

**THE JOINT WORKSESSION
OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BENSON, ARIZONA
HELD APRIL 25, 2011 AT 6:00 P.M.
AT CITY HALL, 120 W. 6TH STREET, BENSON, ARIZONA**

CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Fenn thanked the Benson Unified School District Board for attending and then called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. with the pledge of allegiance.

ROLL CALL:

Present were: Mayor Mark M. Fenn, Vice Mayor John Lodzinski, Councilmembers Jo Deen Boncquet, David Lambert, Nick Maldonado and Lori McGoffin. Absent was: Councilmember Al Sacco.

Benson Unified School District Board Members Present: President Bob Bernal, Clerk Chic Maldonado, Members Brad Cherry, John Comaduran and Kelly Johnson. Also present was Dr. David Woodall, School Superintendent.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Discussion and possible direction to respective staff regarding areas for Mutual Cooperation including, but not limited to the School's Tailgate Party and Butterfield Stage Days

City Manager Glenn Nichols addressed the City Council and the School Board stating the joint worksession was being held to discuss partnerships between both public bodies for the betterment of the school and the community, adding events for a partnership could be the a tail gate party at the school and Butterfield Stage Days. School Board President Bob Bernal stated when the school opened the stadium, Dr. Woodall had the idea of a community affair to recognize the community support for the override. President Bernal then stated the event was very well attended and brought the community together and they thought a joint venture on an event like that would be beneficial for both the school and the City. School Superintendent Dr. David Woodall then spoke about the tail gate event stating they had approximately 1,000 people attend and the school offered free admission, a free meal, hired a band to be there and tried to make it a community celebration to because Benson voters have been extremely generous, passing 2 overrides for the Benson School District. Dr. Woodall then stated he had received many positive comments on the event and was hoping to build on it, whether it was a separate event from Butterfield Stage Days or not. Dr. Woodall then stated they also were looking at working with the City to participate in Butterfield Stage Days possibly by displaying student work, adding it may generate a little more gathering of Benson people and he thinks there is an opportunity to build synergy for both events.

Discussion then focused on the timing of home football games, homecoming and Butterfield Stage Days, and if they could be coordinated into one event. The School Board informed Council the football games are scheduled by the AIA 2 years in advance, but once they have the schedule they would be able to identify if there would be a home game the same weekend of Butterfield Stage Days. Discussion continued on the event schedules and if combining the events would hinder any activities with Vice Mayor Lodzinski stating he thinks it would be better to keep individual events bringing in people on separate weekends that would benefit the merchants, businesses and hotels. Dr. Woodall then stated he may have created some confusion asking to have these events on the agenda, but had not intended to combine them. Dr. Woodall then stated in terms of Butterfield Stage Days, he was drawing from the Vail School District, stating the community of Vail does something called Vail Pride Days where all the organizations come together including the school and try to showcase Vail, with all their elected officials there, displays of student work to bring parents there, a parade and that's what he was envisioning was a way to increase community involvement.

The discussion then centered on the tail gate event and what kind of assistance the City could look at providing, with Dr. Woodall stating they would like to expand the event if possible. Dr. Woodall then spoke of the assistance they had received at the first tail gate event from contractors and most labor being provided through the school district, with the largest cost being the meal. Board Member Kelly Johnson then stated the more people they have involved in the tail gate event, the more in-kind donations the school was likely to receive. Clerk Maldonado then stated it was a lot of fun for the board members to man the soda dispensing and what they

thought was the Council could possibly do something similar, adding the members of the community could get to see both governing bodies interact.

Further discussion focused on the contacts for each event and continued discussions between the City and the School Board, with City Manager Glenn Nichols stating once the school receives their football schedule, we can continue to work with the school and bring something back to Council. Councilmembers McGoffin and Maldonado volunteered to work with City staff and the school to do this.

Mayor Fenn asked if there were any other ideas or comments with Councilmember McGoffin stating another idea was to solicit donations at the tail gate event for the following tail gate event. Councilmember Lambert then agreed with Vice Mayor Lodzinski the tail gate event should be at the beginning of the football season to encourage attendance at subsequent football games.

2. Discussion and possible direction to respective staff regarding the School Resource Officer Program

City Manager Glenn Nichols addressed Council stating this item is on the agenda to see where the School Resource Officer (SRO) Program is at and where it's going. Mayor Fenn asked Chief of Police Paul Moncada to address the Council concerning the SRO Program. Chief Moncada then addressed Council stating he had requested this item be on the agenda prior to knowing the State was going to offer this grant again, adding he had been concerned due to the State's budget issues. Chief Moncada then added if the grant had not been funded or if the school was unsuccessful in the grant, he would be looking to Council for direction concerning the SRO position and whether the City would fund the position or if the school would fund it.

Discussion then focused on the competitive grant process and how much funding had been cut from this program in recent years. Dr. Woodall confirmed the funding for this position is year to year and is never guaranteed, adding last year the funding for this program was cut 60% and they lost a position at the school and they will have to address the issue when they find out if their grant application is successful.

Mayor Fenn asked Chief of Police Paul Moncada if the SRO Gary Douglas' position would be in the budget regardless of the grant program with Chief Moncada stating he believes the position is in the police department budget and the grant reimbursement is budgeted as income in another section of the budget. Mayor Fenn then stated when Council was faced with this decision in the last budget process, they were prepared to move forward in keeping an officer at the school as an SRO with Chief Moncada confirming this. Chief Moncada then stated it would again be up to the Council, and noted there may be some who would object to it, if only because it would dedicate a City employee to one group of people. Chief Moncada then stated he understood the SRO position provides a valuable asset to the school and the community and has been extremely beneficial since we've had it, growing every year, but in some cases that could be bad if the Council doesn't keep the position in check, so it doesn't go too far.

Discussion then focused on the benefits of an SRO with Council agreeing it's very important to maintain that position, the difference it makes with the youth and the community and if there's any way the City can help, they should.

Mayor Fenn then stated the Council has budget worksessions coming up, and they will address coverage for that position with Finance Director Jim Cox.

3. Discussion and possible direction to respective staff on establishing a Benson Youth Council; discussion may include Advisors to the Youth Council, the process to apply to participate on the Youth Council, the goals and direction for the Youth Council and other objectives

Councilmember Lambert addressed the Council and the School Board stating after meeting with a Youth Council at the League of Arizona Cities & Towns conference he and Councilmember McGoffin wanted to pursue setting up a Youth Council. Councilmember Lambert then stated at the conference they discussed the Youth Council, that they had their own rules and bylaws and it was interesting how much they come together to help out the City, adding the youth of today are the future leaders of tomorrow. Councilmember Lambert then stated this was put on the agenda to get the school involved and let them know what we're trying to do, adding he and Councilmember McGoffin will be spearheading this after the first of July when the budget comes out so next

year's school students will have an opportunity to create a council on their own. Councilmember Lambert then stated City Clerk Vicki Vivian has been gathering information on Youth Councils and asked if she had anything to add.

City Clerk Vicki Vivian then stated one of the goals of the Clerk's office was to try and get the youth involved in government, because if the youth are involved, they have the knowledge they need to participate and will be less leery about participation. Ms. Vivian then stated she had a little different vision than Councilmember Lambert so she didn't know if the two ideas could be combined. Ms. Vivian then read from a memo to the Council stating she believed starting with our youth can make a substantial impact on future generations and by gaining the knowledge and comprehension of local government operations, the youth will learn that they can make a difference and hopefully, seize the opportunities to participate in government at not only the local level, but the state and federal levels as well. Partnering with the school, working hand-in-hand would not only encourage participation, but almost certainly guarantee completion of a program created to show how government works on a local level and that fundamentally, the same processes can be applied to state and federal government. This would not only benefit the youth and the school, but the City in years to come, as these students hopefully become vital members of the community seeking an active role in government, whether it be by voting, attending meetings and addressing Council, seeking educational opportunities, employment opportunities or even running for an elected position.

Ms. Vivian then continued stating she had gathered information on Youth Councils and found there are several differences, with some appointed by the Mayor and/or Council and some chosen by staff after an application process. Many of the Councils are formed to host events in the community and although there is some fund-raising done, they are funded largely by the City, which was a concern. Ms. Vivian stated some are run the same as a City Council with open meeting law requirements and others are less formal and meet as groups, but all the councils have the goals of creating an effective way to communicate with the youth in their community, to establish a leadership building program, to expose the youth to the inner workings of government, to encourage youth to have an interest in their community and to create peer mentors, leaders and role models for other youth in the community.

Ms. Vivian then stated her first thought was to partner with the local schools to bring local government to the classroom and by partnering with a government teacher; the curriculum could be enhanced to make government "come to life". The students could elect their own Council and using City Council agendas, could hold meetings in the class room, with the remaining students playing the role of staff and the general public, complete with a call to the public. They could then listen to the actual Council meeting and see if Council voted the same as they did, discussing each item and the outcome. Education could continue explaining what then happens after a Council meeting, how things become "public documents", how documentation is processed, public records and other things. Ms. Vivian then stated this could be done for a semester and could then be analyzed by the Clerk and the teacher who partnered in the program and hopefully, we would see the program give the youth the knowledge and confidence to stand up and participate in their government.

Ms. Vivian then continued, stating she believed, once a successful program is in place, we could expand to create a Council appointed Youth Council to hold their own meetings; their goals and objectives could be guided, but ultimately determined by the Youth Council. They could serve as an advisory group to the Council, providing a voice for the youth of the community as well as work on events and fundraisers, possibly having their own booth at city events such as the 4th of July festivities or Butterfield Stage Days. Ms. Vivian then concluded stating the direction for a Youth Council would be determined by Council and the School, if they participated, then added if the Youth Council held events or fundraisers on weekends, they would require adult supervision.

Mayor Fenn asked the School Board if there was something within the existing curriculum that could possibly fit this idea with Dr. Woodall stating there probably is and there even may be some bodies in existence that could encompass a Youth Council, adding the School has a student council, elected representatives from each grade and other organizations with elected officers and it might make sense to engage or tap into some of those organizations. Dr. Woodall then stated they do have some advanced study classes that also do government activities that it might work well into, adding he would need to get a little better understanding of what we're trying to achieve.

Discussion then moved to the League of Arizona Cities & Towns conference and the youth program there with

Council stating the Youth Councils meet for breakfast, have meetings for ½ the day, then usually have a field trip the remainder of the day and the following morning some Youth Councils present their City flag at the morning meeting.

Discussion then centered around a program that Member Brad Cherry brought up where the school, the SRO and the court system worked together to address traffic violations that officers might write a referral or cite a kid for, adding the program was under the SRO and had an appointed JP, which was one of the kids, a clerk and a judge, and the program was incorporated into the school discipline program. Member Cherry then stated between the City and the school and the SRO, we could incorporate something so the youth could learn all aspects of government. Dr. Woodall stated the school did have a teen court at one point, but he was not sure if it was still in existence. Chief of Police Paul Moncada expressed his concern stating once an officer writes a criminal citation or a juvenile referral, it is automatically in the criminal justice system and becomes part of the juvenile court system. The general consensus was this was something different than what was being explored.

Mayor Fenn then stated there were a lot of ideas floating around and he suggested both governing bodies need to be sensitive on both sides as far as staffing and manpower, adding a Youth Council was a great idea, but questioned whether there was available existing staff that could take on this additional responsibility. Mayor Fenn then asked the School Board to look and see if a program could be integrated within an existing curriculum and if there was an advisor or a teacher that would like to do something like this, then asked them to coordinate that through Councilmember Lambert. Mayor Fenn then stated City Clerk Vicki Vivian would need to determine within her department what resources they have and the time and manpower that's available and then decide where to go from there. Mayor Fenn then stated we don't want to have a Youth Council just to say we have a Youth Council, we want to have a real purpose for it.

Discussion then focused on the information Ms. Vivian had gathered and getting that information to the School with Ms. Vivian stating she would do that and Dr. Woodall stating he would talk to some of their government teachers and see what the potential is. School Board President Bob Bernal stated we also needed to look at other resources for this, such as the FFA that has national chapters and belong to national organizations and FBLA, adding there are many organizations within our school that function like a governing body.

Mayor Fenn then stated we have the start of some discussion there and we'll see where it goes. School Board Clerk Maldonado stated there are some items, such as the football games we will need to follow up on with City Clerk Vicki Vivian stating Councilmembers McGoffin and Maldonado will be working on those events with staff and with the School and bring something back to Council. City Clerk Vicki Vivian then stated she would get the information on Youth Councils to Dr. Woodall and would meet with him to discuss the possibilities and would also share that information with Councilmembers Lambert and McGoffin. Mayor Fenn then stated he certainly appreciates the School Board and their participation within the community, adding he agrees with what was said earlier; that all of our constituents are the same people, we're all serving the same people, and hopefully for the common good.

Board Member President Bob Bernal then asked if he could make a recommendation that the Council and the School Board hold a joint meeting bi-yearly. Mayor Fenn indicated the meetings could be held twice a year and added this meeting was a spring meeting and then asked City Clerk Vicki Vivian to schedule a fall meeting with the School Board.

ADJOURNMENT:

Councilmember McGoffin moved to adjourn at 6:50 p.m. Seconded by Vice Mayor Lodzinski. Motion passed by 11-0 (all present).

Mark M. Fenn, Mayor

ATTEST:

Vicki L. Vivian, CMC, City Clerk