



CITY OF GRAIN VALLEY
BOARD OF ALDERMEN WORKSHOP MINUTES
Regular Session

02/02/2021
PAGE 1 OF 7

ITEM I: CALL TO ORDER

- The Board of Aldermen of the City of Grain Valley, Missouri, met for a Workshop Session on February 2, 2021 at 5:59 p.m. in the Council Chambers of Grain Valley City Hall, 711 Main Street, Grain Valley, Missouri
- The meeting was called to order by Mayor Johnston

ITEM II: ROLL CALL

- City Clerk Jamie Logan called roll
- *Present: Bass, Cleaver, Headley, Knox, Stratton, Totton*
- *Absent:*

-QUORUM PRESENT-

ITEM III: PRESENTATION

- Ryan Murray from ETC Institute presented via Zoom Video Conference; He stated ETC works with local governments to conduct market research; The City of Grain Valley hired ETC to research the failed June 2020 ballot questions; the survey's goal was 250 people for a sample size of verified registered voters and they exceeded the minimum responses with 450 surveys which brought the margin of error down to 4%; Mr. Murray went through a high level overview of the survey results; the survey results confirmed voters understood what they were voting on and confirmed they were registered voters; Mr. Murray reviewed detailed reasons for the "yes" and "no" votes; Mr. Murray shared it didn't appear there wasn't much that was going to sway those that had voted no for a project like this and the reasoning was largely due to costs and potential tax implications; the residents are still divided on what they believe should happen with the current municipal complex and this is the only area on the survey that tends to have any sort of consensus from the two voting groups

ITEM IV: DISCUSSION

- Mayor Johnston shared that the agenda order of discussion topics needed to be changed slightly to address the Nichols building first

Nichols Building

- Pastor Wayne Geiger introduced himself to the Board & shared a brief history of the church's interest past (2018 when it was for sale last) and present in purchasing the Nichols building; He shared he had discussions with Mr. Nichols in the past about their mutual

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Alderman Rick Knox
Alderman Jayci Stratton
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desire for the church to use the building; The church had thought they had acquired the building in 2018, but learned the City put an offer in as well so the church backed out; the Church is still very interested in this property if it were to be put up for sale and they are a growing church in spite of COVID; they like their location in the downtown of Grain Valley and have a vision to make it a youth building; they would have plans to keep the Grain Valley Assistance Council in the building; They would look to restore and beautify the building as well as expansion if it is possible to purchase it

- Alderman Totton asked if this would be a storm refuge; Pastor Geiger shared community is important; however, they are not part of an organized storm plan at this point; they are able and willing if that became part of a plan
- Mayor Johnston asked about the current establishments in their proximity that sell liquor - Iron Kettle’s Facility and El Tequilazo and asked if the church would have an issue with signing something to allow them to stay there and potentially future establishments that might occupy those spaces if they were to close and want to sell alcohol
- Alderman Headley asked if he understands the event space might be hosting events again at some point; Pastor Geiger wants to be a good and responsible community partner
- Alderman Knox shared concerns about the Church having the whole side of Main Street tied up if they do not allow future establishments that sell liquor; Mayor Johnston shared he doesn’t have all the information and would need to research some unknowns surrounding this and if anything could be done to prevent that from happening; Alderman Totton said they should include Mr. Henson on discussions about a storm shelter

Facility Needs

- Mr. Murphy stated the previous facility plan proposed would not go forward; With the survey results the next steps is for the Board to decide how to move forward as there are still City Facility needs that need to be addressed sooner than later
- Alderman Cleaver asked if land was available for a police station; Mr. Murphy has researched some available property; Asked if an option could be for the Police Station to relocate to the current Community Center building
- Mayor Johnston said there is room here at the existing City Hall to make this area work and build a facility here or use what we currently own; he stated this is what he’d like to see pursued
- Alderman Totton asked what the Nichols building would be used for; Mr. Murphy confirmed there is no current plan
- Alderman Knox stated he thinks Nichols building could house some of our current City Hall Staff in the interim or certain departments and it could be a short-term solution
- Alderman Cleaver asked if the ball diamonds off (by Armstrong park) were removed- would it be possible to have a new Police Station and Community Center built there; Mr.

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02/02/2021
PAGE 3 OF 7

Murphy confirmed a community center would have a large price tag especially if an indoor pool is considered

- Alderman Headley asked if the land by Butterfly Trail could add soccer/football fields; Mr. Murphy shared the challenge with the shape of the land
- Alderman Headley asked if the current was expanded backwards, double the size/improve the pool and build a new police station; Mr. Murphy shared indoor pools are much more costly
- Alderman Cleaver asked where in the city would all this take place & what stated the priorities should be determined first
- Alderman Stratton would still like to keep the current City Hall property available for future businesses and feels it could draw more income for the city; She worries future boards would wonder why the current board made the decisions they did if all future possibilities were not considered
- Alderman Knox would like a new police facility on the current ball fields on James Rollo and ask for a new sports complex elsewhere
- Alderman Stratton would like to keep the City Hall and Police Station together to avoid having to duplicate certain pieces and would like it to stay this way for a service standpoint or keep them close by one another; Alderman Knox stated the Chief of Police would like them separated
- Alderman Knox said stated he feels the first need is to build a police station
- Alderman Stratton asked if another construction company could be explored; Mr. Murphy shared we can always go out to bid and shared cheap construction is not always great- this building was built with cheaper options and we are dealing with not being able to keep water out of this building still and getting ready to dig up the side of the building again as a result
- Mayor Johnston is not satisfied with the cost spent on the prior builders selected for the proposed campus project in relation to what was produced from the cost spent; Mr. Knox shared in his past experience construction costs are surprisingly very high; Alderman Cleaver shared these costs will not go down in the future and cautioned against a quick fix
- Alderman Headley confirmed there was a city property inventory of property owned; Mr. Murphy confirmed the list is not extensive and not many buildable properties
- Mayor Johnston does not understand why the current facility is not sufficient; one example is the current facility is still taking on water and it is not built well
- Alderman Stratton asked if the City Hall/Police Station could go to the Farms property and sell and let someone develop the current city hall building property and renovate the community center later; Mayor Johnston said the city was against it and Mayor stated the voters are not interested in going to the South property

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BOARD OF ALDERMEN WORKSHOP MINUTES
Regular Session

02/02/2021
PAGE 4 OF 7

- Alderman Totton said citizens she talks with have shared with her they feel the Police Department is generally left off the ballot
- Citizen Dale Arnold at 31603 E Ryan Rd, shared the public was concerned about the cost of building a complex at the proposed campus site and that what he has heard, they would be supportive of a community center down at that location with trails and their own fitness center, etc. as the money spent would be on the Grain Valley citizens; shared police and city hall together is unusual compared to surrounding cities; he feels the Community Center could work for a police station facility; Shared he heard many say they didn't like walking away from the current City Hall space without a plan of what is going to happen to the land/structure left behind; Alderman Stratton shared the differences between how Blue Springs handled their City Hall/Police Department renovations/expansions is they are located in Downtown Blue Springs and we are located along interstate frontage; Mr. Arnold shared he felt that doing chunks at a time like the schools do might be supported instead of doing all at once
- Alderman Stratton asked if the City were to build a community center without a gym (fitness center) could the city handle that; Mr. Murphy stated the city needs to find their niche and what would the citizens support and potentially looking at only a gymnasium, meeting rooms, and remove the fitness equipment to not compete with other businesses
- There was discussion on what uses a meeting space could be utilized for; there are not a lot of options in town for spaces to host meetings or family gatherings/celebrations and this could help keep these types of things in the city
- Mayor Johnston doesn't feel the city's taxpayers should pay for meeting rooms that they will not use and should see what percent of the city would utilize these meeting rooms; there are many ways to look at community centers either fitness focused or a different mindset
- Alderman Totton asked for the seniors when the senior luncheons will resume; It is a COVID county thing and not a city space issue that is stopping the luncheons
- The documents from the prior workshop over the summer of 2020, stated the amount of space that would be necessary for each of the facilities and various departments as well as how each department uses space differently and not all can be the same
- Mayor Johnston asked what the priorities should be: Police Station, City Hall, and then Community Center? He feels it could be here at the current facility or if there are other spaces large enough away from residential; Alderman Stratton asked a police officer that was helping to monitor the meeting/doors what she thought; Officer Hutchens would like the police station to stay in the center of the city with the growth of the city or moving a new facility where the current ball fields (James Rollo); Alderman Bass shared the services of the community center would be lost if the PD was to move and renovate the current community center for their use and that would need to be addressed

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Regular Session

02/02/2021
PAGE 5 OF 7

- If the ball fields are taken away, the question would be where they would relocate to and a challenge is we already needed more fields before potentially taking those away
- Alderman Stratton asked if ball fields could be moved to the South acreage part of town; Mr. Murphy shared based on past experience at Monkey Mountain, a lot goes into the development of ball fields and the piece of land discussed could have some issues to take into consideration
- Mr. Murphy restated back to the board to confirm their suggested plan: a police station would be the first priority and a parks inventory internally could take place as to what space is needed and what we have; Mr. Murphy said they can work to get together what could occur with a PD the size they need and what options are available
- Alderman Headley stated a public safety tax could be used to help fund a police station and plans need to be clear that support is needed all along the way and the police station is the first domino
- Mayor Johnston shared his thoughts regarding how information was shared at the prior project meetings and said he wanted real time discussion instead of going to a website with all generic answers; Alderman Stratton shared part of the reasoning behind that format utilized was to help with time constraints at those meetings and it was to avoid potential arguing matches
- Alderman Headley shared we will be going back to voters and if they only approve a piece of the puzzle and not another we could be back in the same place
- Alderman Cleaver stated the cost will come way down with things being spread out more; Alderman Stratton shared the community is used to doing things in phases
- Alderman Knox thinks a police station would go favorably with the public since it is a specific need
- Mr. Murphy stated the City rarely goes out to the public and the school and fire department go for the bonding capacity they have which is in part why they do in pieces
- Alderman Cleaver asked if there was space to build a city hall in this area as well as a new police station
- Mayor Johnston thinks the current facility can be used several more years and doesn't think it needs replaced and just renovated; he wants the focus on the Police Station; the Community Center would be next then the City Hall would be last
- Mr. Murphy stated cost and ideas for the Police Station should happen first then move on to the next steps
- Alderman Bass stated it would be maintenance versus a renovation for the City Hall for now; he didn't feel if the Police Station was built now and then a few years down the road try again for a Community Center

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 Regular Session

02/02/2021
PAGE 6 OF 7

- Mayor Johnston stated showing the citizens needs instead of wishes is more favorable and he would like to see the options for the police station; Mr. Murphy and staff will work on this piece and then work to get an agreement with someone to lay it out

Meeting Format

- Mayor Johnston stated he is not satisfied with the current meeting script; he stated he does not like the current process suggested by our legal counsel; Legal would like an introduction to an ordinance and if someone doesn't want it, it won't go for the first vote; Mayor said he doesn't recall a time in the past where an ordinance was brought up once and didn't get a second; Mayor stated Oak Grove and Blue Springs does not operate the same as Grain Valley; He stated our legal counsel recommends the current process, but it is up to the Board on how to proceed; Legal feels the current is the safest and most complete way to do this; Mayor would like the introduction eliminated and feels the current way is redundant
- Mayor Johnston stated the state statute states an ordinance needs to be brought up for 2 reads, but an introduction is not necessary; the Board would decide whether or not to hear a bill; if no motion, then the bill would die-then first read and next meeting would be the second read; Mayor Johnston stated in the past, the board didn't have to decide whether or not to hear a bill- it would be heard and then voted upon and stated this is how it was done forever before the current legal counsel changed it; Mr. Murphy shared it is an attorney opinion to introduce it
 - Mr. Cleaver asked why it changed initially; it was at the attorney's advice
 - Mayor wants it to go back to the way it always was
 - The whole board was asked individually if they would like to change or keep it the same as it is now; all were indifferent and were okay with any procedure so long as it is legal; Mayor stated it will change back to the way it always was and should be changed

ITEM V: ADJOURNMENT

- The meeting adjourned at 7:57 P.M.

Minutes submitted by:

 Jamie Logan
 City Clerk

 Date

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Regular Session

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PAGE 7 OF 7

Minutes approved by:

Chuck Johnston
Mayor

Date

non-official

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