

The Mandan City Commission and the Mandan Park Board met in a Joint Special Meeting at 6:30 p.m. on March 9, 2015 in the Ed “Bosh” Froehlich Room at City Hall, 205 2nd Ave NW, Mandan, North Dakota. In attendance for the Mandan City Commission were Mayor Van Beek, Commissioners Tibke, Rohr, Laber, and Braun. City Department Heads present were City Administrator Neubauer, City Attorney Brown, and Finance Director Welch. Also in attendance for the Mandan Park Board were President Arenz and Commissioners Knoll, Allan, Keller, and Hatzenbuhler. Also in attendance: Parks and Rec Director Higlin.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. *Update on facility needs Mandan Park Board:* Park Board President Arenz reviewed the projects they have been discussing over the last few years. Their goal was to provide facilities that the city has been lacking and that would bring in revenue to Mandan. One of the issues has been the lack of additional sheets of ice which is causing them to not be able to bring in tournaments. Another item has been the Dakota Star Gymnastics (DSG) facilities. There are safety issues that might potentially cause them to have tournaments being pulled. Moving DSG to the All Seasons Arena wouldn't resolve the problem and would free the All Seasons Arena to be used for youth basketball, volleyball, indoor tennis and other recreational activity.

Another facility need the Park Board has found is Faris Field. The track covering is coming apart at several places and parking is another issue in that area. The track is literally coming apart. The projects would include a two sheet ice and gymnastics arena and football track facility the estimated cost is \$22 million to upgrade those facilities. Arenz reviewed the breakout of the cost.

2. *Update on facility needs analysis City Commission:* Mayor Van Beek reflected on the need to start taking care of the residents of Mandan. Whether it is from the kids' side through the Park District or the City side with the infrastructure of City Hall and a fire station. If only City Hall was updated it would be over \$5.6 million to get it to where it needs to be. Six different locations were looked at for potential locations for City Hall. The recommendation of the study that was done was to raze the church down next door to City Hall and to make this a downtown plaza area. The cost to do that would be roughly \$12.5 million. Also included in that study was a new Fire Hall on the north side of Mandan. The cost of that facility would be approximately \$2.5 million. The new Fire Hall would add fire protection to the north side of Mandan.

At this time the public was invited to come forward with any comments. To be fair to all those wishing to speak, two minutes was suggested as the allotted time for comments.

Wayne Papke, Mandan citizen, provided a printout of his comments to the boards and the public. Even though he's a hockey fan he wants to have the expansion done the right way. City Halls and Fire Stations are really “General Fund” items. As the community grows, the general fund grows. That's where you buy your City Halls and Fire Halls. The hockey arena is unique in that the number of kids involved in hockey in the city is a small part of the population. It's hard to put a tax on something that only involves a small group of people. You can also get better financing off of General Obligation Bonds. Raising sales tax also deters businesses from coming into the city. He also requested clarification on the wording of the ballot.

Rich Garman, a member of the Mandan Hockey Board, came forward as a Mandan citizen to explain why he feels we should use the sales tax to ensure the growth of Mandan. These facilities will bring in tourists for athletic events and they will spend their money in Mandan.

Brandon Leingang, a lifetime resident of Mandan, supports the sales tax as well. He feels the athletic facilities will be good for Mandan. For the amount of kids that play hockey, there is about the same amount of adults that play hockey at night.

Annette Behm-Caldwell, co-owner of Open Road Honda with her husband, used her business and board participations to explain why she feels strongly in support of this development. The number one need of business owners for the past five years has been employees. The young people who would come to work here are looking for these recreational activities for themselves and their children. They want up-to-date facilities. This would help Mandan businesses grow.

3. *Discuss possible sales tax ballot language:* Mayor Van Beek requested any suggestions from the Park Board as to whether they had a preference on the ballot language. President Arenz indicated that option number 1 was favored over the other. He explained the difference between the two selections indicating that the first selection is more specific and the second one leaves it more open for other possibilities. He referred to his commissioners for their opinions.

Park Board Commissioner Knoll felt that it was better to be more specific so the public will know exactly what they are voting for. The other commissioners agreed that the No. 1 option was the better one. President Arenz also thought that was the best one since it identifies where the funds are going.

Mayor Van Beek asked the City Commissioners if they had a preference. Commission Rohr indicated that the calls he has received are more in favor of a separation to where they could vote on either the merits of the Park Board or merits of the City. They would rather have a choice. Park Board President Arenz requested a clarification from Commissioner Rohr as to whether the comments he has received are for splitting the sales tax by a percentage to each entity? Mayor Van Beek asked if they would like to see the measures separated. Commissioner Rohr explained that the comments he's received are that the public would like to make a choice as to look at both issues and support which one(s) they like. Commissioner Rohr stated that the appropriations of funds would have to be identified as to what each entity would be looking at.

Mayor Van Beek mentioned that they have been working on this for so long as one unified entity. He understands their concerns but both the City and the Park Board District have needs. Commissioner Rohr stated that ultimately it's up to the voters. Park Board Commissioner Knoll asked what percentage sales tax would be. City Administrator Neubauer stated a full 1% would be needed if projects as discussed were to be constructed.

Commissioner Laber also feels that for clarity for the public, the No. 1 option which identifies where the funds are going would be the better way to go. She would like to see it not exceed \$15 million for the city's portion and not to exceed \$21 million for the Park

District. She also questioned the potential revenue loss of the sale of adult beverages if the School Board owns the property. Cole Higlin, Mandan Parks and Rec Director, said that the only reason they would need to sell concessions of adult beverages would be if they had the semiprofessional USHL Hockey League like Bismarck does. For the high school or youth programs with the dollar amount and the size of the project they are talking about for a \$10-12 million dollar ice arena they wouldn't be able to have the seating capacity needed.

In regards to Faris Field, Commissioner Laber was hesitant since it's so close to the Public Works existing facilities which are greatly in need of updating and additional space. She was looking forward and hoping they could expand the Public Works area if Faris Field was relocated. Park Board Commissioner Knoll stated that the reason they were thinking about the softball fields being down in that area was to keep the fields in the same location as for when there were tournaments. The teams could all be in the same area. Park Board Commissioner Hatzenbuhler also mentioned that it was because of the drainage issue.

Commissioner Braun stated that he was excited about the projects for the Park Board and for the City because they are needed. He has also received calls from the citizens and feels that the input from them indicates that we need to differentiate based on "want" and "need". His conclusion based on what he's been hearing is that they need to succeed on their own merit. Because of the needs of both the Park Board and the City, they should be differentiated that way on the ballot. Park Board President Arenz expanded on that by stating that if that's what the tax payers want, the Park Board is OK with that. Their goal initially was to identify the Park District's needs. They were trying to be good "governmental neighbors" and bring in the other City entities that have facilities needs under one "umbrella". Park Board Commissioner Keller indicated that she is in agreement with Mayor Van Beek to keep it all together on the ballot.

Mayor Van Beek called Wayne Papke back up to the podium. Mr. Papke had more questions and brought up the fact that Faris Field already has two bond issues against it. He questioned the interest cost that is on the City's portion of doing a "GO" bond versus doing the revenue bond? He pointed out that this ballot issue isn't the only solution.

Commissioner Laber felt that the two issues can't be separated out because the benefit to the community is intermingled. For example, the gymnastics needs to be relocated before the City Hall issues could be dealt with. At this point she hopes they can keep them together even if it's a negative vote with some people. Commissioner Braun agreed with that statement since the projects are needed. He also said that when they are separated it is up to the voters to decide what projects are primarily important for them. Park Board President Arenz summarized their perspective on the facility needs and the ballot selection. They realize that it's a difficult decision for the city. They appreciate even being allowed the time to have this presented to the city. City Administrator Neubauer asked for clarification as to what city staff needs to bring to the City Commission meeting on March 17, 2015 since there is a timeline to get this on the June 9th election. Commissioner Tibke stated that the Commission has enough information but just need to do some more research. Mayor Van Beek indicated that they have the Park Board's recommendation on the ballot language. This matter will now be brought up on the March 17, 2015 City Commission agenda.

ADJOURN

There being no further actions to come before the Board, Commissioner Rohr moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Laber seconded the motion. The motion received unanimous approval of the Board members present and the meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

/s/ James Neubauer

James Neubauer,
City Administrator

/s/ Arlyn Van Beek

Arlyn Van Beek
President, Board of City
Commissioners