

***Proceedings of the Council of the City of Joliet, Illinois
held on the 24th day of January, A.D. 2007***

SPECIAL MEETING of the Council of the City of Joliet, Illinois held on Wednesday, January 24, 2007 at 4:00 P.M. in the Council Chambers, Joliet Municipal Building, 150 W. Jefferson Street, Joliet, Illinois.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: MAYOR ARTHUR SCHULTZ and DISTRICT 2 COUNCILMAN TIMOTHY M. BROPHY, COUNCILMAN AT LARGE THOMAS C. GIARRANTE, DISTRICT 4 COUNCILMAN ALEX LEDESMA, COUNCILWOMAN AT LARGE JAN QUILLMAN, DISTRICT 1 COUNCILMAN JOSEPH R. SHETINA and DISTRICT 3 COUNCILMAN ANTHONY UREMOVIC

ABSENT: DISTRICT 5 COUNCILMAN WARREN C. DORRIS and COUNCILMAN AT LARGE MICHAEL F. TURK.

ALSO PRESENT: CITY MANAGER JOHN M. MEZERA, DIRECTOR OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET ROBERT D. FRASER AND FINANCE DIRECTOR RICHARD F. YUCIUS.

A Notice of Special Meeting of the Council of the City of Joliet, Illinois to be held on Wednesday, January 24, 2007 from 4:00 to 5:30 P.M. in the City Council Chambers, Joliet Municipal Building, 150 W. Jefferson Street, Joliet, Illinois, called by MAYOR SCHULTZ for the purpose of discussing the proposed 2007 Budget was submitted.

The City Manager continued with page 7 of the 2007 budget message and began explaining some of the highlights.

He said the budget provides for an additional \$2,250,000 to continue the House Lateral Disconnection Program. He said we started out putting \$1 million into the program and the program is getting a little bigger and more expensive so we have added to that. He said the program is really paying off.

COUNCILMAN BROPHY said they met with the Madison Condos Homeowners Association recently and they said after we did that program the neighborhood immediately adjacent to them felt improvement. He said that's nice to know.

The City Manager said we have \$2 million in the Utility budget for an East Side Water Storage Tower in the Edgecreek area. He said a lot of complaints come in about water pressure. He said it was operated by a booster system which wasn't the best system in the world. He said we are going to build a 1,000,000 gallon elevated storage tank and that will help everything out in that area.

The City Manager said there is \$439,070 budgeted for the Youth Programs which are very popular. He said a lot of different entities get small amounts out of that fund.

The City Manager said we have \$2,436,597 in the budget for City Center paving, streetscapes and signs. He said we haven't done any paving of the streets and they are really in bad condition. He said we need to rebuild Joliet Street because it doesn't have decent curbs and it is a mess. He said we should be able to attract a condominium development on the waterfront this year. He said the Planning Director has been making a lot of progress with a company that has been working in Elgin and they have done a magnificent job up there. He said

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we're not in the position to say we have anything definite but it is very, very close. He said they are very high quality, all brick, beautiful buildings.

The City Manager said we did a signage program a few years back on how to get to the parking decks, Courthouse, etc. using banners, but we've found it's not really an effective program. He said the banners are a little too high on the poles and as they fade they are not noticeable and it is just not a good program. He said we are going to go with aluminum signs. He said as a part of the Friends of Community Public Art program, they are going to start working on the planter boxes which have never really been properly painted. He said we are going to start some colorful mosaic work on some of them and get the rest of them painted.

COUNCILMAN UREMOVIC asked if we are going to change the traffic flow on Scott Street and whether we are going to open up Chicago Street.

The City Manager said no with regards to Scott Street. He said regarding Chicago Street we want to open it up but we can't get the right-of-way from the County. He said we have met with them and the Mayor said it was his highest priority last year and they just won't come around. He said he can't really blame one person because there are so many people that need to cooperate to get something like this done and they can't seem to do it. He said Chief Judge White is a great guy and he controls a little bit of that because they have the parking lot, but he needs new courtrooms and a new courthouse and he said when he gets some of that he can deal with us on the rest of this. He said they own the land which we traded to them years ago when we did Union Station and they did the jail and we did a big property swap. He said at the time we recommended that it be closed off because it generated a lot of traffic on Chicago Street. He said we were making a semi-mall and they didn't want all that traffic there. He now we're saying it probably wasn't a good idea to close it off.

COUNCILMAN UREMOVIC asked if there is a way where you can open up Chicago Street not from a traffic standpoint, but make it more open and brighter. He asked if that was part of this.

The City Manager said it isn't part of this specifically but we could look at that. He said there are some of those areas where we have the pull-off bays and we have a parallel parking situation where you can get 2 to 3 cars in there and we could possibly expand those a little more and maybe put in some angle parking and turn-over parking. He said we'll look into it.

The City Manager said with this \$2.4 million we want to pave Joliet, Jefferson and Cass Streets and do some rebuilding on Benton, Crowley and Webster.

COUNCILWOMAN QUILLMAN asked if we could budget for more clean-up crews because she has received several complaints after parades and especially during the summer when we have special events that the streets are clean, but the garbage cans are overflowing and there is garbage all over.

The City Manager said we can handle that. He said that shouldn't happen and if the trash cans were overflowing we should have had Waste Management pick them up for us. He asked the Deputy City Manager if we could look at our schedule for special events.

The Deputy City Manager said they are normally emptied twice a week downtown.

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The City Manager said we need to have them emptied the night after each parade.

COUNCILMAN GIARRANTE questioned whether we could put the streets signs on overhead light arms on the corner where they would be more visible. He said we could put a street sign on them not only downtown but wherever we have that type of stop light.

The City Manager said that's the kind of thing we're talking about doing. He said we could also take a look at our major arterials and do those on the ones that don't have them already.

COUNCILMAN UREMOVIC said he would like to see what the Friends of Community Public Art is proposing to put in there so we can vote on that. He also asked the City Manager if he could tell us what we spent last year and this year in total by project.

The City Manager said he can get that information.

COUNCILMAN SHETINA asked what our long term plan is for parking downtown.

The City Manager said there are 2 or 3 different phases of this long term plan. He said this year we would like to produce a parking study so we have a plan for downtown that would show the different phases that we're going to do. He said one of the things that we talked about at the last meeting was the fact that we've loaded the parking decks with monthly parking and it really should be for short-term, turn-over parking. He said the monthly parking needs to be more towards the outskirts of town and we are in the process of trying to acquire properties there for additional parking.

COUNCILMAN TURK arrived at the meeting at this point.

The City Manager said there is a big demand for commuter parking. He said between 6:30 and 7 a.m. we have 100 to 150 people that are already parked in the parking decks who pay \$2 per day and walk over to Union Station to take the trains. He said we are getting the license plate numbers of those people and we are going to communicate with them that when we open up these new lots that we want them to move into those surface parking lots. He said that will free up 120 spaces as soon as we make that move and that is very cost effective for us. He said the new lots are \$1.00 per day but that may go to \$2.00 because that's way too low. He said if you were to just double your fees for parking you'd probably pick up \$600,000 or \$700,000 a year. He said you could do a bond issue for \$6 or \$8 million and buy some properties and work with Metra to stretch your dollars out a little further. He said that's the kind of thing we want to put in the parking plan.

MAYOR SCHULTZ asked if we had a list of people waiting for parking.

The City Manager said yes, we have a long list and we don't take too many people off of those waiting lists.

MAYOR SCHULTZ asked what Joliet Township High School is going to do with Rendel's.

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The City Manager said they are going to tear the buildings down. He said they would like to have open space where the kids can go outside and enjoy themselves.

MAYOR SCHULTZ said we should have bought Rendel's.

The City Manager said it was available for a lot of years and we could have bought it. He said there is a lot of property we should have bought.

COUNCILMAN GIARRANTE asked what they paid for the property.

The City Manager said around \$1.6 million. He said we had the opportunity to buy the West Pines Hotel for about \$300,000 and we didn't do it. He said you can go on and on about what we should have done over the years but we didn't have the money.

MAYOR SCHULTZ said if we buy property in the City Center it's going to cost us top dollar and he said he thinks we should move on it right now because the longer we wait the more we're going to pay.

The City Manager said absolutely.

COUNCILMAN UREMOVIC asked if the riverfront condominiums were going to be market priced and not subsidized.

The City Manager said they will all be market priced. He said we won't talk to anybody about subsidized housing in the City other than housing for the elderly.

COUNCILWOMAN QUILLMAN asked about the property where Cass goes into Western where there is a grocery store and an automotive shop. She asked if there were any plans for those businesses.

The Director of Community and Economic Development said they called the owner of the automotive shop because it is closed but he doesn't know the outcome of the call.

COUNCILWOMAN QUILLMAN said she knows the grocery store is a hangout also.

The City Manager continued with the budget message and said we have \$1 million for Traffic Signals at Caton Farm and Frontage Roads. He said he believes we have more than that because it is a pretty significant project. He said the lights there now are temporary but they are going to be permanent and in order to do that we have to do some rather significant modifications with some retaining walls. He said it's a much needed project.

The City Manager said there is also \$1.8 million for the I-55/Rt. 59 Interchange, \$576,000 for Black and Bronk Road Traffic Signals and \$914,000 for Caton Farm Road Improvements from Route 59 to Drauden.

The City Manager said there is \$1.2 million in the Gaming Fund for the School Incentive Program. He said the amounts have not changed drastically from last year.

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The City Manager said \$1.6 million is still in the budget for the purchase of the State's Attorney building across from the Rialto Theatre.

The City Manager said we have \$500,000 for the Far West Side Maintenance and Fire Maintenance Facilities for a total of \$4,230,000. He said this project will get going this year.

COUNCILMAN UREMOVIC asked if \$4.2 million was for both of them.

The City Manager said the West Side Maintenance Facility on Gael Drive is going to be expanded for fire maintenance. He said 3 or 4 more bays with tall doors will be added and the fire trucks that are now repaired downtown will get repaired here. He said a couple of bays will be added to the other end of the current Gael Drive building and several utility crews will be stationed there. He said currently if there is a watermain break on the west side they show up at the east side and then they have to drive their equipment all the way to the west side, and that takes a long time. He said we will build a new Far West Maintenance Facility on Arbeiter Road that will have a salt storage dome, new storage for all the snow plows and a fuel facility like we have at Gael Drive so all of the vehicles that handle the far west side would operate out of that new building.

COUNCILMAN UREMOVIC asked how much would be spent this year for Gael Drive and how much would be earmarked for Arbeiter Road out of the \$4.2 million.

The City Manager said he has the whole breakdown but he doesn't have it here as an exhibit. He said he will get it for him.

COUNCILMAN UREMOVIC also asked if we have a budget item for equipment for the new far west side facility. He said we have the building, but what do we have for equipment.

The City Manager said there is some new equipment in Utilities and some new equipment in the Street Division so that's how that equipment would be budgeted.

The City Manager said we have \$1.5 million for Phase II of the Joliet Public Library Main Branch renovations which pretty much finishes that building. He said this amount will finish their HVAC system and windows. He said they just finished up some of the mechanical work. He said it's a little difficult because they have to keep the building heated and air conditioned and at the same time they have to replace all these major systems, so it really is a big job to plan how they are going to phase that in.

The City Manager said we have discussed the widening of Route 59. He said IDOT has this policy that says they don't want to do Route 59 while I-55 is under construction. He said he doesn't think that is a good policy for us because we can't wait four years to widen that road. He said right now you can't get through any way and he thinks we are better off getting that section of Route 59 under construction even if I-55 is under construction so we can get it opened up. He said I-55 is going to take three years. He said if we go through one more bad year on Route 59 and then have it done, he thinks we'd be in way better shape. He said that's what he communicated to IDOT yesterday and they asked us to send them a letter.

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The City Manager said we have \$200,000 for Silver Cross Field. He said generally the revenue that we get from Silver Cross Field we leave in the budget for improvements there. He said there is probably going to be a need for us to participate in the "Miracle Field" that they are building. He said that's at least a \$500,000 project and they are out in the community raising funds. He said he thinks they are going to come back and ask us at some point in time for an additional contribution. He said he thinks we have already committed about \$50,000 for some field work.

The City Manager said the gift shop at Silver Cross Field was moved up to the second floor and the City has ownership and use of the old space. He said it is a beautiful spot and we have a rendering and a video of what that could be. He said it should probably be a VIP type meeting room with a bar that people could rent before games. He said the Deputy City Manager is working on this.

The Deputy City Manager said we have drawings now from the architect and it is really going to be special. He said he has the drawings if anyone would like to stop by and see them.

The City Manager said there is \$266,000 for the start of the Bridge Street Reconstruction project, but it's not enough to do the entire project. He said we need to bring to the Land Use Committee the Near West Neighborhood Plan. He said it involves CAPA, St. Pat's, St. Ray's, St. Mary's and the school district and all other stakeholders up there. He said they are calling for taking Bridge Street straight through to the college and that requires purchasing 14 homes and it will probably cost around \$4 million to do that. He said we don't have sufficient funds for it. He said he thinks the plan is a series of what are really good ideas with no suggestion as to how to raise the money for any of them. He said it's one of those things we should keep in mind because there are development opportunities along the way, but how we fund them is another matter.

COUNCILMAN GIARRANTE said the last section of Bridge Street west of Center is really bad. He asked if those people are going to have to wait for the rerouting before it gets done, or could we go ahead and do that street.

The City Manager said we need to do it all but there is not enough money to do it all. He said there may be some interim improvements we could do without rebuilding everything and maybe do some paving. He asked the Public Works Director if he could get some cost estimates for those sections of Bridge Street and then meet with the Public Service Committee and go over that and put a plan together.

The City Manager said the budget also provides for \$150,000 for the CED/City Center Partnership. He said the commitment to them used to be \$100,000 and we said we'd go to \$150,000 over 2 years. He said we gave them an extra \$25,000 last year and this is the other \$25,000 for this year so they'll be up to \$150,000. He said they are becoming a very, very effective group. He said the CED is well known throughout Illinois and even beyond. He said they have good planning and great support from the community.

COUNCILMAN BROPHY said they set a goal to raise \$7.5 million and they hit \$8 million.

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COUNCILMAN GIARRANTE said the Water Park Committee met with the Park District and they did lose money. He said they are making some changes because they've seen the trend over the last four years and now they know what hours to open and when not to, etc. He said he was wondering if we could increase their \$200,000 to \$220,000. He said their water bill alone is about \$20,000.

The City Manager said there is \$20,000 in the Riverboat Gaming Fund left as a reserve. He said we used \$230,000 for the Museum exhibit.

MAYOR SCHULTZ asked if that would be a one-shot deal.

COUNCILMAN GIARRANTE said for this year, and then next year we'd have to look at it again.

COUNCILWOMAN QUILLMAN said if we have another cold summer we're going to lose money again. She said we keep throwing money into it and we keep losing money.

COUNCILMAN GIARRANTE said they've served over 250,000 people so somebody's using it, but the bad part is that its weather dependent.

The City Manager said one of the unfortunate things is that everybody has to keep records on how much money you spend and how much money you take in. He said there is no real value placed on the service that is provided to the community. He said he would say the water park is meaningful to the community, because not every community has a water park, and when businesses look at locating here or bringing their headquarters here they look at all of those things that go into the quality of life. He said we had some discussions about that when that project was chosen about whether it was representative of a quality of life. He said we gave them \$200,000 of riverboat gaming funds and the discussion was that they could use that for anything they wanted, but if there was a shortfall they should use it to cover the shortfall. He said that is basically what they're doing.

The City Manager then explained the Comprehensive Financial Plan which includes a long term view of the City's financial condition for 2007-2010.

COUNCILMAN SHETINA asked about funded pensions and what our risk is and what our extended risk is.

The City Manager said the police and fire pensions are funded a little below 70%. He said our goal is to stay around 70%. He said in 2001 and 2002 their investment funds didn't do so well and right now they're doing real well. He said every year we do an actuarial study and we see how much money we have to put in the budget. He said this year we are putting in around \$15 million and we put that in on an annual basis. He said the actuarial study tells us how much we should put in each year. He said we are in good shape.

The City Manager said the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund that management and Local 440 are in is 96% funded. He said it's the best funded pension and one of the reasons is because the benefits are not very good and haven't been changed in 30 years.

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COUNCILMAN SHETINA asked the City Manager if he sees any outside chance for a serious problem with any of the funds.

The City Manager said no, absolutely not.

The City Manager said we've expanded the City by 66% over the last 10 years and have expanded our employees by 33%. He said once the far west is developed we'll need more staffing but we've got the Fire Department in place already. He said we've got the Police Department in place in sectors. He said 2 more sectors might be necessary over the next 10 years or so. He said you really don't need to add to the administrative offices in terms of your overhead, but you would need to add to a lot of the operating departments like the street division, water, sewer and utility crews.

COUNCILMAN LEDESMA asked if we are improving the Police Department at the same rate as the Fire Department.

The City Manager said yes.

COUNCILMAN LEDESMA asked if he meant adding more police sectors.

The City Manager said we are adding another sector this year and over the next few years we will be adding more sectors. He said it depends on how fast we grow; housing is down a little bit right now.

COUNCILMAN GIARRANTE asked if sectors are based on density or size.

The Police Chief said it's a combination of both. He said population density and demographics come into play as do calls for service. He said they use a variety of different factors and it's not as simple as just a population count.

The City Manager said next year we'll need to add a sector on the south end. He said he knows the Police Chief would have liked to have done it this year but we added one far west because that's where we had a lot of growth and in the south we didn't have a lot of growth. He said next year you won't have a lot of growth down south but the distance and the response time dictates you have to do it.

COUNCILMAN TURK said he knows some overtime can't be avoided because of illness or injury but at what point is it cost effective to create another position rather than pay somebody \$10,000 - \$30,000 in overtime.

The City Manager said overtime is pretty cost effective. He said there is no rule of thumb and it really depends on the positions and benefits.

COUNCILMAN SHETINA said the pie chart distributed at the last meeting shows sales taxes are at a projected \$56 million and the gaming tax is projected at \$34 million. He said so our biggest source of income actually is sales tax which speaks well for our growth.

The City Manager said our biggest source of income by far is sales tax. He said if we can land the mall that we're talking about at I-55 and I-80, that will be significant revenue and sales taxes for us. He said the response that the development company is getting from the retail community in the United States is overwhelming.

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MAYOR SCHULTZ asked how close we are with that.

The City Manager said we are getting close to a deal. He said the interchange is expensive and they are throwing around a price of \$40 million to \$55 million. He said we are meeting with some of the State legislators to talk to them about this bond program that's coming up to see if we can get some State funds. He said the State's going to get a lot of sales tax off of this if it hits and we would like to share in that a little bit. He said the developer wants us to pay for some of their improvements on site and subsidize their operation and we said no. He said we don't do it for anybody else. He said we'll do the roads that are off-site which is what we do for everybody no matter what mall or development it is and they would do the on-site. He said the off-site is the interchange and the access road coming in through the junior college that would be our responsibility. He said all of the interior roads and all of that would be theirs. He said we'd like to keep the sales tax from it and we'd have to use some of that to pay down some of the bonds that would be used to pay for the interchange. He said we told them that we wouldn't be in a situation where we would want to use more than 50% of our sales tax to pay off bonds. He said we want the community to benefit from that sales tax.

MAYOR SCHULTZ asked what it would cost us to get that mall out there.

The City Manager said he doesn't have a final cost estimate. He said it is around \$50 million to do the interchange. He said maybe that cost estimate will go down; we're not sure. He said maybe we can get some federal and state funds to help with it.

MAYOR SCHULTZ asked if we get the mall will it pay the bond off.

The City Manager said it will more than pay the bond off.

COUNCILMAN GIARRANTE asked the City Manager if he has an idea about how the State feels about the interchange. He asked if they seem to be alright with it and if it's just a matter of working the numbers out.

The City Manager said the feds love the idea because they hate partials. He said the State doesn't like the idea because somebody is going to come to them and ask them to pay for part of it. He said they look at us every time we go up there for a meeting and they say OK you have to remember you guys are paying for this, we're not, and so there is no commitment from IDOT. He said they know that legislatively we're going to go look for money from the State because the State is going to benefit even though they're telling us we have to pay 100%.

COUNCILMAN TURK asked when he thought they would be making any kind of an announcement about the mall.

The City Manager said potentially in the next 3 months or so. He said the developer is out there on the internet right now because they want all the companies in the country to know that they are going to have a project out here. He said they go to all the conferences in Las Vegas and shopping center conferences everywhere. He said they called the other day and the response that they are getting is really good.

COUNCILMAN TURK asked if they are willing to start before the interchange is even started.

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The City Manager said they have to have a commitment for the interchange. He said they already have contracts on the land.

It was agreed to meet again on January 29, 2007 at 4:00 p.m. to continue discussing the budget.

The meeting adjourned.

ARTHUR SCHULTZ
MAYOR

JANET K. TRAVEN
CITY CLERK

Recorded on Tape