

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF SILVER CITY
STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION AND BUDGET HEARING
Grant County Administration Center, 1400 Hwy 180, Silver City, NM
May 18, 2010 – 1:00 P.M.

Present: James R. Marshall
Cynthia A. Bettison, District 1
Jamie K. Thomson, District 2
Simon Wheaton-Smith, District 3
Michael S. Morones, District 4

Also Present: Alex C. Brown, Town Manager-Finance Director
Ann L. Mackie, Town Clerk

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Mayor Marshall called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

DISCUSSION TO INCLUDE, BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE FOLLOWING: GOALS FOR THE FUTURE AND THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2010-2011 – Manager Brown reported on the summary sheets of the Fiscal Year 2010-2011 budget that were presented to the Council. He reported on the projected budget of the General Fund with a beginning cash balance of \$750,000, projected revenue of \$7.8 million, some net transfers of \$67,000, and \$7.9 million in budget expenditures, for an ending cash balance of \$678,000. He reported on other General Fund items: how the majority of the revenues were from gross receipts tax; how there was a 5% decrease in revenues; how he transferred in \$190,000 from the Water and Sewer Fund; and changes in operational expenditures for each department; etc.

Manager Brown answered questions from the Council and there was discussion on the staff shortage in the Public Works Department and how there would be no increase in employees. Manager Brown recommended the transfer of additional funds from the Water and Sewer Fund reserve in order to hire temporary help in the Parks and Streets Divisions during the summer months. He said the number of staff could not increase unless the revenues increased or if there was a change to the dedication of one of the 1/4% increments of municipal gross receipts tax from the Water and Sewer Fund to the General Fund or at least to dedicate 1/8% of it from the Water and Sewer Fund to the General Fund to use for employees or other issues or projects. There was further discussion about the number of clients in the after-school program at the Recreation Center; how the decreases in staff in the Parks and Streets Divisions had made it difficult to keep up with the weed control, pot hole repairs, maintenance of baseball fields, etc.; the value of temporary employees; how \$34,000 in cigarette taxes would buy equipment and re-do the Virginia Street Park; how the cigarette tax would no longer be revenues for municipalities or counties after June 30th; decreased overtime in the Police, Fire, and Water and Sewer Departments; how competitive wages help to keep employees and reduce overtime; the reasons why the projected cost of health insurance had decreased; how the overall budget expenditures went from \$8.4 million to close to \$8 million; special revenue funds; and how the lodgers tax allocation was projected at \$170,000.

Manager Brown continued reporting on the following: the Capital Fund for the grants and legislative allocations; how the public safety gross receipts tax would sunset in 2 years so they would have to ask the voters to maintain the fund or lose it; the Debt Service Fund; how the Town was in a very good position and could issue debt based on revenue bonds; how they had \$12 million in capacity for revenue bonds that could be paid through gross receipts taxes; the Water and Sewer Fund and how \$100,000 was budgeted for a chip seal project; the Sanitation Fund and how the equipment would be replaced on a 5 year basis; and the Trust and Agency Funds. He commented that through strategic planning they could start looking at infrastructure projects, etc. and said they could borrow money to do some planning. There was further discussion on water conservation and how there was not a big impact because when revenues decreased, the operations expenses decreased as well.

Mayor Marshall asked for input on the budget from the audience and comments were received from Frank Drysdale and Gerald Schultz. Mr. Drysdale said the Town had to become more energy efficient, audit its stated goals and objectives, and proactively budget its resources. He commented on the accomplishments that the community had made through public involvement and Town government support, i.e. Corre Caminos and Corre Cantinas, ADA compliance on Hudson Street and U. S. Highway 180, etc., great trails and open spaces, and the Community Built Park – Penny Park. He further stated that they still had work to do: transit stops with accessible sidewalks, audit policies

for progress, acquire land and easements north of U.S. Highway 180 to complete the Greenway Trails along Pinos Altos and Silva Creeks, and budget for and restore a full time Trails and Open Spaces Coordinator. He outlined other steps that the Town could take to reengage citizens in governance and said the Town should adopt a budget that clearly related to the goals and objectives of its adopted plans. The Council and Manager Brown discussed those issues brought forward by Mr. Drysdale, how the positions for an assistant to the Town Manager and a Parks and Recreation Coordinator were not included in the budget, and how departments had been hit hard. Mr. Schultz commented on water usage and the change in water consumption by individual people.

Councilor Wheaton-Smith made a motion to recess at 2:20 pm. Councilor Bettison seconded the motion. All were in favor, motion passed. Mayor Marshall called the meeting back to order at 2:35 pm and stated they would be moving into the planning part of the meeting, and said a mission statement was drafted 2-3 years prior. He said they wanted to develop the mission statement and then take it to the next step of planning. He commented that his goal was to start all of their meetings with the mission statement. He asked Councilor Wheaton-Smith to read the draft mission statement. There was discussion about the mission statement and the Council received suggestions from the audience. The mission statement was written as follows, "Silver City is the hub of an inclusive community settled within a small town that through guided growth, honors and preserves its historical, cultural, and natural heritage while facilitating jobs, health, and education resources such that the residents and visitors may enjoy and protect the recreational opportunities of the area and high quality of life." Mayor Marshall stated it would be placed on the agenda of the next Council Meeting for further discussion and possible adoption.

Mayor Marshall said the Council had received goals and priorities from department heads and the boards and committees. Councilor Thomson commented on the letter received from Dr. Terry Timme, Chair of the Recycling Advisory Committee, and the Mayor commented that Dr. Timme took more of a system approach to the question. He said he wanted to make sure that the goals and priorities were not project based, but were system based. Manager Brown said the boards wanted direction. Mayor Marshall said they would start by identifying their strengths and identify who they were by doing a SWOT analysis. He said they had a mission statement to work from, and he wanted to hear some people identify the strengths of the Town of Silver City and the community of Silver City. Members of the audience and the Council discussed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and from that discussion the following were identified:

Strengths: San Vicente Trail and other trails; ability of people to work together; recreational opportunities that improve health, draw tourists, and cause people to want to move here and contribute to the community; bike paths and walkability with ADA sidewalks; water resources; diversity in people; citizens that work to improve the town and are the best asset for the future; \$60,000,000 in infrastructure; water and sewer infrastructure and excess and capacity to help in future to assist outlying communities to connect to the system to protect water resources; extensive distribution system and working on regional water system; communities in county and region work together on common goals, i.e. Southwest Regional Transit District, Southwest Council of Governments, Southwest Solid Waste Authority, etc.; historic districts, public friendly 4 year university; a health care system; high quality of life brings in professionals; central hub as a community with high percentage of affluent, well educated population; education level in community very high; partnerships with businesses to do regional things; moderate climate; JPPO and community service projects that benefit and change the lives of youth; Health Council and supporting entities that address health issues; ability to innovate; Arts and Culture District; financial stability of the Town due to Town Manager and Town Council; honest Town government and employees that empower citizens to feel confident, to be heard, and to get involved; in the process of implementing affordable housing; the Mayor's Climate Protection Citizens Advisory Committee and their recommendations to reduce the carbon footprint; the use of electric vehicles by the Town; recycling programs; conservation easements to satisfy the needs of the Trails and Open Space Plan and the Flood Plain Plan; the local expert on stream and run off dynamics; collective regional leadership working toward sustainability of water resources and renewable energy; a housing plan that identifies the needs for affordable and low income housing; and the internet, CATS, and media services in the area.

Weaknesses: larger percentage of people with diabetes and obesity problems, and inequality of infrastructure services in the Town for citizens that still need water, sewer, natural gas, and communication services.

Opportunities: further development of San Vicente Trail and other trails; a commitment to guide the growth of Town trails and open spaces, recreational opportunities and brownfields in the area; a coordinator for Parks and Recreation or Trails and Open Spaces; facilitate community gardens to promote health and nutrition; sidewalks needed on 32nd Street; assess and audit network and reduce hazards by practicing due diligence, i.e. sidewalk inspections; create standardized hazards form for public to report hazards; accommodate recreationalists, i.e. cyclists, etc.; Big Ditch water resources; maintaining and upgrading roads; good law enforcement agencies that work together on crime and drugs; crime rates comparable to other communities, but need to be better; affordable housing initiative; ability to issue bonds and do something about weaknesses and threats; enhance recycling program and re-use; public reporting of issues and concerns via Town's website; the paving master plan update on roads in the community; obtain property easements to reduce the chance of local flooding; innovative practices to use runoff water in a beneficial manner; wind and solar energy; creative ways to reach more people; and infrastructure problems on Mountain View Road with issues of property ownership and right-of-ways.

Threats: risk of tort claims; tailings in Big Ditch; crime and drugs; animal cruelty; and outside economic forces.

Councilor Bettison moved for a short break at 3:53 pm. Councilor Wheaton-Smith seconded the motion. All were in favor, motion passed. Mayor Marshall called the meeting back to order at 4:08 pm and resumed the discussions on strengths, weaknesses, etc. He asked everybody to take the list and develop and refine it before the next planning session scheduled on June 28th. There was further discussion about the next meeting and how a systematic approach was needed for developing goals. Mayor Marshall said the Council wanted to work with the citizens and encouraged the public to attend the meetings.

ADJOURNMENT – Councilor Wheaton-Smith made a motion to adjourn at 4:33 pm. Councilor Bettison seconded the motion. All were in favor, motion passed.

/s/

James R. Marshall, Mayor

Attest:

/s/

Ann L. Mackie, Town Clerk