

**SPECIAL MEETING**  
**MARCH 8, 2011**

The Special Meeting of the City Commission was called to order at 5:30 pm in the Commission Chambers by Mayor Jeff Bearden, and a quorum was declared present.

Present: Mayor Jeff Bearden

Commissioners: Jimmy Dennis, Russell Brownlow, Travis Taylor and Phil McCuiston

Staff Present: City Manager Mitch Grant, City Attorney Trish C. Byars, Police Chief Tom Wilson, Public Works Director Bob Cochran, Community Development Director Monica Wilkinson, and City Secretary Linda Byers.

Commissioner Taylor led the group in the pledges to the U.S. and Texas flags and the invocation.

**RESOLUTION NO. 913**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE  
CITY OF VERNON, TEXAS AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION  
OF A GRANT APPLICATION FOR THE EDWARD  
BYRNES MEMORIAL GRANT OF 2010**

Commissioner McCuiston made to motion to approve Resolution No. 913.

Commissioner Brownlow seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

**PUBLIC COMMENT REGARDING AQUATIC CENTER PLANS**

City Manager Grant explained the history of the park plan and the aquatic center plan, including the focus groups involved in the Master Park Plan and the Swimming Pool Planning Committee and their work toward the final location and design. The current design includes three swim lanes, a 1 meter diving board, a zero entry beach, lazy river, two water slides and a play piece, water basketball and water volleyball areas, with 7400 sq. ft. total water area, and has something for everyone. Estimated capacity is 250 – 300 people.

Mark Hatchell, architect for Kimley-Horn and Associates explained that there were four bids, and one of those was below estimates. The pool as designed is a design for the future, and will be around to serve the community for forty years. He pointed out that a pool is a highly demanded recreational experience and is a quality of life issue in most communities.

The low bid with all components totaled \$1,547,600 from Atlantis Pools. Deductive alternates including a Second Slide (\$78,500), 900 sq. ft. of pool area (\$10,000), Themed play feature (\$110,560), Slide and Tower (\$210,700), and a pavilion (\$17,400) would reduce that total cost. These bids do not include a bathhouse.

City Manager Grant pointed out that our citizens were traveling to other cities to swim, and our tax dollars were going there also. Any increase in sales tax dollars, either from our citizens or from others coming here would help offset property taxes.

Mayor Bearden opened the meeting for public comments.

There was extensive discussion and questions concerning:  
(City Manager Grant and Mark Hatchell answered questions)

- Utility and operating costs: 80% of these costs would be covered by the entry fees which would be \$3 - \$4 per person.
- Staffing: A pool manager and 5-6 lifeguards as seasonal employees. Maintenance would be performed by existing city staff. It would be winterized, but not drained during winter. The pool would not be covered.
- Hours of operation – it was suggested that the pool committee would set rates, hours of operation and rules.
- Insurance costs for existence of a diving board.
- Days of operation: approximately 80 days.
- Why it was not a salt water pool – salt water pool is not as sanitary as a chlorine pool.
- Feedback from other cities about their similar pools – all were favorable and there was discussion about other cities pools.
- Noise levels – similar to those of the park.
- Parking – There is existing parking for about 20 cars in front of the existing pavilion, plus existing parking on the north and east side of the park.
- Tax increases for cost of the pool – any increase in sales tax would offset property taxes. Operating and loan costs are expected to be paid from entry fees and pool donations on utility bills.

Specific Public Comments:

- Grady Stowe, Joe Richie, Bob Ferguson and Sonny Coffee told the Commission that whether or not to build the aquatic center should be placed before the voters.
- Vicki Pennington, Christina Schoonover and Charles McArthur were on the Swimming Pool Planning Committee and were in favor of the pool and said the community needed a pool. The current plan will appeal to kids, and have options for all ages.
- Mike Baumann, Emory Byars and Curtis Johnson all agreed that we need a pool but were concerned with the costs.
- Gerald Thiele and Bob Ferguson believed the country club was a viable option for half the cost of the aquatic center and besides providing a pool for the city would also include tennis courts and golf. The Commission noted that the costs associated with bringing the pool at the club in compliance with current code, including ADA, would be prohibitively costly and more expensive than a new facility.

Recorded on CD

- Meredith Ferguson asked if the location was definitely determined. Commissioner Brownlow replied that after extensive research Orbison Park was the only available option.

Mayor Bearden closed public comment.

### FUNDING PLAN FOR NEW AQUATIC CENTER

City Manager Grant outlined to revenue and funding options:

Currently available funds:	<u>Option A</u>	<u>Option B</u>
Bond Funds available	\$229,479	\$229,479
Donations from Utility bills	\$130,000	\$130,000
Corporate Donations	\$150,000	\$150,000
Electric Trust Interest	\$221,726	\$221,726
Unallocated Revenue:		
94 SRF Funds	\$230,000	\$230,000
Brick Fund Raising	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000
Loan Proceeds	\$350,000	\$350,000
Local Grants	<u>\$ 30,000</u>	<u>\$240,000</u>
Total Funding	\$1,381,205	\$1,591,205
Expenses:		
Pool cost with all components	\$1,497,300	\$1,497,300
Engineering Costs	\$ 170,000	\$ 170,000
Pool House	<u>\$ 130,000</u>	<u>\$ 130,000</u>
Total Expenses	\$1,797,300	\$1,797,300
Cost Cutting deductions:		
Second Slide	\$ 78,500	\$ 78,500
900 sq. ft. pool area	\$	\$
Themed play feature	\$ 110,560	\$ 110,560
Slide & Tower	\$ 210,700	\$
Pavilion	<u>\$ 17,400</u>	<u>\$ 17,400</u>
Total Deductions	\$ 417,160	\$ 206,460
Total Expenses	\$1,380,140	\$1,590,840

Architect Mark Hatchell noted that the pool will never be cheaper that it is right now. He encouraged the Commission to build the best you can, and add the slide and tower now if possible. The deck would have to be torn out if it was added later.

Recorded on CD

Commissioner Brownlow made the motion that the aquatic center be built with Option A, without a slide and tower, a second slide, a themed play feature or a pavilion, with loan proceeds serviced by the parks donation on utility bills.

Commissioner McCuiston noted that this option did not have many donations from corporate or local grants. He questioned that loan proceeds might be offset with donations and local grants.

Motion dies for lack of a second.

There was discussion on funding, including the option to add some of the deductive alternates later - before the completion of the pool, if funding is obtained.

Mayor Bearden noted that this pool was an issue when he was elected two years ago and felt like 3200 citizens voted in favor of this pool each month by payment of the pool donation on their utility bills. He stated that we owe it to ourselves to do everything we can to make this a town with a future, and this is one of those things that we do. In years past, we might not have needed a Boys & Girls Club, a Little League Program, a Hospital, a College, a High School and Football Stadium, but earlier generations had foresight to build these things and they make the difference in this town being what it is today instead of like some other towns having a lot harder time than we are. This is not a time for us to be timid; we can be bold and fiscally responsible at the same time. We have to decide if Vernon is a town with a future, or a town that is going to die. This is a forty year decision, not a decision for right now.

Mayor Bearden stated that he supports the project, and wants to do so in a fiscally responsible manner, if we can service the debt with the pool donations, and the pool committee can continue to pursue additional donations for the slide, play feature, slide and tower or a pavilion.

Commissioner Brownlow made the motion to approve Option A with all deductive alternates removed except the added pool area.

The motion dies for lack of a second.

Commissioner McCuiston made the motion to approve a funding plan Option A and dropped the slide and tower, second slide, themed feature and pavilion, and defer the borrowing of \$350,000 for the project for 45-60 days and seek funding from corporate, business or family donations to pay for those features.

During discussion Mark Hatchell pointed out that alternates could be added later or by change orders if donations are received. There is a three to four month window to add back the deductive alternates. If added later, the cost will be higher. He also pointed out that delay in bid acceptance will delay opening until the 2012 season.

Motion dies for lack of a second.

Recorded on CD

Commissioner Dennis stated that he is not in favor of a loan, but agrees that we need a pool. Commissioner Taylor said that the donation numbers reflect no need for a referendum, and those donations could service the debt. He is not in favor of a loan, but is in favor of a pool. Mayor Bearden believes that we can support the pool.

City Manager Grant pointed out that we could negotiate with the low bidder to find cost cutting options.

**ACCEPT BID FOR AQUATIC CENTER CONSTRUCTION**


Commissioner Dennis made the motion to direct City Manager Grant to work with the engineer and the contractor to review the proposal and find any possible cost reductions.

Commissioner Taylor seconded that motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

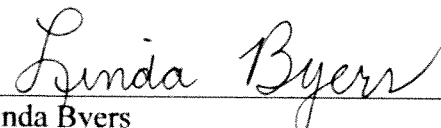
**ADJOURN**

Commissioner McCuiston made the motion to adjourn at 7:35 pm.

Commissioner Brownlow seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

  
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Jeff Bearden  
Mayor

ATTEST:

  
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Linda Byers  
City Secretary