

COUNCIL MINUTES

December 14, 2006

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 December 14, 2006 at 7:30 a.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
Barbara Jones

1. Review items on the agenda for the December 18, 2006 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: 4a, 4b, 10d and 11d (Jones); 9g and 10h (Whalen)

Items removed from the consent agenda: 7j and 9f

Items added to the consent agenda: None

2. Hear a presentation, discuss and provide direction on the Fire Department Master Plan.

Fire Chief Harry Beck stated that the Fire Committee recommended that staff present the Fire Department Master Plan to the full Council. He reported that the Fire Department has been unable to keep pace with the service demanded by the City's increased population. Chief Beck added that the City has reached a critical point with regard to increased fire and emergency medical support (EMS) response times, and he said that Assistant Fire Chief Gary Bradbury would provide detailed information.

Chief Bradbury displayed a PowerPoint presentation (a copy is available for review in the City Clerk's Office) to provide information on the Fire Department Master Plan with regard to response times and coverage. He advised that the department's goal is to arrive on the scene of a fire call within five to eight minutes. He explained that "flashover" typically occurs at eight minutes, after which the entire structure could be engulfed by fire. Chief Bradbury said that the EMS response goal is to arrive on the scene within four to five minutes. He explained that a patient who is not breathing begins to experience brain damage at four minutes with the critical

point occurring at six minutes. He further advised that the department goal is consistent with the national standard of a four-minute response 90 percent of the time.

Chief Bradbury advised that current requirements include four additional stations and five replacement fire apparatus. He reported that the population served by each fire station in 1980 was 19,000 and that number has increased to 26,000 in 2006. He stated that the response time goal of four minutes or less was achieved 63 percent of the time in 2005. Chief Bradbury reviewed the 2005 call volume and noted the increased number of calls generated in the western area of Mesa. He also reviewed the projected call volumes and fire station locations, and he identified four sites that the department considers to be of the highest priority:

- Site 1 – north and east of Station 203.
- Site 2 – 56th and Main Street.
- Site 3 – Elliot and Signal Butte Road alignment.
- Site 4 – Longmore and Broadway Road

In response to a question from Councilmember Somers, Chief Beck advised that although Rural Metro is the service provider for the County islands, the Mesa Fire Department responds to calls for service in the County when requested to do so. He explained that the County is not billed for this service, but that Mesa continues to monitor the costs, which have not been significant to date. Chief Beck advised that the department's policy is to err on the side of public safety when responding to calls for service in the County, and he noted that many incidents on County roadways involve Mesa citizens.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that the department's projections extend through the year 2025; that revenues generated by impact fees are utilized to pay bond debt or new station construction costs; that the key issue limiting the construction of new fire stations is the lack of funds to operate and staff the fire stations; and that the City owns a number of sites designated for the construction of new fire stations.

City Manager Christopher Brady noted that the need for two new stations in the western section of Mesa reflects a change in density and demographics. He advised that in the absence of a new fire station, the firefighter class graduating from the academy this week will be assigned to Station 203, which doubles the number of personnel at that location. He stated that the City's major challenge is to secure the on-going operating costs for new fire stations. Mr. Brady reported that Public Safety is the only funding category that continues to increase during a time of significant budget reductions.

Deputy City Manager Bryan Raines reported that sales tax revenues, adjusted for inflation, have decreased and that conservation efforts have also reduced utility revenues. Mr. Raines stated that "per resident revenues" have declined over time, and he added that salaries continue to consume a larger portion of the City's budget.

In response to a question from Mayor Hawker, Chief Bradbury advised that the national standard that most departments strive to achieve is a four-minute response 90 percent of the time. He added that he would make an effort to obtain comparable information on current response times in other Valley cities.

Chief Beck explained that Valley cities calculate their response times with different data, and he noted that this issue is being addressed on a regional basis in order to establish a standard that enables comparisons between municipalities. He said that the City presently has no bond authorization available for the construction of fire facilities, and he added that the department's response times are deteriorating Citywide.

Mayor Hawker requested that staff provide comparison data when it is available.

Vice Mayor Walters emphasized that Public Safety remains the Council's highest priority and that the City is challenged to address increased costs that are beyond their control, such as the City's increased costs per firefighter for salary, pension and benefits. She added that the Urban Land Institute concluded that the concept of "build-out" does not really exist, and she suggested that the recent surge in service demands in the western section of Mesa due to increased density demonstrates that fact. Vice Mayor Walters, noting that the Fire Department's bond authorizations have been depleted, inquired as to the availability of impact fee revenues with which to purchase the property at 8th Street and Alma School Road for a fire station.

Chief Bradbury advised that he would address that topic later in his presentation.

Councilmember Griswold noted that 60 percent of the City's budget is allocated to the area of Public Safety.

Responding to a question from Councilmember Rawles, Chief Bradbury advised that the Fire Department's leadership has appeared before the Council numerous times since the 1980's regarding the need for additional fire stations. He noted that Mesa's population continues to increase, and he confirmed that the unexpected increased density in West Mesa is presently affecting service demands.

Councilmember Rawles stated the opinion that past decisions regarding priorities and the allocation of Quality of Life funds created the current shortage of fire stations.

Chief Beck said that the department has seen significant deterioration in response times in the past three years. He advised that the process of constructing, equipping and staffing a new fire station would take three to four years. Chief Beck commended Fire Department employees for performing at a high level with limited resources, and he recommended that action be taken in the near future to address the shortage of fire stations.

Councilmember Griswold noted that emergency medical calls for service have increased significantly in recent years and continue to increase as the nation's medical care system fails.

Chief Bradbury continued the PowerPoint presentation by advising that funds from a pre-sold fire bond authorization are available to purchase the property located at 8th Street and Alma School Road. He noted that the seller is willing and that the appraisal/selling price is \$915,000. He also advised that the Mesa Grande Community is interested in pursuing a partnership with the City relative to the development of the fire station site.

Chief Beck reported that the Fire Department is discontinuing public education and community involvement activities for the next 60 days in order to assess the impact of these lower-priority activities on the department's response time. He stated that a report would be presented to the Council when the results are available.

In response to a question from Mayor Hawker, Chief Beck advised that the public education area is staffed by eight inspectors and that a typical fire station requires a staff of thirteen.

Responding to a question from Councilmember Jones regarding the impact of the Deferred Option Retirement Program (DROP), Chief Beck advised that he works closely with Human Resources relative to succession planning. He said that a recruit class scheduled to begin in March would address attrition, and he added that the employees participating in DROP are leaving at a faster rate than anticipated.

Councilmember Somers noted that future plans propose the construction of two fire stations in the area of the General Motors Proving Grounds. He suggested that the City consider negotiating with large developers for donations of land and equipment for the future stations.

Deputy City Manager Bryan Raines advised that in the past the City has entered into agreements with developers for the donation of park land and other amenities, which is then offset by adjustments to the impact fee assessments. He further advised that although the City has the funds to purchase the land for Station 218, the funds with which to construct the station are not available.

In response to a suggestion by Councilmember Whalen that a "Community Facilities District" could address the needs of a fire station in that area, Mr. Brady stated that the topic has been discussed, and that his understanding of State law is that a "Community Facilities District" may address construction costs and is unable to address operating expenses.

Chief Beck responded to a comment from Councilmember Whalen by advising that staff is investigating various alternatives for Station 218, including the possibility of utilizing temporary structures until a permanent station can be constructed. He noted that an existing structure on the property might be able to house the firefighters.

Responding to a question from Vice Mayor Walters, Mr. Raines clarified that the proceeds from the sale of land at the corner of Adobe and Recker Road would be returned to the bond fund and could be utilized for the construction of a fire station.

Vice Mayor Walters noted that Mayor Hawker and the current Council have been careful to ensure that funds are available to address the operating costs of any facility proposed for construction. She noted that although bonds are authorized for the construction of new libraries, the City has no funds available to staff, equip and operate new libraries.

Mr. Raines confirmed that in recent years a greater share of Quality of Life sales tax revenues were allocated to Public Safety than originally projected and that the costs for salaries and benefits have increased at a greater rate than anticipated.

Vice Mayor Walters stated that growing cities such as Mesa struggle to keep up with Public Safety demands.

In response to a comment by Vice Mayor Walters that overall response times are impacted by the increased calls for service from southeast and southwest Mesa, Chief Bradbury concurred.

Chief Beck stated that staff would attempt to extract data regarding that issue and provide a report to the Council.

Mr. Brady advised that staff recommends that the proposal to purchase the property at 8th Street and Alma School Road be placed on the agenda for the next Council meeting.

Mayor Hawker stated that the Council concurs with the recommendation, and he thanked staff for the presentation.

3. Hear a presentation on the Motorola 7.x upgrade of the 800 MHz radio system.

Assistant Police Chief Greg Fowler introduced Chief Information Officer Karen Kille, Communications Director Mike Brown and Assistant Fire Chief Gary Bradbury. He displayed a PowerPoint presentation (a copy is available for review in the City Clerk's Office) to provide information on the proposed radio system upgrade.

Chief Fowler advised that more than twenty agencies participate in the Valley-wide radio communications system in a continuing effort to achieve regional interoperability. He stated that the Mesa system dispatches calls for many area agencies, such as Gilbert and Apache Junction, through Intergovernmental Agreements, and he noted that 16,000 radios are currently on the system. Chief Fowler reported that the 800 MHz system handled 40 million radio transmissions in 2005. He provided a historical overview of the radio system's development for the period beginning in July 1998 when Phoenix and Mesa issued a joint Request for Proposals until the system's final acceptance in December 2005.

Chief Fowler noted that reports of a communication failure during the recent joint effort by the Phoenix and Mesa Police departments with regard to the "serial shooter" case was the result of each department utilizing a different encryption code. He advised that the problem was resolved during the second night of the joint effort and that each department was able to communicate with the other. Chief Fowler explained that the 800 MHz radios, a computer-based system, would require periodic updates as technology changes. He said that the benefits of the 7.x upgrade include the following:

- Provides improved scalability to enable continued growth.
- Allows compliance with new industry standards.
- Enables enhancements for future technology migrations.
- Maintains long-term interoperability capability.

Chief Fowler reported that the total cost of the 7.x upgrade was \$7,656,285. He advised that Mesa's share of the cost would be \$1,455,537, with \$990,000 of that amount funded by grants and lease savings, leaving a balance of \$465,537 due in November of 2008 (see Attachment 1). He noted that this cooperative effort is the result of a strong partnership in the Valley and that all partners recognize the need. Chief Fowler stated that staff was requesting Council approval to proceed with the 7.x upgrade and to authorize the City Manager to enter into an agreement with the City of Phoenix to proceed with the purchase of the upgrade from Motorola.

Councilmember Somers noted that interoperability of communications between police and fire departments has been a major focus of grant funding following 9-11.

In response to a question from Councilmember Somers, Chief Bradbury stated that the 7.x platform upgrade does not completely resolve the problem of “in building” coverage. He explained that fire departments have a higher priority for “in building” coverage than do police departments, and he added that Mesa’s problems with “in building” coverage are minimal because the City has few high-rise buildings.

Mr. Brown concurred with the comments of Chief Bradbury, and he explained that the 7.x platform enhances the software and improves the capacity of the dispatch function.

Chief Fowler stated that the amount of \$1,455,537 reflects the City’s cost to implement the 7.x upgrade, and he said that no additional equipment purchases would be required.

Responding to a question from Councilmember Rawles, Chief Fowler advised that staff could not predict the availability of additional homeland security grants that could be utilized to address the City’s unfunded balance of \$465,537.

Mr. Brady stated that staff would seek all possible grants to address the remaining payment, and he added that the City would also negotiate cost sharing with the City’s partners.

Mayor Hawker thanked staff for the presentation, and he advised that staff was directed to move forward on the upgrade process.

4. Hear a presentation on the Falcon Field Sub-Area Plan.

Senior Planner Wahidul Alam advised that the Planning and Zoning Board (P&Z) reviewed and approved the Falcon Field Sub-Area Plan. He introduced members of the Planning Division staff who assisted in the preparation of the plan, Planner Shawn Murray and GIS (Geographic Information System) Specialist Cory Whittaker.

Mr. Alam provided a brief history of the Falcon Field Airport. He reported that the airport ranks as one of the top ten general aviation airports in the country and serves as an economic hub for the City of Mesa. He displayed a PowerPoint presentation (a copy is available for review in the City Clerk’s Office) that outlined the preparation process and the content of the report. Mr. Alam reported that the process involved the following activities:

- Thirteen meetings of a Planning Advisory Committee, which included representatives of Boeing and other aviation-related firms in the area of Falcon Field Airport.
- Two public meetings.
- A mailing to the area property owners.
- Consideration of the Plan by the Planning and Zoning Board.

Mr. Alam explained that although a “Sub-Area Plan” is more detailed than a “General Plan,” it does not address specific implementation issues that are typically contained in a zoning ordinance. He identified vacant parcels of land in the area of Falcon Field, the types of zoning that are presently applicable to these areas, and the uses recommended by P&Z and the area property owners. Mr. Alam said that the vision statement is as follows:

The Falcon Field Sub-Area is a vibrant and progressive urban center that serves as:

- An oasis of aviation related business and recreation;
- An oasis of abundant, high-quality employment for professionals, technical experts, and highly skilled labor;
- An oasis of regional entertainment that attracts the presence of distant visitors, local employees, and area residents; and
- An oasis of aesthetic beauty, possessing scenic vistas, quality architecture, and natural desert landscape.

Mr. Alam advised that a key element that resulted from the Planning Advisory Committee's discussions relates to "image building" by establishing an architectural character for the area that reflects a contemporary style. He noted that the purpose of the "Design Direction" section of the Sub-Area Plan is to inspire designers by providing examples of contemporary style that could include:

- An aviation theme expressed by symbols, color, building mass and materials to create a unique design.
- Innovative design with high quality building form, materials and color integrated with the landscape and hardscape.
- Creative use of standard building materials in entry features and other building elements.

Mr. Alam said that implementation of the Plan would address land use designations, zoning, the streetscape and individual developments, and he emphasized that the Sub-Area Plan does not change the existing zoning. He thanked the Planning Advisory Committee for their assistance in developing the plan.

Mr. Brady advised that the plan would be included on the December 18th Council agenda for consideration and that this was an informational presentation for the Council.

In response to a question from Mayor Hawker, Planning Director John Wesley explained that the purpose of the Sub-Area Plan is to provide suggestions and inspiration to future developers and architects without imposing requirements. He advised that the Design Review Board is aware that the document is to serve only as a guide.

Councilmember Rawles expressed concern that the document contains references to the fact that staff intends to update the document to include examples of good design as new projects are completed at Falcon Field. He explained that the Council is being asked to approve a document that staff later intends to modify. He also noted that the document utilizes the word "shall" in many instances, which could be interpreted as a requirement.

Councilmember Griswold suggested that Falcon Field Airport management and staff perform the review function for proposed designs at the airport rather than the Design Review Board. He said that airport-related construction projects have special needs relative to form and function with which the Design Review Board is not familiar.

Vice Mayor Walters noted that the Design Review function is included in the City Charter. She suggested that the wording be changed to eliminate references to certain terms, such as "direction" and "shall." Vice Mayor Walters stated that although the Plan provides a good concept, Council adoption of the plan might attach unintended importance to the document, which could be interpreted differently in the future.

Mr. Wesley stated that staff could implement the changes suggested. He added that a General Plan Amendment would involve a separate process, which staff plans to implement with regard to the City-owned parcels in the near future.

Deputy City Manager Jack Friedline suggested that Council consideration of the Sub-Area Plan be continued to a later date in order to provide staff an opportunity to address the comments and concerns of the Council.

Responding to a suggestion by Mr. Alam that the section of the plan related to “design direction” be a separate document, Mayor Hawker said that the approach would be appropriate.

Mayor Hawker stated that the Council consideration of the Falcon Field Sub-Area Plan would be postponed until a later date and that the item would be deleted from the December 18th Regular Council agenda. He thanked staff for the presentation.

5. Acknowledge receipt of minutes of various boards and committees.

- a. Economic Development Advisory Board meetings held on October 3, October 23 and November 15, 2006.

It was moved by Councilmember Jones, seconded by Councilmember Griswold, that receipt of the above-listed minutes be acknowledged.

Carried unanimously.

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

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| Vice Mayor Walters: | Lehi Community Improvement Association Board meeting.
Marlborough Mesa Neighborhood Event. |
| Mayor Hawker: | National League of Cities Meeting in Reno, Nevada.
Maricopa Association of Governments Meeting. |
| Councilmember Griswold: | Meeting regarding the development at Ellsworth Road and McKellips Roads.
Meeting regarding the opening of McKellips Road and the closing of Brown Road east of Power Road.
Observed the DUI (Driving Under the Influence) Task Force effort. |
| Councilmember Jones: | National League of Cities Public Safety and Crime Prevention Committee Meeting.
Immigration Taskforce Meeting. |

7. Scheduling of meetings and general information.

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

Monday, December 18, 2006, TBA – Study Session

Monday, December 18, 2006, 5:45 p.m. – Regular Council Meeting

Wednesday, December 20, 2005, 5:30 p.m. – Transportation Committee Meeting

Thursday, December 21, 2006, 7:30 a.m. – Study Session

Thursday, December 28, 2006, 7:30 a.m. – Study Session – Cancelled

8. Prescheduled public opinion appearances.

There were no prescheduled public opinion appearances.

9. Items from citizens present.

There were no items from citizens present.

10. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Study Session adjourned at 9:38 a.m.

KENO HAWKER, MAYOR

ATTEST:

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 14th day of December 2006. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK

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Attachment (1)