

**GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL  
WORKSHOP SUMMARY  
January 15, 2007**

The City Council of the City of Grand Junction, Colorado met on Monday, January 15, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. in the City Hall Auditorium to discuss workshop items. Those present were Councilmembers Bonnie Beckstein, Teresa Coons, Bruce Hill, Gregg Palmer, Jim Spehar, and Council President Jim Doody. Absent was Councilmember Doug Thomason.

**Summaries and action on the following topics:**

- 1. APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:** The City Clerk updated the City Council on the status of the current vacancies. City Clerk Stephanie Tuin advised that she has distributed applications for the Historic Preservation Board vacancies and asked that Councilmembers respond with their recommendations to her. She said the response was low for the Commission on Arts and Culture so those openings will be readvertised.

**Action Summary:** The City Council agreed with the recommendation and will respond on Historic Preservation Board.

- 2. GRAND VALLEY TRANSIT - LONG TERM FUNDING ALTERNATIVES:** Council discussed the current and long term funding options for the Grand Valley Transit (GVT) system. Assistant Public Works & Utilities Director Tim Moore reviewed the current funding mechanisms for the Grand Valley Transit. He pointed out that Councilmember Beckstein is the City Council representative on GVRTC. He said there has been a discussion for an alternate means of funds for the GVT long term. There was a discussion on how the City went from the initial \$50,000 per year contribution to the current level of funding.

Councilmember Hill noted that the last funding resolution stated that the funding would be for five years, until 2009.

Councilmember Spehar agreed and said that an independent source is still the preference and the current method of funding is a recipe for mediocrity. He referenced the library's creation of a separate district years ago as an example of an entity becoming independent.

Councilmember Coons said the committee seems to want to continue along the same path.

Councilmember Beckstein agreed and said at the retreat the others on the committee seemed to want to continue with the same funding option. Mr. Moore added the possibility of other tax entities coming up in the future, i.e., the Drainage Authority and said the committee was hesitant to ask for another tax.

Councilmember Spehar pointed out that there are other funding options besides sales and property taxes and said those should be looked at.

Mr. Moore advised that the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) will be updating their plan to 2035. That will provide an opportunity to use those consultants working on that update to get more citizen input.

Councilmember Palmer agreed that from the citizen input that Council has received through the Strategic Plan update, the transit system is important. He said the next step would be to find out if it is important enough to fund and at what level.

Councilmember Spehar voiced his concern that a large percentage of the funding is federal and that can be very tenuous.

Tom Fisher, Director of the Regional Transportation Planning Office, appreciated the discussion and looks forward to the long term planning efforts. He said the challenge is to bring the other communities along to understand Grand Junction's position.

Councilmember Spehar said that might be a good topic to discuss at the next municipalities get-together.

It was pointed out that Regional Transportation Authorities (RTA) do not have to be just a bus service, that it can cover many systems from fiber optic lines to trails.

**Action Summary:** The City Council gave the direction to Mr. Moore, Councilmember Beckstein, and Mr. Fisher that alternative funding need to be pursued.

3. **GRAND JUNCTION ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP REQUEST:** An infrastructure grant request in the amount of \$300,000 was presented by the Grand Junction Economic Partnership (GJEP) for a business that intends to relocate to a new location in the Bookcliff Technology Park. Assistant to the City Manager Sheryl Trent reviewed this item and introduced GJEP Executive Director Ann Driggers. Ms. Driggers introduced officials from Leitner-Poma and GJEP. She described what the company manufactures and the acquisition of Prinoth Group that makes grooming equipment. She said all equipment manufactured at the Grand Junction site will be exported outside the County. Ms. Driggers said IDI can develop the parcel and then transfer ownership to Leitner-Poma. She said the request is to construct the infrastructure and develop the parcel. Ms. Driggers said within five years the company will create 100 new jobs at an average of 138% of Mesa County's average wage and identified a number of intangible benefits. She said the State of Colorado has approved funding of \$300,000 for the infrastructure and they will also be approaching Mesa County Commissioners for a request of \$300,000. Ms. Driggers said a performance agreement will be executed.

Councilmember Hill, a board member of GJEP, noted that the citizen surveys indicated that bringing higher paying jobs into the community is a high priority and said this is also a good fit for the City of Grand Junction.

Councilmember Palmer listed a number of goals and policies that the request would meet.

Councilmember Coons, the City's Colorado Associations of Ski Towns (C.A.S.T.) representative, pointed out that once up and running, hosting a C.A.S.T. meeting would be a good idea. She asked why the request is for cash. Ms. Driggers deferred to Ms. Trent. Ms. Trent advised that the City does not have the staff to do such a construction project and said the City contracts out for those larger projects. Ms. Trent then asked that Council place this item on the Wednesday night's agenda for formal approval.

Administrative Services and Finance Director Ron Lappi advised that the entire amount can be taken out of the Economic Development Fund. He said some funds were carried forward from last year and said there was some concern that the request was for infrastructure but nevertheless the Council was supportive.

**Action Summary:** Staff was directed to place the request on the Wednesday agenda for formal action.

4. **WESTERN COLORADO BOTANICAL GARDENS:** City Staff will present additional options for assistance to the Botanical Gardens. City Manager David Varley advised that the Gardens asked for the matter be continued so they can have representatives from the Riverfront Commission present.

Councilmember Hill suggested that Council take this opportunity to discuss it among themselves.

Councilmember Palmer agreed that they could have a chance to have a philosophical discussion.

Councilmember Hill recalled years previous where a number of non-profits were asking for funds and said it was called outside funding at that time. He said the City Council decided that such funding was not their role. He said his only interest is to purchase the real property.

Councilmember Spehar agreed and he does not see a City role in funding operations.

Councilmember Coons asked if relieved of that debt, would that allow them to stay in operation. Mr. Varley said Staff can bring that information back to Council but the bottom line is how they use the funds remaining after the debt is paid off.

Councilmember Palmer agreed and said that he is opposed to funding operations. He feels having control over the entire Gardens property would be a benefit to the City, although he hopes the Gardens are able to make it with the City's assistance.

Council President Doody agreed, stating he hopes that the Gardens make it.

Mr. Varley advised that Staff has numbers of comparable property sales that can be used.

Councilmember Hill said it is clear what the Council is willing to do so unless the Gardens are interested in that kind of help, there are no other options.

**Action Summary:** Staff was directed to negotiate that option with the Botanical Gardens, no other options that include operations should be considered.

## **ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 8:59 p.m.