

Minot City Council Executive Retreat

July 31, 2019 at 9:00 a.m.
August 1, 2019 at 9:00 a.m.

Library Room of the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center
2576 8th St. SW, Washburn, ND 58577

Meeting Minutes:

NOTE: Supplemental Materials were distributed in a binder to accompany several topics discussed on the agenda.

Day One: July 31st, 2019

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Sipma at 9:00 a.m. Present: Mayor Shaun Sipma, City Manager Tom Barry, and Council Members: Mark Jantzer, Lisa Olson, Stephan Podrygula, Josh Wolsky, Shannon Straight. Absent: Council Member Paul Pitner.

1) Welcome, Agenda Review, Meeting Logistics

The City Manager welcomed the Council to the meeting and reviewed the agenda and discussed meeting expectations and logistics. The City Manager reminded the Council that this meeting was a special council meeting and that it was open to the public and that no other business could be discussed other than what was on the agenda.

2) Reflecting on Past Accomplishments

a. Recognizing and Celebrating Recent City Milestones

The City Manager requested that the Council reflect back over the past 12 months to identify and celebrate past accomplishments and milestones and provide other relevant feedback. Council feedback included:

- i. The Mayor said the legislative process and outcomes this year were enormous and included one of the biggest SWC Appropriations, \$3M more in HUB City funding, and applauded the role of other Council Members who participated and testified in the Legislative process. He added that he felt it was one of the most successful sessions recently. Alderman Straight agreed with the Mayor but added that he would like to get more citizens to testify at the Legislature. The Mayor continued stating that he felt that staff seem happier with the employment improvements and the turnover improvements, with the better health benefits and the workforce improvements that have been made and that he felt they were making a positive difference. The Mayor also added that the interactivity between MAFB and City is phenomenal and has been noticed by MAFB personnel and that he's learned a lot by being on Task Force 21. He also noted that he would like to improve the perception that some citizens have and concerns about city beautification and moving the city forward. Alderman Wolsky agreed and added that he would like to see the City be a better example of what we want (i.e. the Public Works building and new pump stations screening). Alderman Straight also agreed that the City should do a better job taking care of its own properties.

- ii. Aldermen Olson and Jantzer noted that public and media perception is much more positive and that the public “sees the new council” and that the new Council is more open and approachable. Alderman Olson also expressed concern going forward that the Census project will need attention and in the future would like to see more women on council and in other leadership roles.
- iii. Alderman Jantzer identified that outreach and communication is much improved, that there is better transparency and more pushing of information: availability of our meetings online, Town Halls, State of the City activities are all achieving desired results. He also applauded better organization cohesion, better long range planning and an improved feel to the organization. Additionally, he added that he would like to improve legislative relationships and relationships with other local political subdivisions as well as improve the time frames for correcting nuisances.
- iv. Alderman Wolsky stated that he felt like the organization was stagnant from 2010-2016 and since then he feels like we are progressing and moving again.
- v. Alderman Podrygula observed that Council is more welcoming and involved in operational projects via committees. He indicated he has learned to appreciate several of the staffs’ knowledge and abilities as well as their approach to learning. He also likes the department reports and the information Council is getting from them. He also identified and applauded improvements in staff retention. He also expressed an interest in getting more information regarding smaller communications issues (i.e. the trip to Sioux Falls, certain new committee formations, etc.).

3) Financial Topics

a. Overview of Current Financial Outlook

The City Manager shared information on the City’s current financial outlook including Hub City Funding projections, Sales Tax revenue projections, interest income, potential short-term financing options for flood control, the flood protection financial model, and the 5-year government revenue and expense projection model. The City Manager also provided an update on the status of the 2020 Preliminary Budget.

b. Cost of Services Approach and Implications

The City Manager discussed the Community Development Department’s Fee Analysis and indicated that Planning Fees seemed to be in line and no adjustment was needed. However, Building Permit Fees were well below market and the Building Department was being 60% subsidized by property taxes. The new State law that prohibits the City from collecting a surcharge in the ETA for building permits will impact City revenues by about \$40,000 per year. The Council indicated that they would generally prefer to reduce the property tax subsidization and recover the \$40,000 anticipated loss and encouraged the City Manager bring the Building Permit Fee modification request to a future Regular Council Meeting for further discussion and decision.

c. Fines/Ordinances

The City Manager briefed the Council on the new State law which allows cities to charge double traffic fines within their jurisdictions. The Council is interested in proceeding but concerned about potential legal challenges. They recommended that this subject be brought up again after the first of next year. The City Manager also

briefed the Council on the fines associated with driving on or otherwise misusing City flood levies and indicated that the City had an ordinance that mirrors the State law regarding fines and imprisonment. Council would like to see some public outreach and signage placed at key points to educate and deter trespassing on levies.

d. Fire Station

The City Manager briefed the Council on the potential to move up the construction of the NW Fire Station. Information regarding the capital and operational aspects were shared. The Council expressed interest in moving up the schedule a year but recommended that it be discussed and decided upon at the Budget Q & A Meeting scheduled for August 19th.

e. City Hall Project

The City Manager shared the space analysis and alternatives for the new city hall building. The City Manager indicated that it appeared that one of the vacating Trinity Buildings could be used as a CTE and that including the CTE in the new City Hall space analysis might not be necessary. This would significantly reduce the size needed. Council recommended the City Manager exclude the CTE in the space analysis. Four options were presented to the Council: 2 existing building options, one expansion option, and one new construction option. The Council indicated that it would like staff to focus on the existing building options first.

f. Deferred Maintenance & Long-Term Funding Needs

The City Manager briefed the Council on the City's outstanding deferred maintenance backlog and implications on future budgets. Included were Public Safety, Traffic, Engineering, Airport, and Public Works (Water, Sewer, Garbage, Stormwater, etc.).

g. City Procurement Policies, Program & Approach

The City Manager reviewed the proposed Purchasing Policy, described the major changes, reasons for the changes, and implications on the operation. Council was supportive of the changes but want to look at the thresholds more closely. Council Members want the bidding process to improve including: better bid specs, better sole source requirements, tracking and using contractor performance in the selection process and some emphasis on buying local. Alderman Podrygula also wanted to see a reference in the Purchasing Policy for the purchasing of real property. The Chamber of Commerce's Buy Local proposal was reviewed and discussed. Council could not support the proposal as written but recommended some language be added to the Purchasing Policy that directed staff to attempt where possible to seek cost estimates from local vendors. Local vendors were generally defined by the Council as those with a physical address in Ward County. Council wanted to place the Chamber's Buy Local proposal on a Regular Council Meeting for further discussion.

4) Legislative Discussion – this discussion was skipped due to time constraints.

- a. Legislative Process & Outcomes Overview
- b. After Action Review
- c. Strengthening Relationships
- d. Future Issues and Strategy

5) Economic Development

The City Manager and Mayor provided an update on the City's efforts regarding the IEDC Steering and Stakeholder Committees. The City Manager shared the City's current role and other organizational current roles in economic development as well as the possibilities for expansion of those roles. The City Manager also discussed the status of the City's new Economic Development Specialist and indicated that the recruitment received about 10 applications but none were qualified. The City Manager indicated that he would be bringing a proposal to the next Council Meeting to request the City hire a professional recruiting firm to assist in the recruitment.

6) Operational Topics

a. City Email Addresses

The City Manager encouraged Council Members to use City Email addresses for all City business and correspondence.

b. City Cell Phone Options

The City Manager briefed the Council on the various phone options available to them and encouraged anyone interested to reach out to the IT staff.

c. Board and Commission Interactions

The City Manager discussed a few examples of concerns and encouraged the Council to avoid attending and participating in other City Boards, Commissions, or Committees unless they were assigned to the Committee.

d. Social Media Interactions

The City Manager expressed concerns regarding the posting of City positions or Alderman positions on other social media sites and the inability to thoroughly respond to public records requests. The City Manager suggested that posts could be made but should be done from official City or Alderman social media pages – that way searches for information could be more thorough.

e. Code Enforcement Program Overview

The City Manager briefed the Council on the Code Enforcement Program. More than 100 code enforcement cases and 600 grass complaints received in the first 6 months of 2019. The City Manager said there is one Code Enforcement Officer and the program is completely reactionary and that more resources are needed if we are to improve outcomes. He informed the Council that he is requesting a new Code Enforcement Officer in the 2020 Budget. The City Manager also reviewed a proposal to increase the fines and penalties for repeat offenders. Council liked the escalating fine approach but did not like the mandatory jail time for extreme cases. The escalating fine proposal will be brought back to Council at a future date for formal consideration.

The Mayor took a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Alderman Jantzer and seconded by Alderman Olson. All ayes, and the motion was carried. Meeting adjourned at 4:59 p.m.

Day Two: August 1st, 2019

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Sipma at 9:00 a.m. Present: Mayor Shaun Sipma, City Manager Tom Barry, and Council Members: Mark Jantzer, Lisa Olson, Stephan Podrygula, Josh Wolsky, Shannon Straight. Absent: Council Member Paul Pitner.

Continuing from yesterday (Agenda Item 6f):

f. Operational Update

The City Manager provided an extensive brief on the administrative and operational aspects of the City. Observations on staff capabilities, management approach, culture, and past successes were discussed. The 2019 Operational Goals document was shared. Current organizational limitations and new programs were also discussed (i.e. onboarding, supervisory skills training, leadership development, customer service training, etc.). Extensive discussion between the Council and City Manager was had. Council was very appreciative of the update and requested the topic be included in future Retreats.

7) Council Meetings

The Council and City Manager briefly discussed these topics as reminders for conducting meetings and the City Manager referred the Council to their supplemental binder for more information on the specific topics identified.

8) The Roadmap to Strategic Planning

The City Manager provided an extensive overview of the strategic planning process, including an introduction to strategic planning, how and why to strategically plan, the opportunities and challenges in strategic planning, setting a vision, mission & organizational values, and how to conduct a SWOT analysis. The Council expressed a strong desire to undertake the work but recognized it would take significant time and resources. They also discussed that regular, periodic meetings dedicated to strategic planning would need to be instituted to get the work done, perhaps as early as the fall.

9) City's Recycling Direction

The City Manager provided an overview of the City's Recycling Study and the Mayor provided an overview of the ROAF Recycling Facility he and the City Manager toured in Oslo Norway. There was a lot of debate and discussion on how to move forward including whether to add the question to a future ballot. The Council felt strongly that this topic should be discussed at a future Regular Council Meeting and directed the City Manager to include it on the second meeting in October. The Council also wanted to encourage education of the public and attendance at the October meeting via the Mayor's Minot Daily News Column, Facebook posts, City News stories, etc. The Council is very interested in hearing from all members of the community, not just the vocal minority. The utilization and benefits of franchise agreements was also discussed. The Council recommended staff begin working on moving the City toward a franchise agreement model that would provide for better oversight, accountability, control, reporting, consistency, and quality in service and to bring a report and recommendation forward to Council for consideration.

10) 2020 Census

a. Complete Count Committee

The City Manager, together with Alderman Olson, who sits on the Complete Count Committee, provided a brief update to the Council on the activities and membership of the Committee. Alderman Olson indicated that the Committee wants to focus on hosting events and utilize the online registry. The Census process and timelines/milestones were also shared and discussed. Emphasis was placed on this Census since the City is near the 50,000 population threshold and could become eligible for \$300,000 to \$400,000 per year as an Entitlement City if the threshold was reached.

b. Update on Annexable Properties

The City Manager briefed the Council on the Annexable Properties Study staff conducted and indicated that hundreds of properties representing as many as 1,600 persons could be eligible for annexation. The City Manager cautioned, however, that North Dakota law set high bars for city initiated annexations. The City Manager discussed the annexation process as well as the costs, service implications, code enforcement implications, and other aspects. The Council indicated that it was not interested in pursuing City-initiated annexations at this time.

c. State Fair Grounds

The City Manager discussed the concerns that the State Fair has expressed with regard to potentially feeling left out of Flood Protection and the City's concerns that the State Fair was not financially contributing to the project. The Council debated the pros and cons of annexing the State Fair grounds. Ultimately, the primary concern is to find a way to work with the State Fair to encourage them to collect the City's sales tax or equivalent to help pay for the State Fair's flood protection. The Mayor agreed to discuss this topic with the State Fair Board at their next meeting and to also encourage that a Minot City representative was included on the State Fair Board.

11) Future Sister City Approach

The City Manager and Mayor briefed the Council on their recent Sister City trip to Norway. Highlights of the itinerary and outcomes were shared. Concerns regarding the public's understanding and response to the trip were also discussed. The historical significance, value, tangible and intangible benefits of the exchange and past exchanges was also discussed. The Council agreed that the relationship was important and has yielded great partnerships, cultural exchanges, increases in tourism, and educational exchange benefits. The Council felt it was important to continue the relationship and to focus more time and attention on continuity and regularity.

The Mayor took a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Alderman Wolsky and seconded by Alderman Straight. All ayes, and the motion was carried. Meeting adjourned at 3:05 p.m.