

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION WORK SESSION
July 19, 2011

City Commission Work Session

Mayor Winters presiding

CALL TO ORDER: 5:33 p.m.

ROLL CALL: City Commissioners present: Michael J. Winters, Bill Bronson, Fred Burow, Mary Jolley, and Robert Jones. Also present were the City Manager; Deputy City Manager; Directors of Fiscal Services, Library, Planning and Community Development, and Public Works; Deputy Director of Park and Recreation; Executive Director of the Housing Authority; Fire Chief; Police Chief; and the Administrative Secretary.

1. BUDGET WORK SESSION

City Manager Greg Doyon reviewed the current year's budget process and highlighted recently discussed issues including the Citizen's Convenience Center (CCC) and replacing playground equipment. He noted that staff is available to answer questions. A summary memo was recently sent to the Commission of some of the recommendations made.

Commissioner Bronson questioned if the budget anticipates the CCC will remain open another year. Mr. Doyon responded that is correct. Commissioner Jolley questioned if increases are included. Mr. Doyon responded that fee increases would have to be requested later.

Mr. Doyon noted the possibility of closing the CCC has prompted community conversation. The Commission needs to know what services the community wants and who would utilize the CCC. The CCC must operate as efficiently as possible, and if the Commission decides to keep the CCC open another year, he believes Director of Public Works Jim Rearden will recommend adjustments. Mr. Doyon noted that if the community supports an additional recycling fee, a facility could be opened on property that has been set aside.

Commissioner Bronson referenced a memorandum he previously submitted to the Commission regarding budget items, including the CCC/recycling. He believes that government doesn't have to be the only player to provide recycling services.

Mayor Winters reported receiving phone calls in favor of keeping the CCC open. An option may be the lumber yard area to the west that is at a lower elevation; containers could be placed so people could back up and throw trash into the containers, eliminating the extra handling.

Commissioner Jolley suggested asking the approximately 16,000 people who receive the \$3/month senior discount for garbage collection to sacrifice that discount to help save the CCC. She also believes the curbside pickup should be advertised.

Commissioner Burow stated he would like to know the proposed fees that would stop the drain on the Sanitation Fund before making a decision to keep the CCC open. If people want to keep it open, they must pay enough to make that happen. He questioned curbside pickup. Mr. Rearden

explained a brush truck goes into each area and picks up extras. If a pickup takes more than the allotted time, a customer is charged extra for that pick up.

Mr. Rearden noted there are two functions at the CCC. The transfer side is the major expense, and raising those rates over a year will show if people quit using the facility. It appears the recycling side is close to breakeven. He reported that he has had preliminary discussions with the county to talk 'trash'.

Commissioner Burow reported the county site at Vaughn has a compactor to cut down on the amount of space.

Commissioner Jones believes the CCC is a convenience and of primary importance to the general public, including small contractors. He agrees that rates should be raised to keep the CCC open. If the CCC site cannot be kept open, he believes another cost-effective, convenient location should be provided.

Mayor Winters requested a cost estimate for placing bins in the drive area and the savings by eliminating the front-end loader driver. Mr. Rearden noted that if that doesn't work, the 20 acres are still available for a facility similar to county sites, maybe with county participation.

Mr. Doyon reminded the Commission the Sanitation Fund requires a revenue stream to maintain the services that are provided. There has been resistance to adjusting fees because there is a desire to remain competitive. He believes people will be surprised at the cost that will be needed to run the CCC at peak efficiency with limited handling.

Commissioner Burow believes that installing a scale will be the fairest option. Mr. Rearden noted a scale would cost approximately \$100,000.

A member of the audience (name and address inaudible) believes that more money should not be invested in a public-run facility that is not making money.

Mayor Winters questioned if a volunteer coordinator for the Animal Shelter and playground equipment are included in the budget. Mr. Doyon responded playground equipment for Elks Riverside Park was funded. Mayor Winters suggested neighborhood councils do fundraising for playground structures for the other two parks. Mr. Doyon agreed the Neighborhood Councils Coordinator could make that suggestion to the councils. Commissioner Bronson agreed that there must be a plan in place to replace the equipment. Mayor Winters noted that Frank Tuss located playground equipment from last year at half price from a supplier for Art Higgins Memorial Park in Black Eagle.

Park and Recreation Deputy Director Patty Rearden reported there is currently no funding to replace playground equipment at Jaycee and Skyline parks. However, the Park Trust Fund offers matching grants and they are looking at a company called Game Time that offers grants. She stated replacement cost for a structure would be approximately \$40,000.

Commissioner Jolley suggested the \$40,000 in the budget not required for a primary election could be used for playground equipment.

Mr. Doyon reported the Animal Shelter operations are now reporting directly to the City Manager's office. Weekly meetings are planned with Animal Shelter Operations Manager Jamie Bennett to address concerns. Animal welfare groups have requested a more robust volunteer program. In addition to coordinating volunteers, he believes a volunteer coordinator would coordinate other volunteer efforts at the site. When visiting shelters around the state a couple years ago, Mr. Doyon stated he was told that someone must be dedicated to that effort. He explained that a volunteer coordinator is part of efforts to make changes at the Animal Shelter.

Mr. Doyon reported that the volunteer coordinator position will be a one year trial period and the budget for the program is \$25,000. Supplies are needed for volunteers including vests, aprons, leashes, manuals, training, etc. The position is part time, probably 20 hours per week.

Mayor Winters asked Commissioner Bronson to address comments regarding capital construction made in a memo to the Commission. Commissioner Bronson stated there have been discussions about taking stock of capital needs including construction and maintenance. He believes the Commission must begin to look at the longevity and price tags of the large number of City assets. A standing committee could be formed to continue from commission to commission.

Commissioner Jolley expressed concerns about committees. She stated public hearings should allow everyone to get information at the same time, rather than Commissioners considering what they have heard over the course of weeks that has been narrowed down to a report. Voting is done based upon information that the public hasn't heard. She believes staff could provide a list of capital needs.

Mr. Doyon noted that consideration must be given to how decisions would be made to address capital needs. He believes a committee or group could articulate planning needs, because the City is not generating enough revenues to offset debt service that would be required to meet facility needs. He noted that Fiscal Services staff has been working on a facility capital improvement plan that will probably be presented at a work session.

Commissioner Burow commented that he would like the proposed budget to include a fund that would begin to set aside dollars for general maintenance on buildings. A committee will not be able to do anything without funding.

There was discussion about limited taxing options, reducing general fund subsidies, and reducing and reallocating other areas of the budget.

ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, Mayor Winters adjourned the work session of July 19, 2011, at 6:33 p.m.