

*CITY COUNCIL AND COUNTY COMMISSIONER WORK MEETING MINUTES –
September 2, 2009 – 6:30 P.M.
CITY OF ST. ANTHONY COUNCIL CHAMBERS,
ST. ANTHONY, ID*

PRESENT: City of St. Anthony Mayor Garth Rose, City Council Members Woody Andersen, Bryant Biorn, Bryan Fullmer, Elva Powell, County Commissioners Leroy Miller, Paul Romrell and Ronald “Skip” Hurt,

ALSO PRESENT: City Attorney Bill Forsberg, City Public Works Superintendent Scott Butigan, City Clerk/Treasurer Patty Parkinson, City Chief of Police Jim Smith, County Deputy Clerk Jodie Flores, County Prosecutor Joette Lookebaugh, Sheriff Lynn Humphries and approximately two Interested Citizens.

The meeting was called to order by City of St. Anthony Mayor Garth Rose at 6:33 p.m.

Commissioner Hurt led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Rose welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Mayor Rose invited the Commissioners and County Prosecutor Lookebaugh to update the city on anything the county is doing.

Commissioner Romrell reported that the county decided to forego the three percent increase on taxes and in addition they are taking a one percent decrease in property taxes. They maintained a flat salary scale for the year. There were three or four individuals where their salaries were adjusted. They asked each department to take a five percent cut in their non salary expenses. Romrell reported having a very aggressive building program this year.

Commissioner Hurt said they have built a new weed building and the old building was sold to the Fire Department. The Road and Bridge building is complete and the old building was sold to Search and Rescue. They have under contract a \$150,000 fuel station at the weed building. The school district will fuel out of that. The school district partnered with them at 25%. There is a contract to remodel the old stud mill office. A road shop in Ashton is being completed. The county also did the financing for a new ambulance shed and meeting room in Island Park.

Commissioner Romrell said all of these projects have been done without using any property tax money. Also, bids have gone out for five new bridges. Special bridge funds are being used.

Commissioner Hurt said that they are finishing the new parking lots and the sprinkler system at the court house.

Commissioner Miller said that they will be chip sealing the Teton highway, from Teton to St. Anthony.

Commissioner Hurt would like to deed over the lot in the middle of the ball diamond field to the city. Attorney Forsberg said that he was supposed to be working on this and will continue the work. The corner by Trost Feed also needs to be deeded over to the city. Forsberg said the deeds will be prepared. Forsberg said that the county is required to have a public hearing prior to conveying the property to the city.

Commissioner Miller reported that in the budget this year the county budgeted to renovate the bleachers at the Fairgrounds. The LDS church has donated \$10,000 to help with that. Miller complemented the Fair Board. The Golf Course Committee has done a lot of work this year and they have seen an increase in play. They instituted a special five dollar fee to play on Monday night that has been very successful. The commission is putting together a Water Ways and Recreation Committee in Island Park.

Commissioner Romrell said that their PILT, Payment In Lieu of Taxes, money is roughly around \$1 million. The regulations have been changed recently and in the past they've put 20% into Title Two, which was by far more than any other county. Fremont County came in on the short end of that deal and the commissioners didn't like what happened. The commissioners are working on a formula to change that and that change will return at least 80% of the money. This year the commissioners decided to only put in 15% instead of 20%. Romrell continued by saying it was a good year in Fremont County, to be able to hold the line on salaries and not make personnel cuts and maintain reserves into next year. Sales of homes are holding steady and new construction was higher in 2008 than in previous years at about 63 million dollars. The county anticipates that in 2009 the new construction will be around 20 million dollars. Romrell reported that they are sitting financially solid.

County Prosecutor Lookabaugh reported on a meeting between her and Sheriff Humphries and said there is a lot more aggressive police action and more aggressive prosecution going on. She reported about 40 felonies outstanding. It's not that there's more crime, there's just more police work and prosecution. Drug arrests are up significantly and the Sheriff's Office has an active drug team working.

Sheriff Humphries reported that he is having a good year and his deputies are working hard. Commissioner Hurt reported that County Prosecutor Lookabaugh and Sheriff Humphries have been good positions for the county.

Councilmember Fullmer appreciated the commissioners not raising taxes this year.

Commissioner Romrell said he understands that with the 2010 budget the city has cut police officers. Mayor Rose said that the Police Department was cut down to four officers, which leaves four hours of no coverage by the police department. Romrell said since there is no contract, the Sheriff's Office would provide the same level of coverage as the rest of the county. Romrell wants it understood that the county doesn't have any extra responsibility to the city of St. Anthony for those hours of no coverage by the city. Mayor Rose says he understands that there would be limited coverage. Sheriff Humphries said that their department will respond to every call whether they are three seconds or 30

minutes away. Mayor Rose said that during those hours there will be officers on call and they will continue to respond to emergency calls.

Mayor Rose asked Commissioner Miller about the census committee. Miller said that it is going well. There are many subcommittees that will be able to draw \$3000 each to pay for materials purchased for the Census. The Fremont County Complete Count Committee is one of the strongest anywhere.

Mayor Rose reported on the City's 2010 budget. The Finance Committee did a very conservative job and diverted some money into the street fund. Their main focus was to work on the streets and to set aside payments towards grant matches. The rest of the city council approved that budget unanimously. It will affect seven employees, who will be losing their jobs or having their hours cut. The biggest complaint has been the loss of the flowers within the city. Current spending has been frozen and department heads have been quite frugal in their spending. He said he really appreciates the department heads. There will be no Cost of Living increase or step or merit increases in the 2010 budget. The police department took the biggest employee cuts with two officers laid off and the Animal Control/Code Enforcement Officer laid off. Mayor Rose reported an increase in the parks budget due to the need for a new mower. Mayor Rose thanked the commissioners for the money needed to seal coat the Airport runway and the assistance with spaying the weeds. That runway was finished today.

Councilmember Fullmer said the sewer department is doing well and hard choices were made in regards to the budget and we'll survive. Fullmer said the council did what they had to do, whether it was popular or not.

Councilmember Andersen said that the city increased city taxes in hopes that we can weather through a possible decrease in the following year. The city overhauled the way we do things in the city and the clerk has been busy figuring out the budget and allocating the wages into the correct enterprise funds. It was decided to remove personnel in order to place money into the streets, as the city has been unable to even do maintenance to the streets. The flowers are a very visible loss including two part time people that work that job at a budget of about \$28,000 per year. The flowers themselves are only about \$2800. There will be cuts in the police department. Andersen is hoping that the Chief and the Sheriff can work closely together to provide safety for the city. The city has been waiting for nine years for anything to help with the streets, federal or government funds. And nothing has come in. So something had to be done. Andersen said he appreciates the help with crack sealing at the Airport and appreciates the new parking lots and sidewalks. He said the court house grounds look very nice. The enterprise funds will continue to increase. If we lose our streets, then we have a dirty town, not being able to keep the dust down. He likes the new parking lots and appreciates the money for the airport crack sealing. Andersen said he has many people contacting him in regards to the flowers and many people asking if they can donate money to bring the flowers back. Andersen also talked about ideas for flowers, possibly contracting the job out. What was disappointing to him was that he hasn't received any comment on the cuts of the police department, the animal control officer, the crossing guards or a custodian for the building. Andersen said he thinks we can find another way to do the flowers, but it's not coming out of the city's budget. Andersen asked if the county might want to participate in some way.

Mayor Rose reported on the stop sign heading out south from the high school. The commissioners thought that was a very good idea. Third North has been opened up and Rose reported that the stop signs are still up to slow traffic until everyone gets used to the new street. Mayor Rose reported that the Safe Route to School Pathway has been settled with the homeowners and work will start soon.

Commissioners and Council Members discussed chip sealing of the city streets and the costs of a tanker of oil. Commissioner Romrell said that next spring they will be getting a new chipper and they will offer to the city the use of the chipper and chips. If the city knows that they will be chip sealing then they can participate with the county and piggy back with Bingham County and Fremont County to purchase road oil at a cheaper price.

Commissioner Romrell said that the County has budgeted \$7000 per year for Economic Development and cities in the county can make a request which they will review and determine how much to give to each city. Romrell said the flowers in his mind are a good economic development project.

The commissioners asked about the upcoming election, being November 3, 2009. They asked if Mayor Rose would be running. Rose said he would not be running for re-election.

Councilmember Biorn reported being a member on the Finance Committee. Biorn said there wasn't a deficit; however the problem is the city has many grants that require match money. The money from the cuts being made in personal will be going towards those matches. Biorn reported that they came up with a one year plan and then a two year plan all the way out to five years. If after two years then they'll relook at the budget and see if they can start bringing some of these things back. Biorn said that we affected seven people's lives and no one seems bothered by it. He said that just left a cold spot in his heart and it really bothered him. Biorn said when they let the crossing guard go then suddenly the school district had the money to hire a new one and pay her directly. He said that they got rid of the flower budget and suddenly there's a person calling Councilmember Andersen ready to donate \$10,000 to the flowers. Biorn said that is amazing. Biorn said that over the last seven years, the city has spent conservatively \$125,000 on the flower project and in the last seven years the city has spent zero on the streets. Biorn said that we are giving up flowers for streets and everyone that wants the flowers back then he has bad news for them. Biorn said he wouldn't have the flowers back until there were two police officers, an animal control officer and all the part time people back and that flower would be the last thing he would bring back. Especially, if there are donations and volunteers to do the flowers. Biorn said it was a hard thing to do, but he stands behind his decision and hopes that everyone can appreciate that. Biorn said that when they do the 2010/11 budget they would like to look at the Fire District and how the city pays and budgets for the Fire Department.

The Commissioners and Council Members discussed the Fire Department and the billing methods and what the city has a share of. There was also a discussion of the city having their own separate fire district. The Commissioners thought that someone from the council should be attending the Fire District Meetings. Mayor Rose said that Councilmember Willmore will be assigned that duty.

Commissioner Miller said that it takes a lot of courage to do the things that the city has done.

Commissioner Romrell said that the Five County Detention Center is in a positive position suddenly and are now in the hiring mode. They are now bringing in some additional state and federal youth and those numbers are really helping.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. on December 2, 2009 in the city council chambers.

There being no further business to come before the City Council or the County Commission the meeting was adjourned by Mayor Rose at 7:55 p.m.

Garth Rose, Mayor

Attest:

Patty Unruh Parkinson, City Clerk-Treasurer