

GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP SUMMARY

July 23, 2013 – Noticed Agenda Attached

Meeting Convened: 8:07 a.m. in the City Hall Auditorium

Meeting Adjourned: 12:00 noon

Council Members present: All except Councilmember Brainard. Staff present: Englehart, Shaver, Moore, Schoeber, Romero, Camper, Hazelhurst, Trainor, Kovalik, Watkins, Rainguet, and Tuin.

Agenda Topic 1. Department Presentations

City Manager Englehart introduced the topic as being an overview of each department and opening up discussion as to what the Council envisions for the future. He noted that the City has experienced tough budget years recently. He reviewed some of the cutbacks that were implemented including reducing expenses, a workforce reduction, a wage reduction and wage freeze, establishing stronger and forging new partnerships while having only limited service reduction, continued capital and community investment, and staying committed to energy efficiency.

For 2013, 26 positions were requested and thirteen were funded as well as implementing the first half of the market adjustment for wages. Reorganization took place which created some efficiencies and saved some salary expenses. He noted the number of new facilities that are completed or underway. One unanticipated expense was a charge XCEL will be assessing of \$150,000 annually for equipment replacement. The City's average labor costs are 42% compared to the average of 60% for other local governments.

Looking at 2014, Staff is anticipating flat revenues and Staff has been directed to maintain the same level of services. The City Manager's goal is to maintain the employee base. As the housing market loosens up, there may be problems with retention of employees. Another area of concern is the mandates and costs associated with the new health care law.

City Manager Englehart addressed the process for reviewing capital projects. Councilmember Norris requested that the Council receive a list of all capital projects as well as a list of grant opportunities. City Manager Englehart agreed noting that Staff is always asked to look for outside funding sources and if a project is dependent on a grant and a grant is not awarded, the project will be re-evaluated before going forward.

City Manager Englehart listed a number of policy issues that Staff will bring to Council on August 5 including TABOR, the fund balance, tax policy, the pay plan, Council economic development, transportation capacity payments, and stormwater. All of those influence the development of the budget.

The first department presentation was the **Police Department**.

Police Chief John Camper reviewed the Department's mission and statistics. He discussed the various divisions and their functions. He highlighted the reinstatement of the bike patrol and how that is a seasonal function. He addressed crime statistics and staffing. The police services contract with Colorado Mesa University (CMU) was mentioned in conjunction with future staffing needs. Chief Camper listed the capital needs for 2014 (vehicle and equipment storage and the shooting range) and 2015 (vehicle storage and the training facility). Further in the future, they will need new radios, and they have discussed using body cameras or going back to in-car video.

Chief Camper addressed Code Enforcement now that the position is in the Police Department. The new person is keeping up with calls and may have the time to be more proactive.

Chief Camper noted the strengths of the Department as quality employees, a state of the art facility, community support, collaboration, and state of the art equipment. The Department weaknesses are staffing challenges (they are currently at 95 officers and are authorized for 109) and the lack of vehicle and equipment storage. He sees the Department opportunities as promotions and reorganizations, the new training facility, and having Code Enforcement. The threats they are facing are the drug trends, vagrancy, keeping up with growth, the job market, and technology.

Things the Chief asked the City Council to consider were how many officers the Police Department should have including considering overhiring in order to address shortages and the construction of a storage building/annex for equipment and vehicle storage.

Councilmember Boeschstein inquired about coordination with the Sheriff's Department especially with the patchwork of annexation. Chief Camper said that they do coordinate and collaborate very well and dispatch knows whose jurisdiction any call is through the technology.

Councilmember Chazen asked if the CMU reimbursement is sufficient to cover the costs. The Chief said he believes it is; the agreement is mutually beneficial. But they will continue to keep an eye on it.

The next department presentation was **Economic, Convention and Visitor Services (ECVS)**.

ECVS Director Debbie Kovalik reviewed the Department and its relationship with the Visitor and Convention Bureau (VCB) board. She addressed seasonal employees who are non-benefited which includes students and retirees. She broke out the Department budget as: 50% Two Rivers Convention Center, 7% Avalon Theatre, and 43% Visitor and Convention Bureau.

Ms. Kovalik provided a history of the Department and its funding. The VCB was restructured and renamed in 2008 to the Economic, Convention, and Visitor Services. Two Rivers Convention Center is run as an enterprise fund. The Department's core objectives are to promote tourism and Two Rivers Convention Center. Their customers are people attending events and their constituents are contractors (event promoters) and service providers.

Regarding the Visitor and Convention Bureau (VCB) Division has tracked 1.5 million hotel guests annually. Friends and relative visitors cannot be measured but also impact visitor dollars.

Relative to VCB budgetary issues, the lodging revenues are down by 4.6%. The Department anticipates no staffing changes for 2014. They expect to have some repairs to the administrative offices and a vehicle replacement in 2014. They also will keep up with internet marketing and continue to fund special events to attract more out-of-town visitors. In 2015, the Department may have one to two retirements so they are mentoring others to fill those upcoming vacancies and provide training resources.

Ms. Kovalik addressed 2013 for both the Two Rivers Convention Center and the Avalon Theatre. With the closure of the Avalon during the remodel, there is a reduction in labor and operational costs. In the Convention Center, one capital expense was for new carpet and that is complete. There is also audio-visual equipment on order as well as kitchen equipment.

For those facilities in 2014, Director Kovalik looks forward to the reopening of the Avalon Theatre. The needs at the Convention Center for 2014 will be kitchen equipment, structural updates to the garage area, lighting improvements (energy efficient), and some office renovation.

For 2015, an increase in administrative support is expected. There was a brief discussion on whether to hire staff first to increase events or hire staff after the events are booked.

Capital needs will be new carpet in the Creekside Rooms, a new forklift, new furniture, keeping up with technology, and office renovation including a satellite VCB and registration desk at Two Rivers.

Director Kovalik listed the Department's strengths as growth (particularly in the outdoor travel market), the development of a Strategic Plan, the change from the Monument designation to a park, studying the web analytics to keep pace with trends, and the dedicated employees. Challenges are increased competition, especially from resorts, the stagnant revenues, completion of the Avalon Theatre, the Council's policy on funding of Two Rivers specifically the subsidy, study of the facilities, development of cultural assets, and transportation/airport services.

City Manager Englehart mentioned that he has heard that a shuttle service from the airport to downtown would be of benefit. Ms. Kovalik said the downtown hotels have decided not to provide shuttle service after 9:00 p.m. which limits their contracting ability with the airlines.

The next department presentation was for the **Fire Department**.

Fire Chief Ken Watkins provided statistics for the Fire Department. The fire service area is 77 square miles, the ambulance service area is 649 square miles, and the hazardous materials service area is 3,300 square miles. The Department has a lean staff, like the rest of the City government, especially in administration. There is only one training officer to keep 105 people trained.

Fire has new facilities, two remodeled fire stations and the fire administration building. Chief Watkins listed all the specialized equipment they have needed to do the job.

Core services provided by the Fire Department are fire and emergency medical services (EMS) combined. 78% of their calls are EMS and 2.5% are working fires. This is reflective of the change in the national trend.

Chief Watkins was pleased that the Department is fully staffed including part-time emergency medical technicians (EMT) who help with peak call volumes. This also helps develop a recruiting pool. The Department does anticipate some retirements in the near future. They are running a training academy in the fall which takes fifteen weeks. Some of the part-time EMT's will be in that academy.

The Chief described foam technology for fighting fires and how that is becoming more widely used.

Challenges for the Department include the limited opportunity for training for working fires, fire and EMS response reliability which includes the number of calls, service demand, concurrency (multiple pieces of equipment on one call), station area coverage, and mutual aid. Some of the numbers indicate that some stations are responding to up to three times the national average number of calls.

Chief Watkins reviewed the 2013 capital expenditures including the completion of the Fire Administration building and the near completion of the remodel of Fire Station #2. The Fire Alerting system is almost complete. Regarding fire stations, three stations are in good condition and are in good locations. There are two stations that need to be relocated and are in the worst shape.

Fleet has been helpful to the Department with the apparatus replacement plan by helping the apparatus last longer and spread out the replacement schedule. The Department was able to

acquire grant funding to re-chassis ambulances which has saved 30% over buying new ambulances. A box truck was repurposed into a wildland truck which saved money.

For 2014 and 2015, the Department is looking at labor, the impacts of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), seeking land and design for a new fire station in the Pear Park area, and facing any changes from the collective bargaining legislation. Relative to operating expenses, they will be exploring accreditation, replacing some operating equipment, providing training, addressing the effect of the ACA, and any changes coming from the medical director. For capital expenses, items included are fleet and equipment for the new station and training center infrastructure. They continue to seek grants for many of these items and pursue partnerships with other entities and departments.

Council President Susuras inquired as the anticipated impacts of the collective bargaining bill. City Attorney Shaver advised that he serves on a statewide committee for the subject and at this point there has been no movement on any of the options in the bill. It is being watched closely.

Chief Watkins lastly provided areas relative to policy direction for the City Council to consider. First, there is cooperative service with other departments. The City Council has been very supportive of that. One idea is an automatic vehicle locator to be used valley-wide so that dispatch could always send the closest responder. The next area is fire facilities. The need has been identified for additional/relocated stations but the Chief asked the Council to consider response time – is the national standard response time the target or does the Council think a reduced or increased response time is appropriate? That policy does affect staffing as well as staffing needs as a result of any new stations. Chief Watkins advised that funding for some of the needs could come from the charging of additional fees that insurance companies will pay. There are other funding streams that can be considered; a public safety tax, an increased mill levy, a sub-district tax, and others.

Councilmember Norris asked if the training has lagged so far behind that it will be an issue if someone leaves. Chief Watkins advised that they have kept up with the basic training; it has limited the specialized training.

Councilmember Chazen observed that the role of the Fire Department is changing and these changes will cost money. He is concerned about the budget impact. Councilmember Norris supported charging the fees mentioned previously. Chief Watkins noted that will be a philosophical change for the City Council to consider.

Councilmember Boeschstein asked about the overlapping service areas with Clifton Fire Department. Chief Watkins described the recent meetings and discussions that have taken

place including meetings with Clifton Fire Department on a possible partnership with a station in the Pear Park area.

Councilmember Boeschstein inquired why the City Fire Department responds to wild fires that are really the Sheriff's Department's responsibility. Chief Watkins said the Sheriff's Office does have a team and the City has a team. The cooperation helps with training and any response out of the district requested by the State is reimbursed which pays for the expense and allows the Department to backfill for those positions that are out on the fire.

Financial Operations Director Jodi Romero clarified that the City receives \$7 million in property tax annually and the Fire Department operations costs around \$14 million so sales tax helps fund that operation.

Council President Susuras welcomed a group of teachers that came into observe as part of a CML workshop they are attending.

The next department presentation was the **Parks and Recreation Department**.

Parks and Recreation Director Rob Schoeber presented the Department's mission statement and described the main divisions of the Department: Administration, the Recreation Division (recreation, aquatics, arts and culture), the Parks Division (forestry, parks maintenance, cemeteries, horticulture, sports facilities), and the Golf Division. He provided information on the number of events at the stadium and described staffing levels which includes 71 full-time employees and 215 seasonal employees. They work with four advisory boards and Staff serves on a number of other groups and committees.

Regarding operations, Mr. Schoeber said the levels are good and they are comfortable with them, however, they do budget some contingency funds to pay for unexpected expenses and equipment needs. Chemical costs can also be volatile. Staffing needs will be affected by future development of Las Colonias Park.

The biggest staffing need is in the area of Forestry. The Forestry Division is down by four full time employees, so they have been using contractors to address some higher priority needs. They are responsible for 30,000+ trees throughout the City (in parks and right-of-ways) and currently have 300 work orders backlogged. The reduced staff has resulted in a declining tree inventory as planting is way down. They have not been able to keep up with removal of dead trees although some are left in place on purpose at the golf courses. One of the main problems is there is not enough staff to treat dying/damaged/aging trees in an effort to save them.

Councilmember Boeschstein applauded the City for being a Tree City USA for 40+ years and for the great Arbor Day celebration put on annually.

Councilmember Chazen confirmed that by his calculations, the City is losing about 250 trees per year. Director Schoeber concurred.

Regarding capital expenditures for 2013/2014/2015, Director Schoeber listed the Matchett Park Master Plan, the development (Phase I) of Las Colonias, trail maintenance, maintenance equipment, an update to the parks inventory which rates the condition of the amenities in each park, Americans for Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements, and pool maintenance on the two pools.

There was a brief discussion on the City's increased financial support to Orchard Mesa Pool due to the County's lack of support. Council President Susuras, and Councilmembers Boeschstein, Norris, and Doody all voiced the importance of the facility and the need for continued support and operation. It was noted that there is a meeting scheduled with the County Commissioners to discuss the matter. Councilmember Chazen asked for information on the user fees and operating expenses before going to that meeting. City Manager Englehart said he intends to provide to City Council a one page summary of the last five years of operating at the Pool, and include a breakdown of City users versus non-City users.

In the Golf Fund (an enterprise fund), Mr. Schoeber listed the demolition of the Quonset huts at Lincoln Park and a relocation of the maintenance facility at Tiara Rado to expand the parking at the Golf Course.

Director Schoeber provided an overview of the capital expenditures for 2012 to 2015 which mostly included capital maintenance. Most of those items have been accomplished so the direction will shift to development of areas not built out. Future capital needs include boiler replacements at both pools but they have not been assigned to a year certain (approximately \$600,000). Councilmember Norris suggested that be conveyed to the other partners at Orchard Mesa Pool so they can also prepare for those upcoming expenditures. Lastly there is note for additional equipment (replacement) in the future.

Councilmember Boeschstein asked about solar upgrades at the pools and other parks facilities. Mr. Schoeber said the facilities manager has not really determined it to be feasible at those facilities.

The last department presentation was the **Public Works, Utilities, and Planning Department (PWUP)**.

PWUP Director Greg Trainor described the scope of this broadly structured department which includes seven Division Managers and 156 full-time and seasonal employees. He listed engineering, planning, streets, and stormwater, as well as four utility enterprise funds. In

contrast to some of the other departments that have mostly personnel assets, the PWUP Department focuses on their physical assets.

Councilmember Norris asked if it is possible to contract out some of the responsibilities and projects. Director Trainor responded that is done with both Spring Clean-up and with the rejuvenation of the Riverside Parkway. City Manager Englehart said that can be a policy discussion as to how far the Council wants to go with contracting out services.

Regarding budgeting and financing for the Department, they do long-range planning in order to consciously map out where the Department will be in 2 to 5 years and beyond. There is sufficient fund balance in the utility funds to ensure the City Council has the ability to either borrow or continue to save in order to pay cash for capital improvements.

The Department has developed many partnerships including water policy partners such as Colorado Water Congress and the Basin Roundtables. They have worked toward the dissolution of the special sanitary sewer districts. The Department also works on stormwater management and works with other agencies, including the 521 Drainage Authority, to prevent stormwater damage.

Under Planning and Engineering, Director Trainor noted that they administer the Zoning and Development Code and they try to strike a balance between the Code and workable development solutions. The Comprehensive Plan is used as the basis for transportation and utility planning. The Department supports the City's commitment to upgrade and maintain transportation facilities. Director Trainor mentioned the Department's responsibility to keep track of environmental regulations and federal mandates. They also monitor pavement conditions as another tool in order to determine where street capital improvements will be needed.

There was a discussion on pavement conditions and the report based on field surveys in 2009. The Department intends to update that field study to determine the current conditions in order to plan for street capital improvements in the future particularly in light of the fact that due to the economic recession there was no funding for street overlays for two years. It was noted that chip and seal extends the life of pavement at one-tenth of the cost of an overlay. The chip and seal program was not reduced in those recession years.

In conclusion, Mr. Trainor listed the policy items for consideration: the importance of the Comprehensive Plan, maintenance of the City's infrastructure, future use of City lands and protection of the natural resources on those properties including development opportunities, flood facility construction, financing for infrastructure improvements, and consolidation of water and sewer services. There is a potential of consolidating water services with other water operators.

Councilmember Boeschenstein expressed his concerns with funding of the upgrades to the drainage facilities and the lack of participation from the Grand Valley Drainage District (GVDD). Director Trainor said it is hoped that would be worked out so that the City purchases the materials for piping the drain and the GVDD has the resources to install the pipe.

Agenda Topic 2. Other Business

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

**GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL
WORKSHOP**

**TUESDAY, JULY 23, 2013, 8:00 A.M.
CITY AUDITORIUM
250 N. 5TH STREET**

To become the most livable community west of the Rockies by 2025

- 1. Department Presentations**
- 2. Other Business**