

**GRAND JUNCTION
CITY COUNCIL ADDITIONAL WORKSHOP
SUMMARY**

August 4, 2003

The City Council of the City of Grand Junction, Colorado met on Monday, August 4, 2003 at 11:30 a.m. at Two Rivers Convention Center, 159 Main Street in the Plateau Room to discuss workshop items. Those present were Cindy Enos-Martinez, Bruce Hill, Dennis Kirtland, Bill McCurry, Gregg Palmer and President of the Council Pro Tem Harry Butler. President of the Council Jim Spehar was absent.

Summaries and action on the following topics:

1. **City of Grand Junction Hiring Practices:** City Manager Kelly Arnold opened the meeting by reminding Council that a request for this discussion came out of the City Council retreat. Administrative Services Director Ron Lappi then introduced Human Resources Manager Claudia Hazelhurst and Personnel Analyst Laura Conant.

Ms. Hazelhurst summarized the highlights of the report provided. She differentiated between the way the City recruits applicants versus hiring practices. She emphasized that the City is an Equal Opportunity Employer and the goal is to keep the workforce in line with the community makeup. She detailed the recruitment contacts made by the division that specialize in the referral of minorities, females and other protected groups. The use of the internet has also allowed a much broader base of applicants.

Council President Pro Tem Butler inquired how many applicants from those specific groups have been hired. Ms. Hazelhurst explained that although recruiting can be targeted, the hiring cannot, all things must be equal. Each applicant is asked about how they heard about the job but they are not required to divulge the information. However, some from those recruitments have been hired as evidenced by the information provided.

Councilmember Palmer asked if the work force is close to the community balance. Ms. Hazelhurst said that mix changes so it is a moving target but the goal is to get closer. They have found that the majority of the minority and protected groups are found in the labor and clerical trades rather than in the professional classifications. That is why the plan is to step up the educational opportunities, which there are many now. Ms. Hazelhurst highlighted the current educational reimbursement program and the number of training classes available through the City. Even with increased educational opportunities, the training takes time. Then

keeping the person in this market once they have the education is another challenge. That is why the training coordinator is developing career ladders. Human Resources will also be analyzing the census data to determine what talent is not being tapped. Professional development of the existing workforce may be more successful than bringing in outside candidates. Those already living here tend to stay.

Action summary: The Council accepted the information as reported.

The City Council then moved to the Kannah Room for the next topic. The meeting came to order at 12:20 p.m.

2. **Riverside Bypass Update:** City Manager Kelly Arnold opened the meeting. City Council gave staff direction to move forward with this project at their retreat. That included pursuing bonding.

The consulting team of Carter Burgess was introduced. They will be guiding the City through the 1601 Policy Directive Process for the interchange at 5th Street (Highway 50). The team included Jay Basher, Bob Sakaguchi, who was involved in the original drafting of the 1601 policy directive for CDOT, Tim Gambrel, a previous CDOT employee who has been involved in processing over 500 NEPA documents, and Craig Gaskill who is experienced in design, transportation planning and environmental issues. Public Works Director Mark Relph spoke to Carter Burgess' experience with the 1601 process specifically. Jay Basher, the team leader, advised that the group is experienced with a significant number of locally driven projects, not just CDOT requests.

Councilmember Enos-Martinez expressed that the work of the Design Action Committee (DAC) should be kept in mind and the members of that group be kept in the loop. Mr. Relph responded that the consultants have been told that.

The consulting team will be evaluating the work accomplished thus far by the DAC and determining what items still need to be completed.

Ron Lappi, Administrative Services Director, advised that staff was also asked at the Council retreat to seek out banking firms to look into bonding for this project. The City received a joint proposal from two very prominent Colorado firms, Steve Jeffers from George K Baum, and Russ Caldwell from Kirkpatrick-Pettis. Mr. Lappi introduced both men.

Mr. Caldwell distributed a handout. He talked about their experience in how the financing can be organized for the community and how it can be presented to the community. He mentioned things like what the project is called as being critical.

Although interest rates have gone up dramatically in the last few weeks, rates are still most favorable for municipalities and from the standpoint of timing, will be favorable over the next few months. He suggested the City use a type of borrowing the City has not really used. The City has an A+ credit rating, a vibrant economy, and high credit quality, so it can borrow under favorable conditions. Three methods are available: general obligation bonds, general fund revenue bonds, and sales tax revenue bonds. The two banking professionals are recommending a general fund revenue bond because it can be done with no tax increase, can issue less, and is used mostly by home rule cities. Under TABOR, certain language has to go on the ballot and, according to the City's bond attorney, this type of question is allowed "without any increase in existing taxes or imposing any new taxes". That makes it clear there will be no tax increase to the voters. Because of the construction time restraints by law, a follow-up (a trailer) bond issue, will be issued later but the vote will be for the entire amount to be issued. Mr. Lappi clarified that because of an IRS requirement that 85% of the spending must occur within three years, and this is a six-year project, two issues will have to occur. It is still the intent to have general fund revenue pay back with sales tax.

Chamber Director Diane Schwenke expressed that if all the funding is being asked for, it must be clear that it is for the entire project.

Steve Jeffers of George K. Baum said with interest rates being so low it really is a choice of "pay as you go" taking 20 years or bond for it and complete it in 6 years. Either uses the same amount of revenue (about 5 to 6 million per year). He and Mr. Caldwell will be actively involved in educating the public and informing the public rather than relying on just the community or a group like the DAC. Once the question is certified to the ballot, the City cannot spend any money. Therefore, the bankers' public policy consultants will form a Political Action Committee, file with the State, define strategies and develop a method and a slogan such as "6 or 20" (years). There will be community outreach, targeted mailings, subcommittees, an overall steering committee, fund raising, and other activities to encourage voters. They will work on identifying and targeting the voting audience.

Councilmember Palmer asked about the campaign period. Mr. Jeffers said at least two months. They already have the nucleus for the committee. With mail ballots going out mid October, there is a long window of voting. One strategy is to have a mass mailing go out the same day as the ballots go out.

Mr. Caldwell said he has been involved in hundreds of elections. He felt there is plenty of time to execute the campaign but the label of the project

is critical since it will be a crowded ballot. Mr. Jeffers added the advantage is that at this point they do not have to define the need or cost aspects; it is a massive transportation project that is already going to happen – either in twenty years section by section or in six to seven years by financing it. Councilmember Palmer asked if it would be more difficult to sell due to the 1601 process being incomplete. Mr. Jeffers answered that interchange is just one component, one segment to be developed and should not affect the campaign.

Other points mentioned: clearly explain the area included in this project, using a graphic, advise this will not preclude other projects, the amount of funds needed for the campaign, if not successful, can it go back on the ballot next time, and incorporating a de-brucing question along with this question.

Loren Dake, a DAC member, said he needs to know the alignment before supporting the question. If the roadway is to go through Los Colonias, he will mount a campaign against the project.

Action summary: Staff will bring a ballot question to the City Council meeting on September 3rd for consideration. An informational piece is being mailed out to all utility customers; the name will be changed to convey a larger community project. Whether a de-brucing question will be included has not been determined. The Chamber supports the bond question and Ms. Schwenke will approach her executive committee about the campaign committee. Mr. John Elmer, Chair of the DAC, expressed an interest in being involved in the campaign. Over the next thirty days, the community reaction will be evaluated. The 1601 process will go forward.

The meeting adjourned at 1:40p.m.