



“The mission of the City of Safford is to make Safford
a great place to live, work, and visit”

**CITY OF SAFFORD CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES
MONDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2011 @ 6:00 PM
PHELPS DODGE ROOM - LIBRARY**

PRESENT: Wyn “Chris” Gibbs, Mayor; Jason Kouts, Vice Mayor; **Councilmember’s** Danny Smith, Jacque Attaway, Ken Malloque, Mary Bingham and Gene Seale.

CITY STAFF PRESENT: David Kincaid, City Manager; Sandra Findley, Executive Secretary; Don Knight, Director Management & Budget; Ann Waite, Finance Director; John Griffin, Police Chief; Christine Fisher, Personnel Director; Rob Chesley, Public Works Director; Randy Petty, City Engineer; Eric Buckley, Utilities Director; Sam Napier, Lead I.T. Specialist; Marion Gauna, Lead Accounting Specialist; Tisha Clark, Accounting Specialist; Vicki Foote, Library Operations Supervisor; Sally Holguin, Library Operations Supervisor; Jenny Howard, Projects Management Specialist; Kim Larkey, Information Processing Supervisor; Raymond Brunner, GIS; Gale Hedges, Water Division Manager; Art Mata, Lead Street Maintenance Worker; James Bryce, Utilities Electrician; and Georgia Luster, City Clerk. Tom James, I.T. Specialist assisted with the audio/video recording of the meeting.

OTHERS PRESENT: Brent Wiltbank, Van Taylor, Steve McGaughey, Valerie Buckley, Drew John (Graham County Board of **Supervisor’s**), Bill Harmon (ADOT), Terry Hinton, (Thatcher Town Manager), Bill Brandau, (Graham County Cooperative Extension), Jon Johnson, Eastern Arizona Courier, and others who did not sign in.

1. **WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Gibbs welcomed everyone present and called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Mayor Gibbs mentioned attendance was down at the Annual Harvest Festival that was held on Saturday. He acknowledged staff and Downtown Association members for their efforts for putting on the Harvest Festival.

Mayor Gibbs acknowledged Vice Mayor Kouts and his crew for painting the exterior of the Boys and Girls Club.

2. **ROLL CALL:** A quorum of the Council was present (7).
3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG:** Mayor Gibbs led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
4. **OPENING PRAYER:** Brent Wiltbank offered the Opening Prayer.
5. **FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2012 BUDGET:** Annual Budget and Financial Plan - Fiscal Year 2011/2012. City Manager Kincaid distributed and reviewed the Annual

Budget and Financial Plan for Fiscal Year ending 2011/2012. He noted two changes in the budget book this year: 1) Work programs included. 2) Individual department line items include actual year-end figures (unaudited), June 2011 figures. He noted the budget for grants are budgeted for the best case scenario because grant funds are not always received. Percentages will appear skewed because actual grant funds are **only** expended if they are received. Also, the electric division will expend significant dollars over the next couple of years to continue the reconductoring of the 69Kv line and acquisition of Graham County Electric Co-op system. Additionally, gas rates were adjusted and will become effective in November.

City Manager Kincaid acknowledged staff for controlling expenses. He noted that it appears that a trend is beginning according to the Arizona Department of Revenue Sales Tax Report; Three (3) straight months of slight increase in revenues - Overall year to year revenues are up 5.7% over last year over the first quarter. He stated that staff monitors expenses and revenues very, very closely.

6. **PRESENTATION:** Brief presentation on end of year unaudited revenues and expenses for Fiscal Year 2011. City Manager Kincaid reviewed unaudited revenues and expenses for the end of Fiscal Year 2011. He pointed out that 94.2% general fund expenditures of what was budgeted; revenue is 94.67% received of what was budgeted.
7. **PARKING LOT LEASE AGREEMENT PURCHASE OPTION:** Discussion on continuing lease or purchase of Warren Parking lot property (Parcels #102-22-229 & #102-22-230) located on Main Street. City Manager Kincaid noted that the agreement between the City and the **Warren's** became effective several years ago and at that time the **Warren's** received payment in full. The term of the lease is for 60 years and may be renewed for an additional period of 30 years. The City of Safford is responsible for the maintenance of the property and to pay the annual property tax. He noted property taxes are now due. He asked the Council to consider the buyout provision as indicated in the agreement. There is an option provided in the agreement allowing the City to purchase the property for the amount of \$1,000. He noted City owned property is tax exempt. He asked the Council to provide direction to staff. The Council asked that the item be brought back for them to consider at the next council meeting.
8. **UTILITIES DIVISION:** Eric Buckley will provide a presentation on water usage allocation and drought conditions. (PowerPoint presentation attached). Mr. Buckley stated the City of Safford currently serves over 22,000 water customers, inside and outside the city limits. He provided information about how Safford produces and delivers water through its system (Bonita Creek system blended with wells). In addition he provided information regarding drought conditions and how it affects the water system. He provided the **City's** Emergency Water Management Plan to the Council. He explained the Plan identifies and explains water management practices that will protect

water supplies during short and long term emergency situations. It also includes information for drought contingency plans as well as information specific to the City of Safford water supply and treatment system. The policy, purpose and intent is developed in order to conserve the available water supply and to protect the integrity of the water supply facilities, with particular regard for domestic water use, sanitation, fire protection, and to protect and preserve public health, welfare and safety and minimize the adverse impacts of water supply shortage or other water supply emergency. If drought or other water emergency conditions exist, the City will place restrictions on the delivery and consumption of water.

Bill Brandau of the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension office stated that he has worked on water issues and has attempted to encourage a change in water behavior for the past four years. Grants were sought to promote water education in Graham County to include programs in the classroom (approximately, 2,000-3,000 children are reached through the school system), water audits in homes and businesses, the Leaky House and the Rolling River. He recalled the flooding that occurred in the **1970's, 1980's** and **1990's** because of a wet cycle that we were in at that time. However, since 1994 rain has consistently been below average every year. The expectation is not a strong return to a wet cycle. He offered their assistance along with the Water Shed Partnership to help move the community into a brighter situation. He emphasized that a leaky toilet could cost a homeowner \$300 a month because he personally had that happen with one of his rentals.

City Manager Kincaid stated the City is facing some challenges and will need to consider different ways of structuring water rates that will encourage water conservation but at the same time allow the City to maintain the infrastructure.

Eric Buckley agreed. He commented that most of us recall the wet years and the flooding that occurred. Unfortunately, the prediction is that a wet cycle is not going to happen, not what we are used to. He noted **Safford's** per capita water usage is around 150-160 gallons which is very comparable to the City of Phoenix. The Gila Valley is a high water user. **"It's a cultural change and it begins with education."**

City Manager Kincaid stated **tonight's** discussion may trigger voluntary public action that could prompt awareness and somehow begin to change the **public's** mindset so that the City is not being forced into certain type activities. Incentives such as low flow toilets, low flow shower heads may be considered and offered to the public. High tiered rate structures can change the **public's** water usage habits. He pointed out that the revenue budget is based on consumption; therefore, there is a need to consider alternative funding of the water system to maintain the infrastructure because if only conservation is encouraged under our current cycle of raising revenue we will fall short and the system will begin to deteriorate.

The Council encouraged Mr. Brandau to continue researching grants for water conservation.

Drew John suggested the City place a notice in the City's newsletter and utility bills indicating how much water would cost for a home with normal usage verses a home with low flow toilets, showers, etc.

The Council encouraged an aggressive educational program to educate the public and asking for conservation before the need occurs and to pursue additional water sources.

9. **ENGINEERING DIVISION:** Discussion on 8th Street and intersection of Highway 70. Randy Petty presented different options for improvements along Highway 70 that ADOT is contemplating and being considered for Hollywood Road, 8th Street and U.S. Highway 70. He reminded the Council of previous discussions that brought forth some of tonight's proposed changes. He stated that Bill Harmon, ADOT's Engineer, is also present to address any questions/concerns. ADOT is seeking a general discussion and input from the Council on which option(s) they prefer in respect to this intersection (8th Street and intersection of Highway 70).

- Option 1, Roundabout (8th Street Connection) US Highway 70 Safford to Solomon, 8th Street and Hollywood Drive. Proposal is similar to previous proposal except Hollywood enters Highway 70 at a larger radius and 8th Street is adjusted a little to the west and makes a connection at a roundabout.
- Option 2, Roundabout, US 70 Safford to Solomon, 8th Street and Hollywood Drive -the roundabout was adjusted by moving the roundabout to the east and shifted to the northwest which allows a smoother connection with Hollywood Road. This option assumes no connection at 8th Street - 8th Street would be closed off. (no railroad acquisition)
- Option 3, Roundabout, US 70 Safford to Solomon, 8th Street and Hollywood Drive - Roundabout moved up to prevent right-a-way acquisition and acquiring railroad property.
- Option 4, Tee Intersection (Cul de Sac on 8th Street) US 70 Safford to Solomon, 8th Street and Hollywood Drive. More conventional intersection - proposing constructing a T-intersection from Hollywood Drive to US Highway 70; No 8th Street connection; Designers need to verify spacing between two intersections is adequate. Also, a proposal for secondary access street entering Sunrise Village off Highway 70.

Councilman Smith inquired about how many cars use 8th Street and Hollywood Road.

Mr. Petty referred to Option 1 indicating vehicular traffic during peak hours.

City Manager Kincaid stated a concern of keeping 8th Street open and accessing Highway 70 is that 8th Street is used as a "by pass" for traffic. Eighth Street is not a

street designed to carry traffic because the street is 18 ft. wide and not 20 ft. wide. The street is not designed for heavy truck traffic.

Mr. Harmon noted the project is currently under design and not in ADOT's Five-Year Construction Plan. The project could be, plus or minus, ten years away from construction.

Councilman Malloque suggested surveying residents who live along 8th Street. He stated that he does not like roundabouts and believes they are a traffic nightmare. His opinion is that a roundabout would hinder industrial/agricultural trucks and equipment. He believes traffic would move more effectively by rerouting Highway 70 and to consider placing yield signage for access to Hollywood Road and consider closing 8th Street if those residents along 8th Street agree with closing the Street. He believes the residents along 8th Street may prefer to close 8th Street and consider constructing a cul de sac because the road is in such bad shape. A cul de sac may provide additional security in the area.

Mayor Gibbs stated that he believes roundabouts keeps traffic flowing, but questioned the traffic flow numbers from Hollywood Road justifying a roundabout. He stated that the Council also needs to be cognizant about the commercial property in the area.

City Manager Kincaid responded that today those traffic numbers probably do not justify a roundabout; however, as the surrounding subdivision continues to build out, the numbers will probably double or triple. He pointed out that all of the undeveloped area of Copper Canyon is designed to flow out onto Hollywood Road which would significantly increase traffic down Hollywood Road which changes the dynamics of that entire intersection.

Mr. Harmon stated that he appreciates the discussion of whether or not to construct a T Intersection verses a Roundabout. Closing 8th Street and constructing a cul de sac has a lot of possible benefits if the citizens support it; signalizing that intersection in the future as a Tee intersection would operate much more efficiently than signalizing 8th Street and Little Hollywood because of the offset of each street. The phases would have to be split, which means the opposing directions would have to take turns which really drags out the length of time people have to wait at a signal. He also noted that a T Intersection with a signal would work well and a roundabout would work well too. He stated ADOT recognizes expensive and emotional issues are involved when the acquisition of homes and property is necessary. He stated there is one other option that may be considered, but believes it would be the **"second best"** option and that is to close 8th Street and **Hollywood Road to just "one way" traffic.**

Councilman Malloque asked ADOT if they could consider a merging lane, westbound, off from Hollywood Road.

Councilman Seale stated he would prefer the signalized T Intersection because he does not know if the amount of traffic would be warranted if 8th Street is closed,

Mr. Petty stated the facts about the accident rates occurring on a roundabout as opposed to a T Intersection are very slight.

A majority of the Council opposes the construction of a roundabout in the area. It was the consensus of the Council to hold a public meeting with the residents living along 8th Street in an attempt to gauge their opinions about possibly closing 8th Street.

10. **ENGINEERING DIVISION: Discussion on road projects for future STP grant submittals, i.e. 20th Avenue.** Randy Petty stated that the deadline for submitting grant application for next year's project is November 17th. He explained projects being submitted for STP funding must be functionally classified as either arterial or collectors within the City and must be included in **ADOT's Plan**. Alternative candidates were presented:

1. 20th Avenue (Relation Street - Golf Course Road) Construction: Continuation of widening 20th Avenue, from Relation Street to Golf Course Road from three lanes to five. We will be requesting \$2.2 million to widen this urban minor arterial from the current 36 feet to 66 feet. The project will include curb and gutter and 5' sidewalks on both sides of the roadway. The sidewalks will provide a connection of Shared-Use Paths south of Golf course Road to the sidewalks north of Relation Street. The project will also include the widening of the Highline Canal crossing to accommodate the new road. The current roadway was built in 1995 and is beginning to fail. This arterial is a major north-south route in the valley and is the major route to the hospital, health care providers, assisted living areas, schools, major shopping, as well as a by-pass route around Safford from US 70 to US 191.
2. Relation Street (14th Avenue to 20th Avenue): This street is currently a two-lane street. The project will consist of reconstructing this segment of Relation Street and widening to a 52 foot wide roadway. Options are: 1) Apply for STP funds for design only (include Environmental Studies and Right of Way purchase). Request \$620,000 and 2) Apply for STP funds to Design & Construct. Request \$1.5 million.
3. 14th Avenue (Relation Street to 8th Street): Section of 14th Avenue is a two lane facility with a continuous left turn lane. The project will consist of reconstructing this segment of 14th Avenue. Options are: 1) Apply for STP funds for design only (include Environmental Studies). Request \$290,000. 2) Apply for STP funds to Design & Construct. Request \$1.2 million.
4. Hollywood Road is currently a two-lane collector and needs to be widened to 52 feet with curb and gutters to the City limits. (widen roadway at Stockton Wash).

5. Phase III of 20th Avenue widening project from Golf Course to Discovery Park or Golf Course to 26th Street.
6. Widening Discovery Park Boulevard

Mr. Petty encouraged the Council to consider Option 1 because 20th Avenue (Relation Street - Golf Course Road) is a major north-south route in the Valley and is the major route to the hospital, health care providers, assisted living areas, schools, major shopping, as well as a by-pass route around Safford from US 70 to US 191. He also noted that a warrant study is included in the design to determine if a traffic signal is warranted at the Relation Street intersection.

The Council selected the construction of 20th Avenue, from Relation Street to Golf Course Road project.

11. **ENGINEERING DIVISION:** Discussion on Enhancement Project for future TE grants submittals, i.e. Shared-Use Paths. Randy Petty stated that early next year, we will request funding through SEAGO for transportation enhancement projects (bicycle/pedestrian). He referred to a map representing Safford's Shared-Use Path System.

1. Construct pathway from 14th Avenue to 20th Avenue along Highline Canal.
2. Construct pathway along Union Canal
3. Lighting to enhance a portion of existing trails - provides security and allows pedestrians to walk in the evening. He suggested starting off small just to see how the lighting will work.

The Council liked and consented to the idea of providing lighting to enhance the walking paths project.

12. **REDISTRICTING:** Discussion and possible action regarding Independent Redistricting Commission Maps. City Manager Kincaid stated Graham County has been speaking on behalf of Pima, Thatcher and Safford. Several redistricting maps have been discussed. A Redistricting Commission Hearing will be held this coming Thursday, October 27th at EAC. He encouraged the Council to attend and speak.

Drew John commented that the Redistricting Commission is actually considering two different maps. He believes it would be really important for the Council to speak at this meeting on the 27th in support of keeping rural districts for rural representation. The proposed Legislative Map splits Graham County into two different districts and does not keep Graham and Greenlee counties together which is not beneficial for either district. These two counties work together and actually provide some services.

