

CITY OF TUCUMCARI
CITY COMMISSION
Work Session Notes
March 29, 2011

Those Present: Antonio Apodaca, Amiel Curnutt, Robert Lumpkin, and James Witcher
Staff Present: Bobby Rose, Clara Rey, Christine Dougherty, Dennis Dysart, and Mike Cherry

Mr. Witcher stated that he wanted to begin the session with some of the good things that have happened in the City. He said that in the last year, the Housing Authority is no longer labeled as a troubled program, the budget is balanced, the budget for next year can be handled, some positive growth things are about to happen, and the landfill is about to be completed.

Mr. Witcher went on to say that things could be worse. He said the City could be having similar problems to those the City of Belen is experiencing. Ms. Rose added that Belen waited too long to make important decisions regarding their budget.

Ms. Rose said that she appreciated the Commissioners for coming to the session. She said that some tough decisions need to be made. Ms. Rose went over the powers of the Commission, the Mayor and the City Manager. Ms. Rose explained that she has experienced Commissioners going around the chain of command and giving directives to staff without going through her. Mr. Witcher asked who is doing this. Ms. Rose responded that all of the Commissioners do this to some extent. Ms. Rose stated that a divided commission will not work. She added that revenues need to be increased, expenses decreased, or both. She stressed that goals are needed. Mr. Dysart added that we only have half an asset management plan because ours contains no plan for maintaining our assets.

It was discussed that a formula needs to be decided upon that will automatically increase utility rates. Ms. Rose thinks the City will be eligible for a USDA loan to purchase electronic water meters and she recommends doing this project first as water sales are the City's greatest source of revenue.

The reallocation of the Ute Lake water tax was discussed. Mr. Curnutt, Mr. Witcher and Mr. Lumpkin agreed that 1/8% should be rededicated for efficiency projects like the electronic water meters. The revenue from that rededication and from water sales could be used to leverage funds for the project. Mr. Apodaca did not agree.

Ms. Rose recommended adjusting the utility rates as per suggested in the rate study results and then adopting automatic adjustment based on the Consumer Price Index. Ms. Rose also stated that provisions will have to be made for the income lost when the City Franchise fee is no longer charged. She believes this fee is not allowable.

Consensus was reached that a \$7.50 tipping fee will be assessed for each refuse customer in town and set aside for landfill expenses.

Consensus was to wait until next year to investigate the cart trash system for residential pickup.

Ms. Rose asked what percent administrative fee the Commissioner feel is fair for each department to be assessed.

Ms. Rose discussed the levels of command at the Police Department and asked the Commission their opinions of the levels. Also within the PD, Ms. Rose stated that she will instruct the Chief to ensure that penalties for animal violations are assessed.

The airport was discussed. Ms. Rose stated that the airport could be privatized or leased. There are grants available to renovate the facility if the City has the cash match. Consensus was that funds should be used for the airport as it is important for economic development.

Ms. Rose explained that the management firm consulted with regarding the Convention Center did not provide a bid to manage the facility. Some suggestions were provided by the firm which will be implemented along with the recent refinance of the loans saving the City \$19,000 annually in interest. Ms. Rose explained that she feels cooperating with the county fairgrounds will help boost revenues.

Ms. Rose explained that a marketing plan for the City is needed and could be funded through lodgers' taxes. Mr. Witcher suggested that the Chamber and the EDC work on the plan.

Ms. Rose then discussed the EMS department. She explained that salaries are not competitive and need to be increased. Mr. Cherry stated that he has been in contact with management companies and is waiting to get a ball park idea of the cost to privatize.

Ms. Rose stated that the intersections in town that are not ADA compliant will have to be modified. Additionally, changes to every stop sign will need to be made with reflective lettering.

Regarding cleanup of the City, Ms. Rose expressed concern that funds are not available for this. Mr. Witcher suggested that volunteers can be used. He stressed that Commissioners and City Management should lead the volunteer charge. Mr. Curnutt suggested free dumping to encourage cleanup.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Dougherty, City Clerk