

**THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BENSON, ARIZONA
HELD APRIL 27, 2015 AT 7:00 P.M.
AT CITY HALL, 120 W. 6TH STREET, BENSON, ARIZONA**

CALL TO ORDER:

Vice Mayor McGoffin called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. Vice Mayor McGoffin then introduced Vicar Sarah Isakson of St. Raphael in the Valley church who offered the invocation.

ROLL CALL:

Present were: Vice Mayor Lori McGoffin, Councilmembers Pat Boyle, Jeff Cook, Joe Konrad, David Lambert and Chris Moncada. Absent was: Mayor Toney D. King., Sr. Vice Mayor McGoffin stated Mayor King called her and was unable to attend this meeting.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION: None

PROCLAMATION:

Vice Mayor McGoffin asked Councilmember Lambert to read the proclamation of the Mayor and Council declaring May 2, 2015 as "Benson Poppy Day." The proclamation was then presented to the American Legion Auxiliary, Unit 45.

PUBLIC HEARING: None

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

Barbara Nunn, La Cuesta Drive, Benson, stated after the April 13 Council meeting, Mr. Lotsof from Cave FM, or the eyesore as Mr. Lotsof calls it, said Mayor King told him to shut up. Ms. Nunn then stated that did not happen, adding so many people signed up, the Mayor had to limit speakers to 3 minutes instead of 5 minutes. Ms. Nunn then stated it seemed very disingenuous for Mr. Lotsof to say on the radio that he was told to shut up, but if listeners wanted the meat of the story, they could go to his editorial page on his website. Ms. Nunn then stated everyone in town doesn't have access to a computer, but almost everyone has a radio. Ms. Nunn then stated praise should be given to the City for not condemning Mr. Lotsof's trailer, as it looks like it could become another Stagecoach Trails for all taxpayers and then asked how the City could give the radio station special favors when it doesn't give favors to other businesses. Ms. Nunn then stated if it's so easy to pick up and move the radio station to another city between permits, licenses, moving the tower and equipment, it seems that it would have already happened, adding instead of bashing the City, Mr. Lotsof should be productive. Ms. Nunn then stated as for the City Attorney being paid \$5,000 a month, it was a cheap price to keep the City out of more debacles like Stagecoach Trails. Ms. Nunn then stated regarding the recent sales tax increase, she didn't want things to cost more either, but it was a fallacy that people will drive to Sierra Vista or Tucson for groceries alone, adding it may occur because people are already in those places due to needing specialized care from doctors. Ms. Nunn then stated Benson needs more specialized care and the hospital that El Dorado is talking about at Vigneto looks good to her, adding everyone should think "doctor local, shop local." Ms. Nunn then stated concerning the budget advisory committee, there is already a budget advisory committee called the council, then asked why the City should get bogged down with another committee.

Don Buchanan, River Road, St. David, stated he owns land below where wells will be drilled for the proposed subdivision and he would like to speak regarding Vigneto and the Community Facilities District (CFD), adding he has no specific information about the builder and he wasn't present to tell the Council they are great criminals, but he would like to remind Council that they are here to make a profit. Mr. Buchanan then stated that means any time there's a conflict between the City and the developer, the developer will be inclined to put their profit first and for this reason, if the Council decides to establish a CFD, he would recommend 3 of the 5 directors be people who know Benson and will put the interest of Benson first because once directors are

appointed, the Council will have very little control over decisions made by the directors. Mr. Buchanan then stated the Council should appoint people with administrative and financial backgrounds and they should be people who will not be bullied, adding even though the CFD will be separate financially in most things, there will be some decisions made by the CFD that will potentially affect operating costs of the City. Mr. Buchanan then stated the Council is in the middle of negotiations with Vigneto, adding he is sure the Council knows that and he knows that Councilman Konrad knows a little bit about negotiations and that in negotiations, the first offer should never be accepted. Mr. Buchanan then stated one thing that would immediately concern him is an indication by the builder that there wouldn't be any traffic problems on Hwy 90, adding he is certain at some point, there are going to be traffic problems. Mr. Buchanan then stated a second potential concern is the proposed time schedule for finishing the CFD, adding he suspects this is only the builder's desire and not an actual requirement. Mr. Buchanan stated he would tend to be suspicious of anyone, including fellow Councilmembers who are always wanting to jump into something without any study or thought, asking what the motive of such capricious behavior was and if it was just an unwillingness for careful study or something else. Mr. Buchanan then stated finally, he would like to add one piece of information about the purported 100 year availability of water, stating if the Council did any study at all, they would find documented instances of a predicted 100 year availability and the water supply disappeared soon after. Mr. Buchanan then asked the Council to remember that if this happens, all the people of Benson and those in the surrounding areas will be affected, then asked the Council if they wanted to be known as the Council who destroyed Benson.

David Thompson, La Cuesta Drive, Benson, spoke regarding the CFD Board, stating he thinks the people appointed should be Benson residents only, adding the Council is hearing from many surrounding areas, but the Benson residents are the people who are mostly affected by this project. Mr. Thompson then spoke about listening to comments and reading editorials, especially regarding the El Dorado development project in Benson and it makes him wonder if people are stupid, apathetic or just don't have any common sense. Mr. Thompson then read from editorials in the April 15 issue of the Benson News-Sun concerning the El Dorado subject, quoting "So where are these people going to work, Tucson, there's no way that City can supply 28,000 jobs, can anyone explain how a 2-lane freeway is going to carry 28,000 more cars to Tucson?" Mr. Thompson then stated common sense would say that not all the households are going to be active, there will be vacation homes and/or retirees and then stated the development is a 20-year project, adding the State will grow with population and will adapt, noting even wagon trails became roads and highways. Mr. Thompson then continued reading from the editorial, quoting "What about services, do we really think the Wal-Mart and Safeway can service a population of that size, of course not, that means more stores and retail businesses. Does anyone really want that besides the revenue hungry City Council?" Mr. Thompson then stated he does, adding comfort, convenience and safety go a long way to the improvement of the community and if people choose to live without those comforts, they could live in a remote or sparse area, noting that is their option, but those people don't speak for him. Mr. Thompson continued reading from the editorial, again quoting "Do you want to wait several months to see a local doctor, do you want a gigantic school system in St. David?" Mr. Thompson then asked if people weren't paying attention and if the 50-bed hospital and schools in the development doesn't speak to these things. Mr. Thompson then stated in the very same article it reads that "The Italians are smart enough to have several severe restrictions of development so the character of their countryside doesn't get ruined." Mr. Thompson then stated the Council has heard about rain and walls of water, adding when Henny Penny said the sky is falling, she must have lived in St. David. Mr. Thompson then read from another editorial in same issue of the News-Sun, quoting "With very little fanfare and in the privacy of a closed meeting of the Benson City Council, Chris Moncada was appointed to the supposed vacant City Council seat. Benson residents could have been better served by the Mayor and Council had a real search for candidates been conducted...this type of action should have been accomplished in an open public meeting. Why was this action required to be in a private and closed-door meeting?" Mr. Thompson then stated this person not only is misinformed, but is grossly negligent in what he's saying, adding people should consider what they say. Mr. Thompson then stated on another subject, there's a local businessman who has been having trouble upgrading his facility, adding this particular individual has been known to say he has not had any help in his quest for improvements, but it is a fact that another local business person in Benson individually has not only offered to help bring the business in compliance with all City, County, State and Federal laws, but to do so without an interruption of his business. Mr. Thompson then stated this individual has also offered his services at an extremely reasonable price including financing for up to 20 years, but the local businessman refused his help. Mr. Thompson then stated when this local businessman was asked by

Mayor King about this help, the businessman stated that he knew nothing of the offer. Mr. Thompson asked if this was due to stupidity, apathy, a lack of common sense or if it was just plain dishonesty.

CITY MANAGER REPORT:

City Manager William Stephens addressed Council, giving the dates of upcoming meetings and events.

- Tuesday, April 28, 2015 – Community Watershed Alliance, 6:30 p.m., City Hall
- Thursday, April 30, 2015 – TPT (Transaction Privilege Tax) Increase Forum, 6:00 p.m., City Hall
- Monday, May 4, 2015 – Benson Economic Development Committee, 6:00 p.m., City Hall
- Thursday, May 7, 2015 – TPT (Transaction Privilege Tax) Increase Forum, 6:00 p.m., City Hall
- Saturday, May 9, 2015 – City Council Budget Worksession, 8:00 a.m., City Hall
- Monday, May 11, 2015 – City Council Meeting, 7:00 p.m., City Hall
- Tuesday, May 12, 2015 – Planning & Zoning Commission Worksession, 7:00 p.m., City Hall

- Friday, May 22, 2015 – Benson City Pool Opens at 12:00 p.m., For more information on the pool and our other summer activities, go to www.cityofbenson.com and look for Parks and Recreation
- Monday, May 25, 2015 – Memorial Day Pool Party – Kick off the Summer Swim Season with the City of Benson’s Forget Me Not Memorial Day Pool Party on Monday, May 25, from 11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Join us for a fun day filled with music, prizes and food! Free swimming is sponsored by the VFW Women’s Auxiliary
- Monday, May 25, 2015 – Memorial Day – City Offices Closed

Vice Mayor McGoffin then asked Mr. Stephens about the attendance of the Transaction Privilege Tax forums with Mr. Stephens stating the first forum had 2 citizens in attendance with the remaining attendees being City employees or Councilmembers. Mr. Stephens then stated the second forum had between 8 and 10 people attending in addition to City Staff or City Councilmembers. Mr. Stephens then stated the third forum would be held on April 30 and the final forum would be held on May 7.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Discussion and possible action on the Consent Agenda**

- 1a. Minutes of the March 23, 2015 Worksession
- 1b. Minutes of the March 23, 2015 Regular Meeting
- 1c. Minutes of the March 31, 2015 Special Meeting
- 1d. Resignation of Barbara Nunn from the Benson Economic Development Committee
- 1e. Appointment of Debra Crafts to the Benson Economic Development Committee
- 1f. Invoices processed for the period from April 1, 2015 through April 20, 2015

Councilmember Konrad moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Councilmember Moncada. Motion passed 6-0.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Pursuant to A.R.S. §38-431.03 (A)(3), discussion or consultation for legal advice with the attorney or attorneys of the public body regarding Community Facilities Districts and the roles and responsibilities of various counsel and advisors thereon and possible candidates for retention or approval

Councilmember Lambert moved to enter into an executive session with the Mayor and Council, the City Manager, City Attorney, Finance Director, Public Works Director and City Clerk at 7:23 p.m. Seconded by Councilmember Moncada. Motion passed 6-0.

Council reconvened at 8:24 p.m.

2. **Review of City Finances with emphasis on March financial results and the City's financial position on March 31, 2015**

Finance Director Dustin DeSpain reviewed the financial highlights for the month of March, stating the City's unrestricted cash reserves were at \$1.5 million and bond proceeds were at a little over \$1 million, adding bond proceeds are only to be used for capital expenditures. Mr. DeSpain then stated revenues exceeded expenditures by \$225,000 for the month of March and year-to-date were up \$672,000, noting this is an increase of over \$800,000 from last year. Mr. DeSpain stated the City is beginning to recover although that money will be spent in the next few months on the payment to Wal-Mart and the bond payment. Mr. DeSpain stated monthly revenues for March were \$887,000, but noted this is a bit of skewed number, due to the State of Arizona depositing money that really should be deposited in April. Mr. DeSpain then stated next month, the Council will see the April deposit a little lower due to this. Mr. DeSpain then stated year-to-date the City's has received \$6.8 million, which is down \$184,000 from last year, noting this is primarily due to construction sales tax flat-lining and from a reduction in grant funds the City received this year.

Mr. DeSpain then addressed personnel costs, stating personnel costs for March were \$351,000, which is a decrease of \$33,000 from last March and a decrease of \$432,000 year-to-date, adding this is primarily due to attrition and to furloughs. Mr. DeSpain stated other expenditures were \$293,000 this month which was a decrease of \$99,000 from last March and a decrease of \$461,000 year-to-date.

Mr. DeSpain then addressed the General Fund, stating monthly revenue was \$489,000 and was \$3.6 million year-to-date, which is an increase of \$84,000 from last year. Mr. DeSpain stated monthly personnel costs were \$231,000, which is a decrease of \$14,000 from last March and a decrease of \$242,000 year-to-date. Mr. DeSpain then stated other operating expenses were \$74,000, which is a decrease of \$70,000 from last March and is a decrease of \$208,000 year-to-date. Mr. DeSpain then stated revenues have exceeded expenditures by \$183,000 for the month of March and were up \$211,000 for the fiscal year, adding the City is beginning to put more back into our budget and provide the amounts of money needed to pay the bond payment and Wal-Mart payment, however, the City was still down about \$309,000 year-to-date.

Mr. DeSpain then addressed the enterprise funds, which consist of Gas, Water, Wastewater and Sanitation, stating they are all in the black, year-to-date and do have some fund balances, although it's not enough for any capital expenditures, he then noted, technically, those funds owe the General Fund since the General Fund has been funding the enterprise funds for some years. Mr. DeSpain then stated Golf Operations did very well in March with revenue exceeding their expenditures by \$14,000, adding year-to-date, they are still in the negative by \$45,000. Mr. DeSpain then stated the Food and Beverage side of the Golf Course also had a positive number of \$4,000, but their year-to-date was still negative \$24,000. Mr. DeSpain then stated the Golf Course was budgeted to lose \$89,000 this year, but it currently down \$69,000 and hopefully remain above that. Councilmember Lambert stated there are 3 more months in this budget year and at \$14,000 a month, the Golf Course could be looking at breaking even and the Food and Beverage side could be looking at being down just about \$10,000. Councilmember Moncada stated the Golf Course was just about to hit the slow season with Mr. DeSpain agreeing that the slow season would result in losing winter visitors, but the Director of Golf has promoted bringing in clubs during this time of year, which will help out, adding club play should go well and will help offset the reduction in rounds.

Mr. DeSpain then addressed sales tax, stating the City spiked high in March due to the early deposit he mentioned earlier, adding the number should be lower for April and then stabilize in May. Councilmember Lambert asked if the March deposit was for 2 months with Mr. DeSpain stating the deposit covered approximately 6 weeks. Mr. DeSpain stated the month of March is usually large, adding he estimates it should be a little higher than last March and should be around \$310,000-\$325,000. Mr. DeSpain then stated Bed Tax is actually pretty equal to the prior year, adding the spike in 2012 was an accounting adjustment, but it's pretty stable at around \$10,000 a month. Mr. DeSpain then stated Construction Sales Tax is also way down from last year, but is staying at about \$10,000 a month, adding he doesn't see any real increases coming until El Dorado or some other construction project starts. Mr. DeSpain then stated the total City sales tax overall contains the big spike from the early deposit that is a little deceiving, then stated the State retail tax is average, noting it is up a bit, meaning sales are increasing throughout the State and economic growth is starting to come back. Mr.

DeSpain then stated this means the City is seeing a little more revenue, but doesn't know the amounts the State will be sweeping starting in July at the beginning of the new fiscal year.

Councilmember Konrad asked where the City stood with the rental transaction privilege tax with Mr. DeSpain stating he is working with State of Arizona. Mr. DeSpain stated due to new laws giving the State control over all municipalities for the collecting and auditing of funds, the State is a little behind, adding the State is working on trying to assign private industries and auditing firms and will then qualify and train them and then let the City know who can be hired to do audits. Mr. DeSpain then stated the sad thing is that not only is the State taking away all that control from municipalities it is charging \$2.2 million for that service, but cities will still have to pay a private contractor to conduct audits because the State is understaffed and will only worry about big cities. Councilmember Konrad asked what the intended results were and if the State was attempting to find out who is and isn't paying the tax with Mr. DeSpain stating that would be the City's resolve, adding if the City was going to contract, a firm would audit a complete list the City submits.

Councilmember Cook stated in the Sierra Vista Herald newspaper, the front page gave names and amounts for water and waste pickup that have not been paid, adding there were thousands of dollars for each person with the highest being \$30,000. Councilmember Cook then stated in Bisbee, there is over \$1 million that their residents have not paid to the city and asked if Benson had any kind of problem like that with Mr. DeSpain stating City Staff watches bad debt carefully and has kept on top of the issue, adding each year, the auditors also look at bad debt write-offs. Mr. DeSpain then stated the City does write off bad debt, but it's not even close to \$30,000, adding the City of Benson has the ability to take away people's trash cans away and shut their water off to get those debts collected.

3. **Discussion regarding the status of the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the restaurant (Benson City Grille) at the San Pedro Golf Course**

City Manager William Stephens stated this item was placed on the agenda by Councilmember Boyle to discuss the status of an RFP, which happened in February, 2013. Councilmember Boyle stated he was assigned by the Mayor to be on the Chamber of Commerce and the first thing to come up when they were discussing the City's budget was that the City should sell the Golf Course. Councilmember Boyle then stated the Council had talked about it before, but he never heard back and he wanted to get it on record that the Council considered it and what the results were. Public Works Director Brad Hamilton then addressed Council stating this was discussed just before Mr. Stephens got here, adding he looked into it contacting other cities to see if anyone had done it successfully, but had only gotten back bad stories and how much it costs cities to do this. Mr. Hamilton then stated when this subject came back up, he contacted other cities again and found that Safford currently leases their course, but pays a \$16,000 a month subsidy to the person leasing it. Mr. Hamilton then stated he spoke to the City of Douglas and found that they leased the Golf Course Restaurant twice, but both times they had bad results and they weren't going to do it again. Mr. Hamilton stated most of the people he spoke to told him that if Benson finds the secret to leasing the Golf Course out successfully, they wanted to know. Councilmember Cook asked Mr. Hamilton to elaborate on the City of Douglas' experiences with Mr. Hamilton stating during the second lease period, the City Staff showed up and the company had cleared out all of the equipment from the restaurant and pro shop. Councilmember Moncada stated this actually happened at a Mayor/Manager luncheon, adding he and the City Manager at the time, were going to Golf Course in Douglas, where they were to have lunch and when they arrived, the Staff in Douglas had found that everything was gone, adding it looked like everything was yanked right out of the walls. Councilmember Moncada then stated Douglas' Staff said they knew there had been problems with the company leasing the course before because there was less maintenance being done on the course, but they didn't realize there were any issues with the restaurant and then they came in and overnight everything was gone.

Councilmember Moncada then asked Director of Golf Operations Joe Delvecchio if he could address the Council with what he has done particularly in the restaurant to try and even out or minimize the losses with Mr. Delvecchio stating when he first came to the City, he saw that there was accountability for food costs, pricing structures and hours, but there was no real implementation of any control over that. Mr. Delvecchio then stated he found that the restaurant wasn't open long enough to recover food costs, so he and Staff sat down and decided to be open set hours for a certain menu and started Friday and Saturday night dinners in

February, beginning with Valentine's Day. Mr. Delvecchio then stated he thinks being able to serve and collect more revenue for dinners is what has made the difference, noting before this, the restaurant was just open basically from 10:30 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. giving only 4 hours of serving and collecting.

Councilmember Boyle then stated someone had made a comment that the Golf Course was set up to lose money. Councilmember Boyle then stated the Golf Course gets its water for free, adding water is the single biggest expense a golf course would have and since it gets it for free, there's no reason the Golf Course shouldn't be making money. Councilmember Boyle then asked what the cause was that the Golf Course was losing money. Mr. Delvecchio stated in working for the City of Tucson, they had golf courses that had to pay for water, which was typically around \$800,000 a year. Mr. Delvecchio then stated they were given in Fiscal Year 2012, 2 years to make money, adding they actually made money the first year and were making money in the second year when the City of Tucson decided to privatize. Mr. Delvecchio then stated he equated the San Pedro Golf Course to the Silverbell Golf Course, and when he first went to work at San Pedro, he was expecting a water bill. Mr. Delvecchio then stated in not seeing that bill and in seeing that the number of rounds played in Benson was fairly close to the number of rounds at Silverbell, he was amazed that the Golf Course had that big of a loss in previous years, adding Silverbell, as well as Randolph made money while paying for water. Mr. Delvecchio then stated he couldn't speak for how the Golf Course was run before the City took it over, but he did know from being in the business for 30 years with private companies, management companies and municipalities that some management companies own a golf course and want it for a loss or a write-off, adding he didn't know if that was happening at San Pedro. Mr. Delvecchio then stated it seemed like controls were set in, but there were no processes involved to check on how the course was doing, such as inventory control and paying attention to budgets, adding understanding the budget and that if there were no revenues, expenditures couldn't be made was difficult to get through to several employees, but now they understand. Mr. Delvecchio then stated the other thing he found is that the rates were well below the going industry especially for the type of course San Pedro is, adding it's a championship golf course and it should be a destination golf course, but with limited resources, Staff is whittling away on improvements to the course. Mr. Delvecchio then stated he increased the passholder's price by \$5.00 and he believes that has made a difference along with specials the course offers. Mr. Delvecchio then stated as mentioned earlier, he has connections with clubs in Tucson, and he actually has a 13th club coming to Benson and playing with 30 people on Sundays, adding that along with specials on golf and food, gets them to play golf, then eat lunch and buy drinks, which he thinks has made an impact on the food and beverage side. Mr. Delvecchio then stated checks and balances and paying attention to what rates are for golf is a big deal in creating revenue.

Councilmember Lambert stated one of the things Councilmember Boyle mentioned was that the water for the Golf Course was free, but after requesting all the electric bills for the City, Councilmember Lambert found that on the Golf Course alone, there are 6 or 7 meters used to pump that water due to the water from the wastewater plant not being pressurized. Councilmember Lambert then stated the water has to be pumped and then pressurized to use it, adding the Golf Course pays a lot in electricity for that water. Councilmember Boyle stated he meant that the Golf Course didn't have to pay for water in the same sense that other courses do. Councilmember Boyle then stated there is the cost of pumping the water, but it seems like the Golf Course should be making more money, adding it looks like Mr. Delvecchio is on the right trail. Councilmember Boyle then stated he wanted to get this information on the public record to address comments from people who say the City needs to sell the Golf Course. Councilmember Lambert stated he wanted to commend Mr. Delvecchio for all of his efforts, adding for the last 4 months, the Golf Course has been in the black and for the last 2 months, the Food and Beverage side has been in the black., noting whatever Mr. Delvecchio is doing, he is moving in the right direction.

4. **Discussion and possible direction to Staff about creating a budget advisory committee**

City Manager William Stephens stated this item was put on the agenda by Councilmember Boyle, adding he believes it comes up as a result of it being budget time and the proposal for a sales tax increase, which of course, has gotten businesses and citizens focused, involved and concerned. Mr. Stephens stated as a result of that, several people have approached Councilmember Boyle and that's why it's on the agenda for discussion. Councilmember Boyle stated when he's attending the Chamber of Commerce meetings, he is hearing the local businessmen and women saying the proposed tax increase is going to kill them, adding he understood Mr.

Stephens had a meeting with them today. Councilmember Boyle then stated he was advised that if he went to Cochise College, they might have some ideas, adding he went and met with Debra DeSoto and Mark Schmidt for an hour and they said there really wasn't anything they could do, but that they helped set up a citizens review committee in Sierra Vista, adding the committee could then review different things going on with Sierra Vista. Councilmember Boyle then stated the committee consisted of different people within Sierra Vista and they went through and reviewed the City's budget and looked at things they thought were important and were not important, and were then able to advise the Council, so the Council had a lot of input from the citizens. Councilmember Boyle then stated Barbara Nunn mentioned at the Call to the Public that the Council is elected by the citizens and therefore, this would be redundant and that's true enough, but if this committee had an opportunity to speak with City Staff, whether or not they supported the tax increase, they would provide political cover for the Council to be able to use and say that is what their recommendations are and what the citizens want so that is what Council is going to do. Councilmember Boyle then stated this would be helpful because it would satisfy the citizens' desire that the City be run as economically as possible and doesn't overspend or behave foolishly with money. Councilmember Boyle stated there are other venues the citizens could use to communicate with the Council, but they don't seem to do that, adding there are only a handful of people attending the last few meetings and when you consider the number of people in town, that percentage is really small. Councilmember Boyle then stated he didn't know how effectively the City is getting the message out, but this is another idea that was recommended to him by the people at the college and he thought I would run it by the Council to see what they thought. Councilmember Boyle then stated lastly, he did mention this to the Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber told him they could actually provide an almost ready-made Council, adding they had people who were available and were already part of a Council that had business experience in town, and were very interested in having a stake in this and would volunteer to do this. Councilmember Boyle then stated since the City Council is closer to the budget season and is running out of time, it would be more difficult to do, but the Council could do something like this, if not now, but for the future.

Mr. Stephens stated he did have a request from that group to meet, adding Staff did meet with them earlier in the day. Mr. Stephens then stated the group has ideas and recommendations they want to present to Council and will do so either on the May 9 or May 11, adding he believes they want to do it before the Council meeting on May 11. Mr. Stephens then stated during the meeting, Staff provided some information and facts the group didn't have, so they wanted to go back and review their recommendations. Mr. Stephens then stated he didn't know what their ultimate recommendation package will look like when it comes to Council, but he wanted to inform the Council that the group is working on their presentation as a result of the meeting.

Councilmember Boyle stated if the committee agrees with the proposal on the tax increase, they could actually be an ally when the Council is trying to talk to the citizens in town about the problems the City has, adding it couldn't hurt to have the committee. Mr. Stephens then stated the group Staff met with has a mix of opinions, adding they were going to talk amongst the group and hash that out, noting some were adamantly opposed to the sales tax increase no matter what, some were willing and able to listen and some simply want a compromise. Mr. Stephens then stated Staff gave them some food for thought and they wanted to go back and put together their thoughts and present to Council on May 9, again stating they wanted to make their presentation to Council before the May 11 Council meeting. Councilmember Lambert stated he would like the group to limit their speakers to one person on each side of the issue so the budget worksession wouldn't be too long. Mr. Stephens stated part of the discussion today was that the group might put their recommendation together to be delivered to Council beforehand and then make their presentation, adding there may be some Council discussion after they address Council, but they wanted the Council to have their recommendation beforehand to review and consider prior to their presentation.

Councilmember Lambert then stated the Council was to get their budget books on April 30 and asked if the Council could be notified as soon as they were distributed, so they could come in and get the books before City Hall closed with Mr. DeSpain stating he would distribute the budget books on Thursday morning as soon as he could. Councilmember Konrad then asked if the budgets could be emailed to the Council with Mr. DeSpain stating he would email the budgets as well as printing them out for Council.

Councilmember Konrad then asked Mr. Stephens if the sense from the meeting earlier today was that the group's focus seemed to be anti-tax increase or was more focused on oversight going forward with Mr. Stephens stating it was divided. Mr. Stephens then stated overall, there were some dissenting viewpoints, but he thought the group was going to handle it within their own discussions. Mr. Stephens then stated the group attempted to do a coordinated presentation versus individual points being made and stated the group will handle the dissenting viewpoints or discussion points within the their group. Mr. Stephens then stated again, he didn't know what the ultimate outcome is going to be with regard to their presentation because they got input from Staff that they didn't have, so they were going to go back and review that information. Mr. Stephens then stated the group seemed very approachable, willing to talk and they made some reasonable discussion points and suggestions, adding it didn't feel like they were a brick wall with one viewpoint and Staff had a different viewpoint and there was nowhere to meet in the middle. Mr. Stephens then stated the Council will see what the final outcome is from their presentation and then can discuss that, adding from the discussion earlier today, he knew Mr. DeSpain was going to look at different tax increase amounts to determine what they look like revenue wise and based on that revenue, what each level of increase fixes or doesn't fix in terms of revenue needed for the City's debt obligations.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS: None

ADJOURNMENT:

Councilmember Konrad moved to adjourn at 8:59 p.m. Seconded by Councilmember Boyle. Motion passed 6-0.

ATTEST:

Toney D. King, Sr., Mayor

Vicki L. Vivian, CMC, City Clerk