

COUNCIL MINUTES

November 7, 1996

The City Council of the City of Mesa met in a Policy Session in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on November 7, 1996 at 4:01 p.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Wayne Brown
Pat Gilbert
John Giles
Dennis Kavanaugh
Joan Payne
Wayne Pomeroy
Jim Stapley

COUNCIL ABSENT

None

STAFF PRESENT

C.K. Luster
Wayne Balmer
Cindy Barris
Fred Conway
Jack Friedline
Mike Hutchinson
Barbara Jones
Harry Kent
Tom Mattingly
Eric Norenberg
Ruth Ann Norris
John Oliver

STAFF PRESENT (CONT.)

Ellen Pence
Bill Petrie
Bryan Raines
Tom Remes
Denise Samuel
Kevin Snow
Jamie Warner
Mindy White
Ralph Wisz
Larry Woolf
Debbie Vickman

1. Deleted.

2. Discuss and consider preparation of the 1996-97 budget.

Mayor Brown outlined a proposal for Council consideration relative to the FY1996-97 budget whereby funding would be allocated by Council initially in the budgeting process for special projects, thereby eliminating the need to reduce final department budget requests to accommodate such projects. Mayor Brown stated that projects could involve issues such as downtown redevelopment, library expansion, transit development, public safety increases, etc. and that Council would need to determine the amount of funding to be allocated.

City Manager Charles Luster spoke concerning the role of fund balances and contingency funds in the preparation of the budget. Mr. Luster distributed information to Council delineating ending fund balances over the previous ten years. Mr. Luster noted the decrease from FY1994-95 to FY1995-96 and commented that an additional decline is anticipated for FY1996-97.

Budget Director Jamie Warner provided examples to assist in clarifying issues of fund balances and contingency funds. Mr. Warner stated that fund balances consist of the collection of unobligated revenue at the beginning of a fiscal year, revenues received during the fiscal year, and expenses paid in the same fiscal year. Mr. Warner advised that while an ending fund

balance of zero is budgeted each year, an actual ending fund balance is realized when revenues are greater than projected and/or expenses are less than projected.

Council and staff discussed liquidity/cash balances, encumbrances, debt service, projected revenue, and factors affecting bond ratings, such as fund balance trends and stability of the revenue base. In response to a question from Vice Mayor Gilbert, Mr. Warner and Assistant Finance Director Larry Woolf indicated that in the event of significant computer failure, the City could continue to operate for approximately two months but said that fund balances are designed for the long term to provide protection during economic downturns.

Mr. Luster proposed that the City strive to maintain minimum fund balances of \$30 million for the next fiscal year, of which \$15 million would be appropriated as contingency funds.

Mr. Warner explained that contingency funds are reserve appropriations available for unexpected expenditures that may occur during a fiscal year. Mr. Warner stated that contingency funds must be appropriated each year to provide legal authority to pay unanticipated expenses for the City.

Vice Mayor Gilbert requested a breakdown by department of the increase in expenses over the past five years.

Mayor Brown reiterated his proposed change to the budget process for the upcoming fiscal year and requested that Councilmembers recommend an allocation amount by the end of November.

3. Discuss and consider providing video origination capability in the lower level meeting room in the Council Chambers.

Executive Assistant Ellen Pence reviewed a recent suggestion to broadcast Study Sessions, Policy Sessions, and Committee meetings on Mesa Channel 11. Ms. Pence outlined two options to televise the additional meetings. Ms. Pence advised that if the meetings were held in the upper Council Chambers, the estimated cost to broadcast would be \$24,800 (based on the number of 1995-96 meeting hours multiplied by the average cost of \$200 per hour presently required to broadcast Regular Council Meetings). Ms. Pence reported that if the meetings were held in the lower Council Chambers, additional costs of approximately \$100,000 would be incurred to retrofit the room, purchase cameras, upgrade lighting/microphones, etc.

Vice Mayor Gilbert spoke in favor of televising all City meetings and suggested potential changes to improve the quality of broadcasting for both the television and meeting audiences (such as split screens showing zoning case information along with site displays).

Mayor Brown expressed agreement with Vice Mayor Gilbert's recommendation concerning video enhancements.

Councilmember Kavanaugh advised that many citizens are unable to attend meetings and commented that the City should make every effort to provide accessibility to the public. Councilmember Kavanaugh stated appreciation for recent improvements made to the Channel 11 format.

Councilmember Giles expressed concern that televising may hinder dialogue among Council, staff, and citizens. Councilmember Giles said that he does not support retrofitting the lower Council Chambers.

Mayor Brown noted that consent agenda items are reviewed at Study Sessions and that televising such meetings would allow the public to better understand decisions made at Regular Council Meetings.

Councilmember Payne said that she does not oppose technological advancements but encouraged Council to carefully consider the most appropriate utilization of funds.

In response to a question from Councilmember Stapley, Ms. Pence advised that \$100,000 is the estimated cost to prepare the lower Council Chambers for broadcasting and that approximately \$200 per hour would be necessary to provide the television coverage. Ms. Pence indicated that she could obtain information pertaining to broadcast practices of surrounding jurisdictions.

Councilmember Stapley stated concern pertaining to increased television coverage.

Councilmember Pomeroy expressed the opinion that expanded broadcasting may be excessive and may actually impede the meeting process.

Mayor Brown suggested that Council consider improving the quality of broadcasts from the upper Council Chambers rather than retrofitting the lower Council Chambers.

Councilmember Kavanaugh commented that the upper Council Chambers could be rearranged to promote a more informal atmosphere. Councilmember Kavanaugh spoke in favor of increased public accessibility in the future to meetings of the City's boards and committees.

Following additional brief discussion, the Council asked that staff provide suggestions/cost estimates to remodel the upper Council Chambers, including improved video technology. Mr. Luster noted that minor modifications had been planned by staff but will now be postponed pending Council's current request.

4. Consider providing entrance signs at various entrance points into the City.

Councilmember Giles suggested that consideration be given to providing entrance signs at various points into the City.

Council and staff spoke regarding signs erected to identify the Town Center area, previous estimates for internally illuminated signage, and sign appearance.

Members of Council spoke in favor of exploring the possibility of providing entrance signs and requested that staff provide further information.

5. Further discussion and consideration concerning requiring maintenance of signs.

Building Inspections Superintendent Tom Mattingly and Code Compliance Supervisor Bill Petrie presented background information concerning the City's sign code and provisions relative to discontinued signs (property unoccupied or vacant for a period exceeding twelve months),

nonconforming signs, and sign maintenance. Mr. Mattingly and Mr. Petrie noted that discontinued sign provisions are generally enforced upon complaint and that sign maintenance stipulations allow for the repair or removal of signs when determined dangerous, defective, or damaged.

Discussion ensued regarding suggested changes to the sign code received by the Mesa Town Center Corporation (MTCC).

Members of Council expressed an interest in pursuing options relative to sign maintenance (perhaps in targeted areas of the City) and requested information pertaining to policies in surrounding communities. Council suggested that staff advise merchants in the Town Center area of illuminated signs that are not operating properly.

6. Update on various solid waste programs.

Solid Waste and Facilities Director Jack Friedline distributed brochures to Council and provided an overview of the programs and responsibilities of the Solid Waste and Facilities Division. Mr. Friedline advised that the Department is comprised of six basic work areas: administration, customer service, residential collections, commercial collections, support services, and recycling. Mr. Friedline outlined activities /duties within each area. Mr. Friedline noted that residential blue barrel implementation will be completed in March 1997.

Council thanked Mr. Friedline for the update and commended staff for their efforts.

7. Scheduling of meetings and general information.

Mr. Luster stated that the November 8, 1996 Study Session will be held at 7:30 a.m. at Williams Gateway Airport.

Ms. Pence advised that a Council portrait has been scheduled for 7:30 a.m. on Wednesday, November 20, 1996, at Riverview Park.

8. Adjournment.

It was moved by Councilmember Stapley, seconded by Councilmember Pomeroy, that the Policy Session adjourn at 6:02 p.m.

Carried unanimously.

WAYNE BROWN, MAYOR

ATTEST:

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK

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I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Policy Session of the City Council of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 7th day of November 1996. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this day 21ST day of November 1996

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK