



City of Lyons

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MINUTES LYONS CITY COUNCIL MEETING

May 11, 2012

OPEN MEETING 6:10 P.M.

The Lyons City Council Meeting was called to order by Councilor Mike Lucas. Present were City Councilors Mike Lucas, Troy Donohue, and Dan Burroughs. Councilor Conner attended via telephone. Mayor Doug Morgan was excused. City Staff in attendance were City Manager Mary Mitchell and Assistant City Manager Audrey McNerney.

Guests

George Geddes and Mark Orr.

Councilor Lucas placed a telephone call to Councilor Conner and put the call on speaker so that he could hear and take part in the proceedings. Lucas opened the meeting and inquired as to whether there were any declarations of conflict of interest or ex-parte contact regarding the agenda item. There being none the meeting continued.

Lucas stated that the reason for the meeting was to discuss the potential budget shortfall which will occur in the event the City does not provide the necessary four services to qualify for State Revenue Sharing (SRS) funding. He explained that in order to qualify for SRS funding the City is required to provide four (4) or more specific services to the residents of the City. Previously the City has provided:

1. Police protection;
2. Street construction, maintenance, and lighting;
3. Storm sewers; and
4. Planning, zoning and subdivision control.

After research it was determined that when the citizens of Lyons failed to pass the law enforcement levy the City no longer provided the four required services necessary for receipt of SRS funds, the loss of which would cost the City approximately \$10,000. Further research revealed that if the City did not provide those four (4) services the City would not only lose SRS funds, but would also lose cigarette taxes, liquor taxes and gas taxes resulting in the loss of approximately \$90,000 of state funding.

A dialogue was entered into with the Linn County Sheriff's Office to discuss the possibility of entering into a contract for an affordable level of service to be provided by them. The sum of \$10,000 was proposed and the Undersheriff agreed to negotiate a contract at an hourly rate of \$99 which would include parameters for services. These services could include, but not be limited to, services such as delivery of ordinance violation citations, property inspections, occasional presence at Council meetings and regular presence in the school zones, either during drop off or pick up time. This would result in the City receiving 101 hours of law enforcement services during the next fiscal year.

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Since the State does not define police protection such a contract would qualify the City for continued State funding of approximately \$90,000. However, because this contract will cost the City an additional \$10,000, budget reductions will have to be made.

If we fail to enter into the contract with the Sheriff's Office or another State authorized entity the City would lose \$90,000 in operational funding. Lucas presented a spread sheet which contemplated the loss of those funds and reflected the City's current revenue and expense streams when all funds and line items were reduced to the absolute minimums, including calculating the dismissal of 4 employees.

Lucas asked Council if they had any questions with regard to the concept and discussion ensued regarding the \$90,000 in budget cuts. Mitchell explained that if the City loses the State Revenue Sharing funds all transfers would have to come from the General Fund.

Lucas then stated that the only decision that needed to be made was to either go with the loss of the \$90,000 in revenue or come up with a contract for \$10,000 with the Sheriff's Office or another State authorized entity to continue to receive the stream of revenue from the state revenue funding. Lucas stated that a decision needed to be made tonight so that Mitchell would know what funds would be available and enable her to prepare the proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year. Mitchell asked Council that in the event the decision is made to enter into a contract with the Sheriff's office what services Council would like to see provided under the contract and the authorization of funds for that contract.

Donohue said that he would like to see the Council as a whole approaching the citizens for a law enforcement levy. Mitchell said that she had sufficient time to prepare a levy to be placed on the November ballot if that is what Council decides. She noted that Council had previously been concerned whether this avenue was appropriate since the citizens had recently voted against a law enforcement levy. There was discussion regarding the need for Council, citizenry and the Sheriff's Office to get involved in promoting such a levy in order for it to be passed.

After discussion it was the consensus of Council to authorize Mitchell to negotiate a \$10,000 contract with the Linn County Sheriff's Office to provide specific services on an hourly basis as agreed upon which will qualify the City to continue to receive SRS and other state tax funding in the approximate amount of \$90,000.

Council discussed adding an agenda item for the upcoming City Council meeting to discuss the best way to inform the citizenry of the need for a levy to provide police coverage at an appropriate level. Donohue suggested that perhaps a well publicized open forum could be scheduled to discuss the need for a law enforcement levy with the Undersheriff present to answer specific questions.

There were comments from the public with regard to the extent of law enforcement services that would be provided under the proposed contract, whether the citizens who voted against the last law enforcement levy would be against this contract and whether or not it was legal. They were assured that this was a legal process. Orr commented that the budget should not include pay increases for City personnel. He was informed that it did not.

Mitchell asked whether or not Council wanted to schedule another meeting prior to the Budget Committee meeting on May 29, 2012 to review the proposed budget figures Mitchell is putting together. Donohue asked if those figures could be included in the Council books for the next Council meeting on May 22, 2012. Mitchell said that she would do her best to have those figures available for insertion in the Council books which are to be distributed by May 17, 2012. She said that because of the possibility of changes in the proposed budget she would have to change the date that the final proposed budget was to be presented to the public.

There being no further business to come before Council the meeting adjourned at 6:50 pm.

Audrey McNerney, Assistant City Manager