

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION WORK SESSION
July 15, 2014

City Commission Work Session
Civic Center, Commission Chambers

Mayor Winters presiding

CALL TO ORDER: 5:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL: City Commissioners present: Michael J. Winters, Bill Bronson, Fred Burow, Bob Jones and Bob Kelly.

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager; Deputy City Manager; City Attorney; Directors of Fiscal Services, Library, Planning and Community Development, and Public Works; Police Chief; Deputy Director of Planning and Community Development; and the Deputy City Clerk.

*** Action Minutes of the Great Falls City Commission. Please refer to the audio/video recording of this meeting for additional detail. ***

1. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments from the public.

2. PPL/NORTHWESTERN ENERGY DAM PURCHASE

City Manager Greg Doyon provided a handout of a Comment Summary memo to the Public Service Commission (PSC) on Northwestern Energy (NWE) Hydro Pre-Approval Hearing; Choice Customer Network Integration Transmission Service Concerns, dated July 10, 2014.

Manager Doyon expressed concern that the City maintains a “choice” customer status with NWE’s proposed purchase of PPL Montana’s 11 hydroelectric dams. Currently, the City has the choice to go out on the open market to purchase electricity; returning to NWE would take away that choice.

Manager Doyon noted the City has a good contract for five years, with a cost savings of over \$2 Million. After that timeframe, he believes it is likely the City could go out on the open market and secure a more competitive rate.

Manager Doyon reported that Commission Kelly also attended the PSC hearing.

Mayor Winters believes it is important for a City Commissioner to attend PSC hearings with Manager Doyon.

3. PARKING REVENUE OPTIONS

Deputy Director of Planning and Community Development Lee Nellis provided a handout memo

regarding parking revenue options. He discussed three revenue strategies including 1) Courtesy Parking; 2) Fines v. Rate Increases; and 3) Expand Hours of Enforcement (Saturdays).

Deputy Director Nellis reported the parking system has suffered from a decade or more of neglect. The surface lots need to be resealed, and surface lot #4 needs to be reconstructed. The pigeon netting project at the south garage has been completed. The north garage has serious elevator maintenance problems. There are other maintenance problems at the north garage that were not caught prior to the estimated \$1.8 Million needed in the parking system over the next four to eight years.

Deputy Director Nellis requested Commission direction to provide a fee resolution and ordinance that will address needs in the parking system.

Commissioner Bronson requested that recommendations of the Parking Advisory Commission (PAC) be presented to the Commission, and consideration be given to Saturday enforcement.

Commissioner Burow expressed concerns with raising fines. He prefers the Courtesy Parking and Saturday enforcement options

Commissioner Jones expressed support for the courtesy parking option, but does not believe that raising fines should be considered until the City does a better job collecting fines. He questioned Saturday enforcement as a concern for supporters of the Farmer's Market.

Deputy Director Nellis responded that the collection agency has informed him the approximate \$25,000 of about \$95,000 that was in arrears when he was hired that has been collected is as good as can be expected. He noted that a cycle is now in place where collection will be done within 12 months.

Commissioner Kelly expressed support for the PAC courtesy parking recommendation. He believes increased fines would be a great behavior motivator. He questioned Saturday enforcement, but would like more information.

Commissioner Burow questioned if the printing of names by the *Tribune* was an effective collection tool.

Deputy Director Nellis responded that \$2,000 was collected the next day.

Planning and Community Development Director Craig Raymond believes the *Tribune* intends to do a follow up.

Mayor Winters stated opposition to raising parking meter fees, but expressed support for the courtesy parking recommendation and increased fines.

The consensus of the Commission was to direct staff to present parking recommendations to the Commission to allow public comment, including alternatives.

Director Raymond reported the Passport Parking program is working well. He requested the Commissioners to continue to remind people that they can pay parking fees on their smart phone.

4. DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL UPCOMING WORK SESSION TOPICS

Manager Doyon reported that a confirmation date has not been set for the BNSF follow up.

Commissioner Kelly noted that a number of emails were received regarding fireworks. He believes that some of the explosions during the festivities were frightening for veterans and animals. He requested a session to discuss the current ordinance and noise levels.

ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, Mayor Winters adjourned the informal work session of July 15, 2014, at 6:24 p.m.