

# COUNCIL MINUTES

May 23, 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 May 23, 2006 at 7:30 a.m.

## COUNCIL PRESENT

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

## COUNCIL ABSENT

Janie Thom

## OFFICERS PRESENT

Christopher Brady  
Debbie Spinner

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

1. Hear a presentation, discuss and provide direction on budget issues, including the following:

a. Police Department

Interim Police Chief Greg Fowler introduced Police Fiscal Management Supervisor Lisa Andrews, who was prepared to assist him with the presentation.

Chief Fowler displayed a PowerPoint presentation in the Council Chambers and provided an extensive overview of the Police Department's Proposed FY 2006/07 budget, which is estimated at \$134,694,239. (The PowerPoint presentation is available for review in the City Clerk's Office.) He explained that the budget includes the reduction of 7 School Resource Officers, 3 Animal Control Officers and 5 Municipal Security Officers; the sale of a fixed-wing aircraft; and increased Photo Safety revenues. Chief Fowler also reviewed various City services that would be impacted as a result of the reductions.

Vice Mayor Walters urged that the work assignments of Mesa's remaining 7 School Resource Officers not be based on an individual's seniority or preference to work at a particular campus, but rather on an assessment by the school district relative to which schools are in the greatest need of those services.

Discussion ensued relative to the Police Department's Quality of Life (QOL) allotments for FY 2006/07; that to date, 108 QOL officers have been hired since the inception of the program (1998-1999), with the final 12 officers slated to be hired in FY 2007/08; that in FY 2006/07,

funding will be allocated for 28 patrol vehicles and related equipment, and construction of the Police Technical Services Building; and that with a \$1.5 million one-time additional allotment of QOL monies, staff is proposing to purchase information technology network equipment to support Patrol operations, replace 20 compressed natural gas (CNG) marked patrol vehicles, officer safety personal equipment, and 90 first-generation laptop computers not compatible with wireless connectivity for Patrol.

Chief Fowler further indicated that the Department is working to develop a full cost recovery model for the Crime Free Program (CFP). He requested input from the Council regarding whether staff should seek cost recovery from the certified CFP units only or all CFP participants who have expressed an interest in the program.

Councilmember Griswold stated that he would prefer that each CFP participant be charged a fee per unit and that those entities that have completed the certification process be eligible to receive some type of credit toward the fee.

Mayor Hawker commented that he does not foresee full cost recovery of the CFP. He stated, however, that the program's primary benefit would be a long-term reduction in calls for service to those units that participate in the program.

Vice Mayor Walters suggested that the City assess every multi-housing unit, for example, \$1 per unit annually. She noted that City Attorney Debbie Spinner's staff is researching whether, in fact, the City would have the legal authority to impose such a fee.

Councilmember Rawles stated that he would be more inclined to support the implementation of a lesser fee for those entities that are fully certified.

Additional discussion ensued relative to alternative funding sources for the SRO Program.

b. Fire Department

Fire Chief Harry Beck and Assistant to the Chief Radona Orlando addressed the Council relative to this agenda item.

Chief Beck referred to a PowerPoint presentation and spoke regarding the Fire Department's Proposed FY 2006/07 Budget of \$51,257,433. (The PowerPoint presentation is available for review in the City Clerk's Office.) He explained that due to the recent defeat of the primary property tax question, it is necessary for the Department to reduce its Full Time Employee (FTE) count by 8, including 4 in Support Services, 1 in Operations, 2 in Fire Prevention, and 1 in Administration.

Chief Beck offered an extensive overview of the services that would be impacted through the above-referenced reductions. He expressed concern that the reduction of a Fire Inspector position would significantly decrease the Department's ability to respond to citizen complaints, provide prevention education to the community and businesses, and increase the risk for major fires and mass casualty incidents. Chief Beck added that 200 high and medium-risk businesses would not receive their annual inspections due to the lack of staffing.

Discussion ensued relative to staff's efforts to create a model, as directed by the Council, to impose a fee to recover \$300,000 in inspection service costs incurred by the Fire Prevention Bureau; that staff's model includes a reduction in service capability in the Fire Prevention Bureau as previously mentioned; that of the 4000 medium and high-risk occupancies in the City, only 2000 are inspected annually due to current staffing shortages; that the proposed model would allow staff to reprioritize inspections to ensure the annual inspection of high risk structures; that the inspection fee would include a \$30 Public Safety Annual Operational Permit fee, with an additional \$50 charge associated with the inspection of high-risk occupancies.

Councilmember Rawles suggested that it may be appropriate for the City to contract with a private inspection firm to conduct the high-risk occupancy inspections and that the owners of the buildings would incur those costs.

Councilmember Griswold expressed support for private industry "paying its own way" with regard to incurring fire inspection fees. He added that whenever possible, he would prefer that City personnel conduct the inspections in order to familiarize themselves with the layout of the structures.

Assistant Fire Chief Cliff Puckett clarified that the Council's previous direction to the Fire Prevention Bureau was to create a partial cost recovery model. He said, however, if it is now Council's direction to achieve full cost recovery of the fire inspection services, staff would proceed in that regard.

Councilmember Jones commented that although he supports full cost recovery of the fire inspections, he is also concerned that the City could overcharge for inspections and "drive businesses away from Mesa."

Mayor Hawker directed staff to bring back a revised model that would achieve "close to full cost recovery." He also instructed staff to research the possibility of the City contracting with private companies to perform a percentage of the fire inspections.

Further discussion ensued regarding additional funding provided to the Fire Department through the Quality of Life sales tax for additional equipment; the construction of Fire Station 218; and various unfunded priorities.

(Councilmember Whalen left the meeting at 9:03 a.m.)

(Mayor Hawker declared a recess at 9:04 a.m. The meeting reconvened at 9:21 a.m.)

c. Community Services

Acting Community Services Manager Trish Sorensen introduced Library Director Heather Wolf, Arts and Cultural Director Gerry Fathauer and Parks and Recreation Director Bob White, who were prepared to assist her during the presentation.

Mayor Hawker stated that the Council recently heard a presentation by the Community Services Department regarding proposed budget reductions. He commented that if staff is not seeking further input from the Council and intends to make the same presentation, in his opinion, there would be no need to proceed.

City Manager Christopher Brady clarified that staff merely wanted to confirm the Council's previous direction and noted that the matters discussed at the previous meeting, including the reduction of staff and the reduction of hours at the libraries and museums, is being implemented.

Ms. Fathauer reported that because of the defeat of the property tax, which would have funded Mesa's arts and cultural grants to outside groups, the Community Services Department has eliminated \$113,668 from its budget. She requested confirmation from the Council for her to give written notification to the nine groups that applied for funding that no monies are available.

Ms. Fathauer briefly reviewed alternative funding sources for the following arts and cultural classes:

- Youth Performing Arts Classes – The Mesa Arts Center Foundation has agreed to provide \$143,734 in funding.
- Adult Performing Arts Classes and Visual Arts Classes – The City and Mesa Community College (MCC) have reached an agreement in principle to partner in the offering of four-credit classes. If both parties do not approve a final agreement, the classes would not be offered.
- Stageworks – The Mesa Arts Center Foundation will contribute \$170,000 to fund the operation.
- Museum for Youth – The Museum for Youth Friends Board is working on a proposal to fund several of the part-time Gallery Educator positions that were eliminated. The group intends to make a presentation to the Council in the next few weeks.

Councilmember Rawles commented that at a recent Study Session, a representative of the Museum for Youth had indicated that the facility would like to develop private funding sources within the next five years. He encouraged the facility to do so and added that he would like the Council to consider adopting a "five-year phase out" of public support for the museum.

d. Streets and Transportation

Transportation Director Jeff Kramer displayed a PowerPoint presentation and provided a short synopsis of the proposed FY 2006/07 budget for the Transportation Division's Street Program. (The PowerPoint is available for review in the City Clerk's Office.) He reported that with the successful passage of the sales tax increase, the Streets Program would receive approximately \$25 million in new revenue, of which \$5 million would be used to meet the Maintenance of Effort requirement, and \$20 million would be earmarked for operations and maintenance and various capital expenses.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that over the next 20 years, sales tax revenues are projected to provide a portion of the City's matching funds for 54 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) projects; that primary funding for the projects would require an additional \$175 million in General Obligation (GO) Bond and Excise Tax Financing; that 20 street projects included in the Mesa Transportation Plan (MTP) would not be funded within Mesa's 20-year plan; that adding new projects would require the elimination of a similar amount from Mesa's 20-year plan; and that the 20-year plan includes material and labor cost increases projected at 3%, which is likely to be significantly lower than actual inflation.

Assistant Development Services Manager Jeff Martin briefly reviewed the proposed FY 2006/07 budget for the Transportation Division's Transit Program. He reminded the Council that the budget included a \$1 million reduction in general fund contributions for the Senior Dial-A-Ride Program. Mr. Martin commented, however, that there are one-time revenues available to offset a portion of the reduction, which would result in net budget reductions of \$695,000.

Mr. Martin further noted that for FY 2006/07, there is a fixed route bus service cost increase of \$733,00 over the budgeted amount and added that the Local Transportation Assistance Fund (LTAF2) distribution is estimated to be \$1.5 million. He stated that staff is proposing to earmark \$733,000 to cover the bus service cost increase and for the remainder to be applied to Senior Dial-A-Ride, for a net budget reduction of \$278,500 for the program. Mr. Martin added that it is the intention of staff to work with the Regional Public Transportation Authority (RPTA) to reduce Senior Dial-A-Ride costs and added that the ridership trend is shifting from that service to ADA Dial-A-Ride.

Vice Mayor Walters questioned whether it would be appropriate to utilize a portion of the Dial-A-Ride funding suggested by Mr. Martin and allocate those monies to the RIDEChoice Program. She stated that it is her desire to provide seniors with greater opportunities to travel within the community and noted that RIDEChoice is a more cost effective program than Senior Dial-A-Ride.

Councilmember Rawles commented that the Council previously identified a \$1 million reduction in Senior Dial-A-Ride contributions and said that now the net budget reduction for the program has been reduced to \$278,500. He questioned the manner in which this one-time "found money" is being allocated and suggested that it may be more appropriate to apply it to the City's fund reserves.

Mayor Hawker stated that it is the consensus of the Council to eliminate the Senior Dial-A-Ride Program and divert any funding to the RIDEChoice Program.

e. Neighborhood Services

Mr. Brady explained that in accordance with Mayor Hawker's earlier admonition to staff, the Council previously heard Neighborhood Services' presentation relative to its proposed budget reductions. He advised that staff would defer from making a presentation today unless the Council so requested. Mr. Brady further stated that at the May 25<sup>th</sup> Study Session, a short presentation would be made relative to various Human Services funding issues.

2. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Study Session adjourned at 10:03 a.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 23<sup>rd</sup> day of May 2006. 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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