

**CITY OF TUCUMCARI
CITY COMMISSION**

**Work Session Notes
January 9, 2014**

The Tukumcari City Commission met in a work session on Thursday, January 9, 2014 at 5:00 p.m. in the City Commission Chambers. Members present were Mayor Amiel Curnutt, Ernest Dominguez, Robert Lumpkin, and Dora Salinas-McTigue.

City staff members present were Doug Powers, City Manager; Charlie Sandoval, Assistant City Manager; Dennis Dysart, Finance Director; and Angelica Gray, City Clerk.

Liz Glenn with New Mexico Department of Game and Fish

Mr. Powers presented the commission a copy of a drawing of Tukumcari Lake. He stated it shows there was interest in the past.

Liz Glenn stated she is with New Mexico Game and Fish and she is the Tukumcari District Game Warden. She has taken several trips to the Tukumcari Lake and spent a good deal of time walking around the perimeters and she stated it is rather sad to see. She thinks it has quite a bit of opportunity to be something fantastic for Tukumcari. At this time it is a re-choked mud flap. Being property of the department she does not think its right to leave as is. She also knows the City and the people of Tukumcari would like to see this area improve.

From her perspective, there are a few things she would like to see and she thinks need to get done before the Department can move forward. She would like to see a stable and reliable water supply feeding into Tukumcari Lake. She thinks it would be very important for moving forward with any type of ecological restoration project.

She thinks that eradication of the salt cedar and the invasive weeds are vital. This in itself will be a project. She thinks it is necessary if we want to see any kind of ecological restoration.

The other purpose for her visit is to find out what the city council wants out of the property and project. She has spoken to a few people in the community and she has a sense of what they would like.

Mr. Lumpkin stated he was on the City Recreation Board years ago and Tukumcari Lake was discussed. At that time, there was a stable level of water in the Lake. The water had fish living in it. It was discussed to build a park at the Lake.

In that time, Game and Fish offered to stock the lake and help with the conditioning of the water with aerator. That board did a project in the City where they assisted in taking care of the drainage when we had high rains and it diverted the water that went into the lake. It went down the drainage system and didn't go to the reservoir anymore. It still maintained a certain level and then the drought started.

Mr. Lumpkin stated a lawsuit was filed where Arch Hurley had to lower the level of the reservoir after it reached our reservoir. In other words, there can be so much water in the Lake before Arch Hurley has to take it out. That stemmed from tale waters from Arch Hurley going into the reservoir causing it to get a higher level than the people in the area and State Highway Dept. wanted.

Mr. Lumpkin stated it was discussed the possibility of building a pipeline from Ute Reservoir to Tucumcari Lake. CDM Smith an engineering firm was going to engineer the project. They wanted to charge us \$200,000 for the engineering. We did not have it engineered, however, every once in a while they tell him they are ready to do the engineering. Since then, the reservoir has been somewhat commandeered by an Eastern New Mexico Regional Water Authority from Clovis and Portales and they want to build a pipeline to the reservoir. Their management plan does not include a minimum pool. The numbers that have been given, along with the droughts we are having, does not give us, what he would consider a stable source of water. There would be a possibility if we came up with the millions of dollars needed to build that pipeline, we might have a pipeline that we cannot get water out of.

He stated that bottom-line, the citizens in Tucumcari have always wanted the Lake as a park. The problem is a sustainable water level in the Lake and the cost of having a water level that would be sustainable.

Mr. Lumpkin stated that water quality, when it gets very low, it is brackish and tainted, and it would not support life.

Mr. Lumpkin stated that he would ask Game and Fish for grants or appropriation to alleviate these situations and maybe the drought will be over soon and then we will have water.

Ms. Salinas-McTigue asked if drought was over, would it be a requirement to clean the lake. Mr. Sandoval stated that he works with clean water but that process makes sense.

Ms. Salinas-McTigue stated that since Arch Hurley has a pump and water coming in, maybe they could contribute to the cleanup.

Mr. Lumpkin stated if it was deeper it would have a higher quality of water and more sustainability because of the water volume that it would contain.

Mr. Lumpkin stated if this project looked feasible and was 95% sure it's going to happen, he would recommend it be dredged before water went into it.

Mr. Dominguez asked where the water comes from to fill the lake. Mr. Lumpkin stated it was a low spot and it had a supply area.

Mayor Curnutt stated that this matter came up a few months ago. He doesn't think we need a lake that size. His ideas were a campground, picnic area, and develop along I-40 with commercial districts that back up to the lake.

Ms. Salinas-McTigue stated the private owners may have some objections.

Ms. Glen stated New Mexico Game and Fish owns the majority of the property. She said property is backed up to Highway 54 and southwest corner is private property at the meeting point of Highway 54 and Route 66. Mr. Powers said City owns some of the property where the 66 lift station is located.

Ms. Glen stated her department would like to see more hunting and fishing opportunities at the Lake, along with local outdoor classroom. She thinks it's a fantastic opportunity to learn about the ecology and work with Mesalands Community College. If we could establish interest with the college and community, it would be an excellent long term project.

Mayor Curnutt stated it is a good fly away for the geese and ducks.

Ms. Salinas-McTigue stated without having the gallons of water in the Lake is it possible to be exploring how to have the picnic area besides the need for the water and then when we get through this drought then we could add the second phase, which is the water.

Ms. Glen thinks planning an initial stage and then planning for something else in the future is a great idea.

Mr. Lumpkin stated the Tucumcari Quay County Regional Water Authority, Eastern New Mexico Pipeline Group, and the Ute Reservoir Water Commission is advocating an eradication project on the watershed of Ute Lake. Jack Chapman, works for the State, gave a presentation and the main problem to get the eradication done is the cost. There are chemical that are not poison, and they do not affect the health of water for wildlife but it does kill the salt cedar.

Ms. Salinas-McTigue stated the key would be to use something that would not be harmful to wildlife.

Mr. Powers stated there is a lot of preliminary work that needs to get done. When we put the 54 lift station we had three wells and they ran 24/7 to get us down 20 ft. in the ground. He likes the outdoor classroom and working with Mesalands Community College.

Ms. Glenn stated the burden is on her to do her homework. She has an idea what the city and city council would like to get from this property. She will do research and present the cost of eradication and other options. She stated if there is not an opportunity to get a water supply the project is moot. She will also have a discussion with her department and see how much they want to put into it.

Ms. Gretchen Gurtler, teaches Environmental Science at Mesalands Community College, stated she met with the president yesterday and they discussed what the College would be willing to assist with this project. She stated that Ms. Glenn is interested in having a floral report, wanting to know what species are out there and plant density. She would like to have her class out there looking at how many salt cedars there are, how large they are and the concentration and what invasive and non-invasive are out there and then give a report of what type of plants would be sustainable.

Through STEM funding we have better equipment than MCC has ever had. We are real quick at handling the products.

Ms. Gurtler stated that when Ms. Glenn gets gain permits then students can get gain permits then students can get samples.

She stated years ago Eastern New Mexico University did a study of birds and other animals.

Discussion regarding District 2

Ms. Gray stated she visited with Mr. Knudson and asked him for any post recall options for the commission. She also gave him blackout dates where the election cannot take place.

Mr. Knudson strongly advised the commission to make a decision as soon as possible whether it be a special election or appointment.

Mr. Lumpkin asked if Mr. Knudson addressed how long the appointment is for. Ms. Gray stated her understanding is the appointment would be until the next regular election. It is also her understanding that this election for District 2 cannot take place during the election scheduled for March 4th.

Mr. Lumpkin stated the commission needs to look at the fact that the special election has come at a cost and an appointment comes at no cost. He thinks the citizens in the community will call us and let us know what they think.

Ms. Gray stated that pursuant to §1-12-71 it states an election cannot be conducted within 42 days from a statewide election. The primary election is set June 3, 2014 and therefore the latest the commission could call for an election would be April 22, 2014. She asked the commission to keep in mind the election resolution needs to be adopted 60 days from the date the election is called, which means it would have to be adopted in February and possibly be as early as the next commission meeting.

Mr. Dominguez asked if there was an appointment, how long the appointment would be for. Ms. Gray stated it would be until the next regular election. He stated he thinks the commission needs to consider appointing someone right now because of the cost of the last election for the recall. In order to save our taxpayers money we need to consider appointing someone and have them appointed for two years.

Ms. Salinas-McTigue stated that with cost set aside, she believes the commission should give District 2 the option to decide who they want to represent them. The citizens have been adamant with visits and calls to her regarding letting them decide who they want as a representative. She is not keen on hearing about appointments because she does not want to hear the negative that they are still hearing from the last appointment. She further stated that \$6,000 to her, is not very much to spend when the people will get who they want. She thinks District 2 should pick their candidates and vote on who they want as a representative.

Mr. Lumpkin asked when would the next date if we could not make the April 21st date. Ms. Gray stated that with the general election scheduled for November 4th the commission could not have an election after September.

Ms. Salinas-McTigue stated the City has the regular election in March and she would like the new commissioners to have a say as to who they want to appoint or be involved in this special election.

Ms. Salinas-McTigue stated the reason for the special election is we are not taking the decision away from District 2 and from the people who live in District 2 however, it gives them the opportunity to, if the chosen candidate is not doing their job, the citizens can go to their representative instead of coming to the commission.

Mr. Lumpkin stated he would agree to take some more time to look at this matter. Right now we have different ideas, including saving money, and getting a representative as soon as possible and then later let the people from District 2 choose. He stated considering all the options, he is okay with taking more time to consider the options.

Both Mayor Curnutt and Mr. Dominguez agree with Mr. Lumpkin in regards to taking more time to consider the issue.

Mr. Dominguez stated if citizens from District 2 want to fill out the paperwork and come to a commission and state their opinions it will be considered.

Ms. Gray asked the commission to study the letter from Mr. Knudson.

Mr. Lumpkin asked if we put this off will we be violating anything. Ms. Gray read from Mr. Knudson's letter which states the commission shall appoint, which is mandatory. The statute also states an alternative which is call for a special election. Ms. Gray again asked the commission to study the letter from Mr. Knudson.

Mayor Curnutt received work plans for the City from Ms. Salinas-McTigue, Mr. Dominguez and himself. He thinks a special work session might have to be scheduled to discuss the work plans further.

Mr. Lumpkin asked if commission agrees that maybe putting on the agenda for the next meeting to take action on appointing somebody until having a special election or should we discuss it again. Ms. Salinas-McTigue stated the commission should discuss it again. She stated the commission does not have to appoint right now and she would like them to discuss and go over the points and as long as we have dates, we can have an election next week, by April and set up a special election. She stated all she wants is for District 2 to have a say on who represents them.

Adjournment

Mayor Curnutt asked for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Salinas-McTigue made the motion to adjourn and Ernest Dominguez seconded the motion. Roll Call:

Curnutt	Dominguez	Lumpkin	Salinas-McTigue
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

The work session end at 5:54 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Angelica M. Gray, City Clerk