

## COUNCIL MINUTES

May 21, 2007

The City Council of the City of Mesa met in a Study Session in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on May 21, 2007 at 4:30 p.m.

### COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Keno Hawker  
Rex Griswold  
Kyle Jones  
Tom Rawles  
Scott Somers  
Claudia Walters  
Mike Whalen

### COUNCIL ABSENT

None

### OFFICERS PRESENT

Christopher Brady  
Debbie Spinner  
Michael Claspell

(Councilmember Whalen participated in the meeting through the use of telephonic equipment.)

### 1. Review items on the agenda for the May 21, 2007 Regular Council meeting.

All of the items on the agenda were reviewed among Council and staff and the following was noted:

Conflicts of interest declared: 6a and 6b (Hawker), (Whalen); 9g (Hawker); 11d and 14 (Walters)

Items deleted from the consent agenda: 3a, 3b, 15i

Items removed from the consent agenda: None

Items added to the consent agenda: 11g

### 2. Hear a presentation, discuss and provide direction on transit budget issues.

Transportation Department Director Jeff Martin referred to a PowerPoint presentation (available for review in the City Clerk's Office) and reported that in March and April of this year, staff discussed possible transit service cuts and also provided an overview of the transit budget. He explained that today, staff is prepared to respond to questions the Council may have and also present various transit service options.

Mr. Martin reviewed the following alternatives for Council consideration (previously presented on March 22, 2007):

- 1. Make no transit cuts in FY 2007/2008.**
- 2A. Eliminate Saturday bus and Dial-A-Ride (DAR) service. (Beginning 9/01/07)**
- 2B. Eliminate Saturday bus service only.**
- 3. Implement Federal minimum requirements for DAR service.**

Mr. Martin indicated that relative to Alternative 1, Mesa would fund the \$1 million FY 2007/2008 DAR shortfall with one-time monies and explained that in FY 2008/2009, Proposition 400 monies would fund the program. He said that in 2008, regional funds would pay for the cost of Route #61 (Southern Avenue) and Route #96 (Dobson Road).

Mr. Martin reported that with the implementation of Alternative 2A, the City would experience a cost savings of \$0.95 million (bus service) and \$0.43 million (DAR service). He stated that the elimination of such services would impact an estimated 6,000 riders, as well as bus routes serving Tempe, Chandler and Gilbert. Mr. Martin also commented that the required public input process could be implemented in September 2007. He added that the services could possibly be restored in July 2008 with additional regional funding.

Mr. Martin advised that implementation of Alternative 2B would result in a cost savings to the City of \$.95 million annually and impact riders in a similar manner as Alternative 2A.

Mr. Martin further commented that Alternative 3 would only serve Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) qualified citizens living within three-quarters of a mile of existing bus routes. He explained that such an option would result in an annual cost savings to the City of approximately \$400,000. Mr. Martin also stated that this option would require a public input process, which could be implemented by September 2007. He added that the Regional Public Transportation Authority (RPTA) is currently conducting a Regional Paratransit Study and Strategic Development Plan and said that the study includes a review of Mesa's current DAR program.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that Mesa is responsible for providing DAR service to County island residents who live within three-quarters of a mile of existing bus routes; that Mesa achieved a 51% DAR budget reduction from FY 2004/2005 to FY 2006/2007; that municipalities receiving Proposition 400 monies are allocated seven and a half percent of such funds for DAR services; that if a community exceeds that amount, the overage becomes the responsibility of the local jurisdiction; and that it would take approximately six months for staff to obtain sufficient data to determine if the funding of transit services (Alternative 1) is within budget or experiencing a shortfall.

Councilmember Whalen expressed support for Alternative 1.

Mayor Hawker stated he would challenge the assumption that Alternative 1 would be a one-time only expenditure and that Proposition 400 monies would be sufficient to meet Mesa's DAR costs. He noted that he would prefer Alternative 3 and encouraged those individuals who wish to use DAR services to live in neighborhoods adjacent to bus routes.

Councilmember Rawles concurred with Mayor Hawker's comments and inquired what City projects and programs might have been funded if staff had not earmarked \$1 million to offset the DAR program shortfall. He commented that Mesa taxpayers are being asked to fund the DAR

program which, in his opinion, is not an appropriate function of government. Councilmember Rawles expressed support for Alternatives 2A or 2B.

Vice Mayor Walters proposed an Alternative 1B, which would consist not only of Alternative 1, but also include the stipulation that if Mesa experienced a funding shortfall with regard to transit services, then Alternative 3 should be considered.

Councilmember Somers expressed support for Alternative 1. He commented that there are several retirement communities in his district in which neither bus service nor DAR is available. Councilmember Somers stated that if DAR and other transportation options are reduced, he could foresee other City services (i.e., EMS and Fire) responding to various health-related calls in those areas. He also directed that staff update the Council in six months regarding the status of Mesa's transit services.

Councilmember Griswold stated that he would support Alternative 1 for one year, but commented that if the transit program begins to experience a budget shortfall, he would expect staff to promptly apprise the Council of that fact. He also encouraged seniors and the disabled to utilize other cost effective transportation options (i.e., Coupons for Cabs, bus fare discounts).

City Manager Christopher Brady assured the Council that staff would monitor the trends and usage with regard to DAR service and notify the Council of any necessary modifications to the program.

Vice Mayor Walters voiced concern that each year as the region funds more City bus routes, the additional cost to provide DAR service would continue to grow. She acknowledged that staff and the RPTA continue to address the riders' qualifications for ADA certification, but stated that funding for such services must be addressed at the Federal level and not just locally.

Councilmember Jones commented that if DAR continues to expand at its current rate, it might be necessary for the City to eliminate the program due to a lack of funding. He urged DAR users to monitor their fellow riders regarding who might be candidates for alternative modes of transportation.

Mayor Hawker stated that a majority of the Council is supportive of Alternative 1 and directed that staff proceed to fund the \$1 million FY 2007/08 DAR shortfall. He also expressed appreciation to the citizens present in the audience for their courtesy during the presentation.

3. Hear reports on meetings and/or conferences attended.

Councilmember Rawles noted that at a recent Mesa United Way Awards Luncheon, he made a joke regarding City of Mesa employees. He commented that he wished to state publicly that he has always been impressed with the competency and dedication of this organization's employees and added that his comments were in no way meant to offend anyone.

Vice Mayor Walters:	Red Mountain Freeway tour with Pulice Construction
Mayor Hawker:	National League of Cities' Finance Sub-Committee Meeting
Councilmember Somers:	Valley Metro Board of Directors Meeting

4. Scheduling of meetings and general information.

City Manager Christopher Brady stated that the meeting schedule is as follows:

Thursday, May 24, 2007, 7:30 a.m. – Study Session

Thursday, May 31, 2007, 7:30 a.m. – Study Session

Monday, June 4, 2007, 3:00 p.m. – Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Meeting

Monday, June 4, 2007, TBA – Study Session

Monday, June 4, 2007, 5:45 p.m. – Regular Council Meeting

Monday, June 25, 2007, TBA – Study Session

Monday, June 25, 2007, 5:45 p.m. – Regular Council Meeting

Mr. Brady also reported that City of Mesa employees were recognized at the Mesa United Way luncheon for their generous contributions to the organization.

5. Prescheduled public opinion appearances.

- a. Hear from Richard Knox on peak oil.

Richard Knox, a Mesa resident, voiced a series of concerns regarding the world's increased oil consumption, oil prices and the fact that oil is a finite resource.

- b. Hear from Mark Feliz regarding potential public transit and Dial-A-Ride cuts.

Mark Feliz, a representative of the National Federation of the Blind (NFB), addressed the Council and stated that his organization would be happy to assist the City of Mesa in making Dial-A-Ride a more a more efficient and cost-effective program.

6. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Study Session adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

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KENO HAWKER, MAYOR

ATTEST:

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BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Study Session of the City Council of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of May 2007. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

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BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK

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