



TOWN OF JEROME

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DRAFT MINUTES

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING - CAPITAL ITEM BUDGET WORK SESSION OF THE TOWN OF JEROME COUNCIL CHAMBERS, JEROME TOWN HALL 600 CLARK STREET, JEROME, ARIZONA

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2024, AT 4:00 PM

Due to the length of this meeting, Council may recess and reconvene at the time and date announced.

4:00 PM (0:01) 1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mayor/Chairperson to call meeting to order

Town Clerk to call and record the roll.

Present were Mayor Alex Barber, Vice Mayor Jane Moore, and Councilmembers Dr. Jack Dillenberg, Issam (Izzy) Sharif, & Sonia Sheffield

Staff present included Town Manager/Clerk Brett Klein and Finance Director/Deputy Clerk Kristen Muenz

Mayor Barber explained that the Executive Session would be moved up in the agenda order for the convenience of those present. The items are presented here as originally agendized.

2. NEW BUSINESS

Discussion/Possible Action

4:15 PM (6:27) A. Discussion, Consideration and Possible Staff Direction Regarding the Council Prioritization of Capital Improvements for Potential Inclusion in Fiscal Year 2026 Budget

Council will engage in a work session type discussion and may prioritize capital projects for budget purposes and provide staff direction regarding the same.

(2:15) Mayor Barber introduced item 2A, Capital Improvements for Fiscal Year 2026 Budget.

Town Manager Klein asked that we discuss Item 2B first, which was agreed upon.

(6:27) Town Manager Brett Klein said that historically, we were one of the later communities to start working on the budget. He explained that it is difficult to fit the meetings in around the holidays, but we will start looking at what needs to be ready by March as the capital items in addition to personnel costs are the highest costs of our budgeted expenses. He said he would forgo going through each item one by one because, as we can see, it is the same list as last year, but things change from year to year. If you would like something to be a higher priority, now is the opportunity.

Dr. Dillenberg said that he would like to state that some of the roads are very bad; he pointed out the curve on Holly and East Avenues. He said he would like to get thoughts on making roads safer.

Ms. Barber commented most of the roads need work, and that it's because of the cobblestones.

Dr. Dillenberg if you drive down the road, it's unbelievable.

Ms. Barber replied that you can tell people turn (vehicles) around there, where they shouldn't. She asked if he would like to add streets as a top priority.

Dr. Dillenberg responded, yes.

Ms. Barber agreed and added that the top of Gulch is really bad, as is Rich Street. She said that we have been avoiding doing topical repairs in any areas where we will be digging for repairs to infrastructure. She said that she agreed that work needed to be done.

Dr. Dillenberg said it is only going to get worse as people drive into Arizona. We love to have the visitors, but driving down that road is just bad.

Ms. Barber agreed. We all live off the main street, and people like to drive around the little roads, but if you do and someone else is coming, you can't get around. She said that we are a National Historic Landmark and lots of people want to look around these areas, and again she agreed that we need to do the work.

Ms. Moore suggested that a lot of them could get temporary fixes. She said that there is a problem where the blacktop and dirt meet that could only take a half hour.

Ms. Barber asked if she was referring to the top of Gulch and Ms. Moore said yes.

Ms. Barber agreed that it needed work, and it would also need drainage improvements. She said this is in the list of Community Block Grant funding.

Mr. Klein replied yes, there is a high priority on our streets. He listed Deception and Gulch, Holly and Dundee, Verde Avenue, and County road. He said we will look at roads that can be fixed simply, perhaps with milling, though there aren't many of those, and we will look at that section of East.

Ms. Barber said that what Jack (Dillenberg) is talking about might be patching but the other work that Mr. Klein had mentioned, milling, would be to have fill added to it.

Ms. Moore commented that anywhere blacktop meets dirt is a problem from people hitting it, spinning their tires, drainage, water, and erosion.

Ms. Barber there's a huge pothole where it meets the apron. As much as we can do with patches, she doesn't know what to do with the curve by East.

There was discussion about people using that curve as a U-turn, despite signage.

Mr. Klein said that he knows the council is reluctant to give staff more work, but to text or email him about these types of things. The crew do a lot of that work in the winter, but it can be done anytime.

Ms. Moore asked if anyone had looked at North Drive. She has gotten a lot of complaints.

Ms. Sheffield replied that she had not been down there in a while, but she has heard the same.

Mr. Sharif commented that, regarding comments about the danger of the surface having compacted almost like ball bearings, it's almost like you need to strip and grade it down.

Ms. Barber asked if we try to fix that?

Mr. Klein replied yes, but to really fix it we need a full reconstruction and grant funding

Ms. Moore clarified that she was talking about further down where the roads meet.

There was further discussion as to exactly the area Ms. Moore was referring to. She said that she would like someone to look at it.

Ms. Barber asked if the residents in the affected area had reached out.

Mr. Klein answered, yes, they have.

Ms. Barber said that she would like to see things listed as in progress that the Zoning Administrator is doing get done. Also, she liked the list of items that we got done.

Ms. Sheffield said, as more light poles get replaced with newer ones, folks wonder why we can't modify them. We have talked about why APS won't do it for us because of the nature of the fixtures, but she thought it was something we could focus on because more and more the lights are getting bothersome.

Mr. Klein replied that he talked to Steve Knowlton about that and we are going to try to retrofit a shield and talk to APS to see if they will approve it. He believes that Mr. Knowlton can design something serviceable without doing anything to the integrity of the posts.

Ms. Barber added that she reached out to Rebecca Rudd (of APS), and they can't bring the old style back because they don't have any of those streetlights yet. Down on Holly there is a new streetlight that people have complained about with no guard. She said that APS has said that if there is no guard they can't put a bulb in and if we want to do it instead, we become the owner of the streetlight and we didn't want to do that. If they are replacing streetlights, that means that they have the bulb to put back. She said that the other thing she would like to add is they are supposed to be Dark Sky bulbs, they are supposed to be darker than we have. She thanked APS for what they have done so far. She asked what had happened with the new bulbs they said could be put in.

Mr. Klein explained that the lights were Dark Sky compliant, but they are much brighter than what we had previously. In the meantime, if we are able to retrofit shields, it will direct the light downward.

Ms. Barber said that the lights do make it safer and easier to walk in certain areas. The retro fitting of shields can be helpful, but she would like to get us to the point of being a Dark Sky recognized community.

Mr. Klein said that we have passed an ordinance on Dark Sky compliance, but to be recognized we may need to do what other communities have done and have an incentive program for people to update existing fixtures.

Ms. Barber asked Mr. Klein to see what we need to do to get recognized.

Mr. Sharif added that, even with the lighting ordinance, do we have means to go back to APS and ask about a different kelvin scale of bulb?

Ms. Barber asked if that would be less bright, because that is what she meant too.

Mr. Sharif explained that it is not about the wattage, it is the kelvin because that determines the warmth. Incandescent is a 3,000 kelvin, which is an amber color, and what they put in now is a 5,000 kelvin, which is bright.

Ms. Moore said that she thought we had identified the wattage that we wanted.

Mr. Klein replied that we had selected what we wanted from what they could provide.

Ms. Barber said that it was because (APS) had said they could not provide a bulb that would fit, so they would have to have one made so that we wouldn't have to replace all of the infrastructure.

Mr. Klein said yes, and they had 2 options to which Ms. Barber asked, and we went with the more ochre color? He again said yes, we did, but it is still brighter than the bulb we had previously.

Ms. Barber asked if it was a Dark Sky compliant bulb, which was confirmed. Ms. Barber asked if there were any other Capital Improvements anyone would like to discuss.

Mr. Sharif asked if we could discuss the possible increase in kiosks as far as the cost is concerned. Maybe raising it a dollar or so to help with our infrastructure. Another item he would like to bring up is the possible implimentation of infrastructure tax that can be applied across commerce.

Ms. Barber asked Mr. Sharif to gather information on that topic.

Mr. Sharif said that he has collected some information because he has talked to the Tourist of Arizona, and spoke to someone in the city for the Cardinals Stadium and how they have managed their infrastructure taxation. So, he would like to bring that up and how do we help ourselves with the weight of tourism to help ourselves.

Ms. Barber said she would like to bring up Friends of Jerome; do we have a website for Friends of Jerome where people can buy merch or give us donations?

Ms. Sheffield wished to add to the parking discussion. She said that she supports increasing the parking rate for visitors, however she felt that we should come up with some sort of accommodation for locals.

She and Lt. San Felice have talked briefly, and he said he was willing to sit on a committee to try to get locals to get limited permits for running errands, getting a quick meal, or something similar type of exemption because a lot of the locals do end up having to pay to park. She said she herself has to dart in and out of town several times a day.

Mr. Sharif said that he agreed, he would like to maybe see something for the workforce.

Ms. Barber said it could be brought up again. There is a 10–15-minute parking spot which should be utilized for that, but she has sometimes noticed an out-of-state plate parked there, so she is willing to discuss it.

Ms. Moore said she talked to Eric Jurisin about how many employees he has, and they are always trying to park in front of the shop and leave their vehicles there all day. One of the areas behind the Chamber trolley, if we could get that road fixed, that could probably hold up to 8 vehicles.

Ms. Barber commented that most people, even locals, think they have to pay to go down there. But there is a spot where you don't have to pay. She said that she understands what Sonia is saying, because rather than going out to the parking lot, most people want front parking. She said that people in Jerome already have to walk pretty far, and she has had to walk from the parking lot, but people don't understand where they can park for free. Ms. Barber said, when our parking is full, our town is full. If we put in a huge parking garage and got a thousand more people in, there would be nowhere for everyone to go. On a busy Saturday, there is an hour's wait for a hamburger. But we will talk about it, and talk about raising the kiosk prices. She asked how long the kiosks have been implemented, which has been over a year, so she said it is not unreasonable to raise it a dollar.

Mr. Sharif agreed and said that Ms. Sheffield had a good idea to look for a way to take care of the locals. When Lt. San Felice looks into it, there could be a code.

There was more discussion on the parking situation in the center of town, and possible ideas for solutions for employee parking, such as permits and utilizing the town shuttle.

Ms. Barber concluded that we need to figure out how to sustain the tourism that we are getting, she is pretty sure we are getting 2 million a year, and it is taking a toll. She said that we also need to keep moving forward on the wastewater treatment plant, which should be at the top of the list. She said that every year there is another project to be added to the list.

Mr. Klein said that the wastewater treatment plant continues to be a top priority.

Ms. Barber said she would also like to see movement on item 2 of the list, the parking inventory.

Deputy Clerk Muenz explained that Zoning Administrator Will Blodgett had been making progress on that item recently.

Ms. Barber said we are lucky to have our volunteers and paid staff, and Jerome survives to fight another day. She asked if there had been any momentum on the plate glass windows on the Hotel Jerome.

Mr. Klein said that he had called several companies, but only 1 would come out, Cottonwood Glass. But they will need a contractor. When he followed up, they said they were waiting on us to provide a contractor. One of the roofing companies works with them, so he is going to call them to see if they will work with the casings.

Ms. Barber said that is the problem with the old buildings, because we want to save them, but the contractors don't want to have their name on an old building without a lot of work because they are liable for it. She said that she would like to, on the record, thank Steve Knowlton for all of the work he had done for us. She said, with the caliber of work he has done with his old buildings, they are not renovations, they are rehabilitations. He has helped this town, and we are lucky to have him as a member of this community.

Ms. Moore asked, regarding retaining walls, what is being done.

Mr. Klein said we have done inventory and identified a structural engineer and now it is just about funding. He is pursuing some grants and while there are not a lot of opportunities for structural engineering grants, we could work with several entities to pursue grants.

Ms. Barber said the Freeport McMoran used to do a grant cycle, and we may have more monies in restricted funds that we could use.

Mr. Klein said we are grateful for those grants, but community grants can be rather small, so we would need to seek larger grant funding to complete the projects.

There was some additional discussion of funding and future improvements.

Ms. Barber asked if we have had any luck with asking ADOT to red-stripe the entrance to Rich Street.

Mr. Klein said that we were in contact, and there was some discussion about other roads that may need safety improvements. The pull-off and 89A and the new striping close to Clarkdale were both discussed. Going back to parking kiosks, Ms. Moore wondered about adding a shade structure or something to stand under when using the kiosks.

Mr. Klein explained that should be worked out when we go to all texting ones. A lot of entities only do payment by phone, but we will keep a kiosk for those without phones and we could provide shade for that one.

Ms. Barber said she didn't believe any town does it (provides shade structures). She described a dirt lot that she parked in for a concert in Phoenix where you could only pay via phone. Ms. Barber asked Mr. Klein to describe the run-down for budget planning.

Mr. Klein explained that we usually have 4 or 5 meetings. After which, the budget will be more fine-tuned to come to you. There will be meetings in February and March, and by April or May, we should have a draft budget.

Ms. Barber asked, then we can add any extra if needed?

Mr. Klein confirmed this.

Ms. Barber expressed that she liked the plan. She explained that her work schedule had changed, but she was willing to attend special meetings and asked if everyone was in agreement.

Ms. Sheffield said she would like to discuss the library windows, and wanted to know if something could be done, such as seal them with plastic.

There was discussion on ways to seal the existing windows to retain heat for the winter.

Mr. Klein we've spent money on HVAC, which has made a difference, but they do still need windows. Sealing them could be a stopgap.

Mr. Sharif said that he sees that a new project is a court security camera system, and he would be interested in seeing the fees.

Mr. Klein said the cost of the cameras was being paid by a court grant and the service fees were minimal, but we could certainly share those invoices.

Ms. Moore said she talked to Marty (Boland) about improvements to water lines and everything going into School Street. That is something that has been identified for years.

Ms. Barber asked her to elaborate.

Ms. Moore said that she believed that the valve might be leaking on that water line, and the valve box.

Mr. Klein we are doing a valve replacement program every year.

Ms. Moore asked if that would satisfy the problems that are going on.

Mr. Klein said, ultimately, no, we are losing a lot and that is why we qualify for grant funds.

Ms. Moore asked if that would be for School Street, and Mr. Klein said it will be for just the regulators on School Street.

Ms. Moore asked if it could wait, and Mr. Klein said that he would discuss that with staff.

Ms. Barber asked if there was anything further, and reminded the council members that we have many more opportunities to talk. She thanked Mr. Klein and Ms. Muenz, and said we are lucky to have everyone who works for the town. She asked for reminders for the employee appreciation lunch and the going-away party for Chief Muma.

Mr. Klein confirmed that notices both events have been posted.

4:12 PM (3:05) B. Discussion and Possible Staff Direction Regarding Legal Services, Including Potential Issuance of a RFP

Council will discuss and may provide staff direction regarding the issuance of a RFP or other method for Legal Services.

Ms. Barber asked how long Bill Sims has been the town's legal representative?

Mr. Klein replied, over 10 years.

Ms. Barber asked when his contract was due.

Mr. Klein explained it was open-ended. He then explained that the best practices were to check market rates to review every 3 to 5 years. He did not believe this had been done for legal services in quite some time. He commented that we had recently done something similar for the town engineering contractor and this was our opportunity to do the same; to make sure pricing was competitive, perhaps someone who is more familiar with the town, or might be closer, or perhaps council would prefer to maintain the current legal counsel, William Sims.

Ms. Barber commented that she did not think we've ever done this in the past 10 years, and this is something she thinks we should do.

Councilmember Sheffield said, agreed.

Ms. Moore stated that she would like to say we have some difficult things coming up and she would like to see more attention paid to these things in the presence of an attorney. She would like to look for that in a new attorney or continuing with the current attorney.

Ms. Barber agreed and commented that it was fair and reasonable.

Ms. Sheffield also agreed.

Ms. Barber moved to issue the RFP for legal services.

Motion to Issue an RFP regarding Legal Services

COUNCILMEMBER	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
BARBER	X		X			
DILLENBERG			X			
MOORE			X			
SHARIF			X			
SHEFFIELD		X	X			

3. EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a public majority vote of the members, Council may enter into executive session in accordance with ARS § 38-431.03 (A)(7)

4:02 PM () A. Motion to Adjourn to Executive Session

On a Public Majority Vote of Council Members Constituting a Quorum, the Town Council May Enter into an Executive Session pursuant to ARS § 38-431.03(A)(7); *discussion or consultation with designated representatives of the public body in order to consider its position and instruct its representatives regarding negotiations for the purchase, sale or lease of real property. Discussion and instruction will center around potential acquisition of 621 Main Street for Town employee / workforce housing.*

Council member Sharif moved to enter an Executive Session, which was seconded by Vice Mayor Moore. The motion was approved unanimously.

Mayor Barber read the agenda item description, and the council entered into Executive Session at 4:02 P.M.

Motion to enter into Executive Session at 4:02 P.M.

COUNCILMEMBER	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
BARBER			X			
DILLENBERG			X			
MOORE		X	X			
SHARIF	X		X			
SHEFFIELD			X			

4:10 PM (1:55) B. Return to Regular Open Session and Consideration of Any Action to be Taken from Executive Session Discussion

Council may take action through a motion and / or may direct staff to prepare an action item for a subsequent meeting.

The meeting returned to an Open Session at 4:10 P.M.

Mayor Barber gave staff direction to pursue the purchase of 621 Main Street for town employee workforce housing.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 5:07 P.M.

COUNCILMEMBER	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
BARBER	X		X			
DILLENBERG		X	X			
MOORE			X			
SHARIF			X			
SHEFFIELD			X			

APPROVE:

ATTEST:

Alex Barber, Mayor

Brett Klein, Town Manager