

**GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL
WORKSHOP SUMMARY
April 2, 2007**

The City Council of the City of Grand Junction, Colorado met on Monday, April 2, 2007 at 7:03 p.m. in the City Hall Auditorium to discuss workshop items. Those present were Councilmembers Bonnie Beckstein, Teresa Coons, Gregg Palmer, Jim Spehar, Doug Thomason, and Council President Jim Doody. Absent was Councilmember Bruce Hill.

Summaries and action on the following topics:

1. **UPDATE ON GRAND VALLEY TRANSIT MODEL:** Public Works and Planning Director Tim Moore distributed a report and highlighted the contents. The significant items are the new items being considered in the 2035 model. The model is based on the current land use plan. The fact that the City is beginning a Comprehensive Plan process which may impact land use designations will impact the congestion. Other assumptions include the completion of the Riverside Parkway, the completion of the 29 Road connection to I-70 and others.

Councilmember Spehar pointed out that some of the assumptions are dependent on State funding for State road systems and that the traffic would also be impacted less if some shopping is located on the east end of the valley.

Action summary: City Council voiced concern over the dramatic change in levels of service just in the five years from the 2030 model and the 2035 model and were anxious to have additional discussion on this process so they proposed scheduling a discussion at the May 14th workshop.

2. **UPDATE ON THE STATE RIVER BASIN ROUNDTABLE:** Greg Trainor, Utility and Streets Director, gave a history on the creation of the various Basin Roundtables and the associated laws (Statewide Water Initiative). Studies show a 99% increase in population in the Colorado River Basin. That will leave a tremendous gap in the water supply. The population increase will require two additional large reservoirs to be constructed to fill the gap. There are a few uses that are not even being considered in that study nor is drought considered. These other uses (non-consumptive use and energy uses) and the drought issue is being studied by the Colorado River Roundtable. The impact will be on a number of sources but significant on agricultural uses, about 16,000 acres of agricultural land is estimated to be lost in the next twenty years. Mr. Trainor outlined the many ways the City is involved in the water issues statewide.

Councilmember Palmer asked about conservation efforts that may reduce the gap. Mr. Trainor responded that the gap estimated assumes Stage 1 conservation efforts.

Councilmember Spehar commended the efforts to study the energy industries water needs. He thought there are a number of senior water rights held by the energy companies and if those rights were called, it would have a significant impact on the existing water supply. Mr. Trainor said that is true and those rights will be looked at. The energy study is jointly with the Yampa River Roundtable

and those water rights and what their effect will have if exercised will be included in the study. The companies holding those rights have continued to show their due diligence to retain those rights. City Attorney Shaver added that due diligence is an application and anyone can object to such application. The companies can include monies spent to develop the future use on their application but that can be challenged.

Mr. Trainor then deferred to Dan Vanover, Water Supply Superintendent, for the discussion on the Gunnison Basin. Mr. Vanover briefly described his experience in working with the Gunnison Basin Roundtable. The thought in the Gunnison Basin is that they have excess water. The Roundtable has managed to get thought dispelled since the studies are not complete. Much of his time on this group has been educational. A subcommittee has been formed to seek funding. There are 32 people on the Roundtable.

Councilmember Coons asked if there is a process where a representative from each Roundtable gets together. Mr. Vanover said a four Roundtable meeting is scheduled in Montrose for June 18th.

Mr. Vanover said he thought the water supply outlook for 2007 will be at 68% of normal. There is a one-year supply in the reservoirs. Grand Junction is very fortunate.

Councilmember Spehar commended the forefathers who acquired and developed the rights the City owns. However, it is hard to engender a conservation effort when there is such a supply. He praised Mr. Vanover's participation on the Gunnison Roundtable.

Action summary: The City Council was appreciative of the report.

3. **POLICY ON FIRE BAN FOR 2007:** City Manager David Varley advised City Council the reason for this coming forward. Jim Bright, Interim Fire Chief, presented recommendations for a policy on fire bans. He noted there is not a formal policy and he explained what usually happens. The City usually follows suit with the Mesa County Sheriff's Office. There has been a fire ban ten of the last thirteen years. Mr. Bright stated that there are two open burning seasons in the City, spring and fall. On occasion, there is a fire ban during those burn seasons. Usually the fire ban is during the summer season, over the 4th of July. The question is whether a policy should be put into place rather than have the issue discussed every year. Another issue is that the City Fire Department responds to the Rural Fire Protection District where it is difficult because one side of the street might be under ban and the other is not.

Councilmember Palmer advised that happens out in the eastern part of the valley as well.

It is the Interim Chief's recommendation to have a policy that follows the County's policy.

Councilmember Coons asked if during a Statewide Ban, if it applies to public displays of fireworks. Chief Bright said all bans exempt the public firework displays; it only applies to private displays. Outdoor cooking fires in a grill are also allowed.

Councilmember Spehar agreed to consistency between the City and the County.

Councilmember Coons agreed, especially in light of the urbanization.

Councilmember Beckstein asked about the fireworks that are sold and then days before the 4th of July, a fire ban is put in place. She believes that if a fire ban is in place, that firework sales should be banned. This has been a problem in the past and the City needs to be more consistent. Chief Bright agreed, however the permits for the firework stands are usually issued in mid June.

Councilmember Palmer noted that the fireworks can still be shot off at other times of the year. If they are bought and then a fire ban is put into place, they could be used at a later date.

Council President Doody questioned why the Mesa County Sheriff's Office should dictate to the City, the Fire Chief should be the one to decide for the City.

Councilmember Coons agreed but the policy is to guide and govern the Fire Chief's decision.

Councilmember Spehar still urged the consistent policy.

Council President Doody said he would support a policy from the Fire Chief.

Councilmember Palmer deferred to the Interim Chief's recommendation.

Councilmember Spehar suggested a formal action at a Wednesday meeting.

Action summary: The direction was to bring a recommendation before City Council on the policy for formal action on Wednesday, April 4th.

Councilmember Palmer commended Interim Chief Bright on his work, stepping up and doing what needed to be done for the Fire Department.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 8:44 p.m.