

GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP SUMMARY
August 18, 2014 – Noticed Agenda Attached

Meeting Convened: 5:00 p.m. in the City Auditorium

Meeting Adjourned: 8:16 p.m.

Council Members present: All (Councilmember Boeschstein left the meeting at 7:08 p.m.).
Staff present: Englehart, Shaver, Moore, Romero, Tice, Evans, Valentine, Stavast, Kovalik, Bowman, Meyeraan, Machado, Taylor, Daugherty, Foster, Camper, Nordine, Zen, Watkins, Schoeber, Lanning, and Tuin.

Agenda Topic 1. Department Report – Administration/Internal Services continued (Facilities)

This Topic was moved to follow Agenda Topic 2.

Agenda Topic 2. Visitor and Convention Services/Two Rivers Convention Center

Visitor and Convention Bureau Director Debbie Kovalik reviewed the core objective of their Department which is to create business opportunities for non-profit and for profit groups.

Two Rivers Convention Center and Avalon Theatre Manager Stuart Taylor presented slides on the categories of events held at Two Rivers Convention Center over the last year. The number of conferences and conventions were up in 2014. Holiday parties, galas, and wedding receptions are showing high profitability for 2014, in the middle are lunch and dinner meetings, and the category that shows the least amount of profit margins are the service clubs, trade shows, catering out, concerts, and sporting events.

Mr. Taylor said they are starting to focus and put their resources on social media for promotional purposes, working with Miles Media to put the word out, sending out email blasts for reminders to people to book for holiday parties, and developing relationships with other meeting planners. They are looking at having someone in house or getting an intern from Colorado Mesa University to conduct research on other cities in the United States to find out how they are doing their events, what are their best practices, what works for them, and what does not work for them. Mr. Taylor advised City Council that they need direction on whether only the community should be served, should they solely do conventions and trade shows, or should they serve everybody they can get. They also need City Council's direction on policies, procedures, and how to get out of running in a deficit. There was discussion on the research which is expected to be conducted and what areas should be researched, i.e. do other convention centers run in a deficit, are the deficits offset by people utilizing other City amenities, such as shopping and hotels, etc., and look at the pricing for rental rates and food.

Mr. Taylor said that some of the challenges are that food costs have gone up and the building is an old building so upgrades are needed, especially in the area of technology, to stay competitive.

Mr. Taylor stated that the grand opening for the Avalon Theatre will be September 17th and there will be a “film cutting” instead of a ribbon cutting. He mentioned other events and activities for the week of the grand opening. City Manager Englehart advised Council that they will set up a time for City Council to tour the facility prior to it being opened up to the public.

Marketing Sales Manager Jamie Daugherty advised City Council that they have been thinking out-of-the-box for ideas for other types of events that could be held at the Avalon Theatre such as weddings and progressive dinners. They are going to set up cooperative photo shoots with vendors to promote different events and activities as well as set up social media sites to draw people to the Avalon Theatre. Ms. Daugherty advised that they will offer all inclusive package prices for events instead of individual pricing for rental, food, beverage, etc.

Mr. Taylor outlined the goals for 2015 that they have set for the Avalon Theatre which included having the lights on every night, effective management of space, and booking simultaneous events.

There was discussion about how many orchestra members could be placed in the amount of space available on stage. A 72-74 piece orchestra can probably fit on the new expanded stage.

Mr. Taylor advised that there is still quite a bit of training necessary on the new projection equipment and the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system.

Councilmember Boeschstein pointed out that some of the items that they were not able to fund are the marquis sign which shows what is playing, a projector for the multipurpose room, and the stadium style seating in the multipurpose room.

Regarding the Visitors and Convention Bureau (VCB), Visitor and Convention Bureau Director Debbie Kovalik stated that the Destination Marketing Association identified the top twenty trends for destination marketing and the most significant were the rapid adoption of smart technology and the growing presence of social media. Director of Sales and Division Manager Barb Bowman gave a highlight about 2012 and 2013 and stated that even though economy was still in a slump, there was a 40% conversion rate for businesses into Grand Junction which was well above the industry rate.

Marketing and Public Relations Coordinator Mistalynn Meyeraan reviewed some of the areas that is driving business to Grand Junction which is Get Smart Content, search engine management, True View Video, expanded direct marketing, and having an online booking engine.

Ms. Bowman explained that they have expanded international marketing translating content to four to six different languages which can provide an international presentation. They held National Tourism Day which they trained 80 front line hotel employees about marketing tourism and opportunities in Grand Junction. The VCB was recognized for their mobile site, rated by Travel Nation as one of the biggest, coolest desert towns, and had two articles on the Sunset website. Lodging tax, unique visits to the website, and Visitor Guide requests are all up this year. For 2015, they are projecting a further increase in lodging tax for 2015, they have a representative in Denver who is looking at bringing new groups to Grand Junction and is advertising with a sign on her car, they are redesigning the Visitors Guide, looking at a digital billboard, and painting the water towers in Clifton to attract travelers from I-70.

The actual visits to the Visitors Center have gone down but they are looking at the possibility of a downtown visitors center, presence at the old train depot, and Colorado Mesa University. They have taken over the information desk at the airport. They are constantly looking around the region to see what other visitor centers are doing and getting ideas to remain competitive.

There was discussion regarding the occupancy and hotel rates which are down from the rest of Colorado. Grand Junction has the lowest daily rate for hotels in the State of Colorado; the VCB is trying to educate the hotel staff on ways to bring the rates up and build pride in the community.

Ms. Bowman reviewed their three to five year plan which came out of a two day retreat with the VCB Board. They have started a strategic plan with four different strategic initiatives which are to increase positive economic impact, identify potential revenue options, further develop county-wide partnerships, and look at their entire scope of visitor services and compare it to other visitor bureaus.

Agenda Topic 1. Department Report – Administration/Internal Services continued (Facilities)

Internal Services Manager Jay Valentine advised that they are proposing that Facilities become part of the Internal Services Fund (similar to Fleet and Information Technology) instead of the General Fund to bring everything for Facilities under one umbrella. Mr. Valentine showed City Council a slide which broke down the maintenance costs for the facilities and explained that the costs are up because of the complicated systems and increase in space. He advised that, in conjunction with the County, they are having a company conduct a condition assessment for all of the buildings in September and all of the information will go into a software program and help for future budgeting for the facilities. All maintenance will be put into the software program and it will keep track of maintenance and life expectancy for all facilities. There was discussion held on what buildings will be put into the software program, maintenance versus capital, the phasing process to build up a separate reserve fund, utility bill tracking, and energy efficiencies that have been implemented throughout the City buildings. Mr. Valentine advised City Council that he could put together the details and provide that to Council. Council was supportive in looking at the details.

Agenda Topic 3. Department Report – Police

Police Chief Camper presented a slide show to Council on 2013 statistics and reviewed calls for service, staffing levels for sworn officers, deployable officers, civilians, and detectives who investigate crimes against persons and crimes against property, and operations versus support services. He noted there is good collaboration with other agencies and there is a commitment not to duplicate efforts in the valley.

When asked about other Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Teams, Deputy Police Chief John Zen advised that there are currently two SWAT Teams, the County has one and the City has one. They are working towards what is similar to a Memorandum of Understanding between the City and County to provide interagency assistance.

Police Chief Camper reviewed the crime statistics from 2009 through 2013 noting that 2010 was especially low. He advised Council that there is a program called Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) and it is a vital program that has been struggling with staffing issues. Deputy Police Chief John Zen provided more information on the SANE program and advised that the number of specially trained volunteer nurses have dwindled and because of that, the remaining two SANE nurses only concentrate on children and not adults. The SANE nurses met with other entities (the two hospitals, Mesa County Sheriff's Office, the City Police Department, Western Slope Center for Children, and Mind Springs Health) and asked for some assistance to keep the program going. They are asking all of the entities for a donation to staff a part time coordinator position which would be \$5,000 per entity per year starting in September. Police Chief Camper advised Council that they would like to support the request and asked Council their thoughts in supporting the request and where it should be taken out in the budget. City Council agreed to supporting the request and have the contribution taken from the monies set aside for Community Partnerships.

Deputy Police Chief Mike Nordine updated City Council on the Communication Center stating that there has been a significant increase in incidents handled through the Communications Center (the calls handled effectively per dispatcher are well above the national recommendation) and they are currently at the same staffing levels. Chief Camper advised Council that there are some significant funding issues for all of the served agencies. A different way to fund the Communication Center is vital. Chief Camper advised that they have some sub-committees working on options that are small in reference to the issue, but he feels there needs to be a larger discussion about public safety funding. A large problem looming over in the near future is "Text 9-1-1" and Chief Camper outlined problems that could arise from that. They have met with City and County Managers to address the seriousness of the issue. City Manager Englehart said that one thing the Managers have agreed to do is to over-hire additional staff but they still need to get in front of all of the elected officials to address the concern. City Attorney Shaver advised that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has ordered the cellular companies to have the "Text 9-1-1" availability by the end of this year. There was discussion held regarding how many additional staff would be needed and when would be best to hold a meeting with all the elected officials. There was also discussion

regarding where most of the calls are coming from to the Communication Center and how the charges are determined for various call outs.

Police Chief Camper went over the Economic Development goals for the Police Department which included continuing to address crime and community safety concerns in a rapid and effective manner and to provide the “right sized” Police Department for the needs of the citizens.

Police Chief Camper reviewed staffing areas with gains (Street Crimes Unit, Code Enforcement, HOT Team, and CMU Team), losses (traffic team, Community Advocacy Program, School Resource Officers, and K-9), and areas that are the same size, but short (investigations, Drug Task Force, Police Support Technicians, property/evidence, and communications).

Police Chief Camper advised that their capital needs for 2015 are carports, the continued development of the Colorado Law Enforcement Training Center, and improving the shooting range. Capital needs for 2016 are vehicle/evidence/property storage (annex), a new bomb robot, handling text to 9-1-1, radio replacements, and body cameras. Other challenges are Colorado Mesa University’s growth and the sustainability of the current policing model, downtown issues, and vagrancy issues.

Police Chief Camper said that Strategic Plan items are to develop a plan for the annex, analysis of business process systems, assessing deployment of staff resources, reassessing managed police response, test and potentially implementing body cameras, and other items that concern training and development.

Agenda Topic 4. Department Report – Fire

This topic was tabled until 5:00 p.m. on August 20, 2014.

Agenda Topic 5. Board Reports

This topic was tabled until 5:00 p.m. on August 20, 2014.

Other Business

City Manager Englehart reported that it looks like all of the drawings for North Avenue from 12th to 23rd Street will be completed in December and construction could start in March. A plan has been put together utilizing resources from the Parks and Recreation and Public Works Departments to dedicate an evening in September to tear out and replace the medians, sprinkler system, and shrubbery on North Avenue from 1st Street to 12th Street. There is also one median past 23rd Street that will also need to be redone after the 1st to 12th Streets project.

Management and Legislative Liaison Elizabeth Tice provided City Council with the description on a Foreign Trade Zone and advised them that it is a very competitive, economic development

tool which could have significant advantages and tax savings. The City was approached by Associated Governments of Northern Colorado (AGNC) as they were advised that there is an agent of foreign investors looking for a location in Western Colorado to establish foreign trade zone projects. The Airport would have to agree to getting a customs port which could also open up the option of having foreign flights and foreign cargo into Grand Junction. It would be a significant undertaking and would require a lot of research. Ms. Tice reviewed some of the research that would be required. City Council directed Ms. Tice to move forward and start the research process to see if it would be beneficial for the City. City Manager Englehart advised that the first step would be to talk to the City's partner, the County.

Councilmember Doody pointed it out that it would be a good idea for the City to look at joining other partners like the Latino Chamber of Commerce.

City Manager Englehart advised Council that the Parks and Recreation Department, the Downtown Development Authority, and the Museum are moving forward with community discussions on Whitman Park.

City Manager Englehart informed City Council that the Streets Condition Survey is being ground truthed and will be presented to Council during the budget process.

With no other business, the meeting adjourned.

**GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL
WORKSHOP**

**MONDAY, AUGUST 18, 2014, 5:00 P.M.
CITY AUDITORIUM
250 N. 5TH STREET**

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

- 1. Department Report – Administration/Internal Services continued (Facilities)**
- 2. Department Report – Visitor and Convention Services/Two Rivers Convention Center**
- 3. Department Report – Police**
- 4. Department Report – Fire**
- 5. Board Reports**
- 6. Other Business**