

CITY OF GREEN RIVER
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS
August 9, 2011

The Governing Body of the City of Green River met in workshop session at 6:30 pm in the City Hall Council Chambers. Mayor Castillon called the meeting to order. The following Council Members were present: Gary Killpack, Gene Smith, Tom McCullough, Jim Boan, and Lisa Maes. The following were present representing the City: City Administrator Barry Cook, Director of Public Works Mike Nelson, Director of Community Development Laura Hansen, URA/Main Street Administrator John Dahlgren, Director of Human Resources Debbie Klein Robertson, Interim Chief of Police Chris Steffen, Parks and Recreation Director Allan Wilson, and Public Affairs Specialist Stephen Pyles.

Council Member Coppolo was not present.

Presentation on Grass Roots Initiative to Prevent Suicide

Jennie Melvin started the Grass Roots Initiative to Prevent Suicide organization after her sixteen year old daughter tried to commit suicide three years ago. She was astounded on how big of a problem suicide is in Wyoming. Wyoming has the fourth highest rate of suicide in the nation. In Wyoming, suicide is the second leading cause of death for ages fifteen to twenty-four. Sweetwater County is in the top ten percent in the nation and third in the state for completed suicides.

She said 80% of people who try to commit suicide told someone of their intentions first, and 90 % of those who die from suicide had a treatable mental disease.

She said if you see a drastic change in a person or hear them talking about suicide then you should call 911 or talk to someone else about it. This could help them and ultimately save their life. Do not ever be afraid of talking to them about their intentions. The National Suicide Prevention hotline is 1-800-273-8255. Veterans can call this number and they can talk to fellow veterans or trained officials that have experience. There is another crisis line 1-800-784-2433. She said you can follow Grass Roots Initiative to Prevent Suicide at www.facebook.com/gripsuicide.

Jamestown Emergency Action Plan Review

Mark Davidson with Sunrise Engineering said in the event of an emergency in the Jamestown/RioVista Water District, where they don't have the ability to produce water. An emergency water connection between Green River and Jamestown would provide the water. He said a memorandum of understanding needs to be agreed upon by all parties that will clarify timelines, amounts, and procedures.

The Mayor asked if this was a surface line.

Mr. Davidson said yes, it would not be a final solution.

The Mayor asked if the county will be involved.

Mr. Davidson said yes, but it is up to the city to include the county in the memorandum of understanding.

Council Member Killpack asked if the county is aware of the emergency plan.

Mr. Davidson said yes. It would be the City of Green River who would ultimately provide water to Jamestown in the case of an emergency.

Council Member Killpack asked if the Joint Powers Water Board was aware of the proposal.

Mr. Davidson said yes.

Council Member McCullough said he is in favor of helping Jamestown in an event of an emergency. He asked about pressure issues that could arise with the line.

Mr. Davidson said a pressure valve would be hooked to the line to control the pressure.

Council Member Boan said he does not have a problem with helping, but who will pay for it.

Mr. Davidson said the district would be responsible.

Council Member Smith said he supports it. He asked about the timeline for the phases on the Jamestown RioVista Water District project phases.

Mr. Davidson said it looks to be around three to four years before it will be completed.

Council Member Maes said she supports the emergency plan.

IME Update on the Green River/Rock Springs Alternate Road

Mike Brown with Inberg Miller Engineers said the project is an alternate route for people to take if the interstate is closed. This is a four phase project: the first is the feasibility study, the second is the surveying with base mapping and preliminary design, the third is the final design of the roadway, and the fourth is the construction of the roadway.

Base mapping is done to better understand the property and the cost for the project. This was completed a few months ago. They are currently working with the Steering Committee which is made up of members from the City of Green River, City of Rock Springs, and Sweetwater County. They have provided the historical eligibility of the old Lincoln highway. They have learned that there is more than one Lincoln highway, one from the 1950's, and one from the 1920's. These are considered historic so the route cannot go on either of the roadways.

They have come up with two main alignments. One follows the existing roadway and the other is north of the existing roadway. The roadway would be posted at forty miles an hour and it would have two lanes.

The Mayor clarified the city has contracted with Ingberg Miller Engineers for surveying only. The next phase would be the design. If the money cannot be found for the next phase the project will not go any further.

The Mayor said there are two more public meetings scheduled. He said he was disappointed in the turn out at the last public meeting, so he encouraged citizens to come and take part in the next meeting.

Council Member Boan asked how much was budgeted for the project.

Mr. Cook said the city entered into an agreement with the County and the City of Rock Springs. He believes the city funded \$100,000.

Director of Public Works Mike Nelson said the city budgeted around \$156,000. The city pays for all of area one because it is in city limits. The second area is divided into thirds with the county and the two cities each paying a third of the cost.

Personnel Manual Revisions

Director of Human Resources Debbie Robertson said staff has some proposed changes for the personnel manual. The proposed changes are due to some misunderstandings in policies as well as changes in federal and state law. There are a number of items that are included in the changes that were in the administrative procedures manual, but were determined to be more relevant in the personnel manual.

Council Member Boan asked why the city does not have random drug testing for everyone on the payroll. He said almost every place in Sweetwater County has drug testing.

Ms. Robertson said because of some issues it was not pursued, but she has talked to legal counsel and he said they can.

Council Member Boan clarified that anyone that is being hired with the city has to submit to a drug test. He said they are taking a drug test to be employed, so why shouldn't they have to take one to stay employed. He said it does not have anything to do with distrusting the employees but it is a matter of governmental employees not being exempt. He feels it is important.

Ms. Robertson said they require post-accident testing which is a drug test after an accident. The city also has a reasonable suspicion drug test which is on the spot testing of a person when they appear to be acting strangely or impaired.

Mr. Cook said he would support random drug testing for all employees as long as legal council allows it.

Council Members Killpack, McCullough, Smith, and Maes said they would support it.

Council Member Maes asked if the problem is because of the city being a governmental agency.

Mr. Cook said yes.

The Mayor asked Ms. Robertson to look into what the school districts do.

Council Member Boan asked if department heads could talk to their employees and see if they would waive their rights, and submit to random drug testing. This could eliminate the legal issues.

Council Member Smith said one policy that is not on the change list is the early retirement program. He asked for this to be changed during the budget process and he is wondering if they plan to change it.

Ms. Robertson said there was a policy on early retirement, but it was rescinded. She could change it to be contingent upon funding, and make it current to what was done this year.

Council Member Smith asked if it could be worded to be when and if the need arose.

The Mayor said he would like it to be known that it would be only at the council's discretion.

Mr. Cook said staff has changed the special time off to state: At the end of the fiscal year, all remaining special time off will be forfeited.

Council Member Boan said he is glad to see this. The purpose of comp-time is to give the department heads and supervisors compensation for the time they have to come to meetings outside of their normal work hours. Comp-time is not intended to be held on to until the end of the year and then paid out. It should be used or given up.

Council Member Killpack asked if it would create a problem if there are 40 employees that want to use the comp-time at the same time.

Ms. Robertson said they would have to plan their time off.

Mr. Cook said staff should review their time cards and track their hours to see what they need to do in order not to lose it.

Council Member McCullough said they should add: with the approval of the City Administrator. The staff would have to have Mr. Cook's approval to take the time off.

Council Member Maes clarified that this is only for comp-time not floating holidays or anything else.

Ms. Robertson said this is for the people who do not get the overtime such as the supervisors and department heads. This does not address the employees who earn overtime.

Council Member Maes said it would be prudent to use the comp-time first. She asked if the vacation time can be carried over.

Ms. Robertson said employees are able to carryover some of their vacation time, the amount depends on how long they have been with the city. Staff has to plan ahead on what they should use first.

The Mayor asked if there was a cap on the amount of time staff can acquire.

Ms. Robertson said it is given in a lump sum of hours on July 1st. They have the whole year to use it. There is nothing that is accumulated during the year and once you use it its gone.

Mr. Cook said the grievance and appeals process is under review also, and he has some changes that he would like to make. The current procedure requires employees to work through their supervisors, department heads, and the city administrator. If the grievance is not resolved then it goes to the personnel board which is appointed by the governing body. He said there are two areas that frustrate him, having to go to the personnel board over grievances and having frivolous grievances. He said there are a lot of costs associated with grievances that the city has to pay for. He said he would like to tighten the process up by eliminating the personnel board. If a grievance goes to the city administrator and it is not addressed then the person can take it to court.

City Administrator's Report

Mr. Cook said staff is working to finalize the workforce analysis process the consultant will be here on August 15 through August 18. The consultant will be meeting with department heads, members of the governing body, and two focus groups made up of employees. He will also be able to meet with citizens to hear their suggestions.

The Governmental Affairs Committee meeting will be on the first Tuesday of every month at 7:30 am. It lasts around an hour and breakfast is provided.

He discussed the September 13, 2011 workshop agenda.

He said staff is continuing to monitor the Southwest Water Project. The contractor is not meeting requirements that have been set, so staff has started the process of notifying the bonding agency.

The Mayor said the city should charge him the wages for city staff to be on site when he works on the weekend.

Mayor and Council Reports

Council Member Boan said the city has to do something to prevent this from happening again. No one should have to put up with this type of behavior. If there are issues like this with a contractor the city should have the right to not allow him to work on their projects.

Council Member Killpack had nothing to report.

Council Member Maes said she agrees with Council Member Boan. No one should have to put up with that kind of behavior.

Council Member McCullough had nothing to report.

Council Member Smith clarified that the city workforce analysis will only be looking into the City of Green River not anywhere else.

The Mayor said he and Mayor Demshar welcomed the Oregon Trails Organization. They will be visiting Green River on Saturday, August 13, 2011, at 4:00 pm, at the Island. He said SWEDA is no longer an organization.

He said there was some confusion with the amount of money the city will be given for the Consensus Block Grant for the High School Rodeo Finals events. The commission said the city

would get \$322,000 but they had decided on \$424,900 in a meeting before. After some discussion he was assured that the \$424,900 was what the city would receive. He is hoping to have the resolution next week.

He said the county wants to hold on to the money that is collected from the 6th penny tax for the Child Development Center. He said this was not agreed upon, they were supposed to pay for the Rock Springs building. The CDC is paying \$8,000 a month for the building they are renting in Rock Springs. He said the best thing to do is to pay for the building.

He said the county wants to keep all of the excess monies collected and then allocate them out as needed. They want to allocate the money by population. He does not agree with this either so he will not support it.

Mr. Cook said the county treasurer said he is willing to allow the City of Green River to hold the excess money that is collected. The county treasurer only has one issue, in the event that the Tax Commission or State of Wyoming requires a repayment, he would be obligated to make that payment, so he wanted to have some flexibility to do so.

Council Member McCullough said he thinks the county needs to release the money to pay for the building. The county had the chance to have control of the project and they chose not to.

The Mayor said this was already agreed upon in the memorandum of understanding that all parties signed.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:27 pm.

H. Castillon, Mayor

ATTEST:

Jeffrey V. Nieters, City Clerk