1597 (International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, AFL-CIO) has four labor agreements and represents employees in the Utilities and Finance departments, the Wastewater Treatment Plant and a group called Service Clerical that has employees who work at various departments throughout the City.

All seven labor agreements are ready to be negotiated this spring as they will all terminate at midnight on September 30, 2011.

## Discussion

As negotiations are getting ready to commence, a review of the Commission of Industrial Relations (CIR) to provide information to the City Council and citizens is timely. We will review the CIR's history, purpose, and powers to create a better understanding of the CIR and how it will play a part in upcoming labor negotiations.

In addition, we will discuss the following bills; LB 397, LB 482, LB 555, LB 564, LB 619, LB 623, LB 624, LB 664, and CA 29. They are currently before the State Legislature and are focused on CIR reform.

## **Conclusion**

This item is presented to the City Council in a Study Session to allow for any questions to be answered and to create a greater understanding of the CIR.



# City of Grand Island

Tuesday, March 01, 2011

Study Session

## Item -2

**Legislative and Lobbyist Discussion**

Staff Contact: Brenda Sutherland

# Council Agenda Memo

**From:** Mayor Jay Vavricek  
**Meeting:** March 1, 2011  
**Subject:** Legislative and Lobbyist Discussion  
**Item #'s:** 2  
**Presenter(s)** Brenda Sutherland, Human Resources Director

## Background

There are many legislative considerations looming before the State of Nebraska that will impact the City of Grand Island and its citizens. Enacted policies and financial decisions will long affect our community. To what degree City leadership devotes time, energy and financial resources to this process needs to be understood and determined.

There were comments made during a January City Council meeting suggesting the need to develop a legislative process to be better engaged to defend and affect state legislative policy making decisions specifically affecting the City and the people of Grand Island.

## Discussion

This presentation is not meant to champion any specific opinion or direction. The intention is to demonstrate options and have an open discussion that helps to inform the Council of our current practice and explore opportunities to better assist in strategic planning for the City of Grand Island going forward. Discussion is warranted for greater citizen awareness in regards to this subject and to determine future efforts and attention to state legislative decisions.

## Conclusion

This item is presented to the City Council in a Study Session to allow for any questions to be answered and to create a greater understanding of the issue at hand.

It is necessary and appropriate for the Council to evaluate alternatives to better address state legislative concerns. Therefore, it is wise to examine the merit of all considerations that may be in the best long term interests of the City of Grand Island and the people it serves.



# City of Grand Island

Tuesday, March 01, 2011

Study Session

## Item -3

**Discussion Concerning Closing the Elm Street/Union Pacific  
Railroad Crossing**

Staff Contact: Scott Gripenstroh



# Council Agenda Memo

**From:** Scott Griepenstroh, Public Works Project Manager

**Meeting:** March 1, 2011

**Subject:** Discussion Concerning Closing the Elm Street / Union Pacific Railroad Crossing

**Item #'s:** 3

**Presenter(s):** Gary R. Mader, Interim Public Works Director  
Scott Griepenstroh, Public Works Project Manager

## Background

The Elm Street crossing at the Union Pacific Railway is a two-lane, two-way facility, approximately 50 feet wide with a speed limit of 25 miles per hour (mph), carrying approximately 795 vehicles per day. This crossing is equipped with flashers/gates, bells, and power-off indicators, but not constant warning circuitry. In the Railroad Corridor Safety Study performed by Kirkham Michael in 2006 three alternatives to improve this crossing were offered; total closure, raised medians, or wayside horns. The primary issue with this crossing is the proximity to the existing Eddy Street grade separation just two blocks west. This crossing is part of Phase I of the Quiet Zone Improvements in the Downtown area.

At an on-site diagnostic team meeting, the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) requested that the quiet zone project at Walnut and Elm Streets upgrade the sidewalk crossing panels on the siding tracks that serve the Peavey Elevator. The UPRR also requested that the project at Walnut and Elm Streets fill in the area between the existing street surfacing and the sidewalks with crossing panels. The additional crossing panels would increase the Phase I Quiet Zone cost by over \$250,000.

In working with the consultant, Felsburg Holt & Ullevig, it was suggested that the pavement be narrowed at the Walnut and Elm Street crossings similar to the currently designed pavement narrowing at the Oak and Pine Street crossings. The revision of the design to narrow the crossings is the most cost effective solution for establishing a quiet zone.

## **Discussion**

When looking at the vehicle use of the Elm Street/UPRR crossing compared to the cost of installing the wayside horns, of \$219,486, it would be more cost effective to close this crossing. The total cost involved with this closure is estimated at \$46,454, with the possibility of the City receiving up to \$40,000 from the UPRR and NDOR for the closure. The City would possibly be looking at a total cost of \$6,454 to close this crossing.

City Staff have visited with Emergency Personnel to gather their input on potential conflicts if this crossing were to be closed. The Fire Department stated this closing would not affect their response time, as they plan to use the Eddy or Sycamore underpass. This closing is also supported by the Fire Department, because it will eliminate a location where there is risk of a vehicle-train collision. In talking with the Police Department they had no objections to the closing and said their operations would not be impacted by the closure.

City Administration is recommending total closure of the Elm Street / UPRR crossing based on the cost involved for the wayside horn installation compared to the vehicular use.

## **Conclusion**

This item is presented to the City Council in a Study Session to allow for any questions to be answered and to create a greater understanding of the issue at hand.

It is the intent of City Administration to bring this issue to a future council meeting for the approval of a resolution to close the Elm Street/UPRR crossing.