

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION WORK SESSION
January 5, 2010

City Commission Work Session

Mayor Winters presiding

CALL TO ORDER: 5:45 p.m.

ROLL CALL: City Commissioners present: Michael J. Winters, Bob Jones, Bill Bronson, Mary Jolley and Fred Burow. Also present were the City Manager, Acting City Attorney, Directors of Fiscal Services, Park and Recreation, Planning, Public Works, the Interim Library Director, Police Chief, Fire Chief and the City Clerk.

1. COMMISSION ANNUAL WORK PLAN AND GOAL SETTING

City Manager Gregory T. Doyon explained the purpose of this meeting is an opportunity for the Commission to outline its concerns, policy priorities and what it would like to undertake in the coming year. This will allow the City Manager to focus on those priority items and direct staff accordingly.

Mr. Doyon noted that of all the policies facing the city and raising the most concern is the ultimate direction of Electric City Power (ECP). The thought was that the Burns & McDonnell report would give some direction on how to proceed. The report was deficient. He suggested the Commission consider a meeting with the ECP Board to figure out a strategy moving forward. He noted that, after receiving the Burns & McDonnell report, ECP has been in a holding pattern because it was suggested to wait until the new Commission was seated before considering the recommendations of the report.

Mayor Winters commented that it seems reasonable to him that the three new commissioners have some time to get all the benefits of the experience of the two past commissioners, and then move forward on the issue.

Commissioner Jones suggested the Commission meet with the ECP Board and discuss whether or not to bring the consultants back or schedule a video conference to address some of the areas of interest not mentioned in the report.

Commissioners Burow, Bronson and Jolley concurred.

Mayor Winters requested that Mr. Doyon arrange the meeting at the earliest convenience with the ECP Board of Directors to discuss the report and whether or not to have the consultants come back.

Mr. Doyon reported that he had ongoing discussions with the Animal Foundation for the past eight to nine months about options available to them to finance a new facility. The past Commission directed him at a work session to work with the Animal Foundation to try to come up with something. A memorandum of understanding has been drafted, but the framework for the finance section is not yet complete to bring forth for the Commission's consideration.

Mr. Doyon reported that the Animal Foundation has been working with an architect to determine what it will cost to build a shelter that it thinks is appropriate for the community. He suggested having another work session in the near future to lay out what he has come up with the Animal Foundation. At that point, he will be looking for direction from the Commission whether this is something it wants to do with a facility that the Animal Foundation is proposing, or are there other alternatives that this Commission wants him to explore.

Commissioner Jones suggested that a number of options need to be explored before entering into a public/private partnership.

Commissioner Jolley noted the Animal Foundation estimates for the shelter have grown from \$3 million to \$4.8 million. She commented that the city is legally responsible for animal control, but that it did not have to be a function of the Police Department. She suggested a request for proposals be advertised to run animal control.

Commissioner Burow concurred.

Commissioner Jones commented that the Commission will have to weigh all the options that the City Manager comes back with; consider if that operation in a \$4.8 million dollar building is affordable; if it is not, then the Commission will need to look at the current facility and land, and consider if it can be improved and at what cost.

Chief Grove noted that there are big ticket items that need to be upgraded with regard to the current shelter. The biggest problem is there is not enough room for all the animals brought into the shelter. Commissioner Jones asked if it was an option for the Animal Foundation to take the adoptable animals from the shelter. Chief Grove explained the city's significant output for the upfront costs of the animals coming into the shelter for shots, veterinarian care, etc., and that the licensing and adoption fees for adoptable animals would go to the Animal Foundation.

Mayor Winters requested a breakdown of what it costs to keep each animal. Commissioner Burow requested information regarding income from license and adoption fees.

Mr. Doyon reported that the city has been exploring relocating the current Convenience Center to 33rd Avenue. The challenge has been a sanitation fund that consists of the commercial and residential curbside pick-up, as well as the Convenience Center. The Convenience Center is not in good shape and is not designed to facilitate and promote recycling. The thought was to sell that property and put the money into a Convenience Center on 33rd.

Public Works Director Jim Rearden explained that there are two functions of the Citizens Convenience Center. He reported that 15,000-20,000 people per year use the transfer portion of the facility and that is about 70% of the expense at the facility. About 30% of the cost is for the recycling portion of the facility. However, there is an imbalance in the losses. The recycling side is losing more money than the transfer side. Mr. Rearden reported that the neighborhood councils seem to be in support of a \$1 per month, per customer proposed recycling fee. But, that does not satisfy the equity issue between Montana Waste and Cascade County customers that use the facility, if only city residents are be charged the fee.

Commissioner Burow wants to see a proposal from Montana Waste Systems to take over the transfer facility. He wants this option explored before making a decision. He further commented that Pacific Steel is down the block and will take the recyclables.

Mr. Doyon suggested the Commission wait for the budget process, then make a decision whether to direct him to draft an RFP.

The Baseball Club recently asked for a proposal to help them facilitate improvements at the stadium. The Baseball Club leases the stadium from the city. The last Commission received a proposal from staff to use funding from central garage to support a loan. The revenues would come from the leases the Baseball Club and Pasta Montana pay now.

Mr. Doyon explained the financing of the 1st phase of improvements. Ms. Balzarini added that the original improvements totaled approximately \$1.6 million. The Baseball Club contributed \$1.1 million. The city made the commitment to borrow \$400,000 from central garage that the general fund is paying back.

Commissioner Jones noted that was the first loan, but the Baseball Club is now asking for an additional loan. The proposal is the same, leveraging money and paying ourselves back. He wants more time to review what the Baseball Club committed to the first time before considering a second loan. Commissioner Jones requested Tom Hugg's recent report on the equipment revolving schedule.

Commissioner Burow requested information on the central garage fund and whether this proposed loan would cause a shortfall in the budgets.

Commissioner Bronson inquired what the projected needs were for central garage overall given the other possible needs out there.

Mr. Doyon referred them to the handout and email about the feasibility of the loan to address some of the concerns raised. He concluded that he would assess the prior commitments of the Baseball Club.

Due to time limitations, Mr. Doyon quickly reviewed ongoing key areas:

Economic Development Efforts – developing an industrial site, West Bank, finding a site for Montana Specialty Mills, and CDBG allocations.

Support of Military Missions – ongoing discussions about military missions and nuclear reductions. He strongly encouraged the Commissioners to become more active with MAC and CMDA and would advise them of upcoming meetings. Also, continue to support the Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) sponsored by Cascade County.

Downtown – RFP for downtown revitalization study to focus on efforts to encourage reuse of existing buildings using new downtown loan fund, CDBG funding, and a parking plan that will

support residential efforts.

Growth Management – infrastructure, annexation policy, communication/coordination with Cascade County.

Operations – being careful not to spread city resources too thin; being able to meet service expectations of the Commission and community.

Mr. Doyon asked what their thoughts were. He wanted to know what he and staff need to be aware of that the Commission wants to begin working on.

Commissioner Jones requested additional information and answers to the Centene Stadium proposal. His concern is he hasn't had an opportunity to listen to the department head budget reports yet. A priority of his is not to spread resources too thin and that departments are adequately funded to the realistic expectation the public has.

Commissioner Burow wants to get started on a proposal for the Convenience Center before the budget process.

Commissioner Jolley commented that she doesn't agree with the \$4.8 million dollar expense of the animal shelter. The city owns a shelter now and may have to look at upgrading that facility. She would like to see an RFP.

Commissioner Bronson doesn't believe it is too soon to give consideration to obligations of the Great Falls Police Department, and what the city can do to satisfy the community's needs with respect to police protection. He thinks the Fire Department made a strong case for the resources it needs to provide an effective department that meets the needs of the public but also protecting the safety of the people that provide that service.

Mayor Winters feels city government incorporating more community participation is a priority. He commented that representatives of neighborhood councils should be reporting at Commission meetings, and that representatives of Boards and Commissions should report at least quarterly.

ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, Mayor Winters adjourned the work session of January 5, 2010 at 6:53 p.m.