

**THE WORKSESSION  
OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BENSON, ARIZONA  
HELD OCTOBER 24, 2016 AT 6:00 P.M.  
AT CITY HALL, 120 W. 6TH STREET, BENSON, ARIZONA**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Mayor King called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL:**

Present were: Mayor Toney D. King, Sr., Vice Mayor Lori McGoffin, Councilmembers Pat Boyle, Jeff Cook, Joe Konrad and David Lambert. Absent was: Councilmember Chris Moncada.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **Discussion regarding City Hall facility issues; this will include a site inspection to view and discuss structural and other building issues**

Public Works Director Brad Hamilton stated he wanted to let the Council know about the City Hall facility problems, noting a few months ago, staff noticed light through a crack in a wall of the Council chambers. Mr. Hamilton then stated there had been a 6 inch drop in the front of the Council chambers, but after examining the building, he has found the west side has settled and moved an additional 2 inches west. Mr. Hamilton then stated a structural engineer then looked at the building and recommended stabilizing it by drilling piers, which will cost about \$73,000; then noted that cost doesn't include the tear down, removing the baptismal, removing and replacing the air conditioning, heating, electrical and plumbing, which will all be additional costs to restore the building to basically what exists now. Mr. Hamilton then stated the roof is an additional problem. Mr. Hamilton then stated the entire facility also has termite problems and should have been tented 10 years ago. Mr. Hamilton then stated he would like to take the Council around the facility and show them the issues; then asked at what point the City stops pouring money into an old facility.

Mayor King stated the Council would tour the City Hall facility to see the issues Mr. Hamilton spoke of. The Council viewed the outside of the Council chambers, the signs on termites in the conference room, the various cracks in the buildings, the drainage issues by the IT office, the recent flooding and the damage it caused inside the Public Works offices and that the bathrooms are not ADA compliant. Mr. Hamilton noted all these issues don't include the roof that needs to be addressed. The Council returned to the Council chambers.

2. **Update on the Railroad Quiet Zone; discussion to include the review of the City of Benson Railroad Quiet Zone Feasibility Study prepared by Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.**

Public Works Director Brad Hamilton reviewed each railroad crossing in the feasibility study (Ocotillo, Patagonia and San Pedro Streets) and gave a brief summary of the recommended improvements and costs and stated the cost for the quiet zones is \$310,956 and other recommendations to improve the crossings cost approximately \$170,000 for a total cost of \$480,731. Mr. Hamilton told the Council he was looking for direction on whether or not to continue with the design and would then bring back the estimate for that to Council for their decision. Mr. Hamilton then spoke about funding and that it may be a possibility to use CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) funds, noting he had brought it up before, but had been met with resistance; then noted he may be able to make the case that this would be an improvement to a low- to moderate-income area. Mr. Hamilton then stated using CDBG funds would require timing on the City's part and completing the project in phases over a period of years, adding once they are all completed, the City could move forward to obtain a Quiet Zone designation. Mr. Hamilton then asked the Council for direction.

Mayor King stated the Council knows the City Hall building situation and that a lot of residents want the Quiet Zone and then asked Finance Director Dustin DeSpain to explain GADA loans. Mr. DeSpain stated GADA

financing is based on bonds and is government funding loaned only to governments, adding the interest rate is usually 3-4%. Mr. DeSpain stated both the town of Sahuarita and Marana used GADA loans for their town halls; then stated this funding can be used for buildings and quiet zones. Mayor King spoke about not having to do everything in one year and that the project could be done over time. Mayor King asked how much the City receives in CDBG funding with Mr. Hamilton stating the City receives CDBG funding every 2 years and the last funding amount was about \$170,000. Mayor King then stated he didn't want City Hall to move from downtown Benson, adding it was very important to promote downtown and keep it alive.

Councilmember Konrad asked about location options including the current City Hall location with Mr. Hamilton stating if the Council decided to build a new facility, the first step would be having a space needs study completed to determine how much space would be needed now and in the future and would result in knowing the general size and cost of the facility, which then could be used to see how much property would be needed and what options the City has. Councilmember Boyle asked if the City owned the current City Hall location with Mr. Hamilton stating the City purchased the property and also owns property between St. Vincent de Paul and Battaglia and Roberts, PC businesses. Mayor King stated the original idea was to purchase the property St. Vincent de Paul is using and have City Hall and the City Police Department located there, but the price was too high, adding after that, the Council looked at having a campus-style City Hall with all City Hall locations within walking distance, but the Council chose to purchase the current City Hall facility when it became available.

Mr. Hamilton then spoke about the settling issues in Benson and that placing any building on piers is cheap if the piers are put in before construction, but are very expensive to put in later. Mr. DeSpain then spoke about the GADA funding being available at a very good interest rate. Mayor King stated he would like the opportunity to combine both projects and pursue a City Hall facility and the Quiet Zone designation.

Vice Mayor McGoffin asked about the City's financial future and taking out a GADA loan if the proposed development and growth didn't occur and the City's income stayed where it was now with Mr. DeSpain stating it would depend on the cost of the facility, adding he knew the railroad improvements were about \$400,000, adding he would like to see the City Hall facility happen over phases and be expanded as needed, then stated with the current sales tax collections, the City could afford to make the additional payment on a bond. Vice Mayor McGoffin noted the temporary .5% sales tax would be ending in October, 2018 with Mr. DeSpain noting some City obligations would also be ending in 2018, but to know how much funding and what the payment would be would require the space needs study being completed.

Councilmember Boyle stated he received an offer from Annette Buechel, a certified grant person, to find grants for the City and asked if she could look at the specs with Mr. Hamilton stating he would always welcome assistance in finding grants the City could use. Councilmember Konrad asked if the Council needed to do anything to allow Ms. Buechel to look for grants with Mr. Hamilton stating the space needs study would be a public record and Ms. Buechel could contact City staff for additional information she may need.

Councilmember Lambert asked about the Police and Fire Department building with Mr. Hamilton stating that building is in much better shape than City Hall, noting the lighting, generator, roofing, and other upgrades have been done and he is not aware of any big problems with it at this point. Mr. Hamilton then stated the City Hall building is the largest and oldest City facility. Councilmember Lambert spoke about the proposed development being done in phases and having City facilities there with Mr. Hamilton stating the development agreement with El Dorado does call for a Police and Fire station in the development. Vice Mayor McGoffin asked who would pay for those facilities with City Attorney Paul Loucks stating the developer would build the shell and the City would pay for tenant improvements.

Councilmember Cook spoke about building settling and shifting problems in Benson and noted the Benson Hospital was built so it could be leveled as needed; then stated he didn't understand how putting piers under the current City Hall building would help. Mr. Hamilton stated the piers would be placed on the stable layer below Benson's soil problem, which is mostly 20-30 feet down, adding the weight of the building would then be on the piers. Mr. Hamilton then stated when the golf course club house was repaired, drilling was done to

about 70 feet in order to reach soil that was stable and would hold the building weight. Councilmember Cook then stated at the Council candidate forum, everyone committed to eliminating the .5% sales tax and putting in quiet zones and he doesn't feel both can be done. Councilmember Cook then stated he didn't hear many people who are in favor of putting in quiet zones, but instead sees a small group saying they represent the entire city and he knows they don't, adding if the City was able to get grants for the quiet zone to bring to costs down to a little, he would be in favor of it. Councilmember Cook then spoke about building in phases and asked about how much the City could obtain at one time, if the remaining funding would be at a different interest rate and if it would be available at a later date with Mr. DeSpain stating a GADA loan is like a mortgage and is done in a onetime lump sum, adding it's sold on the open market to bond purchasers with tax exemption status.

Councilmember Konrad spoke about the post office building being on piers that were not placed deep enough and asked about the engineers being confident they could reach stable ground under the current City Hall facility with Mr. Hamilton stating the City would have core drilling done before the design to make sure the science was behind it. Mayor King spoke about going through the building issues at Safeway and that after the piers were in place, there wasn't much shifting at all, adding he's confident engineers know more now than they did in the past. Councilmember Konrad agreed and stated there were plenty mistakes to learn from. Mayor King then stated he wants City Hall to stay downtown and that the City needs something that can be used for the next 25 to 40 years. Mayor King then stated loan rates are lower than what they have been in the past and this may be the best opportunity Council has had, adding Staff should have the study done and bring it back to Council. Councilmember Konrad stated he would rather spend money on property instead of a bunch of concrete with Mayor King stating he agreed, as long as it was in downtown Benson.

Vice Mayor McGoffin asked if the estimate for \$78,000 was just to put the piers in with Mr. Hamilton stating that cost did not include anything else, adding the other costs of stabilizing the building and replacing the roof could run as high as \$200,000-\$250,000 and the building wouldn't really change. Vice Mayor McGoffin stated half of a new City Hall facility could be built for that cost. Mr. Hamilton agreed; then stated with a space needs study done, the Council can see what options are available. Councilmember Boyle asked about the current interest rate with Mr. DeSpain stating the interest rate fluctuates, but is about 5%.

Councilmember Cook stated he had no dispute with the need for work on the City Hall building or possibly replacing it, but the timing bothers him, adding currently there is some staff shortage in the City and getting things done take a while because employees have so many things to do. Councilmember Cook then stated if the development proceeds, the City will collect construction sales tax to pay for this and more, but if it doesn't move forward, the City may not be able to pay for it. Councilmember Cook then stated he has lived this long without a Quiet Zone and he doesn't know how long it will be before the City Hall building becomes a crises, but it's not at the point where something has to be done right now.

Mr. Hamilton agreed, stating he wanted to give Council the information on the quiet zone costs and the building issues so the Council could consider and decide what they wanted to do. Mayor King stated the space needs study needed to be done and could be brought to Council during a regular meeting. Mayor King then stated the regular Council meeting would begin at 7:10 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Vice Mayor McGoffin moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 p.m. Seconded by Councilmember Boyle. Motion passed 6-0.

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Toney D. King, Sr., Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Vicki L. Vivian, CMC, City Clerk