

**STUDY SESSION NOTES
CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO**

March 19, 2012

Mayor DiTullio called the Study Session to order at 6:40 p.m. Council Members present: Davis Reinhart, William "Bud" Starker, Joyce Jay, Kristi Davis, Mike Stites, George Pond, and Tracy Langworthy.

Also present: City Clerk, Janelle Shaver; City Treasurer, Larry Schulz; City Manager, Patrick Goff; Police Chief, Daniel Brennan; Public Works Director, Tim Paranto; staff and interested citizens.

- 1. Elected Officials' Report(s)** Hank Braaksma from the Senior Resource Center gave a report on the usage of the senior circulator bus. The program was created by the Mayor and City Council a couple of years ago and is funded by donations from the riders. Last year over 8,500 rides were given and \$65,000 dollars in donations was collected. The riders really appreciate the service. Funding is good through 2013. Current stops include Highlands West, Highlands South and the Vintage and Vantage Apartments on West 38th Avenue. They will also start serving the 44th and Upham senior apartments when they are completed.

Davis Reinhart reported on the recent fundraiser for MCPN. Councilmembers Reinhart, Langworthy, Jay, DeMott and Starker were there along with Mayor DiTullio. The Mayor read the proclamation at the fundraiser honoring MCPN as their most recent project is in Wheat Ridge.

Mayor DiTullio reported on NLC. Janice Smothers will create a packet of information from NLC for the Council regarding our lobbying efforts. Senator Michael Bennet asked for a letter signed by the Mayor and Council about CDBG funding to include requests for maintaining current levels of CDBG funding and less restrictions on the CDBG funds.

- 2. Staff Report(s)**

- a) SWAT Regionalization**

Chief Brennan went through the material in the packet about the history of SWAT in Wheat Ridge. He explained the reasons that led to the recommendation to enter into an intergovernmental agreement with the City of Lakewood to combine the teams of the two cities into one joint team. The Lakewood and Wheat Ridge Police Departments share similar policies, procedures, training, and philosophies.

The benefits of a combined tactical team include:

- More efficient use of police services, personnel and resources
- More timely and effective responses to calls
- Adequate staff levels of highly trained officers to resolve crisis and high-risk situations
- The combined team will meet national standards (Currently WR doesn't have enough personnel to do this.)
- Wheat Ridge's tactical team will be reduced by one supervisor and four operators
- Wheat Ridge's negotiation team will be reduced to a negotiations supervisor and two negotiators.
- Each department will outfit its team members with uniforms, tactical vests, and safety equipment.
- Future purchases of major equipment and vehicles will be shared, with Lakewood paying 80% and Wheat Ridge paying 20%.

The Lakewood City Council approved the intergovernmental agreement to establish a joint Special Weapons And Tactics (SWAT) Team – to be called the West Metro SWAT Team – on February 27, 2012.

Chief Brennan recommended that Wheat Ridge also approve the IGA to provide the citizens of these cities with professional and adequate tactical team presence to respond to unusual occurrences.

This item will be on the March 26th agenda.

b) 2011 Annual Review of EMS Services

January 1, 2012 marked the beginning of a new five-year contract with the City of Wheat Ridge, Wheat Ridge Fire Protection District and Pridemark Paramedic Services.

The annual performance review of Pridemark included all calls from January 1 through December 31, 2011, and was reviewed by a committee which met on January 9 and January 23, 2012 at the Wheat Ridge Police Department. Those in attendance were:

- David Witherspoon, Operations Manager, Rural/Metro-Pridemark Paramedic Services
- Steven Gillespie, Fire Chief, Wheat Ridge Fire Protection District
- Joe Cassa, Division Commander, Wheat Ridge Police Department
- Michelle Stodden, Administrative Assistant, Wheat Ridge Police Department

Pridemark maintains certification and reduced their response times this past year. They provide annual First Aid and CPR training for our officers.

The review committee found that all terms of the IGA are in compliance and they were satisfied with Pridemark's performance.

Chief Brennan also noted that in 2010 Pridemark merged with Rural/Metro of Central Colorado, Inc. They are now called Rural/Metro-Pridemark. This merger has provided a good partnership in the areas of resource capacity, clinical excellence, mechanical reliability, improved technologies, and more efficient systems.

3. **Street/Stormwater Utilities**

The City's current revenues are funding the City's operating budgets at insufficient levels. Since 2009 the General Fund cash reserves have been used to subsidize the CIP budget. This has allowed the City to maintain a minimum street preventive maintenance program, but leaves no funding for other street or drainage infrastructure improvements. The projected General Fund reserves at the end of this year are \$6,670,000. The City Council has determined that the minimum cash reserve is 17%, or approximately \$5,000,000. Once the cash reserves are depleted and the preventive maintenance program is suspended, many streets will deteriorate to a condition that will require major reconstruction to return them to serviceable status. The many needed stormwater improvements will also remain unfunded. The Council needs to consider if they want to create a separate Street/Stormwater Utility to provide additional, dedicated revenue for major capital projects.

After considerable discussion about this issue there was consensus to include this topic in a larger more comprehensive budget discussion at the retreat in May.

4. **Roadside Memorials**

There has been a request to install a street sign memorializing the two young men that recently lost their lives in a traffic accident on Twilight Drive. The City currently does not allow such signs within the street rights-of-way and this is the first such request in over ten years.

The merits and disadvantages of allowing roadside memorial signs include:

- Loved ones can be commemorated at the location of their tragic death
- Private shrines can be minimized
- Property owners adjacent to the memorial signs may not support having a reminder of a tragic event in front of their property

Few cities allow memorial signs. If memorial signs were to be allowed in Wheat Ridge, the City's Sign Code must be amended. The City of Arvada does have such a roadside memorial sign program (policy included in the packet).

Mr. Pond will contact the neighbors about this sign and discuss the Arvada ordinance with them. He will email the Council what he finds out

The study session was adjourned at 7:51 PM.



Janelle Shaver, City Clerk