

**REGULAR MEETING**  
**FEBRUARY 24, 2009**

The Regular Meeting of the City Commission was called to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Commission Chambers by Mayor Jeff Bearden, and a quorum was declared present.

Present: Mayor Jeff Bearden

Commissioners: Jimmy Dennis, Russell Brownlow, Tra Cardwell and Phil McCuiston

Staff Present: City Manager Mitch Grant, City Attorney Trish Byars. Police Chief Tom Wilson, Fire Chief Kent Smead, Public Works Director Bob Cochran, Finance Director Anne Garmon, special Services Director Monica Wilkinson and City Secretary Linda Byers.

Commissioner Cardwell led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. and Texas flags, followed by the invocation.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Commissioner Cardwell moved the following items under the Consent Agenda be approved:

- A. The minutes of the Special City Commission Meeting held on Thursday, January 22, 2009, and the Regular City Commission Meeting held on Tuesday January 27, 2009, for approval.
- B. Vouchers – January 1, 2009 through January 31, 2009, for approval.
- C. Bills from external auditors King, Moore, Truelove & Pharis, for approval.
- D. Award a contract for EMS billing & collection services to Southwest General Services at a rate of 11.75% of collections.
- E. Approve services to demolish Schmoker house at 4630 Wilbarger in exchange for permanent water rights to the Schmoker water field.
- F. Approve Interagency Agreement for K-9 Unit Drug Dog with the City of Iowa Park.

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

**BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION RECENT ACTIVITY**

Business Development Corporation President / CEO Sean Stockard presented a summary and overview of the annual report from the BDC as outlined in the agenda packet. He reported that wind energy is the main focus of their efforts during the past months, from supply to manufacturing to maintenance.

Mr. Stockard reported that there are several manufacturing companies with interest in Vernon.

There is a BDC Board retreat scheduled in July 2009 to establish a work plan for the next 12 months to 36 months for City Commission oversight.

### **PLAN FOR HOTEL / MOTEL TAX FUNDS**

Chamber of Commerce President Robert Webb presented the Comprehensive Tourism Plan for the Hotel / Motel Tax Committee, as follows:

- Completion of Community Website
- Create a new slogan and logo for Vernon
- Development of printed material, including brochures to be distributed through local lodging facilities, merchants and restaurants as well as locations in Texas and surrounding states.
- Renewed efforts to attract sports playoff games. The Chamber Board has appointed a Sports Committee to work with local coaches to attract sporting events to Vernon, with the aim to pay for the trophies for the teams attending.
- Advertising strategy to include increased billboards and signs that include the longhorn V and the website, and work with TxDot to post signs for Food-Lodging-Shopping along the highways and entrances to Vernon.
- Print Advertising and Other Media. Develop new kiosk at the Covered Events Center to promote Vernon, and using publications to advertise Vernon.
- Develop internal marketing for merchants and restaurants to identify potential “weekend” customer base and develop an ongoing “hospitality training” program for managers and their staff. Encourage merchants to have regular hours that include weekends to accommodate visitors attending weekend events
- Hotel / Motel Budget and spending priorities:
  - Hold funding request hearings yearly and encourage groups having events to advertise outside of Vernon.
  - A contingency fund in the budget to assist new events at the Events center with advertising.
  - Assist the County with completion of the new facility.
  - Assist the Red River Valley Museum with funding towards their new museum addition.
- Additional efforts to promote tourism in Vernon and the Community.

Mayor Bearden commended the Hotel / Motel Committee efforts.

### **ANNUAL EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS FOR CITY OF VERNON & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

Mike Edgin, CPA with the firm of Edgin, Parkman, Fleming & Fleming, PC, outlined the Annual Financial Report of the City for the year ended September 30, 2008 and the Financial Statements for the Business Development Corporation.

Tape #832

Commissioner Brownlow made the motion to accept the year-end financial report.

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

### **SEAL COAT CONTRACT**

Public Works Director Bob Cochran requested approval of a Seal Coat Contract with Freeman Construction to seal coat approximately 136,765 sq. yards of city streets at a cost of \$1.385 / sq. yd and a 2350 sq. yd parking lot at the Central Fire Station at a cost of \$4.50 sq/yd.

This years seal coat project will remove Marshall Street from Main St. to Sand Rd.

Commissioner Cardwell made the motion to approve the seal coat contract.

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

### **PUBLIC HEARING TO DISCUSS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

Kim Lacy, a grant writer and administrator with Municipal Development Services, outlined the Texas Capital Fund, which is part of the Community Development Block Grant Program. The Texas Capital Fund Infrastructure Grant Program is funded through the Department of Housing and Urban Development and administered through the Texas Department of Agriculture.

The Program is a 50/50 grant program in which the state funds 50% and the business owner funds 50% of the cost. The business owner is required to create jobs and build the facility that the infrastructure serves and adds to the ad valorem tax base. They must provide a business plan & financial information. The City is required to pass a resolution in support of submission of the application for funding and to hold this public hearing.

Mayor Bearden declared the Public Hearing opened.

Joe Rogers voiced his appreciation to the City Commission for their cooperation in this project.

The street to be constructed will run east and west between Hillcrest Drive beginning at the driveway for the State National Bank and the Hwy. 287 access road.

Mayor Bearden declared the Public Hearing Closed.

**RESOLUTION NO. 872**

A RESOLUTION APPROVING AN APPLICATION FOR FUNDING THROUGH THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE / OFFICE OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS TEXAS CAPITAL FUND INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT PROGRAM.

Commissioner Dennis made the motion to approve the resolution.

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

**CITIZEN COMPLAINT PROCEDURES FOR THE  
TEXAS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

In order to comply with the Texas Department of Economic Complaint System, 10 T.A.C. Sec 178.1 and 178.2, the City of Vernon adopted citizen complaint procedures to provide a timely written response to all complaints and grievances made against the City of Vernon Community Development Program.

Commissioner McCuistion made the motion to approve the procedures.

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

**RESOLUTION NO 873**

AUTHORIZING APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE TEXAS WATER DEVELOPMENT BOARD; DESIGNATING CERTAIN CONSULTANTS, AND MAKING CERTAIN FINDINGS IN CONNECTION THEREWITH.

This resolution is to approve application for financial assistance from the TWDB for construction of improvements to the City's water system.

Commissioner Cardwell made the motion to approve the resolution.

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

**BOND COUNSEL ENGAGEMENT LETTER**

Consider and approve engaging the law firm of McCall, Parkhurst & Horton, L.L.P. as bond counsel in connection with financing of improvements to the City's water system through the Texas Water Development Board Loan. Services to be performed are outlined in the engagement letter.

Commissioner McCuistion made the motion to approve the engagement letter..

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

### **PURCHASE OF POLICE CRUISER TO REPLACE DAMAGED VEHICLE**

A police vehicle was recently damaged during an attempted capital murder event. The driver had no insurance, and the vehicle is past the age for the City to carry full insurance coverage. The damage is estimated to be in excess of \$5,000, but estimated value of the vehicle is only \$2,500.

City Manager Grant recommends that the City amend the budget in the amount of the \$4,500 down payment and purchase a new vehicle to replace the damaged car and to finance the vehicle with a lease purchase.

Commissioner Cardwell made the motion to approve the purchase of a new police cruiser.

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

### **APPLICATION FOR WEATHER RADIO EQUIPMENT**

Commissioner Brownlow outlined the Department of Agriculture Weather Radio Transmitter Grant Program. This is a federal grant which is available with a 75% / 25% match. The cost of the equipment is approximately \$60,000.

Local radio enthusiasts will do some of the work, and Wilbarger County has agreed to help with the cost.

Range of the installed equipment will be 25 – 55 miles, depending on antennae height.

Commissioner Brownlow made the motion to submit an application to the Department of Agriculture for weather radio equipment contingent upon funding match of 25% or \$15,000.

Commissioner McCuiston seconded that motion.

After discussion, the motion passed by unanimous vote.

### **STEP AND GRADE PLAN FOR MERIT INCREASES**

City Manager Mitch Grant presented the step and grade plan for merit salary increases that will be based on tenure and productivity.

The plan allows that new hires can be hired at a lower rate than current employees, and implements a 2% increase for each step.

The current year plan is to look at current salaries/employees and “true-up” salaries with those in the step & grade plan.

Tape #832

Commissioner Dennis voiced his hope that tenured employees would be able to expect better salaries.

Commissioner Cardwell stated that this plan ties into request of several City Commissions, and will also tie into the employee evaluations which were implemented last year.

The plan will be adopted and approved at the next City Commission meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Charles McArthur encouraged the paving of Dean Street from Maiden St. to Antelope St. to improve the area around Christine Lyday Park.

Mayor Bearden responded that the City is looking at options for paving. There are 24 miles of unpaved streets and there is no question it needs to be done, but there is also a question of paying for the paving.

Stimulus funds might possibly be available. Mayor Bearden suggested a Citizen Advisory Committee to determine priority for paving. And stated again that the City Commission is committed to plan for paving.

**ADJOURN**

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 7:40 p.m.

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Jeff Bearden  
Mayor

ATTEST:

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Linda Byers  
City Secretary