

**GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING**

December 3, 2008

The City Council of the City of Grand Junction convened into regular session on the 3rd day of December 2008 at 7:02 p.m. in the City Auditorium. Those present were Councilmembers Bonnie Beckstein, Teresa Coons, Jim Doody, Bruce Hill, Doug Thomason, Linda Romer Todd, and Council President Gregg Palmer. Also present were City Manager Laurie Kadrich, City Attorney John Shaver, and City Clerk Stephanie Tuin.

Council President Palmer called the meeting to order. Councilmember Todd led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Citizen Comments

There were none.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Councilmember Doody read the Consent Calendar and then moved to approve items #1 through #3. Councilmember Coons seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.

Setting a Hearing on the Sterling Crane Rezone, Located at 2220 Sanford Drive [File #RZ-2008-315]

Request to rezone 4.32 acres from C-2 (General Commercial) zone district to I-1 (Light Commercial) zone district, located at 2220 Sanford Drive.

Proposed Ordinance Rezoning the Sterling Crane Property from C-2 (General Commercial) to I-1 (Light Industrial), Located at 2220 Sanford Drive

Action: Introduction of a Proposed Ordinance and Set a Hearing for December 17, 2008

Setting a Hearing to Create Alley Improvement District 2009, Phase A

Successful petitions have been submitted requesting a local improvement District be created to reconstruct three alleys:

- East/West Alley from 3rd to 4th, between Glenwood Avenue and Kennedy Avenue
- East/West Alley from 9th to 10th, between Main Street and Rood Avenue

- East/West T Alley from 17th to 18th, between North Avenue and Glenwood Avenue

Resolution No. 145-08–A Resolution Declaring the Intention of the City Council of the City of Grand Junction, Colorado, to Create Within Said City Alley Improvement District No. ST-09, Phase A and Authorizing the City Engineer to Prepare Details and Specifications for the Same

Action: Adopt Resolution No. 145-08 and Set a Public Hearing for January 7, 2009

Purdy Mesa Flow Line Replacement

The project consists of replacing approximately 17,700 lineal feet of deteriorating 20" waterline through developing areas in Whitewater.

Action: Authorize the City Manager to Sign a Construction Contract for the Purdy Mesa Flow Line Replacement to Downey Excavation, Inc. in the Amount of \$393,595.00

ITEMS NEEDING INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION

Council President Palmer advised that the item relative to the Brady South Referendum Petition has been removed from the agenda as a protest was filed so that will not be heard tonight.

Public Hearing and Presentation of the 2008 Supplemental and 2009 Budgets

This request is to appropriate certain sums of money to defray the necessary expenses and liabilities of the accounting funds of the City of Grand Junction based on the 2008 amended and 2009 proposed budgets.

The public hearing was opened at 7:07 p.m.

City Manager Laurie Kadrach introduced the planned presentation and noted for the viewing audience the number of hours Staff and City Council have already taken in reviewing the proposed budget in workshops. This presentation is to the City Council and the public.

City Manager Kadrach first addressed the focus of this year's budget including revenues, reserves and the high priority capital projects.

She then went through the priorities for the City including paying off the Riverside Parkway debt, the continuation of the Parkway with the 29 Road Project, which is a joint

project with the County, and getting ready for the Public Safety Facility. She clarified that the City had budgeted funds to acquire the needed land, site preparation, relocation of some operations, and design work on the facility in anticipation of the Public Safety Project.

Ms. Kadrich reviewed budget development and the review process. The last two years, a one year budget has been developed. The capital requests were significantly greater than the available resources, even after being pared back. Local government budgets must be balanced.

Local economic conditions were then summarized. Grand Junction's economy has tracked stronger than the national economy. The diversity in the local economy, especially in the job sector, has stayed strong.

Councilmember Coons asked if there is any way to determine the impact the mining jobs have on the other job sectors. City Manager Kadrich said she is not able to extract that information but estimates that there are one or two additional jobs as a result of each mining job.

There continues to be concern that if one employer left the valley, what would the impact be? Ms. Kadrich stated there are over 5,000 employers in the valley which is very different than the situation in the 1980's. The valley's unemployment rate, although higher than last year, is still much lower than the state and national average. The Valley is experiencing continued growth in its GMP (gross municipal product), although lower than last year, but growth nonetheless, which is better than the rest of the State. Grand Junction was ranked the 5th best performing small metro area in the nation.

The budget being presented does include the cost of increased petroleum as it is uncertain the lower prices will remain in 2009.

Councilmember Hill clarified that the slide indicating requested budget is not what was originally requested. City Manager Kadrich advised the requested budget is the City Manager's budget request, which is much less than the request originally brought forward.

Council President Palmer pointed out the amount of the budget being allocated toward capital. He noted the percentage being spent on capital has increased in the 2009 proposed budget.

City Manager Kadrich reviewed allocations by type and by department. A review of the number of personnel per thousand citizens showed that the present number is lower than the number in 1988.

A list of the major capital projects was displayed and included Riverside Parkway (29 Road), sewer projects, Ranchman's Ditch, other road projects, the emergency response training facility, vehicle replacements, local street improvements, contract street maintenance, a new computer aided dispatch system, and water projects.

Councilmember Coons asked about the local street improvements. City Manager Kadrach advised the original request was over \$4 million. The \$1.9 million proposed includes overlays and road repair but it does not keep up with the needed maintenance.

City Manager Kadrach then introduced Deputy Police Chief Troy Smith for the Police Department budget presentation. Deputy Police Chief Smith advised the Police Department's main focus is to address the meth problem and major crimes. There has been some success in the fight against meth.

A second goal is to continue the partnership with Mesa State College, Western Colorado Community College, and Mesa County Sheriff's Office for the police academy. There have been four academies and the academy has been a proven success.

The third goal is to increase staffing in the Communication Center. All emergency calls in Mesa County come to the 911 center except State Patrol calls which are forwarded to Montrose.

Mr. Smith then reviewed the operating budget and the reasons for the increase which include both fuel costs and increased technology.

Council President Palmer asked if the percentage of personnel costs are comparable to similar sized cities. Mr. Smith said it is right in the range for the size of this city.

Council President Palmer asked for additional information regarding technology. Deputy Chief Smith described the COPLink system that will soon be up and running which will connect law enforcement agencies across the State. They are replacing the Computer Aided Dispatch System and the Records Management System. There are also video cameras in all the patrol cars which has sped up convictions and reduced internal investigations with video corroboration.

Councilmember Coons asked about the radio transmitters. Mr. Smith described both the 900 MHz for data transfer and the 800 MHz for voice communication that are being installed and expanded. More expansion is planned and grant funds are being pursued for some of that cost.

Deputy Police Chief Smith introduced Rob Schoeber, Parks and Recreation Director.

Mr. Schoeber first listed the planned park improvements at Melrose and Canyon View Parks. He noted that the City is about 100 acres short in developed parks per national standards.

Another program being focused on is department efficiencies including the various irrigation systems and maintenance of parks and restrooms.

Other items planned for 2009 is a community partnership with the School District for the park by Chipeta Elementary, a partnership with the Weeminuche subdivision developer for a neighborhood park, and Staff development and training.

The bulk of the Parks and Recreation budget is personnel.

Council President Palmer asked if the cost of operating has stayed steady percentage-wise. Mr. Schoeber said there has likely been an increase due to the increase in fuel and other costs.

Tim Moore, Public Works and Planning Director, was next to present. Mr. Moore stated the opening of Riverside Parkway has decreased congestion on Highway 6 and 50. The other big project is the Ranchman's Ditch which is underway and will be completed in 2009. The Neighborhood Services Division has increased in its responsibilities, most notably the graffiti removal program and working on specific developments that may need additional coordination. The Comprehensive Plan has been a large effort in the Planning Division as well as a rewrite of the Zoning and Development Code. New software to assist in the tracking of development is planned for 2009.

One capital project to begin in 2009 is 29 Road as a continuation of the Riverside Parkway project. Other road projects include the F ½ Road Parkway and the Main Street redevelopment.

Council President Palmer asked for clarification on the 29 Road project for the audience. Mr. Moore described that it will connect D Road to North Avenue which will make 29 Road go through to Patterson Road.

Councilmember Coons asked him to confirm that it does not include the interchange with I-70. Mr. Moore said that is correct; that is anticipated to begin with the design phase in 2015.

Mr. Moore reviewed the breakdown of expenses noting no new personnel are planned for 2009.

Fire Chief Ken Watkins reviewed trends and challenges in the Fire Department. There have been increasing calls and response times. The Fire Department covers more than

just the City. The revenues have leveled and the ambulance service has added value to Department operations. This has also added personnel to the Department which can respond to all types of calls and which has helped in recruitment.

Council President Palmer asked if having more personnel has helped with capacity. Chief Watkins said yes and with mutual aid response too.

Chief Watkins then addressed the 2009 goals and opportunities for the department. A full-time EMS trainer is planned for 2009. Hiring personnel for in-house ambulance billing rather than using a contractor as well as bringing in non-emergent ambulance dispatch to the City's dispatch system.

The Fire Administration Office is working on relocation plans, likely to the Riverside Parkway office. An additional ladder truck and additional ambulances are planned for 2009.

A training facility is in the works partially funded by grant funding.

Personnel costs are 82% of the overall budget. A number of retirements are anticipated.

Councilmember Coons asked about the academies and noted the successful Public Safety Citizen Academies in 2008. She asked if there will be others. Chief Watkins said a spring academy is being discussed.

Councilmember Hill said he thought the Riverside Parkway office was to be sold. City Manager Kadrach stated it was discussed that it might be a temporary location for the Fire Department Administration and that evaluation is taking place so that it might be used for the Parks and Recreation Department or even an office for the Cemetery in the future.

Councilmember Hill thought the proceeds were built into the Riverside Parkway budget. City Manager Kadrach apologized, noting a facilities update should be brought to the City Council as there have been several changes.

Council President Palmer called a ten minute recess at 8:32 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 8:44 p.m.

Utilities and Street Systems Director Greg Trainor reviewed the proposed budget for his department. The bulk of his department is as a utility provider for water, sewer, trash, and irrigation. The increases in the various areas will be very low with the exception of

trash service which has high equipment maintenance and fuel costs. However, City trash service continues to be significantly lower than other providers.

In street maintenance, the proposed budget is tripling because the dollars for street construction has decreased proportionately.

Rates for utilities will increase but are still the lowest cost provider in the valley. Water rates are actually lower than they were ten years ago.

Two part-time workers will become full-time to help with street maintenance.

In the facilities arena, 46 buildings are maintained. A long range improvement plan for facilities will be presented to the City Council in 2009. An additional maintenance technician is requested for 2009.

Councilmember Hill noted the uniqueness of this department as it is comprised of several enterprise funds. He asked if gas stays down will that reap dividends next year a rate increase may not be needed next year? Mr. Trainor concurred but added that rates adjustments are based on a longer term view to ensure adequate fund balances. Councilmember Hill asked about the effect of possible savings with asphalt patching if those costs go down. Mr. Trainor said that would be evaluated with the management if cost savings are realized.

Councilmember Coons asked Mr. Trainor to address the department's plans for conservation efforts.

Mr. Trainor described two ongoing projects, converting methane at the wastewater plant to natural gas and additionally a major energy audit is underway for all City buildings. Those results will be evaluated and then discussed with the City Council. The cost of energy savings devices would likely be paid for by the savings and/or through the energy audit company.

Debbie Kovalik, Director of the newly formed Economic, Convention, and Visitor Services Department, described the different facets and responsibilities of the department. She listed a number of the programs planned for 2009. Maintaining the level of service of the Visitor Bureau is critical to maintain the number of visitors who come to the community and spend money which actually accounts for 38% of the sales tax collected.

Several new hotels are being planned for future construction in Grand Junction.

Ms. Kovalik then reviewed the events and programs at the Two Rivers Convention Center, the Avalon Theatre, and the food concessions at the various sports facilities.

In conclusion, the breakdown of the expense is greater on the operating side, higher than personnel costs.

Council President Palmer reviewed the events described by Ms. Kovalik for the Avalon Theatre which will include movie “events” that will be combined with other activities which will be some independent films and children’s films. There are many other ideas being discussed.

Deputy City Manager Rich Englehart then presented the Administration budget which includes seven different divisions that support the other departments.

Goals of the Administration Department are organizational sustainability and fostering community partnerships and public safety. Organizational sustainability includes the succession planning, the class and compensation study, the restructure of the health insurance plan, and the refinement of health rewards program.

Mr. Englehart reviewed a list of highlights for 2009 including the update to the Council Chambers and the City Council election.

Council President Palmer asked how retirements are funded. City Manager Kadrach clarified that the City pays nothing when someone retires; the majority of City employees have a separate retirement account. There is a small unfunded liability for old pension plans.

Councilmember Beckstein clarified that the City does contribute to the retirement accounts. City Manager Kadrach concurred noting that is considered part of the benefit package. The cost when retirements are anticipated in the public safety arena is overhires to get replacements fully trained before personnel retire.

City Manager Kadrach recapped the presentation. The proposed budget is ten percent less than last year’s budget. She reviewed fund balance and expressed the goal of sustaining existing service levels.

Council President Palmer asked about revenue projections. Ms. Kadrach said the projections are lower. Council President Palmer confirmed that the budget includes an increase in emergency reserves. Ms. Kadrach concurred.

There were no public comments.

The public hearing was closed at 9:26 p.m.

Ordinance No. 4310—An Ordinance Making Supplemental Appropriations to the 2008 Budget of the City of Grand Junction

Ordinance No. 4311—An Ordinance Appropriating Certain Sums of Money to Defray the Necessary Expenses and Liabilities of the City of Grand Junction, Colorado, the Downtown Development Authority, and the Ridges Metropolitan District for the Year Beginning January 1, 2009, and Ending December 31, 2009

Councilmember Coons moved to adopt Ordinance Nos. 4310 and 4311 and ordered them published. Councilmember Hill seconded the motion.

Councilmember Hill thanked City Manager Kadrach for the process and the way the improved process has helped the City Council be able to digest the amount of information included in the budget and budget process. Councilmember Hill made some observations; that the budget is a guideline and wisely the numbers are good regarding revenue projections and expenses, but this could change. Everyone has displayed the passion for the job even with the challenges. The organization is getting better due to the commitment of the Staff. There are some amazing challenges coming in the future but he is proud and privileged that the City is maximizing the dollars the City does have.

Councilmember Doody thanked City Manager Kadrach and the Staff for their conservatism in the 2009 Budget. Others talked about the City being an economic engine in the community and it is.

Council President Palmer addressed the viewing audience to have them understand that the Council has spent forty to fifty hours reviewing and discussing the proposed budget and it is a very responsible budget. He commended Staff for the hours and effort and he can defend the budget to anyone that it is responsible and right.

Motion carried by roll call vote.

City Manager Kadrach thanked the City Council and mentioned to the community her contact information. The plan for budget development next year is to form a Citizen's Budget Committee.

Councilmember Beckstein pointed out that involvement of citizens will result in a healthier community. She thanked City Manager Kadrach for pursuing that.

Set Mill Levies for Property Tax for Levy Year 2008

The resolutions set the mill levies of the City of Grand Junction (City), Ridges Metropolitan District #1, and the Downtown Development Authority (DDA). The City and DDA mill levies are for operations; the Ridges levy is for debt service only.

Financial Operations Manager Jodi Romero presented this item. She explained the request sets the mill levies for property tax collection. The City's mill levy has stayed flat. Also included are mill levies for the DDA and the Ridges Metropolitan debt reduction.

Councilmember Beckstein asked when the Ridges debt will be paid off. Ms. Romero answered 2013.

Ms. Romero noted that both DDA and the Ridges mill levies have also remained the same.

Resolution No. 146-08—A Resolution Levying Taxes for the Year 2008 in the City of Grand Junction, Colorado

Resolution No. 147-08—A Resolution Levying Taxes for the Year 2008 in the Downtown Development Authority

Resolution No. 148-08—A Resolution Levying Taxes for the Year 2008 in the Ridges Metropolitan District #1

Councilmember Hill moved to adopt Resolution Nos. 146-08, 147-08, and 148-08. Councilmember Thomason seconded the motion.

Councilmember Todd pointed out a resolution numbering discrepancy. The numbering was clarified.

Motion carried by roll call vote.

Non-Scheduled Citizens & Visitors

There were none.

Other Business

There was none.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Stephanie Tuin, MMC
City Clerk

