

Customer Support Services City Council Minutes

12 North Center
Rexburg, ID 83440

blairk@rexburg.org
www.rexburg.org

Phone: 208.359.3020
Fax: 208.359.3022



CITY OF
REXBURG
America's Family Community

**November 10, 2006
Work Meeting**

Mayor Shawn Larsen

Council Members:

Donna Benfield – Council President
Farrell Young Christopher Mann
Rex Erickson Randy Schwendiman
Bart Stevens

City Staff:

Stephen Zollinger — City Attorney
Richard Horner – Finance Officer
John Millar — Public Works Director
Val Christensen – Building Official
Gary Leikness – Planning & Zoning Administrator
Blair Kay — City Clerk
Amanda Saurey – Administrative Assistant

9:00 A.M. – Pledge to the Flag

Roll Call of Council Members: All City Council Members were present.

Council Update:

A. L. P. Project

- a. Mayor Larsen reiterated previous discussion of L-P property as discussed per City Council, November 01, 2006.

B. Professional Step Raise Program

- a. Richard Horner reviewed professional certificate list with City Council.
 - i. Three City Council members were assigned to meet with Richard and review his proposal. The three City Council Members are Randy Schwendiman, Bart Stevens and Ferrell Young.
 - ii. Once a proposal is made, the City Council will then take it to the employee committee for further review.

C. Downtown Enhancement Grant

- a. Two applications due to ITD by the end of January. City Council will need to review the application before it is submitted.

10:00 A.M. Drive Around: The following are details of locations and items discussed during the drive around tour with the City Council.

- A. Co-Op Property
- B. L-P Property
 - a. Dirt piles will need to be cleaned out before any construction takes place.
- C. ECIPDA – The Development Company
- D. Rexburg Business Park
- E. Smith Park
- F. Morgan & Reed Streets
 - a. Suggestions were made to fill in the manhole as well as unfinished sidewalk.
- G. Millhollow Road
 - a. Suggestion- Smooth out and seal coat roads
- H. Temple
 - a. Suggestion – LID 7th South
- I. Road next to Cresthaven Church
- J. Roundabout
- K. Pioneer Road – a comment was made that all developers must be uniform and follow the same standards.

- L. 7th South
- M. North Yellowstone Hwy
 - a. Need to be addressed access along North Yellowstone Hwy.
- N. Nature Park
 - a. Discussed that skate park needs finished.

Department Reports

A. Police Chief Lynn Archibald:

- a. Q & A:
 - i. Q. Why does college police force need to increase? A. Because they should be more involved with serious criminal cases that normally consumes city police.
 - ii. Q. Is the police department getting value from different boards & committees? A. Yes, it has been worthwhile and educational for the police force to be on different committees. They feel more involved with what is going on in the community.
 - iii. Q. Who are your most valuable & productive employees? A. All employees are constantly striving to improve, there are non that are sub-par.
 - iv. Q. Is your department fully staffed? A. They are staffed okay on average. However, as the city grows, the average is going up all the time. The police Department could always use more people.

B. Chief Spencer Larsen

- a. Challenges
 - i. When interns become valuable to the city, they move on due a shortage of resources to keep them.
 - ii. The challenges have been budgeted for the new fiscal year.
- b. Q & A:
 - i. Q. Is the Rexburg Fire Department getting a ladder truck? Yes, at some future time. The minimum cost is \$550,000. A. Although, the city is hoping to get a grant to go towards the purchase of the ladder truck.
 - ii. Q. With new personnel on board, should the Rexburg Fire Chief position become full time? A. Yes, for the past five years it has continued to be busier.

C. Gary Leikness

- a. Challenges – related to current projects.
- b. Powell Subdivision: It was discussed that unless a person gets a permit from the city, they are not allowed to have an apartment in a basement. Gary reviewed the history of life safety reviews for homes with apartments. The City Council determined that if someone in the Powell Subdivision passed a life and safety inspection per Ordinance 851, they would be considered a grandfathered duplex, regardless of the duplex date of establishment, i.e. someone started a duplex in 1998, received life and safety inspection and now the city finds out that they only have 8,000 square feet of lot size versus the required 10,000 square feet.

D. Val Christensen

- a. Challenges – getting the word out to concrete specialists concerning permits for sidewalk inspections.
- b. Possible remodel of city annex building:
 - i. Current office space is packed; this is a concern because each year the employee rate is growing.
 - ii. The construction of the annex building would not take time away from city employees, the work would be contracted out.

E. Blair Kay

- a. Suggestions:
 - i. The City Clerk should be reviewed for a step raise like everyone else.
 - ii. Employees need to wear business casual.
 - iii. Front counter pronounce words loud and clear on the phone.

F. Stephen Zollinger

- a. Challenges:
 - i. Time specific events, cannot be two places at once.
 - 1. Possible solution – Hiring someone two days a week. (The City Council agreed that it would be a good investment, however, the City Council will need to come to a consensus before further discussion.)

G. Jack Bowman

- a. Discussed the Americorps position; It will not be filled this year.
- b. Spring projects – A plan for tree projects will be presented to the City Council.

H. Craig Rindlisbacher

- a. Power Point – Address Search Capability (all city computer terminals can be used to look up GIS parcel information.)
- b. Budget reconciliation needs more clarification.
- c. Challenges – Pay is not sufficient to retain GIS employees.

I. Steve Christensen

- a. Suggestion – Keep website current.

J. Richard Horner

- a. Proposal to hire Consultant.
 - i. Will be on agenda for November 15 City Council
- b. Proposed Airport Expansion
 - i. Topic will be discussed in the future

K. John Millar

- a. Reiterated the need to LID 7th South
- b. Concern: Not enough engineering power to complete jobs.
- c. City Council suggested they and Airport Board develop standards for Airport building procedures.

Amanda Saurey – Administrative Assistant

Meeting continued on November 15, 2006 at 7:00 A.M.

Mayor Shawn Larsen

Council Members:

Donna Benfield – Council President
 Farrell Young Christopher Mann
 Rex Erickson Randy Schwendiman

City Staff:

Richard Horner – Finance Officer
 Val Christensen – Building Official
 Celeste Beattie — Deputy City Clerk

Mayor Larsen commented that he thought Friday’s meeting was very productive and he wanted to proceed on the department head requests. Before moving into those requests; however, he asked for City Council’s comments and feelings from the meeting on Friday.

Council Member Benfield said Friday wasn’t like she anticipated. It was a good day of listening and learning. Going into the meeting she anticipated hearing from each department on how they did last year, what they accomplished, and what they are going to do this year. She didn’t feel that happened. She would like to have another meeting with the department heads to gather feelings on goals accomplished from the previous year and goals for the next year. There were six goals from Rexburg 101; these weren’t accomplished. She then listed the goals. 1) Form a redevelopment district; 2) Set benchmarks; 3) Markedly raise the upkeep of the parks; 4) Complete a comprehensive

plan; 5) Reprioritize and redirect money into roads; and 6) Readdress the sidewalk ordinance and plan and take time.

Council Member Erickson said there was progress made in the parks and he thought they had done a pretty good job. Council Member Benfield agreed there was some progress. Mayor Larsen said the first goal is being worked on; it won't be finished by the end of the year because the city must meet with each property owner. Mayor Larsen asked to go over the list Council Member Benfield noted. Finance Officer Horner is working on the benchmarks. He wanted to have those after the audit.

Mayor Larsen discussed what he does with department head's goals at their six month review. He discussed their goals, what they have accomplished, and what they hope to accomplish in the upcoming year. Council Member Benfield would like to know that information. Council Member Schwendiman mentioned that he didn't know the Urban Renewal District's project list. Council Member Young suggested the Urban Renewal Committee should be in better contact with City Council. Council Member Erickson said Rexburg 201 should have focused on those six goals and department heads should have reported on those goals. Mayor Larsen thought all six goals received attention; however, more time was needed for their completion. The government entities (county, Rexburg, and Sugar City) are working together with the university towards an (RFP), Request For Proposal, to update the comprehensive plan. The three entities, Rexburg, Sugar City, and the county, will have to decide how to proceed; there is no deadline. Council Member Benfield was concerned how the new Planning and Zoning Administrator will do his job if he doesn't have a comprehensive plan. Mayor Larsen said it is a complicated process because there are three entities. The RFP will be sent out and then firms will respond and the three entities will then decide what consultant firm to choose and how to allocate costs.

Mayor Larsen said Planning and Zoning Administrator Leikness will work under the current comprehensive plan from 1995. We need an updated one. The roads are being worked on and they have been discussed in the past. The city has received \$4,000,000 for the South Arterial project. Sidewalks are being inspected. Public Works Director Millar is working on a sidewalk ordinance. Mayor Larsen felt that progress was being made on each of the goals. Council Member Erickson thought there should have been updates in last Fridays meeting. He was thankful that Council Member Benfield takes good notes. Council Member Benfield wanted to make some goals for the next six months, prioritize, and then come back and discuss what happened. She was glad the department heads came in and discussed their challenges. The chief complaint was personnel. How can we do more with less? Just because the city is growing by "leaps and bounds" doesn't mean the city has to spend money by "leaps and bounds." Council Member Benfield would rather spend money wisely and spend more money on city priorities. The City Council should come up with a list of their top three priorities and put more money into those areas.

Council Member Erickson was concerned with requests to amend the budget, even though the budget was discussed 4-5 months ago. There wasn't a department head that came in with positive feedback from their budget. They all wanted more money from the contingency fund for more people. He felt the department heads should live with the set budgets for the year and the City Council can address their needs next year.

Finance Officer Horner mentioned a couple of departments did ask for more people; however, the City Council said they wouldn't put those requests in the budget this year. Inspectors and Engineering were two of those departments. Council Member Erickson was confused why those positions weren't put in the budget. Finance Officer Horner said a lot of time was spent discussing the personnel requests and City Council said they would wait until a later date. Mayor Larsen said at the time, the feeling from the City Council was to wait and see. Council Member Erickson didn't understand why the inspectors said they needed more personnel and why the proposed positions weren't put in the budget. Finance Officer Horner said it was mentioned the university may not need the inspector until next year, so the position wasn't budgeted. It was the same with Engineering.

Mayor Larsen said the city is growing and the growth has been handled without raising taxes. Rexburg has the lowest tax rate in the state for a city this size. He said many positive things are happening and he gave credit to the city's professional staff. We have been handling growth with our current staff; however, that does not mean we always will be able to stay at the current staffing level. Mayor Larsen acknowledged the need to re-visit the budget within the year due to the city's rapid growth. Council Member Erickson thinks it would be refreshing to come out with a budget surplus. Mayor Larsen said the city did come out with a budget surplus last year. Council Member Erickson doesn't think any money was spent on roads. Mayor Larsen said the city is under contract to fix roads. Many city roads were crack sealed this summer. Council Member Erickson said only

one road project was finished this year (2006). There is a lot of money sitting in the budget for the roads. He wonders what our street department did during 2006. Finance Officer Richard Horner said the two city engineers spent a lot of their time preparing for LID 35 and an equipment addition to the wastewater plant. There was a personnel shortage. Council Member Mann asked if an engineer could be hired for the wastewater plant so Public Work Director Millar's time could be more valuably spent. Mayor Larsen said only City Attorney Stephen Zollinger asked for money from contingency. All other requested personnel will be paid with fees from the respective departments. Building Official Christensen is asking for two additional building inspectors because there is a need and there is money from fees that will pay their salaries.

Council Member Schwendiman doesn't understand why new personnel are needed just because there are fees that can pay for them. He wanted a benchmark that would tell him that's what the department needs to do. Finance Officer Horner said the City Council was given information to justify the new positions.

Building Official Christensen said the university has asked for one full-time inspector on their projects. Building Official Christensen said you can justify two inspectors. Sixty percent (60%) of Building Inspector Jon Berry's time is spent at the hospital and the temple. The schools project will take four times more work. He doesn't know why we can't put one fulltime inspector on the university's projects if the school can graphically show the need for two inspectors. The city won't be doing special inspections for the university because the building department doesn't have those capabilities. The university will provide an inspector for special inspections. Building Official Christensen said the city will do the same inspections for the university as we do for everyone else. The university won't be taking care of the regular inspections.

Council Member Erickson wanted to know if the school would build a building that isn't up to code if we didn't have an inspector on site. Finance Officer Horner said the university has done that before and they were glad for the city's help to fix the problem. Mayor Larsen said the university is willing to pay the fees to make sure their buildings are up to code. Council Member Erickson is concerned about what will happen to the inspectors when the building boom goes down. Is there an exit plan; like the Police Department's DARE program. The city has to pay those policemen. What is the hiring basis? The university won't always be spending \$150,000,000.

Mayor Larsen reminded the City Council of their role to set policy and allow him to manage the day to day operations of the city. The city will have to cut back if there aren't funds in the future. Mayor Larsen attributed the personnel requests to additional work. Mayor Larsen said the only request affecting the budget is City Attorney Zollinger's. All other requests have been budgeted.

Council Member Benfield mentioned new hires would be a policy decision that would go through the City Council. Mayor Larsen indicated the new positions were requested to keep up with all of the additional building permits. The city is under state statute to make sure buildings are up to code. Council Member Schwendiman wondered how many personnel are needed to do the job adequately. Council Member Benfield wanted the city to be a lean workforce with hard workers. Why can't the city departments get to a point where they have a surplus and use it where it is most needed? Mayor Larsen said there was a surplus last year. City fees stay within the department charging the fees. Mayor Larsen expressed the need to have a cushion in the budget for future years. Surpluses can be used to reduce fees. City departments that create revenue are treated differently. Council Member Schwendiman agreed with Mayor Larsen that fees should be reduced if there is a surplus over time.

Council Member Mann wanted to know what was budgeted versus what was requested. Finance Officer Horner said some of the requests were budgeted and some requests were not budgeted. Council Member Mann wanted as much service as possible with our money. He said he was not concerned so much with surplus. He agreed with Council Member Benfield that money should be spent wisely and wanted the department heads to be challenged to use their money wisely.

Finance Officer Horner said part of the struggle is to provide service. If the city wants a certain service level, you can't cut back. Sometimes you can make technology changes; however, the reality is sometimes you have to spend money to get things done. Council Member Schwendiman was disappointed city departments didn't say they could improve within their departments. He wanted departments to do a little more with what they have budgeted.

Building Official Christensen said he provided the City Council a list a couple of meetings ago. The list indicated employees had been reduced per permit, per evaluation over the last five years. That means the building department has reduced the amount of employees to do a certain amount of work all the way through this process and we are continuing to increase productivity.

Council Member Schwendiman would have liked to see the list again. He said that is important information to hear that departments are doing more with less. He was concerned that he was asked to make decisions without benchmarks.

Council Member Young said in the future more time should have been spent with department heads. Twelve minutes wasn't enough time. Mayor Larsen liked the idea of having departments come in monthly and just rotate the departments. Council Member Mann wanted departments to feel like the City Council cares about their department.

Council Member Benfield asked what everybody's priority were for the city. Mayor Larsen said his priorities are the priorities set at the beginning of the year. 1) Economic development. 2) Comprehensive plan (this needs to get done). 3) Transportation (South arterial). A check was sent off two days ago to ITD for \$11,000. 4) Seek additional funding for roads: Impact fees. Council Member Young asked why ITD was so involved with this South Arterial Project when it's not a state project. Mayor Larsen said because the funding came from LHTAC. 5) Quality of life and recreation opportunities for the city (LP project).

Council Member Schwendiman wanted to know what an estimate was for the incoming impact fees. Finance Officer Horner estimated \$300,000 to \$400,000 per year and this will be used to widen roads. Mayor Larsen said the revenues have been budgeted. Council Member Schwendiman wanted to know what money and personnel are being committed to economic development.

Mayor Larsen said the city has helped Madison Economic Partners (MEP). The goal of MEP is to bring new business to Rexburg. He thinks infrastructure projects drive economic development. South arterial is the number one project; number two is expansion at the airport. Mayor Larsen has to talk to the county on the airport issue. Council Member Schwendiman is much more likely to vote in favor of allocating funds to different projects if he has more information.

Mayor Larsen presented an \$8,000 budget adjustment request to hire a contract attorney to supplement legal work for City Attorney Zollinger. The money would come out of contingency. Another request was made to hire two positions (project manager/field technicians) for the Public Works Department and an inspector for the Building Department. The money for the project managers would come out of budgeted money for projects and the money for the inspector would come from building inspector fees. Building Official Christensen said the new inspector would be a residential inspector and the current residential inspector would become the new commercial inspector. Council Member Schwendiman wanted time to think about these requests. Mayor Larsen said he would make copies of the request for the City Council Members.

Council Member Benfield asked about Planning and Zoning's need to look at design review standards again. Also, who will do this review and when will the review be completed. Council Member Erickson said Planning and Zoning Administrator Leikness is already working on this problem. He stated Planning and Zoning as been very stringent with their design standards. There is a feeling that one shoe doesn't fit everyone. He felt there needs to be more flexibility on the design standards; depending on where a building is being built. Council Member Benfield said what she read seemed just the opposite and Planning and Zoning was looking for more stringent standards with less discretion. Council Member Erickson said Planning and Zoning Administrator Leikness would like to know how far the city would like to go one way or the other.

Building Official Christensen said he went completely through Ordinance 926 and identified the problems and made a list of each problem to discuss with Planning and Zoning. He brought a spreadsheet before the Planning and Zoning Commission to discuss zoning and design standard changes. One question was if there should be additional zones added. There were over 200 changes requested in that zoning document. Council Member Erickson said about 100 pages are discussed each meeting about Ordinance 926. Progress is being made on the text of Ordinance 926. Building Official Christensen said they highlighted all the substantial problems and the problems have been discussed.

Mayor Larsen presented an issue of creating a Local Improvement District (LID) for 7th South. He said the city doesn't have right-of-way in this area. This delays the process of getting the project done. Does the City Council want to spend money to buy the right-of-way? Doing a project piecemeal saves tax payers money, but it does delay projects. Mayor Larsen added the city is at a historic time; while there are challenges, it's a great community and a great city to live in. One of his major concerns coming into office was "can we maintain the character of this community?" He thinks the City Council has done a good job in maintaining Rexburg's character.

Council Member Benfield asked if the carousel has been fixed. Mayor Larsen said it is not working mechanically. It should be fixed by next spring when the carousel opens. Lynn Grover from the Street Department Shop will be working on it.

Adjourned

Shawn Larsen, Mayor

Attest:

Celeste Beattie, Deputy City Clerk