
The Mandan City Commission met in special working session at 4:30 p.m. on December 8, 2010 at the Lakewood Fire Station No. 2, 2009 40th Ave SE, Conference Room. Commissioners present were Helbling, Tibke, Rohr, Frank, and Jackson (arrived at 5:10 p.m). Department Head present was City Administrator Neubauer. Citizens present were Susan Beehler and from the Bismarck Tribune LeAnn Eckroth

NEW BUSINESS:

i. *Funding alternatives for new development infrastructure*

Commissioners reviewed how various communities in North Dakota fund infrastructure costs for new residential developments. Those communities included Bismarck, Dickinson, Fargo, Jamestown, Mandan and Williston. Communities use a combination of funds including sales tax, utility funds, general property taxes, special assessments, general property tax and some costs which are paid for at the front end by the developer. Concern stems from the amount of debt that has accumulated related to new residential development in the past ten years. City staff has drafted a document that compares how the city of Bismarck v Mandan deal with special assessments. Based on this review there are few areas where we differ. Bismarck has recently updated their procedures and it would not be a complicated matter to make some adjustment to how we assess projects and there are a few areas where Bismarck may adjust to conform to what we are doing.

The one area of interest was in new developments Bismarck will receive a financial instrument that ensures payment of special assessments should the property within that district come back to the municipality for failure to pay taxes. Thus protecting the citizens should this occur. Staff will continue to work with representatives of Bismarck and develop further information to bring back to the commission for its consideration. There was general agreement that having Bismarck and Mandan mirror their policies in the special assessment area would be beneficial for both communities.

ii. *Tax Incentives & Economic Development*

At the October 27th working session of the board, city staff was asked to review the policy that West Fargo has adopted for property tax exemptions and incorporate Commissioner Jackson's suggestions and bring that information back to the Board for their consideration.

A draft policy for "Commercial Property Tax Exemption Policy and Guidelines" was presented. Discussion ensued regarding whether or not to have such conditions or continue considering the application on a case by case basis. The working draft will be brought to a future commission meeting for consideration.

Other areas of economic development were discussed such as whether to pursue more government agencies to locate in Mandan, potential for adding a public campground, and possibly imposing a payment in lieu of taxes for emergency services such as police and fire protection on property that is otherwise tax exempt. The commission discussed the possibility of partnering with the small business development council for additional assistance in the economic development office. This concept was brought forward during budget discussions however; the funding was eliminated due to budget constraints.

Additional information will be gathered and disseminated to the commission at a later date.

The option of raising the city sales tax rate was discussed and it was suggested that it would not be practical to have one rate in Mandan and another in Bismarck.

iii. *Budgetary issues upcoming years*

Discussion was held regarding the increasing of cost of providing the health insurance in the manner set in city ordinance and its implication on subsequent year's budgets. At this time it is unsure what effects the federal health insurance legislation will have upon the city's health care provider. At this time it appears there are negative consequences if the city would change the manner in which it provides health insurance coverage.

Administrator Neubauer indicated that a proposal has been received from Sanford Health and the premiums were comparable to our current plan. Sanford has several plans with varying deductibles. A higher the deductible results in a lower the premium.

During preliminary budget discussions this summer management team members were asked to survey their employees and determine what area of compensation was most important to them, cost of living raises, merit increases or health insurance coverage. The majority of employees considered the continuation of health insurance coverage the top priority.

Mr. Neubauer and Human resources continue to research this issue along with the federal legislation and bring additional information back to the commission at an appropriate time for its consideration.

iv. *Leadership Code*

An example of a Leadership Code for Elected Officials was presented to the Board for its consideration at the October 27th working session of the Board. Administrator Neubauer informed the Board that the example is from the City of Wahpeton and a few minor changes were made to the document for the commission to consider. Discussion was held regarding the pros and cons of having such a policy. It was generally agreed that such a policy would be desirable and requested Mr. Neubauer to bring the document to the January 4, 2011 City Commission meeting for further discussion.

There being no further actions to come before the Board, Commissioner Tibke moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:53p.m. Commissioner Jackson seconded the motion. The motion received unanimous approval of the Board members present and the meeting adjourned.

/s/ James Neubauer

James Neubauer,
City Administrator

/s/ Timothy A. Helbling

Timothy A. Helbling,
President, Board of City
Commissioners