

SPECIAL MEETING DES MOINES CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES

March 28, 2009

The special meeting of the Des Moines City Council was called to order at 9:10 a.m. by Mayor Sheckler in the Des Moines Activity Center.

ROLL CALL – Present: Mayor Bob Sheckler, Mayor Pro Tem Dan Sherman, Council members Dave Kaplan, Ed Pina, Carmen Scott, Susan White and Scott Thomasson. Also in attendance were City Manager Tony Piasecki; Asst. City Manager Lorri Ericson; City Attorney Pat Bosmans; Planning, Building and Public Works Director Grant Fredricks; Parks, Recreation and Senior Services Director Patrice Thorell; Finance Manager Cecilia Pollock; Judge Veronica Alicea-Galvan; Police Chief Roger Baker; and Harbor Master Joe Dusenbury.

2009 BUDGET

City Manager Piasecki provided an overview of the information contained in his budget memo and attached spread sheet.

General discussion commenced on the following items: SST and the negative budget impact that resulted from the loss of that anticipated revenue, the use of alternative jail sentences to reduce some jail costs, the possibility of obtaining a COPS grant to avoid police layoffs and a grant to fund the volunteer Domestic Violence Advocate. There was further discussion about the impact of State budget cuts on the DOC crew that assists with our parks maintenance.

Council members shared their position about both the proposed cuts and those cuts that have been mentioned, but not proposed by staff. Parks, Recreation and Senior Services Director Thorell shared information about the programs in her departments and provided council with information about citizen use of those programs.

Councilmember Thomasson queried how the loss of the Administrative Assistant in Crime Free Housing/Code Enforcement would affect the Crime Free Housing program. City Manager Piasecki assured the council the level of service provided to Crime Free Housing would remain the same.

Councilmember Thomasson asked Planning, Building and Public Works Director Fredricks to speak to the elimination of one Public Works Maintenance Worker. He had a concern about the enterprise funds subsidizing the general fund. Planning, Building and Public Works Director Fredrick explained that the city would go to a 3 person street crew and there were accounting measures in place to assure the correct fund was charged for the work provided by any maintenance worker.

At 10:25 a.m. Mayor Sheckler announced a break. The meeting resumed at 10:45 a.m.

City Manager Piasecki identified the following additional cuts as ones that he was recommending: \$15,000 for the 50th Birthday celebration, the remainder of the Public Information Contract, a savings of approximately \$20,000 and \$25,000 savings for the closure of Mt. Rainer Pool. He also suggested asking employees to voluntarily remove spouses and dependents from the city medical plan and providing an incentive to do so by sharing a percentage of the savings with those employees who volunteer.

Discussion ensued resulting in council consensus to cut the entire funding for the 50th Birthday Party and \$5000 from the Public Information Contract. Council felt they needed to keep the pool open through the remainder of 2009 due to the commitment made to the public at prior meetings.

No consensus was reached on an incentive for employees to remove spouses and dependents from the City's medical coverage.

Councilmember Pina suggested the council accept all reductions on the City Manager's spread sheet. Discussion ensued and consensus was reached to accept all the recommended budget cuts; however, council felt that approximately \$103,000 should be removed from the revenue projections. \$103,000 is the total amount received from the School District for the salary for the SRO and from the Criminal Justice Training Center for the TAC officer currently assigned to each of those positions. It was council's belief that a budget crisis in either agency could result in the elimination of that revenue.

City Manager Piasecki advised the next step was to determine the exact amount needed from the employee groups to balance the budget.

A discussion followed about potential revenue with council consensus to assume no additional revenue. Councilmember White requested a copy of the Finance Department's monthly report on revenues be distributed to each council member as they are produced.

City Manager Piasecki introduced the topic of furloughs and explained that the actual furlough days in his proposal were valid only for City Hall. Other departments such as the Police Department, the Court and Parks, Recreation and Senior Services would need to stagger their furlough days in order to continue operations.

At 12:10 p.m. Mayor Sheckler announced a break for lunch. The meeting resumed at 12:55 p.m.

Discussion resumed about furloughs with the topic of the closure of City Hall Suites A and B and all other non-essential or non-revenue generating programs on the actual furlough days.

Council authorized the City Manager to use furloughs as a portion of the solution for the budget deficit and further authorized that with proper notice to the citizens City Hall could be closed on furlough days. It was council preference that the furlough days are kept to a minimum and the suggested number was five.

Council directed City Manager Piasecki to work with the department directors to identify additional cuts and report back to council on Thursday with the results from those follow up discussions.

They also directed staff to prepare a budget amendment that reflected the reduced appropriations and the accompanying expense reductions.

Council Member Kaplan asked the council if they would consider working through the process to establish a framework for budgeting by priority. After much discussion, City Manager Piasecki suggested he work with staff to bring something back to council on that subject in a couple of months.

NEST MEETING DATE – Study Session April 2, 2009

ADJOURNMENT – Meeting was adjourned at 1:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorri Ericson
Assistant City Manager