


Special Bentonville City Council
Meeting Minutes
February 20, 2010

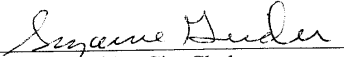
The City Council of Bentonville, Arkansas met in special session, Saturday, Feb. 20, 2010 at 9:00 a.m. at the Bentonville Fire Department, Station No. 1, 800 SW "A" Street, Bentonville, Arkansas. Present were Council Members Chris Sooter, Bill Burckart, Ed Austin, Jim Dotson, Shane Perry, Jim Grider, and Ryan Parks. Absent was Council Member Mary Baggett. Also present were Mayor Bob McCaslin, City Clerk Suzanne Grider, City Attorney George Spence, and city staff.

City Council Member Ed Austin called the meeting to order and stated this would be a question and answer session and then the members would go on a bus tour of some of the projects. Some Council Members had put on paper some questions they would like to have answered or explained. Attached is a list of those questions.

Council Members discussed part of the questions but no action was taken. Council Members then adjourned for a bus tour of street and parks projects. The meeting adjourned around 3:00

p.m.


Bob McCaslin, Mayor


Suzanne Grider, City Clerk

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Bob McCaslin, Mayor

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Questions Posed by Alderman Bill Burckart:

For: Mayor and Camille Thompson _____

1. One of our main goals is to sustain a strong local economy. We are very blessed to be the home to so many great companies like Wal-Mart in our city and in the MSA. These companies provide a large employment base as well as other direct and indirect benefits. With that being said, our small businesses in almost all sectors are closing at record numbers, job layoffs continue, and both the owners and the hard workers have very little options.

Would it be prudent to contract as much of the cities task, large or small, to local area companies? Task or services would be subject to bid and controls by contract.

If the value is found in subcontracting out these services without risking quality of the service for our citizens, would we consider exploring such ideas if it meant saving money to the tax payers and providing much needed local jobs?

For: Bender and Matlock _____

2. When establishing projects/tasks to be performed in-house, is a comparison completed to establish the long term cost including all overhead factors (such as labor, insurance, benefits, equipment purchase, storage of equipment, maintenance, office space, or vehicle expiration, etc....)? Then, is that compared to the subcontract or service cost without the overhead and legacy cost?

For: Camille Thompson and Bender _____

3. When purchasing heavy equipment has it been considered to contract rental rates for equipment used less frequently and forgoing all maintenance, storage and depreciation?

For: Camille Thompson and Bender _____

4. What is the policy on the purchase of used equipment? Can the purchasing agent or departments look at the many auctions being done and evaluate the savings?

For: Exploration _____

5. Can we move away from individual vehicles to a pool to reduce the long term expense? I realize some departments need to have ready vehicles for use as needed by our citizens.

For: Denise Land and Chief Allen _____

6. Could we discuss the possibility, or at what point do we move to a shared fleet for the patrol personnel? I do not have all the facts necessary to make that determination because more is involved than one can measure easily. I would like to understand better the long term plan in this regard.

For: Camille Thompson and Chief White _____

7. It is a policy of the city not to bid professional services, is this state law, or policy?

For: Mayor _____

8. Could we move away from waiving competitive bidding as much as possible?

For: Camille Thompson _____

9. Are we going to adopt the jails fees able to be charged by the City to help remove that budget expense from tax payers? Act 209 or 2009, as codified at Ark. Code Ann. 16-17-129, permits cities to enact an additional fine not to exceed twenty dollars (\$20.00) per offense on misdemeanor or traffic violations which occur in the City for the purpose of defraying the cost of incarcerating prisoners, etc., savings of approximately 36K per year.

For: Mayor _____

10. What is the long term plan for the location of main city departments, such as Street, Electric and Water/Sewer?

For: Mayor _____

11. Can the departments share a common storage facility for equipment as we look to buy land and build these facilities?

For: Bender _____

12. Can the equipment itself be shared to fully utilize each piece to its capacity? Unless the equipment is being used continuously we would save money by contracting it out, or renting when all factors are considered.

For: Camille Thompson _____

13. Would the Council consider a sales tax holiday and work toward discussions with state and county for the same? We would do well to have our local shops get the back-to-school business vs. other states.

For: Mayor _____

14. Could we as the City Council remove sales tax on groceries for basic needs and nutrition? The WIC products are a good place to start.

For: Camille Thompson _____

15. Can we create incentives for small business especially during start-up; such as reduction in fees or cost of utility services during start-up periods? The downtown area could be a good place to try such incentives.

For: Camille Thompson _____

16. Would the temporary removal of the A&P tax on restaurants encourage more patronage? If we lower the cost for our casual dining to our citizens it may mean we eat here in our City more than neighboring cities during the hard times we are in. This could only be done if offsets could be found to replace the Parks dollars lost.

For: Mayor and Denise Land _____

17. Once we take care of the needs promised to the tax payers in the bond approval, should we (with exception of necessities that may arise) save the funds from project cost savings and pay down debt owed on each issue as soon as possible up to our agreed maximum of pre-payment?

For: Sunset Bonds _____

18. Is it our long term goal to reduce the sales tax burden if it would not affect the health of our City? Would this do more to create additional revenue than we would lose?

For: Denise Land, Camille Thompson, Mayor and Ed Wheeler _____

19. Can we discuss private business strategies for the City's department heads and staff? With the times as they are, like many of our citizens, our City's employees have not seen any raises. What if we would allow for raises, merit pay, or by another word come from the savings of money and that has been budgeted? The % that is saved is where the merit pay would derive from. The amount of saving and efficiency created and the merit would be shared through all levels of the department. The one employee who has the greatest impact would receive an award, recognition, as well as additional compensation. The next year the budget would then be a revised amount and you would repeat the process. This could be in many forms, such as overhead, personal, work turnover, reducing cycle times, etc.

For: Mayor _____

20. Do we see any other services provided that could be shared regionally?

For: Mayor and Bender _____

21. As a member of the regional waste water facility, and responsible for the majority share of the overhead, what is the buy-in cost of other parties to use the plant? Would more capacity have to be added if another large user was added? Do we see the O&M cost remaining steady after new parties join the plant or would they decrease?

For: Mayor _____

22. Could we have a Meeting of the Whole once a month at the minimum?

For: Mayor and Camille Thompson _____

23. Would it be possible to get the council agenda items on the Wednesday before the meeting, instead of Friday afternoon?

For: Denise Land _____

24. Could we get budget information in an electronic spreadsheet quarterly with all additional sheets?

For: Denise Land _____

25. Could we receive a quarterly breakdown of each issue of the bond funds, a detailed list of projects with an estimate of those projects, cost to date, or completed amounts?

Questions posed by: Unknown

For: George Spence

26. City Council Four Year Terms

For: Okay

27. Neighborhoods other than north side of town need improvements

For: Churchwell and Galloway

28. Sidewalks SE side of town connecting to downtown

For: Covered

29. Current Bond projects, status, balances and encumbrances

For: As Needed

30. Possible more meetings of the whole

For: Covered

31. Earlier receipt of Council packets (agenda)

For: Covered

32. Bond funds update, detail spent and encumbered by project, by bond fund

For: On Website

33. Impact fee update by fee

For: Each March/April late early

34. 2009 EOY budget and fund balance update

For: Mike Churchwell

35. Street project by project update (future project status)