

SPECIAL CITY COMMISSION MINUTES

August 11, 2009

7:00 p.m.

The special meeting of the Junction City City Commission was held on Tuesday, August 11, 2009 with Mayor Terry Heldstab presiding.

The following members of the Commission were present: Terry Heldstab, Scott Johnson, Mike Rhodes, Ken Talley, and Jack Taylor. Staff present was: City Manager, Rod Barnes, Assistant City Manager Mike Guinn, City Engineer Christina Cook, and City Clerk Tricia Gowen.

PUBLIC HEARING

City Manager, Rod Barnes, outlined the proposed 2010 budget. The proposed budget is .96 mills more than the 2009. The taxing entities have proposed the following mill levy for 2010:

State	1.5 mills (remains constant)
County	49.610 mills
USD 475	45.634 mills
City	49.268 mills
One mill equates to \$164,765.24.	

Mr. Barnes stated that the Commission will consider and approve the final mill levy for the 2010 budget at the August 18th Commission meeting. Mr. Barnes recommended that the Commission schedule a Special Commission meeting for August 17th to work through the budget to prepare for the final consideration of the 2010 budget.

Mayor Heldstab opened the public hearing for public input on the proposed 2010 City budget.

1. Bob stated that the city is spending \$678,000 on an airport that is not used so why is the City paying for it? He stated that the City can use the profit from selling the airport to purchase property across US-77 that can be used for the Self Help Housing program.
2. Trish Giordano stated that she appears before the Commission as a representative of the Junction City Police Officers Association. Ms. Giordano stated that the JCPOA is appreciative of the Commission's compromise regarding the recent proposed cuts of police officers from the 2010 budget. The JCPOA feels that any additional, freezing or the removal of any additional police officers will have significant repercussions on the services that they provide and more importantly, the safety and security of our citizens and police officers. Ms. Giordano stated that there are currently seven vacant positions at the Police Department which have not been allowed to be filled during the last year. By allowing the three positions to be filled, they will be operating at a level of 50 sworn officers and only three officers short of the current approved staffing level. The application process takes approximately a month and a half to fill a position and the additional training time for each recruit of six to eight months, it is important to retain current officers and every effort should be made to fill vacancies immediately as they occur. The current morale at the Police Department has been greatly affected by the low staffing levels and has caused several officers to seek employment with other law enforcement agencies. With the increase in the city's population, the demand for calls for service has increased and will continue to increase. With this in mind, the JCPOA requests that the additional three vacant officer positions be frozen for the current budget process and not be

eliminated from the budget process or any future budget proceedings. Ms. Giordano stated that recently there have been major crimes occurring; the Police Department has been successful in the investigation of these serious crimes; however resources were limited to those involved due to the absence of extra manpower. With fewer police officers resources necessary to fully investigate these crimes were severely limited and will have the potential of being non-existent in future cases. The Patrol Division is the heartbeat of the Police Department and this division is often overtaxed with an influx in crime, temporary officer injuries, requests for vacations, officer training and the use of sick time. The Patrol Division is currently staffed with 28 officers; one position short. The JCPOA feels the current staffing level of the Patrol Division is four positions short, due to the increase of calls for service and the population of the additional housing areas on the north and west side of Junction City. With the Patrol Division being short, the other divisions have to assist with patrol and in turn leaving a void at times in the other essential areas of the Police Department. The JCPOA understands that by freezing the three additional vacant positions, those positions would still have to be funded in the 2010 budget. However, leaving the positions vacant is a process that the officers are familiar with and those funds would essentially be a savings to the City. The concern is that if the police officer positions are eliminated, the positions will not be available when needed. Ms. Giordano challenged Mark Sanders to participate in the Police Department's Citizen's Academy to learn first hand what the Police Department does and how the department operates.

3. Charlie Neil stated that he, along with Jolana Montgomery-Matney, found the Junction City Arts Council. The purpose of the Arts Council is to improve the community. The Arts Council needs to be included in the 2010 budget. The City should support the Arts Council because it creates something people love to do – music, art shows, plays, etc.
4. Joniece Pitts stated that she coordinates the Juneteenth Celebration. Ms. Pitts stated that the Opera House should be supported in the City's budget. The Opera House will eventually be able to support itself, but now it needs the City's support. The Arts Council gives citizens the opportunity to see other worlds through the arts. She has witnessed her granddaughter grow through the arts. Lastly, Ms. Pitts stated that she was approached by Rod Barnes several years ago concerning the Juneteenth and he stated that the City would provide assistance to the celebration. In 2005, the City made a donation to the Juneteenth and has done so every year since. Ms. Pitts quoted, "We've come this far by Faith." Some kind of support for 2010 would greatly be appreciated. With the City's assistance, they were able to award two \$500 scholarships to two graduating seniors. The purpose of Juneteenth is to educate the public on the history of culture and to celebrate.
5. Delilah Hamilton stated that she is responsible for the historical part of Juneteenth. Last year, the Juneteenth did a Who's Who from Junction City dating back to the 1800's. If the public attends a celebration, they might learn about black culture. Without the Juneteenth, knowledge is not going anywhere. "Knowledge without action is fruitless." She stated that she truly believes this. The Juneteenth is an opportunity to learn and get closer to a different culture.
6. Richard Pinaire stated that the City's debt service will increase four mills to seven mills which is an increase from 12 to 13 percent to nineteen to twenty percent. The twenty percent special assessment deficiency rate is optimistic. Mr. Pinaire stated that more revenue sources must be found. People must pay taxes. The Commission must stop guaranteeing exemptions and should enact moratoriums. Everyone needs to pay taxes to get more revenue. City must stop borrowing.
7. Gaylynn Childs stated that this evening she comes before the Commission as a private citizen. Ms. Childs spoke about the history of the Junction City Community

Band. In 1996, the band returned and the Community Band was reborn. We stand in danger of losing the Community Band once again. Ms. Childs stated that \$5,000 is a small amount in the context of the entire City budget. This is a Quality of Life issue. It's a small investment for large returns for the community.

8. Blanchard Brown stated that recently he was involved in a head-on car collision. The fine men and women of the Junction City Fire and Police Departments assisted him in his time of need. It hurts him to know there could be a cut in resources and manpower in the public safety area. Mr. Brown stated that you can't put a price on safety and saving lives. Mr. Brown requested the Commission to reconsider any cuts to the Fire and Police Departments.
9. Terra Coons stated that she lives in White City; however, she and her family have benefited from the Arts Council programs and activities. Ms. Coons encouraged the Commission to reconsider the proposed cuts to the Arts Council and the leadership of Gail Parsons as the Arts Council Director.
10. Jerri Gary stated that she appears before the Commission on behalf of the children of Junction City. The Arts Council has provided excellent programs to the children of this community after school and throughout the summer. These programs help keep children off the streets by providing them with something to do while they are out of school. The Arts Council can be funded by eliminating the funds for Sundown Salute and diverting them to the Arts Council.
11. Mark Sanders quoted City Manager, Rod Barnes, "Nothing is personal." He has the utmost respect for the City employees and their contributions to making Junction City a better place to live. Tough times require tough decisions. It is time to pay. Mr. Sanders stated that he was hoping that tonight there would be more dialogue between the citizens and the Commission. Mayor Heldstab replied that tonight is a public hearing and not open to discussion. Mr. Sanders stated that he questions three benefits – longevity, vacation buy back and contribution to health insurance deductibles. He doesn't believe the City is financially sound enough to provide these benefits. If the City must provide them due to contractual obligation, then they must be provided. Mr. Sanders stated that he may not know the particulars of the Police Department; however, he knows about matching skills to tasks. He doesn't see the need to have two police officers serving as blight officers. The City has spent quite a bit of money training these two officers. The two officers should be put back on patrol and get back to doing what they were trained to do. The 2010 budget calls for the reduction of one inspector. He doesn't understand why this position is being eliminated when there are two officers that can go back to patrol and the inspector position can be kept. The way Mr. Sanders views it, is that there is the inspection part, the notification part and the enforcement part. The enforcement part may involve law enforcement if necessary. The inspection and notification part can be done by the Codes Department. Mr. Sanders stated that the City chose to incur a large amount of debt. With that increase comes a high price and payments increase substantially. The City must be prepared not just for the 2010 budget year, but must be ready for 2011 and for 20 years to come. The budget does not cover any new debt. Junction City is ranked 22nd out of 25 in the mill levy amount. Junction City is the fourth highest mill levy in first class cities in Kansas. Junction City is 10-30% higher than other surrounding communities. The City must lower the mill levy and reduce spending. Decisions will be difficult to make. The decisions made will be very important, not only tonight but beyond.
12. Cathy Rankin stated that the Arts Council budget is small in respect to the rest of the City's budget. She stated that she spending money in Junction City. Cutting the Arts Council affects more than the City's bottom line. The Arts Council helps attract businesses to Junction City. When a business comes to Junction City, most of the time, they bring their management staff with them who want a good quality of life;

including the arts venue. If people have to leave Junction City for their entertainment, they spend their entertainment money elsewhere and then don't have any left to spend in Junction City. She strongly urges the Commission to reconsider the cuts to the Arts Council and the impact it will have to all of Junction City if the cuts are made.

13. Rick Parsons stated that the Commission has a responsibility to listen to the community and base their budget decisions on their wishes. The arts keep progression going in a community. Humans have been creating art for all their lives and communities have been supportive. Cutting the Arts Council will set Junction City back. If the Commission doesn't believe the arts are important and the community doesn't deserve the arts, then they should cut the Arts Council budget.
14. John Stewart stated that one third of the proposed mill levy is paying for the City's debt. This is a crime. Mr. Stewart suggested that any time the sales tax revenue is more than expected, that the extra amount should be applied toward the City's debt principal to pay it down quicker. Mr. Stewart stated that the City does not need the airport; it's a waste and not used. We should keep Lifestar and their fueling. The ambulance service should be privatized. The DARE program at the Police Department should be eliminated. The Police Department should be not doing blight tasks. The City needs to look at combining the Sheriff's department and the Police department. The City has too many firefighters. False alarms should be charged for and charge the hospital for dispatching the fire crews to the hospital. Mr. Stewart inquired as to what has happened to fixing the older streets in 2009. The only streets that have been repaired are the ones people can see when the drive by the City. For the Opera House budget, he sees it as zero, where did the \$125,000 go? Mr. Stewart believes that the CVB should contribute to the Arts Council and the Historical Society. The CVB is the quietest organization in town and they can use their bed tax revenues to support these organizations. The Rolling Meadows Golf Course is a gold mine waiting to be tapped. Mr. Stewart stated that it might be a four-star course, but the club house is zero star building. He has a plan that can save \$30,000 easily. Mr. Stewart stated that he has seen varying amounts for the Military Affairs and inquired as to why so much is budgeted for them. Mr. Stewart stated that the Commission should lower the proposed mill levy and there are things that can still be trimmed.
15. Ben Kitchens complimented the staff and Rod on the work they did on the budget that was presented to the Commission. The assessed valuation is staying relatively flat. The City must increase revenues and decrease expenditures. A Finance Manager still hasn't been hired. Essential services should not be cut. Quality of life is definitely an issue but the private sector needs to stand up. The public expects essential services; he is not so certain we need the quality of life services to survive. He asked, can the City survive without a property tax increase? He believes it can.
16. Harmony McFall stated that she has participated in the Arts Council's youth activities for the past four years. She stated that the Arts Council has opened new opportunities for her. If the Arts Council is eliminated, it would greatly affect the students and Junction City High School. Ms. McFall stated that one day she would like to be an Arts Council Director and wants to do an internship with the Arts Council. She stated that without the Arts Councils, students won't have a chance to learn about and experience the Arts.
17. Gail Parsons stated, "The CVB has contributed considerably to the Arts Council over the past four years. The Arts Council operates with a combination of public and private funding. As work started this year on the City budget, it was proposed that the City completely eliminate the Arts Department. This department has only existed for two years and was formed as a partnership with the non-profit Junction City Arts Council. When it became clear to the community that losing the arts was a very real

possibility, losing everything we built in the past four years, and losing all the potential the arts have in Junction City, the community responded. Several commissioners have stated they needed to hear from the people. You asked for people to tell you what they wanted. Well, they responded with e-mails, one-on-one conversations, letters to the editor, which by the way, the Daily Union received so many letters that they said they wouldn't print anymore. You have heard from the Junction City residents and from people in the region who are coming to our community because of what we are doing in the Arts Department. You asked, they spoke – the question now is, will you listen?"

18. Mike Fuller stated that he has lived in Junction City for three years. He stated that he has always felt safe in our community and there is adequate police and fire services. Mr. Fuller stated that he likes that Junction City is a small town and citizens can be active. He volunteers with the Arts Council and stated that there are a lot of programs offered through the Arts Council. He would like to see the Arts Council continue. Perhaps the Arts Council can survive through volunteers, but not at the current level of services and programs that it provides.
19. John Armstrong stated that he would be remiss as the Arts Council President-Elect if he didn't speak on behalf of the Arts Council. He requested that if there were any discretionary funds to donate them to the Arts Council. He doesn't want to see the public safety cut. This is a difficult time. Instead of cutting the Arts Council, perhaps the City should pave only the in-bound streets. If we pave the out-bound streets, everyone will leave.
20. Alan Bontrager stated that Junction City is a great place to live. However, the mill levy should not be raised. He stated that he doesn't want anyone to lose their job. The employees should be protected; he doesn't understand how the City got by without these employees; there aren't enough employees to cover now. Mr. Bontrager questioned why the Engineering fund is budgeted at \$0; where are construction projects funded? He stated that the Military Affairs Council is important and funds should be taken from the Arts Council and other proposed cuts and give to MAC. Mr. Bontrager stated that it is a tough job to figure the budget.
21. Mark Edwards commended the Commission on the entrances to the City – they look wonderful. In the 35 years he has lived in Junction City, they have never looked better. Mr. Edwards stated that he is concerned with the proposed cuts to the Parks and Recreation. He believes that any money found should be used to restore the proposed cuts. He stated that he is disappointed that there is not any dialogue between the citizens and the Commission during this meeting. Mr. Edwards asked when the community can converse with the Commission in open dialogue about issues. Mr. Edwards stated that next year during the budget process, the community will have the opportunity to converse with the Commission. Mr. Edwards stated that he would be ok with the Commission raising the mill levy; this would be a good move. He stated that the County and the School District are both proposing a higher mill levy and no one has made any comments on them raising the mill levy. The Commission should not be afraid to raise the mill levy. Unfortunately, the published mill levy does not leave much wiggle room. If the community wants lower taxes, they should move to a smaller community. This debate is decades old in Kansas. Mr. Edwards encouraged the Commission to spend money on personnel. Commissioner Taylor stated that public meetings were held in March for the community to make comments on the 2010 budget. Mr. Edwards stated that he was sorry he missed it. Although, he was glad he asked, because there was finally some dialogue with the Commission.
22. Ben Kitchens stated that the EDC has recommended that the City exercise the call back option if any businesses fail to meet the requirements of the development agreement.

23. Deanne Hoambrecker stated that she appears before the Commission on behalf of the Arts Council and their activities that draw people to the downtown area. The Arts Council is a good thing for our community; the Arts Council touches every level of people. The Opera House also needs to be looked at. The Opera House is the crown jewel of our community. It should not be cut either. Junction City has things that Manhattan, Salina, etc. does not have. Junction City is proud of and supports the Arts Council and Opera House. Everyone should be ashamed to cut money from the Opera House. There are a variety of activities at the Opera House that range from free to \$25. People buy homes in a community for their Quality of Life. We want people, businesses and restaurants to come to Junction City.

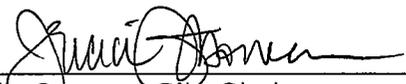
Mayor Heldstab thanked everyone for attending and for being courteous.

City Manager, Rod Barnes, stated that he wanted to clarify that the City does not provide any money to fund health insurance deductibles. At this point, there is no money allocated in the 2010 budget for Sundown Salute. The delinquency rate for 2009 and 2010 has been figured at 30%. The City is in full compliance with State regulations with its debt management.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Rhodes moved, seconded by Commissioner Talley to adjourn at 8:55 p.m. Ayes: Heldstab, Johnson, Rhodes, Talley, Taylor. Nays: None. Motion Carried.

APPROVED AND ACCEPTED THIS 1st DAY OF AUGUST 2009 AS THE OFFICIAL COPY OF THE JUNCTION CITY CITY SPECIAL COMMISSION MINUTES FOR AUGUST 11, 2009.



Tricia Gowen, City Clerk



Terry Heldstab, Mayor