

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COTTONWOOD, ARIZONA, HELD MAY 9, 2017, AT 6:00 P.M., AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS BUILDING, 826 NORTH MAIN STREET, COTTONWOOD, ARIZONA.

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Mayor Elinski called the work session to order at 6:00 p.m. Roll call was taken as follows:

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Tim Elinski, Mayor
Ruben Jauregui, Vice Mayor
Kyla Allen, Council Member
Karen Pfeifer, Council Member
Linda Norman, Council Member
Tosca Henry, Council Member
Deb Althouse, Council Member

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Doug Bartosh, City Manager
Matt McLean, Deputy Clerk
Steve Horton, City Attorney
Morgan Scott, Development Services Manager

OPERATION OF THE WASTE TRANSFER STATION

Mr. Scott gave a short history of the transfer station. In March of 2012 the city took over the operation from Waste Management who had contracted with the city to operate the waste transfer station. The city wanted to increase the hours of operation at the transfer station by opening it six days a week. We have two part time employees working up there. We have also accepted contractors' waste, and that increased the volume we received. After opening it up to contractors, we started operating at a loss. The council increased the fees for the contractors and we started to level out. Over the last 12 months the transfer station has lost about \$33,000. The disposal of brush continues to be an issue with the smoke of trying to burning it. We have shut down the burning of the brush and are not accepting any at this time. There is a lot of brush that we need to get rid of. Mr. Scott asked the council how they would like to dispose of the brush, and would they like to move forward with a Request for Proposals (RFP) that would allow us to contract out the operations or relocate the transfer station.

Mayor Elinski stated he knows the council is aware of the complaints we received from the neighboring residents about the smoke, and he is little bit gun shy to start burning again.

Council Member Althouse stated she lives in Cottonwood Ranch and she has received a lot of complaints from residents, and the residents don't want the burning. She asked if we quit taking the brush and people just put it in their trash cans, where would it end up.

Mr. Scott stated it ends up at the landfill. The impact to the citizens is not significant. It impacts the commercial landscapers.

Mayor Elinski stated if we don't accept the brush we run the risk of it ending up in the national forest. He asked what we do with the chipping now.

Mr. Scott stated we haven't chipped in quite a while. We have a small pile.

Mayor Elinski asked if we have enough trails in the area where we could spread the chips.

Mr. Scott stated we could, and a lot of it has been spread out at Riverfront Park.

Council Member Althouse asked Mr. Scott to explain the option to contract it out.

Mr. Scott stated he has spoken with Waste Management, Taylor Waste, and Patriot Disposal. Both Waste Management and Taylor Waste stated they are interested. They have the same concerns about how they are going to make money if they are being held to the same number of hours. They are also interested in taking our equipment and moving it somewhere else. Mr. Scott assumes the council doesn't want the transfer station to be too far out of town.

Mayor Elinski stated he is very interested in seeing what proposals the waste haulers come back with, and thinks that is a good first step. We would have to define what they can and cannot do with the brush.

Mr. Scott stated we can put in the RFP that they cannot burn on site.

Council Member Althouse stated we should continue not accepting brush and look into the RFP.

Council Member Allen stated she agrees with not burning any of the brush at this point, and asked what the savings will be if we contract out.

Mr. Scott stated right now we are losing about \$33,000 a year. If we could get someone else to come in and operate it with any fees they want to charge, we could save that amount. The issue is they could charge whatever they want and they might decrease their hours.

Mayor Elinski asked if the RFP would include the disposing of the existing monumental pile.

Mr. Scott stated we should treat that separately, and he could look at hauling it out. We also need to budget about \$30,000 for safety improvements to meet some new standards that are required by our insurance company.

Pat Minch, from Cottonwood Ranch, stated the burning is intolerable and thinks the council should cut out all the burning, and the oleander is toxic. The transfer station should be closed down if it is operating in the red.

Beverley Headmen, from Cottonwood Ranch, stated the oleander is toxic and people could not breathe, and hopes you will not burn anymore.

Mayor Elinski stated he feels that a transfer station in the city limits is important. Some of the ideas are a single waste hauler like what they have done in Clarkdale. Clarkdale uses Patriot to pick up their trash, and there is a tremendous savings to Clarkdale and they use some of that money to do community clean ups. We should discuss that in the future. For now the best thing we can do is a request for proposals, and stop collecting brush and stop the burning.

Council Member Henry asked Mr. Scott if the city can still continue to operate the transfer station, not accept brush and continue to operating to a zero loss.

Mr. Scott stated it is tough to say right now how much we are bringing in for brush and how much we are bringing in for regular waste. If the council wanted us to continue to operate it in the black, he thinks it would take a reduction in hours. If we dropped down from six days a week to three days a week, we would lose one part time employee. That part time employee costs us about \$19,000 a year.

Council Member Althouse stated if we stopped collecting brush and we are only collecting waste, it would seem like cutting hours would not be that big of a deal. It seems like a no brainer to cut back the hours if we are collecting less.

Mr. Scott stated what we are restricted on is our part time employees can't work more than 29 hours a week. If we cut it back, we could be open for three days and maybe one of those days be longer than eight hours.

Council Member Althouse stated five days a week at five hours is only 25 hours. She doesn't see a problem with cutting back hours.

Council Member Henry stated she agrees in the interim to cutting back the hours until we get the RFPs back.

Mr. Scott stated the RFP process could take between 2-3 months.

Mayor Elinski agreed to cut back hours, and thinks it should be open on Saturdays.

Council Member Allen stated it is important to be open on Saturdays, but would leave it up to staff to which days to remain open.

Mr. Scott stated we can see what days generate the most income, and make a recommendation.

Council Member Althouse stated she would hate to lose employees, and asked if we can look at moving them to another position.

Mr. Scott stated unfortunately right now, he doesn't know of any other positions. The employees were hired as a temporary part time worker.

Vice Mayor Jauregui stated we should stay open longer on Saturday.

Mayor Elinski stated let the Prescott National Forest District Ranger and Yavapai County know that we will be cutting our services so they can increase patrol around typical dump sites around town.

Mr. Scott stated for clarification regarding the RFP it sounds like, no burning on site, and open to flexible hours and flexible fees, and asked if the council would be open to possibly moving it to one or two miles outside of city limits.

Council Member Althouse stated she thinks even five miles.

The council agreed.

Council Member Henry asked are we going to put in some requirements, such as being open on Saturday.

Mr. Scott asked the council if they want the RFP to state they need to be open at a minimum three days a week including Saturday.

The council agreed that it should be open on Saturday.

Mayor Elinski asked Mr. Scott if they will come back to us at another time with a cost proposal on hauling away what we have there now.

Mr. Scott stated he will get quotes to get that hauled off.

Ms. Minch stated would like to see it codified in the code for no burning at the transfer station. She is worried in three years or four years when the council changes, we might have the same problem again.

A representative from Waste Management stated the council is on the right track here, and get away from burning, and privatizing would be in the best interest of the city.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Elinski moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Council Member Allen. The work session adjourned at 6:49 p.m.

Tim Elinski, Mayor

ATTEST:

Matt McLean, Deputy Clerk

CERTIFICATION OF MINUTES

I hereby certify that the attached is a true and correct copy of the minutes of a work session of the City Council of the City of Cottonwood held on May 9, 2017. I further certify that the meeting was duly called, and that a quorum was present.

Matt McLean, Deputy Clerk

Date