

STUDY SESSION NOTES
CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO
City Council Chambers 7500 W. 29th Avenue

March 21, 2016

Mayor Joyce Jay called the Study Session to order at 6:37 p.m.

Council members present: Monica Duran, Janeece Hoppe (arrived at 7:14pm), Kristi Davis, George Pond, Tim Fitzgerald, Genevieve Wooden, and Larry Mathews

Absent: Zachary Urban

Also present: City Clerk, Janelle Shaver; City Manager, Patrick Goff; Police Chief Daniel Brennan; Division Chief, Dave Pickett; Public Works Director, Ken Johnstone; guests and interested citizens.

At the Mayor's request and Council's consent, the rules were suspended to allow Margie Seyfer to give a short presentation about the upcoming kite festival. She distributed samples of the flier (one side Spanish; one side English) that is going to 1800 school children in Wheat Ridge. She also displayed the window poster that will be seen around town. She went through the list of events for this year's festival. New this year is a mini-train that will run continuously in the west end of the south parking lot.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

Kim Calomino (WR) spoke on Agenda Item 3 and expressed support for the creation of a storm water utility to make our infrastructure current. She doesn't think it's a tax – it's only a fee.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

1. Staff Report(s)

2. JEFFCOM IGA and consolidation ~ Chief Brennan

Chief Brennan introduced Brian Wilkerson of Revolution Advisors, the consultant who has conducted the regionalization project. Mr. Wilkerson walked through details of the IGA for consolidation of 911 services.

Why have 911 Consolidation for Jefferson County?

- To improve service (better response times and fewer call transfers)

- Some centers, including Wheat Ridge, struggle to maintain adequate staffing levels. In WR during 2015 the staffing level averaged 40% below what was authorized.
- Increasing costs duplicated across centers as volume increases and technology requirements evolve
- Increased concern about Mass Events (terrorism, natural disasters, etc.)
- Other regionalization functions in Jeffco have been successful (SWAT, Drug Task Force)
- Consolidation has been a national trend for 20 years, resulting in greater economies of scale, more efficient use of resources and improved interoperability.

Proposed Solution (5 different options received in-depth study)

- A single consolidated center known as Jeffcom, with specialized dispatch groups for law enforcement and fire, plus dedicated call takers for 911 and admin calls
- Center location: West Metro Fire Communications Center, (with backup/failover to another metro area 911 center)
- A separate Authority with its own governing board
- Tentative live operation date of July 2017.
- Initial members:
 - Arvada, Golden, Lakewood and Wheat Ridge Police; Jefferson County Sheriff
 - West Metro, Arvada and Evergreen Fire
 - A total of 21 agencies will be served by the center. Smaller agencies in the County would also contract for call-taking and dispatch services (Lakeside, Mountain View, etc.)

Benefits to citizens

- Improved call answering times, time to dispatch and response times
- Reduced hold times / abandon rates / transfers / misdirected calls
- Better coordination of critical events that cross jurisdictional lines
- Enhanced coordination in Mass Events'

Personnel concerns

- About 155 positions will be needed. Existing dispatchers will all have jobs.
- Salary will be better; benefits not lost; better career advancement opportunity
- Cross jurisdictional knowledge will be stressed so that dispatchers know the area they serve.
- An Executive Director has already been hired, from Texas. She already working on this to make sure it's ready to go when the time comes.

Costs

- The total initial operating budget for Jeffcom is \$15,249,580. (This is a savings of \$3M over the cost for current operation of 8 centers.)
- Jefferson County Emergency Communications Authority (JCECA), which is funded by Jeffco phone users for 911 services, will contribute \$4,200,000.
- Contract services will contribute \$261,192
- The remaining \$10,778,388 will be contributed by the member agencies based on a formula.

- Per the IGA formula, WRPD's share is projected to be \$657,222.
- Our 2016 budget allocates \$924,709 for our dispatch center.
- The projected cost savings in \$267,487.
- Not all duties that WRPD dispatch performs are appropriate to transfer to Jeffcom.
- A review of dispatch center duties is being done to determine what duties should be transferred and what duties should remain in house.
- Some additional personnel costs may be incurred to cover those duties not transferred

Other considerations

- The focus has been on improved service and best practices.
- The actual costs for the center have been less than was projected.
- While the main focus of the consolidation wasn't cost savings, there is significant benefit in terms of future cost avoidance for implementing Next Gen 911 and other future technologies.
- Small jurisdictions will have service.

Council questions and discussion followed.

- Will calls from cell phones be recognized? The Chief said we already have that capability, but we aren't GPS capable in our patrol cars. That will be a future request. The Next Gen 911 will go beyond cell phones and include communication capabilities such as texting and social media.
- What duties will be kept in house and what will it cost? They're working to identify that now; some calls will be handled locally (some administrative, code enforcement, animal control, etc.) and he doesn't know if he'll need ~~people or technology~~. He doesn't anticipate chewing up the entire \$267K on savings – maybe some minor upgrades to our phone technology and a position or two – possibly low level records clerk or increased hours for the records department. He will keep Council advised.
- The Chief explained how the 2009 storm overwhelmed our one call taker and one dispatcher instantly, and how when things get busy people get put on hold. The force multiplier will help prevent situations like that.

Janeece Hoppe arrived at 7:14pm

- WR Fire is included as part of West Metro Fire.
- WR Police will still respond to WR calls. Calls near boundaries will likely be covered sooner.
- There will be a back-up location and the ability to virtually transfer the operation in an emergency.
- IGA will come to Council next week; Arvada Fire and West Metro Fire have already approved it.

3. Revenue enhancements/storm water utility ~ Patrick Goff

Councilmembers Wooden and Pond requested a discussion about potential tax increases including, but not limited to, a storm water utility.

To provide financial perspective Mr. Goff gave a brief update on the results (unofficial) of the 2015 general fund budget numbers.

- Revenues ended up being 0.7% more than projected; expenditures were 1.6% less.
- Unrestricted fund balance will be just under \$700K larger than expected. (Part of that will go for the Fruitdale project and we've done the supplemental appropriation of \$150,000 for Tabor Street improvements -- so it's mostly gone.)
- Comparing 2015 to 2014:
 - General fund revenues were up 4% or \$1.2M, which is good for WR. Mostly due to increased sales tax.
 - Sales tax revenue was up 8.1% or \$1.5M. (Note: Use tax was down.)
- Revenues have remained higher than expenditures every year since 2010.
- Reserves are decreasing primarily due to transfers to CIP
- Grants have helped (\$3.5M for 32nd & Youngfield, \$25M for Wadsworth PEL, Kipling Trail).
- Revenue are sufficient to take care of routine needs, but no money is left for large capital projects without grants.
- Council policy set in 2011 was to maintain a 17% minimum reserve.

Council discussion and questions followed. Points of opinion and inquiry included:

- Property tax is about 2-3% of our total revenue. Property tax for a \$325K house is about \$45-46.
- Most of the DIRT projects are transportation related. Sidewalks and drainage on W 38th are high on the list.
- We should consider a fee; we shouldn't keep kicking the can down the road.
- Fee amounts? In 2004 a consultant recommended: Residential -- unit-based; \$4.10/mo. Industrial and commercial: based on acreage and amount of hard surface.
- Administration? Mr. Goff said this could be done in-house with additional staff, but recommended contracting it out.
- Of the communities across the front range that have storm sewer utilities, rates range from \$1.39/mo to \$14.26/mo (Ft Collins). Flat surfaces could be included or not. We could do a flat rate. There are all kinds of ways to set it up.
- There are other capital needs besides drainage, including \$267M in DIRT and deferred maintenance. We need \$6M for Wadsworth, \$9M for 38th Avenue, \$6M for critical maintenance, plus the TOD site, Clear Creek Crossing, etc. A storm water district will only solve one problem.
- We need to look at all our problems and find one solution, so we can position ourselves and attract young families.
- Understand the need, but think we need to look at this in a more general perspective. We also need to prioritize our spending.

- Need an updated plan, to look at priorities, and have further investigation.
- Can we get an updated DIRT list, costs and what we've done so far?
- A storm water utility has a defined purpose and shouldn't be ignored.
- Need specifics on deferred maintenance.
- A tax to cover all the City's needs isn't the way to go; we need to be more specific.
- Need to decide what's appropriate for each need; there are other funding possibilities.
- Look at all the needs and all the possibilities
- An asset replacement schedule is important
- We spend about \$2M/yr on preventative maintenance; there are limited funds for drainage. The percentage of revenue used for the capital improvement budget can be provided.
- While grants are available, it's a very competitive field. Everyone in the country needs grants for infrastructure.

Mr. Goff will get updated and detailed information on the topics mentioned for a continuation of the discussion.

4. Elected Officials' Report(s)

Kristi Davis brought up the subject of Mr. Mathews' comment last week that 5 councilmembers have said citizens aren't smart. She thinks this is divisive and requested that generalizations like that stop. Mr. Mathews clarified that he said "in the past seven months he's heard 5 different politicians say that the general populace isn't capable of keeping up with the complexities of government", and it included a state representative and past councilmembers. Discussion between the two followed.

Tim Fitzgerald expressed concern about the layout of the Incarnation development. Walking access to 38th Avenue was to be part of that plan, but buildings are built right where people would walk. Mr. Goff noted the project isn't complete; it will be done. Mr. Fitzgerald assured there's no way to get to 38th. Mr. Goff will research it and send an email to Council.

Larry Mathews offered that as we do these improvement projects we need to be mindful of putting undue burdens on other agencies like sewer, water, and gas. Mr. Pond noted that the agencies are asked if they can serve and Mr. Goff said there's a referral process with agencies. He also noted the City contributed to the upgraded sewer line for the 52-unit Fireside housing development on West 38th.

Genevieve Wooden expressed her disappointment that there was no retreat. She understands Mr. Dahl's memo about proper notice being required, but is extremely upset

that 10-12 people's schedule was scuttled at the last minute. It took months to put it together, get the facilitator and she wants the public to know they had a good agenda planned about how to work together.

Discussion followed.

Mr. Mathews said he pointed out the rule about notice requirements when he realized it and asked for a ruling. There was no intention to "scuttle" anything.

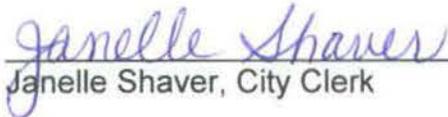
Mr. Goff pointed out there is conflict between state statues and the Council Rules – which he thinks need to be changed.

Mr. Pond noted the retreat will be rescheduled.

Janeece Hoppe suggested that people are responsible for their own behavior. She promises to be the most 'respectful disagreeer' she can be.

ADJOURNMENT

The Study Session adjourned at 8:14 p.m.



Janelle Shaver, City Clerk

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL ON April 11, 2016



George Pond, Mayor Pro Tem