

MINUTES  
OF  
CITY OF WHARTON  
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
MARCH 5, 2005

Mayor Bryce D. Kocian declared a Special Meeting duly open for the transaction of business at 7:50 P.M.

Councilmembers present were: Mayor Bryce D. Kocian, Councilmembers V. L. Wiley, Jr., David Samuelson, Ken Freese, Don Mueller, Domingo Montalvo, Jr., and Ray Linseisen.

Councilmember absent was: None.

Staff members present were: City Manager Andres Garza, Jr., Finance Director Joyce Vasut, City Secretary Lisa Stavena, Assistant to City Manager Jackie Jansky, Community Services Director Jo Knezek, Police Chief Tim Guin, Police Chief Tim Guin, Building Official Ronnie Bollom, EMS Director John Kowalik, Facilities Maintenance Director Bob Baker, Public Works Director Phil Bush, Emergency Management Coordinator Harry Priesmeyer, Assistant Fire Chief Bobby Barnett, Fire Department Secretary/Treasurer Paul Shannon, and City Attorney Paul Webb.

Visitors present were: David Schroeder, and Carlos Cotton.

The second item on the agenda was City Council Workshop and Strategic Planning Session. Mayor Bryce D. Kocian welcomed the City Council, City Staff and visitors to the City Council Workshop and Strategic Planning Session.

Presentations by Department Heads:

a. Joyce Vasut, Finance Director.

Finance Director Joyce Vasut informed the City Council that the projected revenues were: Ad Valorem Taxes \$1,869,160; Franchise \$872,585; Fees and Forfeitures \$206,925; Interest and Miscellaneous \$81,900; Bond Proceeds \$1,689,860; Sales Taxes \$1,093,384; License and Permits \$80,400; Charges for Services \$3,920,020; and Intergovernmental \$223,400.

She stated that the issues affecting revenues included: cap on property taxes, sales tax 14 day holiday, sales tax reform, changes to franchise taxes, eliminate the Community Development Block Grant Program, outstanding fees, fines, and other amounts due the City.

She stated that the projected expenses were: Salaries and Benefits \$4,410,521; Building Maintenance \$139,080; Operational Expenses \$1,849,618; Lease & Debt Payments \$774,601; Operating Transfers \$726,700; Supplies \$287,190; Equipment Maintenance \$274,711, Other Operational Expenses \$321,980; Capital Outlay \$1,865,860; and Depreciation and Bad Debt \$402,470.

She said that the issues affecting expenses included personnel health insurance benefits; federal and state mandates that identified amount of loss water ratio, water quality regulations, wastewater treatment plant permits with the removal of nitrogen. She also stated that non-self supporting services and projects were EMS Services: support from Wharton County, creation of Emergency Services District, and number of ambulance provider permits; Civic Center; Swimming Pool; Railroad Depot Restoration Project; and Santa Fe Trail Project. She stated that the major future expenditures and projects were Water and Sewer System Improvements, Manhole Survey, Drainage Projects, Floodproofing Projects resulting from the Feasibility Study, and Swimming Pool.

b. Tim Guin, Police Chief.

Police Chief Tim Guin informed the City Council that the personnel current needs were a full-time Narcotics Investigator in order to balance case load and work with other departments. He stated that future personnel needs relating to City Growth included: adding 2 to 3 Officers per the addition of 1,000 citizens increase in population, additional Detectives, and additional Records Clerks. He stated that the equipment current needs were a two-way radio communication system to comply with Texas Radio Communications Interoperability. He stated that the current system was in its fourteenth year of operation. He stated that the future needs included individual equipment for additional officers, radio, uniforms etc., equip additional police cars with emergency equipment. He stated that the Governor's Interoperability Plan consisted of six levels of interoperability; therefore the goal would be to reach Level 4 within the next 24 months. He stated that at State wide Level-4 attainment, simply put, was when fire fighters, emergency medical responders, police officers, deputy sheriffs and state troopers can go anywhere in the state and have immediate radio communications with each other using their own equipment. He stated that Interoperability Plan - Phase I would consist of console upgrade to Level 4 and Interoperability Plan - Phase II would be to join HGAC Regional Radio System. He stated that other equipment needs were mobile data terminals. He stated that the facilities current needs included sub floor- old Council Chamber area, and carpeting. He stated that the future needs included painting the building, building settling issues. He stated that the building was constructed during the depression. He stated that the Reliant Energy Building could be a possible re-location for the Police Department. He stated that another need was the firing range target system replacement. He stated that the Wharton Police Department would like to take a proactive approach by offering a Citizens Police Academy, which was an interactive program, designed to educate the public about the criminal justice system and ways to reduce crime; to give the public information on how the police department works, it policies and procedures, through a series of ten classes involving instruction by police officers. He stated that two (2) CPA sessions would be held per year with an annual cost of \$2800 per year and a startup cost of \$3500.

Chief Guin stated that the Communications Department personnel current staffing was seven full-time employees. He stated that at times only one TCO would be on duty. He stated that the goal would be to have two TCOs per shift, which required three additional TCOs. He stated that the equipment included two-way radio communication, which the current system was over thirteen years old. He stated that the recording equipment consisted of emergency telephone lines and two-way radio traffic. He stated that the State would have funds available for the 2006 budget. He stated that the current location was not adequate for two TCOs per shift and additional TCOs will require larger area.

Emergency Management Coordinator Harry Priesmeyer stated that the need or goal of the Emergency Management personnel would be to increase “manned office hours” in order to accommodate plan enhancements. He stated that the programs consisted of Implement Mobility Impaired Evacuation Plan by Spring 2005, implement Major Facility Advanced Alert Warning System by Spring 2005, utilize satellite radar weather system for office and mobile by March 2006, distribute Disaster Planning Guide, formalize Regional Hurricane Evacuation Plan, and distribute copies of new Emergency Management Plan. He stated that the Equipment consisted of additional siren locations, which two was recommended, low power AM/FM transmitter. He stated that the Facilities was sharing the office with Wharton County Office of Emergency Management.

Police Chief Guin stated that the Animal Control Equipment would be a vehicle replacement for 2012 budget year, additional traps, and other capture equipment. He stated that the facilities would consist of expansion of a new shelter for future growth.

c. Jo Knezek, Community Services Director, Community Development.

Community Services Director Jo Knezek informed the City Council that the Housing Program consisted of: 1999 Home Program - 4 rehabilitation and 1 reconstruction; 2001 Home Program 9 reconstruction; Unmet Housing Needs Program 9 reconstruction; 2004 Home Program 7 reconstruction; 2005 Home Program 9 reconstruction, and 2005 Flood Disaster Grant Program 9 reconstruction. She stated that the total homes rehabilitated were 4 and the total homes reconstructed were 51. She stated that the Section 8 Program (Rental Assistance) was a program of approximately 50 low-income families assisting to pay rent expenses. She stated that inspections were completed once a month on the structures.

d. Ronnie Bollom, Building Official, Code Enforcement.

Building Official Ronnie Bollom informed the City Council that the continued enforcement of Building Standards Issues consisted of not only beautification efforts but also to eliminate havens for drug use and distribution. From January 2003 - January 2005, 16 substandard structures were demolished, 9 of which were voluntary, and 7 were demolished by the City. He stated that other issues were continued enforcement of the public nuisance ordinance concerning weedy lots within the City and ETJ; adoption of the 2006 International Codes; and home address numbers such as insuring that all residential structures within the boundaries of the City have address numbers that were visible from the street as referenced in the sign ordinance and the Property Maintenance Code. He stated that this would assist, most importantly, with emergency response calls. He stated that public awareness of the NFIP and FEMA requirements was needed to hold a meeting for residential owners, business owners, real estate agents and insurance agents emphasizing the requirements concerning the elevating structures that have substantial improvements or substantial damages in the specific flood hazard areas. He stated that the new flood ordinance and mapping, which had been drafted including the requirement for structures built in the SPHA to be elevated one foot above the base flood elevation and would give the City the authority to penalize those that do not comply with the flood ordinance. He stated that new flood mapping should be available for the City to review during the month of March, and if there were no conflicts the new flood ordinance would be presented to the City Council for adoption. He stated that the Community Rating System (CRS) had initiated the application process to obtain a community rating for the City that would reduce the cost of flood insurance. He said the

amount of the discount was based on several Criteria (above and beyond the minimum required in the National Flood Insurance Program) for 10%, 20%, or 30% discounts. He said if the City was accepted into this program, a yearly audit would be conducted thereafter for compliance. Non-compliance could result in revocation of the CRS and future flood insurance discounts. He then said the subdivision ordinance had been completed and would be presented to the Planning Commission. He said the main issue of the new ordinance was to address drainage issues. He stated that there was a concentrated effort to insure that residential rental properties were in compliance with the Property Maintenance Code, including single family and multi-family dwellings.

e. Phil Bush, Public Works Director, Public Works/Utilities.

Public Works Director Phil Bush informed the City Council that the Sanitary Sewer System Facilities consisted of nine lift stations in different locations throughout the City, approximately 3,042 service connections in the City, and approximately 77 miles of sewer lines running throughout the city to lift stations and Treatment Plants. He stated that WWTP No.1 had a designed capacity for 1.5 million gallons per day, which was operating at 850,000 gallons per day. He stated that WWTP No.2 had a designed capacity for 0.5 million gallons per day, which was operating at 250,000 gallons per day. He said the Sanitary Sewer Department Projections consisted of correcting issues at WWTP No.1 by: Infiltration Study, Plant Expansion Plan. He stated that in order to correct infiltration issues, the following could be conducted: Flow monitoring lines, televising lines, smoke testing lines, manhole inspections, and pan installation in manholes.

He stated that the Water System Facilities Department there were 4 water wells in the City, 3 elevated water storage tanks in the City, and 4 ground water storage tanks in the City. The total storage capacity of the City was 3.3 million gallons. He said there were 2 booster pump locations in the City, approximately 78 miles of water mains in the City, and approximately 3,128 service connections in the City. He said the daily average consumption of the City was 1.6 million gallons per day, with a maximum daily capacity of the complete water system of 5.0 million gallons. He said the projections included: complete system analysis, including studies on well capacities, storage capacities, booster pump capacities and line sizes and loops. He stated that the following should be conducted: implement a semiannual Well Testing Program, collect and efficiently record accountability data & repair history data, implement a program of Operational Procedures, including plant controls, elevated tank controls and plant coordination, implement a program of Emergency Operations, including right-angle drives, emergency generators (Alabama Road WP), and dialers, prepare for future expansion, including additional water plants and major trunk lines, and prepare a Replacement Plan for the Cloud Street Elevated Water Tank. He stated the fire plugs as identified, were approximately 390 fire plugs in the City. Of those plugs, 361 were Mueller plugs and 29 were old Corey plugs. He said that as per the City of Wharton Fire Code, all fire hydrants should be set no more than 500 feet apart in residential areas. He stated that this distance would require each fire hydrant to cover an area of no more than a 250' radius. He stated that 10 new fire hydrants were added through the 2004 Utilities Improvements Project. He stated that the Projections were approximately 190+ additional fire plugs should be installed. Many of these plugs would require the installation of a new 6" water line or the up-sizing of an existing smaller line.

Mr. Bush stated that the Streets Department consisted of approximately 95 miles of concrete, asphalt and gravel streets, with \$150,000 per year budgeted for street reconstruction, an additional \$30,000-\$40,000 used for regular street maintenance. He said that the streets to be reconstructed, sealed or overlaid were selected by the City Staff and presented to the Streets & Drainage Committee for preliminary approval and the City Council for final approval. He said all asphalt work was bid out to private contractors. He said that all indicated streets had been reconstructed and sealed since 1997. He said that Junior College Blvd. was currently pending on the Streets & Drainage Committee's list of streets to be widened, curbed, & guttered. He said that the Projections included: begin a Curb & Gutter Program to improve the streets & drainage, begin a Street Rehabilitation Program. He stated that a budget of approximately \$200,000 per year for street rehabilitation, including reconstruction, seal coating, overlaying & curbing was needed, ADA requirements on parking & accessibility of downtown area, US 59 Service Road Construction Project, FM 1301 Extension Project, Texas-New Mexico Railroad Service Road Crossing Project, Halford Road Acceleration/Deceleration Lanes Project, FM102/US59 Intersection Project, and additional personnel.

He stated that the drainage projects that were currently in progress were: Mahan Street, Mayfair Addition, Crestmont/Chapel Heights Inlets, Ahldag Addition Outfall Ditch, NANYA Outfall Ditch. He said the Projections included: Lake Net Outfall Ditch Project, down stream Caney Creek obstructions Project, Caney Creek East of US 59 (Outlar Lake) Project, Baughman Slough Diversion Project, storm line replacement across block @ Richmond & First Street Project, second outfall to Colorado River along Santa Fe Railroad right-of-way Project, and downtown storm lines project.

Mr. Carlos Cotton with Jones and Carter Engineering informed the City Council that the Corp of Engineers conducted a feasibility study with a levee system that would run along Colorado River, Santa Fe outfall, and Caney. City Manager Andres Garza, Jr. stated that the City's 25% would be approximately \$500,000 of the \$2 million project.

Mr. Bush stated that the sidewalks were approximately 66,600 total feet in the City with 29,300 ft. poor, 13,100 ft. average, and 24,200 ft. good. He stated that the projections was an annual program for replacement or removal of sidewalks.

He stated that the Wharton Municipal Airport had 2003 Capital Improvements Project (Total: \$1,280,896) completed, installed AWOS System in 2004, installed ramp road to AWOS System in 2004, installed cross-over between parking pads in 2005, installed fence around parking area in front of new hangar. He stated that the Airport Board was currently developing an Airport Development Plan.

f. Bob Baker, Facilities Maintenance Director/Park Maintenance.  
Facilities Maintenance Director Bob Baker informed the City Council that the Facilities Maintenance Department was comprised of five full-time positions and was responsible for the maintenance of nine City parks and sixteen additional City Facilities. He stated that a large portion of time was spent mowing parks, etc., which total approximately 85 acres. He said that the new Santa Fe Trail project and the Railroad Depot Project would also be maintained as they were completed. He stated that the Projections consisted of meeting the requirements of the new

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for all City facilities with the total cost of approximately \$1,003,735. He stated that the Parks Equipment Assessment would need to be completed to determine compliance with the Texas Department of Health and ADA codes and requirements. He stated that re-plastering of the Wharton Swimming Pool would cost approximately \$25,000 to \$35,000.

g. Anthony Abbott, Fire Chief.

Assistant Fire Chief Bobby Barnett informed the City Council that the Fire Department goals would be to maintain an Effective Training Budget with the number of personnel, and increasing training cost. He stated that the Fire Training Facility would need to be repaired or replaced in order to meet NFPA (National Fire Protection Agency) Requirements, comply with safety requirements, meet department training needs, and improve ISO (Insurance Service Office) Rating. He stated that the equipment would need to be replaced or purchased with portable radios in order to meet needs. He stated that the SCBA (Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus) would need to be upgraded to meet NFPA Requirements. He stated that the PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) needed to be replaced that was outdated and damaged bunker gear; and hand tools needed to be replaced or purchased. He stated that currently a day crew (Monday-Friday/8-5pm) was staffed in order to maintain or increase emergency response times by staffing the day crew to compensate for decreasing volunteer availability. He stated that the wages should be maintained at a competitive rate. He then further stated that a full-time Administrative position for general records and administrative duties in the Fire Department and Fire Inspector's Office was needed. He stated that the Command Vehicles Unit #1103 (1999 Crown Victoria) and Unit #1101 (1996 Chevrolet Lumina) needed to be replaced. He said the Ladder Truck - Unit #1131L (1981 American Le France 65' Ladder) and the Rescue/Hazmat Truck - Unit #1150 (1993 International) would also need to be replaced. He said that the Fire Station would need to be replaced or relocated in order to meet current and future community needs, meet current and future in-house needs, meet NFPA requirements, and meet ADA (American's with Disabilities Act) requirements. He stated that these needs should be addressed over the next 1-5 years by Priority and Feasibility. He stated that many of the items discussed could be met in combined Projects which would lower the initial and/or operating cost and effectively meet the current and future community, NFPA, ADA, ISO, and in-house needs and requirements.

h. John Kowalik, EMS Director.

EMS Director John Kowalik informed the City Council that the EMS Ordinance would be presented to council in April of 2005. He stated that remodeling of EMS Station Phase I was completed in July of 2004 and Phase II would be complete this spring. He said the EMS CPR/First Aid program was currently awaiting approval from AHA to become a CTC. He said on March 1, 2005, the Emergency Medical Services Support Group received approval to instruct: First Aid, CPR, National Safety Council BBP, and approval to be a National Registry Testing Site for EMS personnel. He stated that Staffing would need to be addressed in 2004-2005. He said that the in-house Youth Explorer Post Program could be created. He stated that future funding would need to be addressed as such as Wharton County Contributions, and the creation of Emergency Services District.

i. David Schroeder, Wharton Economic Development Corporation.

Wharton Economic Development Corporation Executive Director David Schroeder informed the City Council that communication was an important process for bringing potential companies to the City. He stated that the City Council needed to discuss an ordinance for placement of metal buildings. He recommended that the buildings facing streets should have a façade. He stated that signage was also a problem. He stated that since the tornado of June 2004, the Civic Center has been without a sign. He stated that there was not a sign advising where Wharton County Junior College was located. He stated that WEDCo would be preparing a CD to send to prospects that would be personalized.

Group Discussion. City Manager Andres Garza, Jr. asked the Group for input on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.

The following were added to Strengths:

Stuck in 1960s

New flood mapping development

The following were added to Weaknesses:

Parks

Image

Hay Lots

Time for Development

Housing Development

Avenue for Expanding Infrastructure

City Manager Andres Garza, Jr. asked the group "What specifically should we, the City organization do during the next five to ten years to improve and promote the quality of life in Wharton and provide efficient, effective services to our citizens?"

City Staff and visitors discussed the question. The City Council, City Staff and visitors addressed the following:

1. Communicate next step to developers - setting up meetings.
2. Improve image.
3. Zoning.
4. Improve existing infrastructure.
5. Improve community relations.
6. Expand infrastructure outside city limits.
7. Expand housing.
8. Increase tax base.
9. Positive media coverage - image.
10. Hay permit ordinance.
11. Maintain properties to curb.
12. Delinquent property taxes.
13. Intergovernmental relations with Wharton County.
14. Communication with taxing entities and Chamber of Commerce.
15. NFIP/FEMA Public Education.

16. Coordinate with private sector to improve Emergency Management Plan.
17. Citizen awareness Communication.
18. Remove one way streets for traffic safety.
19. Improve City facility infrastructure.
20. Support schools.
21. City facilities space.
22. Flood study.
23. City Signage.
24. Survey parks.
25. Citizen communication on city events.
26. Transportation Plan.
27. Drainage District to prevent flooding.
28. Set Quarterly meetings with governmental and taxing entities.
29. Educate Citizens Against Virtually Everything (CAVE).
30. News letter.
31. Drainage Projects.
32. Educate public of City goals and prioritize.
33. Waste Management to leave notice why debris not removed or picked up.
34. Communications with Wharton County.
35. Need a City Public Relations Employee.
36. Better Equipment - Video Camera and Recorder.
37. Housing innovation with developers.

The question helped to prioritize the top ten priorities the City Council and Staff could accomplish. The top five priorities were:

1. Improve image and communication with public.
2. Improve and expand City infrastructure.
3. Improve housing.
4. Zoning.
5. Increase tax base.
6. Code Enforcement.
7. Intergovernmental relations with all other taxing entities.
8. Transportation.
9. Improve Schools.
10. Drainage and Floodproofing.

After some discussion, no action was taken.

City Manager Andres Garza, Jr. stated that the next step would be to develop action steps and a timeline to achieve goals.

The third item on the agenda was adjournment: Councilmember Don Mueller made the motion to adjourn. Councilmember V. L. Wiley, Jr. seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 11:22 a.m.

City of Wharton  
Special City Council Meeting  
March 5, 2005

CITY OF WHARTON, TEXAS

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
DONALD MUELLER  
Mayor Pro-Tem

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
LISA STAVENA  
City Secretary