

**COMMON COUNCIL, RETREAT, CITY OF NOBLESVILLE
SEPTEMBER 10, 2010**

The Common Council of the City of Noblesville met in a special retreat session on Friday, September 10, 2010 at 8:00a.m. Mr. Boice called the meeting to order pursuant to public notice with the following members present: Dale Snelling, Mary Sue Rowland, Brian Ayer, Mark Boice, Steve Wood, Roy Johnson and Greg O'Connor.

Also present was Clerk-Treasurer Janet Jaros.

AGENDA

Mr. Boice passed out an agenda and tally sheets. Each Council person will be given two minutes to talk about 5 budget ideas, one minute for discussion on each idea. Those ideas were written on the tally sheet. Each Council was to score the idea using 0-10. After all of those ideas were done, the same process would take place for strategic project ideas. Mr. Boice will take the tally sheets and total each one to get the Council's priorities.

Mr. Wood asked Mrs. Jaros for information concerning the budget numbers and COIT amounts. Mrs. Jaros passed out the information from the fiscal plan. The 2011 budget, as presented, uses 96.25% of COIT. It is balanced by \$34.00. She stated she would like direction from the Council as to how much COIT they would approve using.

Mrs. Jaros has another issue she would like for the Council to make a decision on. February 2011 meeting dates fall on the 15th and the 29th next year. The month only has 28 days. She asked if they would like to meet on Monday the 28th. The Council asked about moving the dates up to the 8th and the 22nd. Mrs. Jaros stated there will be a meeting on the 22nd for the Plan Commission because Monday the 21st is a holiday. The Council decided to move the meetings up by a week, meeting on the 8th and the 22nd.

Mr. Ayer stated his #1 is rambling. He appreciates Mr. Boice organizing this meeting. He feels they need to find a better way to do the budget process and has felt that way for 7 years. He feels until they see red ink they will continue the same process. Legislation has put us in this position but in the end we might be fine for the next 3 to 4 years. His time was up for this idea. #2 is continuation of rambling. #3, budget ideas, he has not gone through the budget like he has done in the past. The Council might have to make some very hard calls but he doesn't believe until they start seeing red that they need to look to raise a tax or collect a trash fee. They may have to close a fire station, merge communications. He felt they could cut \$400,000, \$500,000 or even \$600,000 from this current budget. #4, he would like to look at consulting contracts, especially for the Parks and Economic Development. He felt there were items that can be cut. He stated he misses the information from Board of Works and wondered if they could have that information again in their packets. There was discussion held after he presented his ideas.

Mr. Boice stated his #1 is to look at the longevity that is being paid. The Council needs to come up with a plan as to what they plan to do with it. No one else gets longevity in the county. #2, City Court, they need to look at the court to see what they would like to do with it in the future. Mrs. Jaros stated she asked the Judge if he had talked to the incoming prosecutor to see what his thoughts were concerning court. The Judge has not done that. #3, brush service in the city, it takes two people to pick up brush every week. He is not saying we do away with this service but they need to look at it. #4, Ordinance enforcement, the one he is looking at is the alarm ordinance. He has talked to the chief, they are not enforcing it. He said the Chief feels he needs direction from the Council. The consensus was that the police need to start enforcing it. They felt information needed to be put in the wastewater bill and a press release done in order to get the word out.

Mr. Johnson stated his #1 would be consulting spending. #2 is the trash fee. When that was started long ago, they did not connect a fee to it, it was absorbed with property taxes. There never has been any additional revenue added to cover the cost. #3 are take home cars, who has them, when do cars get bought and look at having a plan for this expense. #4 is to look at all the contracts for cell phones. Each department has a separate contract and he feels it needs to be city wide. This could also pertain to copier leases. #5 would

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be to try to get the buying pool going. He is not sure they will be able to pull it off. He also feels they need to look at Court. Discussion was held on some of these ideas.

Mr. O'Connor stated his #1 was to look at the health care. He would like to engage Holly Ramon to look at the long term effects of the new health care law. They need to see the numbers from the clinic, get the cost of insurance and how we are dealing with new regulations. Mrs. Jaros stated the committee has started reviewing all the new requirements and how the city needs to address each one. #2 would be ordinance review. If they don't get enforced or are outdated, get them off the books. There are thousands of ordinances and do they need all of them. #3 would be to target COIT at 90% and work backwards. It was stated it takes \$128,000 to equal 1% of COIT. He would like to see more expenses funneled into CCD. #5 would be to have the Administrative Assistant have to sign off on all expenses \$500.00 and more. Discussion took place that they are reviewing all expenditures \$2000.00 and up. Some felt \$500 was too low.

Mrs. Rowland stated they need to look more in terms of what is best and how they can better serve the taxpayer. Everything is going into operation and it is all out of balance. The city spends too much and it is all high end things that get bought. She would like for COIT to be reduced to 75%. That would take it to the 2006 level. She wants to see money put into the rainy day fund and include the special distribution going into that as well. She would like to have all the Food and Beverage revenue go into the rainy day fund. It was never meant to be used as it is. Mrs. Jaros stated she has to say something about that. When it was before the Council for consideration, Mr. Hinds wanted to put the Food and Beverage revenue into a special fund. Mr. Ayer stated if they did not need it for operation and set it aside, he would not vote for it. Mr. Ayer stated that was correct and that was the way he felt. Mrs. Rowland said in order to be able to only use 75% of COIT and set it aside, they can consider the following things, consolidation of dispatch, NRO, golf courses, more efficient patrolling, reduction of all take home vehicles by 25%, cut out all promotional, cut out all clothing. Police, Fire and Street are different. They need to have uniforms. A reduction of the Planning staff by percentage of permits they are down. She really didn't know how they all can be busy. Cut summer help by 25%, interns need to be eliminated. They need to go back and cut all this out to achieve what she is proposing. Mr. Ayer stated taking the COIT to 75% would be a reduction of over 3 million dollars. He didn't think that was possible. He said if you add Food and Beverage to that, that amount is over \$800,000 more.

Mr. Snelling said he has not written anything down. All the years he has been on the Council, Mr. Reuter is always projecting Doomsday. They are now in a different ball game. State Legislature has done this and really put the City in a bind. They have also squeezed everyone else too, the schools especially. We are still in good shape. He feels they need to look at the survey questions to see what the citizens are willing to do without. He feels there needs to be greater trust between the Council and the Administration. He is sure there may be some fluff in the budget but if this Council feels they can do this process better, then set up a committee and lay out the ground rules. He said on the trash fee, when that was started there may have been around 8500 people in Noblesville. When you look at a fee of \$1.00 or \$5.00 per month, how much would that create. He is kind of on the fence concerning the trash fee right now. Vehicles have been mentioned. That comes up every other year or so. The Council will request the report, it is given and it gets put on the shelf with nothing being done. He stated Board of Works does do a good job at reviewing the contracts and what is being approved. He said if there are questions on the claims, he knows they can get those answered. He does have a problem with how much money is being spent on promotional items. Mr. Ayer asked if there would be any interest in hiring a consultant to review the budgets. They would know if we are too high per department and see if anything is out of whack.

Mr. Wood stated his #1 is cut every position out of the budget that is not filled. Mrs. Jaros stated that has been done except for one position. Mr. Wood stated he would like to see that taken out and then if a person was hired, they could come to Council to get an appropriation. #2 is to start the talking process for LOIT. See if there is interest from other communities. #3 is to stop all encumbrances at the end of the year and move those

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dollars to the rainy day fund. #4 is to bring all vehicle purchases before the Council prior to being purchased. #5 is to look at insurance. The question was asked if he meant health insurance or all insurance. The response was to review all insurance.

PROJECTS.

The same procedure was used to look at future projects.

Mr. Ayer said he feels #1 is they need to do the Riverwalk. He is not sure they should spend 1.5 million dollars on a Riverwalk. #2 is the purchase of Forest Hill School. He felt that would be his first priority. It is hard to get property adjacent to our property and if it would go to someone else they will regret it. He didn't feel using it for a police station was a top priority. If they built a new building it would have to go out for a referendum. If they remodel this building they wouldn't have to do that. #3, he would like for them to look at the S. 8th corridor. That is a high priority for him. They have had a commitment from Hamilton County Tourism to help start that. That would be an easy project. He also stated that he is not sure if they can do anything. If they do something on projects, are they sending a message. The employees are not getting raises but the Council is doing projects.

Mr. Boice said #1 would be to start Downtown calls on businesses. #2 would be cold calls on all businesses. #3 would be attractive roundabouts. Mr. Boice said he read a study that now says it is good to have grasses planted in the middle. You don't have to see across them and that makes them safer. #4 is the Riverwalk project.

Mr. Johnson said his #1 would be to acquire property on the West side of the river. He felt they need to be ready for the public/private partnership once things start moving again. #2 would be the Riverwalk and Trails connections. A discussion took place that since the Riverwalk has been mentioned that they reduce this one to just the Trail system and connections. #3 would be a pedestrian bridge on Little Chicago Road bridge. A discussion took place concerning the Westside. Mr. Ayer stated the Downtown Strategic group has asked that the zoning overlay be done. They have not seen that yet. They need to have that in place before they start buying properties.

Mr. O'Connor stated his #1 would be Riverwalk. #2 would be to acquire Forest Hill School. #3 would be the roundabout at Pleasant and Merchantile Bvd. #4 would be to bond several of these projects. Interest rates are low and they will not be able to get money at this rate again. They should take as many of the projects that fit into the Logan Street TIF and bond them.

Mrs. Rowland gave out a packet of information. The packet contained information from the Downtown Committee. Their projected projects were listed in the packet information. Many of the projects are those that were mentioned before. One that wasn't would be the community center. The Riverwalk and the community center would bring in ec development to the Downtown.

Mr. Snelling said he feels most of the Council is on the same page. He is in favor of looking into doing a bond issue for the projects. Mr. Ayer stated they will need to know the cost of the projects to see what they can afford. They would be able to use TIF to pay for these projects. Mr. Snelling said they have been sitting on their hand and he would like to move forward and get off their hands. He started the process of getting the consensus of which project within all of these projects had top priority. Mr. Wood asked if he could present his ideas before they started that process. He said they could go back to that after he presents his.

Mr. Wood said his #1 would be road repairs. #2 would be storm drain upgrades, #3 would be sidewalk repairs and upgrades. #4 would be the purchase of the Waffle House on the West side. #5 would be the Riverwalk.

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Once the projects are put in priority they will be presented to the Mayor. It will depend on the cost for the projects and how much they can afford from TIF. The following projects were put on the list. Riverwalk, West side land purchases, Forest Hill School, S. 8th Street corridor, Community Center. There was a lot of discussion during this time. Riverwalk and Forest Hill School purchase were both top priorities. Westside land purchases and the S. 8th Street project were second. The last priority would be the community center. Mr. Wood said that doesn't mean it is off the list, but it didn't rank as high as the others.

The Council was moving the meeting to the police department for a walk through. Mrs. Jaros asked for the COIT amount for the 2011 budget. Mr. Wood and Mr. Boice said they felt we should proceed with the budget the way it is using the 96.25% of COIT. Mrs. Rowland felt we needed to cut more out of it. Mr. Wood moved to leave it as it stands, second Mr. Snelling, six aye, one nay. Mrs. Rowland voting nay.

Mr. Ayer stated they would have Mr. O'Connor get information from the company doing the survey to see if they can do a budget review to see what our needs are. Mr. Snelling said that would depend on what they would charge to do the review.

There being no further business before the Common Council of the City of Noblesville, the Council recessed to the Public Safety Building for a tour of the Police Department at 11:15 a.m.

John Ditslear, Mayor

ATTEST:

Janet S. Jaros, Clerk-Treasurer