



CITY OF IDAHO CITY

AGENDA

SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday, March 20, 2024

6:00 pm

Ray Robison Community Hall, 206 W. Commercial Street, Idaho City, ID 83631

MINUTES

CALL MEETING TO ORDER: Mayor Everhart called the special city council meeting to order at 6:02 PM

ROLL CALL: Clerk Ptak called roll, Heffington, Elliott, Adams, Secor in attendance.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mayor Everhart led the pledge of allegiance.

I. IDAHO CITY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT DISCUSSION

Mayor Everhart welcomed everyone from the public and explained how things would go so everyone could speak and be heard. Mayor Everhart mentioned a rumor that the city is going to kick the Fire District out of the building, and he expressed how untrue that rumor is. Mayor Everhart explained the purpose of this meeting is to allow the city to present their view of the situation, the Fire District to do the same, and to take input from the public that live in and around the area. Then use all the information to reach an agreement. Mayor Everhart's position on the situation is that he believes it is his responsibility to oversee and take care of the assets the city has. He believes that the facility belongs to the city and knows there is dispute with that. The city is not opposed to the sale of the property, but Everhart is remiss in his responsibility to just give the property away. Mayor Everhart believes that the city and the Fire District can come to an agreement that benefits both parties.

Counselor Secor explained that he would like to listen to the public comments and have discussion as needed. Secor added that he was put out in the beginning when the Fire District was formed because he believes scare tactics were used, that the Fire Department was not going to respond to calls outside the city limits. This was not true at all.

Counselor Adams wanted to listen to the public's input and help come to a resolution.

Counselor Elliott had a prepared statement. Elliott did not want the meeting to be a history lesson or debate. Her opinion is, to ask the taxpayers of the Idaho City Fire District to purchase the firehouse from the taxpayers of Idaho City is robbing Peter to pay Paul. The property is owned by the city of Idaho City and is an asset that the city would probably never sell to anyone but the Fire District. Elliott's suggestion is for the Fire District to purchase the property from the city – not talking about the building. Since it is taxpayer to taxpayer the purchase price should be the assessed amount of the land. When Elliott checked the land value it was \$127,000. A land survey would need to be done which would fall to the purchaser. Elliott believes this to be a compromise by both parties in that it is less money than the city wants for the property and also more money than the Fire District wants to offer.

Counselor Heffington wanted to listen to the public's input.

Brent Adamson, Commission Chair of the Fire District, explained when the Fire Department built the building they built it out of a need and they knew the city did not have the funds. Adamson believes the city was grateful for that and has never had any intention of not letting the Fire Department use the building. The problem arose when the District was formed. Adamson added that Elliott raised a positive point that has not been discussed to date, which was thinking of other ways that this situation can be resolved.

Dave Kuwahara, Fire Commissioner for the Idaho City area, explained that he believes everyone is in agreement that they want what is best for the town. His only concern is that the Commissioner, Council, and Mayor are elected positions, and it is possible that in the future there may be someone in that position that is not as open minded on the situation as the current elected officials. Kuwahara added that the district wants to make improvements and expansions on the building but are reluctant to because they do not have ownership. Right now there is no danger with the city, but that could change in the future with newly elected officials. Coming to an agreement would solidify the district's position.

Mayor Everhart was going to read a letter that was submitted, but that individual was present to speak. Mayor Everhart went on to read a comment from John Roberts. "We created a new entity when we created the fire district by popular vote. The city and the fire district have separate but overlapping constituents and taxpayers. The city has long supported many of us who do not pay city taxes, but who travel the city streets and relied on the volunteer fire department for years and years. I suspect this meeting is now an opportunity to decide who owns what and set these separate entities up for the benefit of both. The creation of the new fire district creates a new tax income stream and should reduce the impact on the city, while allowing the fire district to become better and better! Of course a lot of those decisions will be governed by what agreements were made in the past." Mayor Everhart agreed with a lot of the statement and added that everyone has the same goal for the city, community, and entire

area, to prosper and improve. The city has no desire to hinder the Fire Department, but also has to look out for the interests of the city.

George Thomas, Fire Commissioner, agreed with what has been said and believes the situation needs to be resolved to allow for the expansion of the Fire District.

Cole Hoyt living outside the city limits explained his background and believes the volunteers who built the building should own it. His concern is that if the city keeps the building will volunteers be lost.

Terry Teeter, Fire Chief, explained that things need to be worked out. The District is trying to get a grant to expand the building, but they cannot because the District does not own the building.

Liz Hastie, living in the city limits, has two members of her family in the Fire Department. Her question is if the ownership of the building is not under contention, and the city is now offering the property, does that solve the issues? Mayor Everhart responded that it goes a long way towards it. This meeting is to bring out that kind of information, and then to allow the city and the commissioners to work out an agreement. There has to be a benefit to both sides. Whether it was grant built or anything else, the city has provided input, and he cannot see giving that away. Mayor Everhart added that he looked into grants that are available where the Fire District could pursue a grant to purchase the property from the city. Then the District would not be out any monies.

Dave Woras, living outside the city limits, used to be an active member of the Fire Department, recalled when the department received the grant and built the building. Woras liked Elliott's idea and believes it should be a compromise on both sides. He did not know or understand the legality of the process. Mayor Everhart responded that the city has spoken with their attorney and the transfer of a property from one entity to another does not require fair market value or advertising. It can be done by both entities getting together and coming to an agreement. City Attorney Callahan added that there would have to be a public hearing prior.

Steve Shay, living outside the city limits, thanked the council and fire department. Shay did not understand why this situation is not considered an investment back into the community rather than a loss. Shay asked if there could be a reduced value based off it being an investment rather than a sale type situation. Could the Fire Department make long term payments?

Lisa London, living in the city limits, did not have a problem with the city giving the property and building to the Fire District. It is only worth anything to the community as the Fire Department. The Fire District does not have the \$127000 to purchase the property. Counselor Elliott added that the \$127000 number came from her because she used to work in the assessors office. It is not a real number and is not being proposed.

Pete Scarborough, living in the city limits, explained that he has been in the fire service for many years. One thing he believes this discussion needs to think about is what would happen if there were no volunteers. There are studies out there that show what it costs for a paid fire department, and this community does not have it. Everyone needs to support the volunteers and do what is best for everyone.

Dave Martin, living in the city limits, explained that he has been on the council and is a volunteer firefighter. The Fire Department is busier now than they have ever been. Every time the ambulance is called out so is the Fire Department. This situation needs to be resolved. The department needs grant money because they are bursting at the seams. Trucks are parked outside, etc.

Roger Jackson explained that by his memory the city administered the grant and that grant paid for the land. He believes that the city and Fire District need to come to a decision that does not break the Fire Department. Counselor Secor responded that it has never been the cities intent.

Jerry Abbott, living in the city limits, believes that it should be awarded to the Fire Department. If there is money exchanged with the city, those funds should be allocated to infrastructure.

Bob Quarles, living outside the city limits, explained that everything done in this town has been done by volunteers. The Community Hall, and Senior Center were both built on city property and done by volunteers. Quarles believes the Fire Department needs to be given the property and building so they can keep up the good work they have been doing.

Tonia Hansen, living outside the city limits, explained her opinion that the Fire Department is needed. She understands that the city needs money, but the Fire Department should be given the property and building so they can move forward with what they want to do.

Mitchel Tain, on the volunteer Fire Department, explained that he was involved in the construction of the building. Tain added that Roger Jackson was correct in that the city was reimbursed through the grant for the purchase of the property. The Fire Department paid out of the grant, a grant writer, and the city was the administrator of the funds. Tain added that before the Fire District was formed, Mayor Obland shut down everything the Fire Department could respond to except for Idaho City. Counselor Secor responded that was false. He was on the council at that time and that was never said. Discussion on Obland charging other areas for fire service ensued. Tain wants a resolution to the situation so the Fire Department can move forward and expand. Mayor Everhart explained the scare tactics that have been mentioned. The Mayor at that time (Obland) was doing things without the involvement of the Council and he was recalled. The discussion on forming a Fire District were because of Obland's actions and tactics.

Steve Shay asked if the grant paid for the property, wasn't that recorded somewhere? Mayor Everhart responded that it was before his time, and he did not have that information currently. Discussion on the grant and monies ensued.

Bobby Mathews, owner of Idaho City Grocery, explained that he understands wanting fair market value, but where does the \$1000 per year come from. Mayor Everhart responded that the annual amount is due to other legal issues and the city's need to rent out properties owned. Lawyers produced the fees. Mayor Everhart added that the city is not even interested in fair market value. The city just wants a fair reimbursement and fair agreement. Discussion on options ensued.

Carol Kirkland, living outside the city limits, explained her background in Idaho City. Kirkland has gone through 8 years of minutes from city council meetings. There was a huge amount of effort from the city, county, and volunteers to try and make things better for the community. Kirkland also notice that there was not a lot of follow though. Once the firefighters got a grant things started moving. Kirkland did not notice any of the city personnel or equipment being volunteered. She explained that if it did happen it was not recorder in the minutes. The Fire Department building would not exist if it were not for the firefighters. Kirkland added that the situation needs to be resolved immediately. The grant paid for the land the first time and therefore the firefighters should own the land.

Jerry Abbott added that if an agreement with the Fire District can be made he is willing to donate 100 hours to help build a city shop.

Mayor Everhart agreed with a lot of what Carol Kirkland said. There was a long period of time in the city where nothing happened. When Everhart first came on the council they tried hard to turn things around. In order to make things happen there has to be funds to complete them. Discussion on grants and monies ensued.

Someone in the audience asked if the grant took care of the purchase price of the property and the building why is there a question on ownership. Mayor Everhart responded that this is the first time he has heard that the city was reimbursed. A lot or all was paid for by grant but in the preceding 20 plus years, anything that was not done by fundraiser was paid for by the city. The city had a fund for the Fire Department until it became the district. Mayor Everhart added that this is the purpose of this meeting to gather everyone's input and information and then sit down with the District to make an agreement that is beneficial to both entities. Discussion ensued.

Brent Adamson explained that the Fire Department has spent some money on an attorney and legally the city owns the land, and an agreement needs to be made. A recent agreement among the firefighters and commissioners that there is an upper limit that they are willing to talk about. This meeting was needed to see the public's input and then move forward to come to an agreement with the city. Discussion on previous years budget for the fire department ensued.

Counselor Adams thanked everyone for coming and explained that she is the director of EBCAD, and the fire departments numbers are up because they are working directly with them on medical calls now. Adams thanked all the firefighters and expressed her appreciation. Mayor Everhart agreed and thanked them.

Terry Teeter thanked everyone for showing up and addressed talks of not responding to calls outside the city. Teeter has responded to calls as far down as Robie Creek and the Council has always been supportive.

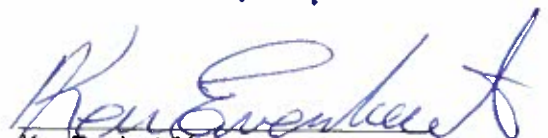
Mayor Everhart thanked everyone for coming and providing their input.

ADJOURNMENT 7:24 PM

ATTEST:

Date approved: 3/27/2024


Nancy L Ptak, City Clerk-Treasurer


Ken Everhart, Mayor

Questions concerning items appearing on this Agenda or requests for accommodation of special needs to participate in the meeting should be addressed to the Office of the City Clerk, 511 Main Street or call 208-392-4584.

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