

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

April 20, 2011

The City Council of the City of Grand Junction convened into regular session on the 20th day of April 2011 at 8:39 p.m. in the City Auditorium. The purpose of the meeting was to fill the vacant District D seat. The regular meeting was noticed and convened following a public candidate's forum. Those present were Councilmembers Bruce Hill, Tom Kenyon, Gregg Palmer, Bill Pitts, Sam Susuras, and Council President Teresa Coons. Also present were City Manager Laurie Kadrich, City Attorney John Shaver, and City Clerk Stephanie Tuin.

Council President Coons called the meeting to order.

Councilmember Pitts nominated John Ballagh. Councilmember Susuras seconded the nomination.

Councilmember Palmer nominated Reford Theobold. Councilmember Kenyon seconded the nomination.

Councilmember Hill nominated Laura Luke. Councilmember Kenyon seconded the nomination.

Councilmember Coons asked if there were any other nominations.

There were none.

Councilmember Coons stated there were three candidates nominated: John Ballagh, Reford Theobold, and Laura Luke.

Councilmember Hill reiterated that the Candidate Forum was a wonderful reflection of the quality of people that are in this community. He thanked all six candidates for their interest. He said this community continues to be in good hands with people like this.

Councilmember Susuras agreed.

Councilmember Kenyon agreed and said he would be honored to serve with any of the candidates. He thanked them for going through the process.

Council President Coons reminded Council that it takes four votes to select the person to fill the District D seat.

A roll call vote was called and each candidate received two votes. Councilmembers Susuras and Pitts voted for John Ballagh. Councilmembers Palmer and Kenyon voted

for Reford Theobold. Councilmembers Hill and Council President Coons voted for Laura Luke.

Council President Coons asked the City Attorney for suggestions on how to proceed. City Attorney Shaver suggested the Council discuss the pros and cons of each candidate.

Councilmember Pitts said he really liked the candor and direct approach from John Ballagh. None of the candidates stood head and shoulders above the rest. Councilmember Pitts stated Mr. Ballagh is familiar with the valley and his approach provides a new and fresh perspective.

Councilmember Hill said he nominated Laura Luke from a perspective of diversity and he was impressed with her interest with the Master Panel Survey group. He noted that Ms. Luke brings the tools that previous Councilmember Beckstein had which were financial and accounting backgrounds.

Councilmember Palmer said he did ask the two Council-elects and got their opinion. His opinion was based on the candidate's way of expressing and articulating. His deference is for experience since with the three seasoned Councilmembers leaving, 22 years of experience are leaving the Council. Mr. Theobold has the basic understanding and has the background. He has institutional memory.

Councilmember Kenyon stated a number of candidates said a number of times "I agree with Reford". Mr. Theobold has experience and is well-thought of in the community.

Councilmember Susuras said he thought all of the candidates did very well and he would be happy to serve with any of them. He said his vote will stay with Mr. Ballagh.

Council President Coons agreed with Ms. Luke having fiscal experience, and she too would like to see diversity on the Council. Without another women on the Council, the community isn't accurately represented by the sitting Council.

Councilmember Pitts said he objects to Council President Coons favoring Ms. Luke because she wants another woman on the Council. Council President Coons responded that was not what she said clarifying that the Council should reflect the make-up of the community.

Council President Coons asked the City Attorney for direction on breaking the tie. City Attorney Shaver said they could decide by lot such as flipping a coin, or continue to deliberate. He suggested the Council be polled on their top two. That vote was taken by roll call and John Ballagh and Laura Luke were the top two choices. Councilmember Susuras voted for John Ballagh and Reford Theobold, Councilmember Hill voted for John Ballagh and Laura Luke, Councilmember Kenyon voted for John Ballagh and Reford Theobold, Councilmember Palmer voted for Reford Theobold and Laura Luke, and Council President Coons voted for John Ballagh and Laura Luke.

Council President Coons then called a roll call vote on the two candidates and another tie was the result. Councilmembers Susuras, Kenyon, and Pitts voted for John Ballagh. Councilmembers Hill, Palmer, and Council President Coons voted for Laura Luke.

Councilmember Palmer asked if the Council-elects should be allowed to give some input.

Councilmember Kenyon suggested that each of the two Council-elects be given an opportunity to address the City Council.

City Attorney Shaver said they are not sworn in so he would advise against it.

Councilmember Kenyon said he would like to hear what they have to say.

Council President Coons asked if that is in addition to asking the candidates to address the City Council.

Councilmember Hill said he thinks this is a an appropriate opportunity for the Council candidates to give closing summaries in order for those voting to have more clarity on their choice.

City Manager Kadrich suggested that the candidates offer a closing statement.

Councilmember Pitts concurred with City Manager Kadrich.

Council President Coons asked John Ballagh to come forward.

Mr. Ballagh said he stood and was elected six times on the Clifton Water District. He also served on a State Board. He has been in an elected position and has also served on elected board. In consideration of both of those situations, one being an enterprise fund and one being supported by a mill levy, he has the experience and would not need a lot of startup time. He has also served on Planning Commissions.

Laura Luke said experience comes in a lot of different forms. She knows what it is like to compete with other candidates and land the position. She knows what it means to develop partnerships in the community. Experience is very important and she has experience in many areas. Together as a team they can conquer great things. She comes with a fresh perspective. She will have a steep learning curve but she comes with ability to learn. She has a very strong stake here. There are a lot of energy issues and she has the experience to talk intelligently on those issues.

Council-elect Bennett Boeschenstein came forward and expressed his appreciation to the process and to all the candidates. He has worked with John Ballagh for thirty years and he has a lot of respect for him. He lauded a number of things Mr. Ballagh has accomplished. However, his vote goes to Laura Luke. He thought she did a wonderful job with the questions she was asked.

Council-elect Jim Doody complimented all the candidates. He said he read Laura Luke's application five or six times and he could feel the energy. Her background reminded him of former Councilmember Beckstein. He has known John Ballagh for about six years with the 5-2-1 Drainage District and respects him. However, he will support Laura Luke.

Council President Coons then called for another roll call vote. Laura Luke received five votes, John Ballagh received one vote. Councilmembers Hill, Kenyon, Palmer, Pitts and Council President Coons voted for Laura Luke. Councilmember Susuras voted for John Ballagh. Laura Luke was duly elected by the City Council.

Council President Coons advised that the oath of office to newly elected District D Representative Laura Luke, who was selected, will be given along with the newly elected Councilmembers Boeschenstein and Doody on May 2nd at 10:00 a.m.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:16 p.m.

Stephanie Tuin, MMC
City Clerk