



COUNCIL MINUTES

April 19, 2021

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 April 19, 2021 at 4:45 p.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT

John Giles
Jennifer Duff
Mark Freeman
Francisco Heredia
David Luna
Julie Spilsbury
Kevin Thompson*

COUNCIL ABSENT

None

OFFICERS PRESENT

Christopher Brady
Dee Ann Mickelsen
Jim Smith

(*Participated in the meeting through the use of video conference equipment.)

Mayor Giles conducted a roll call.

1. Review and discuss items on the agenda for the April 19, 2021 Regular Council meeting.

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

Conflict of interest: None

Items removed from the consent agenda: None

Assistant City Manager John Pombier introduced Police Commander Jeffrey Cutler, who displayed a PowerPoint presentation regarding Item 4-c, **(One-Year Renewal to the Term Contract for Private Jail Services for the Mesa Police Department (Citywide))**, on the April 19, 2021 Regular Council meeting agenda. **(See Attachment 1)**

Mr. Pombier noted the private jail services contract takes the misdemeanor aspect of the jail services business and provides a higher level of service at a more efficient cost. He mentioned Mesa continues to have a relationship with the County Sheriff dealing with felonies. He outlined the three C's of incarceration and that the contract provides customer care, cost, and compatibility. He explained inmates are provided a high level of care at an affordable price and that CoreCivic has been an excellent partner.

Commander Cutler stated in June of 2017 the City entered into a three-year contract with CoreCivic with the option to extend and are looking for an extension through May 2022. He

remarked all offenders booked into CoreCivic are being held on misdemeanors and all felonies go to the County jail. (See Page 2 of Attachment 1)

Commander Cutler shared the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) per diem rates back to Fiscal Year (FY) 12/13. He added each year the cost increases exponentially, and the rate gets changed every year based on County costs. (See Page 3 of Attachment 1)

Commander Cutler compared the average inmates booked per month for MCSO and CoreCivic over the previous five years. He said the drop in the total number of inmates per month is due to implementation of Community Court, Veterans Court, and some other processes that have decreased the number of individuals in custody. (See Page 4 of Attachment 1)

Commander Cutler presented the cost savings for housing inmates with CoreCivic versus MCSO for 7, 15, and 30 days in custody. (See Page 5 of Attachment 1)

Commander Cutler highlighted the monthly costs for FY 15/16 through FY 19/20. He added FY 20/21 numbers were not included due to COVID and would not reflect a fair comparison. He pointed out the cost per month in FY15/16 was \$510,000 with MCSO and \$215,00 for FY19/20. (See Page 6 of Attachment 1)

Mayor Giles mentioned the numbers of inmates housed was cut by approximately half.

Commander Cutler agreed that in FY 20/21 there was a drastic drop because of COVID and there were not as many bookings or holdings.

Mr. Pombier elaborated that one of the concerns with switching to CoreCivic was that the bookings would go up; however, the graph shows that has not occurred over the last five years and bookings have decreased.

Commander Cutler provided the estimated cost savings since working with CoreCivic. He reiterated the lower cost savings in FY 20/21 was due to the lower booking numbers. (See Page 7 of Attachment 1)

Commander Cutler stated the other side of the equation is the cost associated with having people in custody. He indicated some of the successes with CoreCivic are actively managing inmates every day and having constant contact with CoreCivic allows the City to be an integral part of the process. He mentioned CoreCivic picks up every morning and evening and the transportation costs are built into the contract. He noted the cost savings realized from not transporting people constantly down to County. (See Page 8 of Attachment 1)

Commander Cutler commented on the surveys that are handed out to inmates during the inspections and when they are being released from custody. (See Page 9 of Attachment 1)

Commander Cutler stated programs offered at CoreCivic include resume building, work programs, and self-paced anger management classes. He indicated all the programs are offered to the inmates no matter how long their stay. (See Page 10 of Attachment 1)

Commander Cutler clarified that MCSO is not currently offering work release due to COVID. He mentioned quarantine protocols have been improved with on-site medical, quarantine pods, and adding extra transports to lower the number of individuals being transported at one time. He spoke

about the audit conducted last year on the CoreCivic contract and noted the positives were the financial impact and efficiency. (See Pages 11 and 12 of Attachment 1)

In response to a question from Mayor Giles regarding work release, Mr. Pombier stated the City attempted to incorporate work release through CoreCivic and due to the timing and transport issues went back to only offering work release through MCSO. The inmate is given the option to go to County if work release is desired; however, currently there is no option for work release because the County has suspended the program as a result of the COVID restrictions.

Commander Cutler disclosed the three recommendations from the City audit comprised of having a more detailed inspection procedure, a structured process for documenting issues, and a way to document survey concerns and the solutions to those concerns. (See Page 13 of Attachment 1)

Commander Cutler advised Mesa PD believes the CoreCivic contract has been a huge success based on the fact that over \$4.5 million in savings has been realized, and the inmate experience and processes have improved. He mentioned the collaboration with CoreCivic, Mesa's Crisis Response Team (CRT), and the Courts to provide mental health services to inmates who need services rather than incarceration. (See Page 14 of Attachment 1)

In response to a question from Councilmember Luna, Mr. Pombier explained the agenda item is a one-year extension on the contract and next year a new contract will be brought forward after the Request for Proposal (RFP) process is complete.

Responding to a question from Councilmember Heredia with regard to whether Mesa will reach out to MCSO on the RFP, Mr. Pombier confirmed that the City actively communicates with MCSO as they currently house a portion of the misdemeanor and felony inmates. He verified as the RFP process moves forward, staff will contact MCSO to find out the County's interest in providing those services.

In response to a question from Councilmember Heredia, Mr. Pombier advised CoreCivic is requesting a 2% increase in the daily rate, which is the first request for an increase.

Councilmember Heredia inquired about the cost for transportation and Commander Cutler replied the City pays CoreCivic \$35,000 per month for transportation services.

In response to a question from Vice Mayor Duff regarding the average jail time for a misdemeanor, Mr. Pombier indicated the average is between seven to ten days. He explained post-conviction stays are much shorter with CoreCivic because the inmate can be brought back on a quicker timeline compared to County.

Councilmember Freeman shared his appreciation for the whole package that CoreCivic is able to provide which includes social services, food, housing, and medical. He asked whether video conferencing is available between the City court and the facility so inmates do not have to be transported.

Commander Cutler reported that video conferencing is available for family members and attorneys to speak to their clients.

Mayor Giles thanked staff for the presentation.

2-a. Hear a presentation, discuss, and provide direction on the Transit Services budget:

Transit Services Director Jodi Sorrell displayed a PowerPoint presentation and provided an overview of the FY 21/22 budget. **(See Attachment 2)**

Ms. Sorrell stated there have been three federal stimulus packages for transit and noted the funding is separate from the other funding the City has received. She remarked Mesa received \$11.9 million from the CARES Act to offset transit costs in FY 21 and the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) provided \$5.1 million. She said the American Rescue Plan Act was passed in March and the distribution of funds is still being calculated. (See Page 2 of Attachment 2)

Ms. Sorrell commented that FY 19/20 actuals were the last full year before COVID and identified the reduction for FY 20/21 based on the CRRSAA funds. She mentioned the FY 21/22 budget does not reflect the American Rescue funds. (See Page 3 of Attachment 2)

Ms. Sorrell stated the majority of the Transit budget is for Valley Metro contracted services and shared the breakdown of funding for the transit programs. She added Prop 400 funding makes up approximately 40% of the budget, the CRRSAA funding 20%, leaving the City of Mesa responsible for \$15.2 million of the contracted services. (See Page 4 of Attachment 2)

Ms. Sorrell presented the comparison between Paratransit and RideChoice trips. She noted just as COVID hit the RideChoice trips began to outpace Paratransit trips; and as the recovery continues, that pattern continues. She highlighted that two and a half RideChoice trips can be provided for every Paratransit trip. (See Page 5 of Attachment 2)

Ms. Sorrell outlined the RideChoice program that is provided to residents who are Americans with Disabilities (ADA) certified. She reported just under 500 individuals actively participate in the program. She mentioned a mileage-based pilot program was tested for residents living outside the service area and the feedback has been positive. She pointed out the mileage-based program accounts for 12% of the budget and the blended cost comes out to \$17.35 per trip for the whole RideChoice program. She added with the stimulus funding the City is able to offer the mileage-based program citywide beginning July 1. (See Page 6 of Attachment 2)

Ms. Sorrell discussed that Mesa has approximately 800 bus shelters and 400 of those do not have shade. She indicated the need to evaluate the bus stops for options of utilizing surrounding landscape, neighboring businesses, or a canopy-type structure to provide shade. She elaborated that 10 additional bus shelters will be installed over the next several months using the CARES Act funding. (See Page 7 of Attachment 2)

Ms. Sorrell pointed out the route service enhancement requests to increase weekend service. She outlined the funding totals for the bus shelter shade and route enhancements. She commented that bus ridership takes about three years to develop, which is the reason the funding is spread out over multiple fiscal years. She stated that Route 45 is only funded for two fiscal years because the intent is to transition Broadway Road from being locally funded to regionally funded in FY 24. (See Pages 8 and 9 of Attachment 2)

Ms. Sorrell described the idea of developing a route through the Fiesta District working with Mesa Community College (MCC), Banner Hospital, and the surrounding neighborhoods. She mentioned the pilot program will start around fall of 2022. (See Page 10 of Attachment 2)

In response to questions from Councilmember Freeman related to the bus stop shade program, Ms. Sorrell stated staff is in the process of adding 10 additional structures out of last year's budget; however, those shelters are still in the design phase. She added future structures will depend on the design and the associated cost.

In response to a question from Councilmember Spilsbury regarding the RideChoice program, Ms. Sorrell explained the program covers the entire city, and a resident can take 50, eight-mile trips. She added a resident can only utilize this mileage option if they reside outside of the Paratransit service area.

Discussion ensued relative to restricting the Paratransit boundaries in the past to the federal minimum requirement within three-quarters of a mile of a bus stop or light rail station; and that as a result, changes were made to the RideChoice program to compensate for the loss of service to Paratransit.

In response to a question from Councilmember Luna regarding service to Power Road and the Mesa Community College Red Mountain Campus, Ms. Sorrell explained there have been no requests to return service to those areas; however, staff is always willing to look at where service can change or increase while following Valley Metro standards. She added as ridership increases, surveys can be conducted to determine interest.

Responding to a question from Councilmember Heredia related to the mileage-based pilot program, Ms. Sorrell stated staff will work with Valley Metro, and communicate to riders via postcard or phone calls. She added the pilot program will begin July 1.

In response to a question from Councilmember Heredia regarding the Fiesta bus route, Ms. Sorrell indicated staff will conduct outreach and look at two to three different routes.

In response to a question from Vice Mayor Duff, Ms. Sorrell explained the Fiesta Buzz pilot program is not in the FY 22 budget, that this review is a look ahead to FY 23 as there will be some upfront investment that goes into that before requesting funding. She added there is a one-year lag between coming to Council and implementation.

Discussion ensued relative to shade structures and the Engineering Department's role in that process. Mr. Brady stated Engineering is very busy and there are companies that specialize in these types of structures. He referred to the limited spaces in some of the rights-of-way for typical shade structures, so staff is looking for non-traditional options. He commented with 400 shade structures, there will be a variety of solutions.

In response to a question from Councilmember Thompson regarding District 6 bus service, Ms. Sorrell explained other than the already existing service to the Power Road corridor, no additional service is planned.

In response to a question from Mayor Giles regarding the demand for service in District 6, Ms. Sorrell commented Valley Metro has formulas to determine if a route would be successful. She said there are various transit options that could be considered other than traditional bus service. She added staff will take this into consideration when working on the Transit Master Plan update.

Mayor Giles thanked staff for the presentation.

2-b. Hear a presentation, discuss, and provide direction on the Transportation budget:

Transportation Director RJ Zeder introduced Deputy Transportation Directors Orlando Otero and Erik Guderian, who displayed a PowerPoint presentation and provided an overview of FY 20/21 revenues. **(See Attachment 3)**

Mr. Zeder highlighted the forecast for the local streets fund and the Highway User Revenue Fund (HURF) Forecast. He commented this last year sales taxes increased, and HURF did not decrease as predicted, which places the City in a strong financial position. He stated this fund is also used to augment the capital program. He explained the City currently pays just over \$12 million on HURF bonds, which will be paid off in FY 25/26. (See Page 4 of Attachment 3)

Mr. Otero commented on streetlights stating staff's goal is to respond to service requests within five days of notification. He stated that the average is approximately 1,300 service requests per quarter and 5,000 requests per year, that over the past few quarters the response rate was within six days, that over the last eight months the department was down to 50% of streetlight staff which affected the ability to make repairs, and a full staff will help exceed performance metrics. (See Page 5 of Attachment 3)

Mr. Otero reviewed the streetlight LED conversion and stated it is on target to meet the seven-year conversion plan. He explained the city has 47,000 streetlights and over 16,000 have already been converted to LED. He notified Council when a streetlight is repaired, it is converted to an LED, which positively impacts conversion numbers. (See Page 6 of Attachment 3)

Mr. Otero provided an overview of the debris pickup program and stated the city has 102 miles of alleys and he anticipates cleaning all alleys within the next few months. He added when the data is complete, staff will use that to track response times, as well as the amount of linear feet of alleys that were cleaned on a per quarter basis. (See Page 7 of Attachment 3)

In response to a question from Councilmember Spilsbury regarding alley cleanup and the source of the debris, Mr. Zeder indicated while there are homeless in the alleys, most of the debris comes from residents that throw items over the walls. He stated staff has had many conversations with Code Compliance and the challenge is in figuring out who the debris belongs to. He added the gate program has worked well from a public safety standpoint, but the maintenance of alleys will be a continuous effort.

Mr. Zeder provided highlights of department accomplishments. (See Page 8 of Attachment 3)

Mr. Guderian provided an update on the photo safety program and remarked the focus has been around schools and a few other locations where sidewalks have been added to existing arterials. He stated staff is in the process of updating software for school zone flashers so they can be turned on or off as needed. He remarked on driver feedback signs and added the photo safety enforcement revenue will be used for a traffic calming study and for a consultant to assist with ideas on areas for traffic calming. (See Page 9 of Attachment 3)

In response to a question from Councilmember Duff, Mr. Guderian explained the areas chosen for the traffic calming study were streets that have historically received a lot of speeding complaints and speed humps have not been a solution.

Mr. Zeder stated budget adjustments are being requested for FY 21/22 to cover costs for updating the long-range transportation plan, hiring a traffic analyst that will be shared with the Police

Department to analyze data related to the photo safety program, and for pavement overlays and maintenance. (See Page 10 of Attachment 3)

In response to a question from Councilmember Heredia regarding various coatings for pavement preservation, Mr. Zeder explained the pavement management team is always looking at new products coming on the market, and the best product depends on the condition of the roadway and the type of surface.

In response to a question from Councilmember Freeman, Mr. Guderian commented the cost of driver feedback signs is approximately \$2,000, but the major expense related to these is the power source and where it can be mounted, which could result in a cost closer to \$15,000.

Mayor Giles thanked staff for the presentation.

2-c. Hear a presentation, discuss, and provide direction on the Energy Resources budget:

This item was continued to the April 22, 2021 Study Session.

3. Current events summary including meetings and conferences attended.

Mayor Giles – Volunteer Appreciation Event

4. Scheduling of meetings.

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

Thursday, April 22, 2021, 7:30 a.m. – Study Session

5. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Study Session adjourned at 5:58 p.m.

JOHN GILES, MAYOR

ATTEST:

DEE ANN MICKELSEN, 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 19th day of April 2021. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

DEE ANN MICKELSEN, CITY CLERK