

TONOPAH TOWN BOARD  
PUBLIC WORKSHOP MINUTES  
OCTOBER 14, 2016  
Tonopah Convention Center  
301 Brougner Avenue, Tonopah, NV 89049

Tonopah Town Board Chairman Duane Downing called the public workshop to order on October 14, 2016 at 9:15 a.m. Also present were Vice-Chairman Tom Seley, Clerk Janet Hatch, and Board Members Don Kaminski and Jerry Elliston. Fourteen others were in attendance. Chairman Downing led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Public Comment

None.

2. Update from staff regarding status of ongoing projects previously approved by the Board, including, but not limited to amending Water/Sewer regulations in Nye County Code: upgrades to Pocket Park; Security System at new firehouse; renovation of old firehouse to new Town/TPU offices.

Chairman Duane Downing explained that the workshop was planned to get all Board members up to speed on past and present projects. He asked Administrative Manager Chris Mulkerns and Utility Manager Joe Westerlund to start with their reports.

Joe Westerlund noted that the parking area at Pocket Park is almost finished and one driveway was turned into a sidewalk. He added that the next step will be to add the kiosk to the site. Board Member Don Kaminski asked whether the cost for the kiosk was part of the current budget to which Chris Mulkerns replied that it was budgeted for in the capital projects fund. Board Member Jerry Elliston inquired whether handicapped parking was marked to which Mr. Westerlund replied that it was a possibility to do so and that he thinks it was a good idea. He pointed out that the landscaping at Pocket Park will be improved.

Chris Mulkerns stated that staff has been working on the Water/Sewer Ordinance with Susan Dudley. They have a rough draft that they would like to discuss with Board Members Duane Downing and Tom Seley before they bring it to the Board in a workshop. She noted that it will take a lot of discussion before it can be placed on the agenda for a public hearing to amend the ordinance. Jerry Elliston inquired why the ordinance is being amended to which Chris Mulkerns replied that it is outdated. She noted that everything is currently being updated and staff is adding what the Board has changed by resolution over the years. Joe Westerlund added that the way the ERU's (Equivalent Residential Units) are calculated will be changed. Ms. Mulkerns pointed out that the Board will have to make the decision how they want to calculate the ERU's. Vice-Chairman Tom Seley noted that he would like to see all fees listed in the ordinance as part of an appendix.

Chris Mulkerns noted that the security system at the new fire station is currently being installed by Mt. Grant Electric. Chairman Duane Downing pointed out that the access codes for the doors should be updated on a regular basis.

Chris Mulkerns explained that the renovations of the old fire station to turn it into the new Town/TPU offices are continuing. She stated that the conservation crew has been working on the building and it has been progressing faster than expected. She noted that she does not have a target date as the crew has been pulled due to fires. Joe Westerlund

stressed that TPU Account Supervisor Becky Braska's counter is completely framed in and the electrical is about 90% done. Chris Mulkerns added that the current offices would be used for the utility staff and file storage. She stressed that staff would like to clear out the current storage area in the upstairs of the historical fire station. She noted that there were plans years ago to turn that building into a museum. Having a central location for files that is out of the weather would be great for staff. Joe Westerlund added that maintenance staff has been starting to store equipment in the bay area of the old firehouse. Ms. Mulkerns explained that the bay area may need an additional support beam at some point, but it is otherwise structurally sound. Tonopah resident Robin Rivero pointed out that there were issues with the old firehouse in the past due to mine shafts collapsing underneath. She suggested checking this periodically.

Board member Don Kaminski asked what the status of the sun shades at Sportsman's Park was. Joe Westerlund stated that he had not had a chance to talk to Gary Davis yet. Mr. Kaminski pointed out that Mr. Davis' quote might not be valid for a long period of time and that Mr. Davis had stated that he needs at least a month to order the needed material and build the sun shades. Mr. Westerlund noted that he will contact him.

3. Open for discussion regarding future of various items that have been requested by Board members, including, but not limited to Emergency Services in Tonopah; Town staffing levels; Town Manager position; Security issues at various Town properties; future items for Town Capital Projects; Status of Public Safety Tax funds (Fire/Sheriff); Status of Community Foundation of Western Nevada Funds.

Board member Don Kaminski asked his wife Cindy Kaminski to read part of an article about the local hospital. Ms. Kaminski read from the Tonopah Times Bonanza "a hospital emergency room or urgent care will not come to Tonopah anytime soon". Tonopah resident Horace Carlyle stated that there was a workshop in which it was discussed that the State was not going to support the hospital district. Commissioner Lorinda Wichman explained that she does not know where Mr. Carlyle is getting his information from and that she has not heard this or knows of a workshop in which this was discussed. She stated that the Nye County Board of County Commissioners hired a consultant to get the board members up to speed and educate them on the board's roles. She added that she has been looking for help (partners, grants etc.) to support the district. Commissioner Wichman stressed that Renown has been a great partner. She clarified that the County needs to have engineers check the main building before the clinic and emergency room can be combined in one building. She added that she has been in contact with USDA so they can help with grants or low interest grants. The plan is a complimentary system between the emergency services and emergency care. She pointed out that an eight bed hospital is currently being built in Las Vegas. Commissioner Wichman emphasized that this takes time and will not be done in one or two years.

Cindy Kaminski stated that there are services like x-ray and lab work that could be done in Tonopah, but Renown is turning away patients if the referral came from another physician, not a Renown physician. Board member Tom Seley added that he knows of people who have had problems with their insurance providers and that they may be dropped due to the fact that they live in a Town without a hospital. Commissioner Wichman stressed that Renown is trying very hard to get as many providers into the network as possible. Tom Seley pointed out that Dr. Peterson offers lab work every Thursday because he knows there is a need.

Commissioner Wichman clarified that the reason Renown has not started lab work or x-ray is due to requirements by the insurance companies. She stressed that she will do anything she can to make the facility more attractive. She has been in contact with Congressman Heller and SolarReserve to hopefully get support for the hospital district. She emphasized that she wants to ensure a revenue stream for the EMT's so that emergency services can have paid employees and they do not solely have to rely on payment for the bills. Fire Chief Rob Elliott added that they are on the same page as EMT's currently transporting hundreds of miles away. During this time, there are no services available in Town until the staff and ambulances return.

Rob Elliott stressed that Nye County Emergency Services needs to host training classes for EMT's. Commissioner Wichman suggested Mr. Elliott recruit interested members of the community and let Emergency Services know that he has enough people to fill a class. Cindy Kaminski proposed charging for the class in advance without the possibility of a refund if people do not show up for the class to ensure the cost of organizing and hosting the class is covered. The fact that volunteers have to leave work or their family for a 7 hour transport was discussed. Chairman Duane Downing pointed out that the number of volunteers dropped when the hospital closed as a lot of them cannot afford to be gone from work that long. Commissioner Wichman noted that the cost for ambulance runs is not covered as Medicaid or Medicare does not cover most of the cost, but a lot of the patients are covered under these programs.

Commissioner Wichman stated that she wants to create a revenue stream for emergency services. Duane Downing noted that the Town wants the same thing. He suggested having two paid crews who are on call 24/7. He stated that he believes that the Town and County can cover all shifts with two paid employees and volunteers.

Fire Chief Rob Elliott called Emergency Services Director Vance Payne to discuss the possibility of having an EMS class in Tonopah. Mr. Payne stated that there will be a class in January 2017.

Chairman Downing adjourned the meeting for a short break.

Tonopah resident Horace Carlyle stated that he used to attend the Fire Department meetings when he used to be on the Town Board. He suggested appointing a liaison to attend the meetings and communicate the Fire Department's needs. Chairman Downing noted that this is a good idea and noted that the Board can have this on the agenda for the next meeting.

Board member Don Kaminski noted that he knows of at least three physicians who are willing to come to Tonopah to work in the emergency room part time. Commissioner Wichman proposed getting them in touch with Renown to find a solution together. She pointed out the Renown's insurance company dictates who they can allow as their staff. Horace Carlyle stated that Desert View was interested in the hospital in the past. Commissioner Wichman explained that she knows the CEO of Desert View and they are in contact with Renown to see if they can sublease the hospital building.

Commissioner Wichman explained that Legislature is working on adjusting the tax rate by having fees such as landfill and water district fees outside of the tax cap. This would allow increasing the tax rate within the 3% cap.

Chairman Downing asked if it was a possibility to have a sales tax for EMS as this would bring revenue quickly. Administrative Manager Chris Mulkerns stated that she does not know if the Town can do this; it has always been done through the County. Tonopah resident Cindy Kaminski noted that Tonopah will end up like other cities that have a high sales tax. Chairman Downing stressed that Nevada is one of few states that does not have an income tax. He pointed out that Wisconsin where he grew up has one of the greatest educational systems and it is because of their taxes. He emphasized that everyone wants great services, but they need to be willing to pay for them. Tonopah resident Robin Rivero proposed changing the hospital district tax to a fee that can possibly be taken out of the cap. Cindy Kaminski noted that Mammoth has a tax on their food for tourism.

Chairman Downing noted that another topic on the agenda was the security at various town properties. Board member Don Kaminski explained that Deb Cobb had reported some vandalism at the rodeo grounds. He asked if it was possible to have cameras. Chairman Downing pointed out that the vandalism took place at private corrals, not the rodeo grounds. Utility Manager Joe Westerlund stressed that the gates at the rodeo grounds have been secured by Team Roping Club and that the kids who committed the vandalism were caught. He added that there was only little damage and that there have never been problems before, so he believes it does not warrant having security surveillance. Duane Downing agreed. He stressed that he would like security systems installed at all other Town properties though. Cindy Kaminski noted that the juvenile probation officer position in Tonopah should be filled again as there is a need to work with the local youth.

Chairman Downing inquired about the status of the public safety tax. Administrative Manager Chris Mulkerns stated that about \$34,000 are showing for FY 15/16 in each fund and that once the audit is complete, they will show the full amount. She added that they Nye County is catching up on showing it in the right fund. Duane Downing explained the tax and how it is supposed to be spend to new Board member Jerry Elliston. He added that he will have to abstain from voting once the Sheriff comes before the Board. He pointed out that vehicles have already been replaced.

Board member Don Kaminski stated that he would like to develop the shooting range by the race track into a regularly used facility that could bring revenue to the Town. He noted that the biggest problem would be that it is on BLM land and that they would sell it at fair market value which is about \$5,000 per acre. Mr. Kaminski believes this is too high for the property. Chairman Downing stated that he believes it cannot be a Town property due to the liability. He suggested having a gun club. The Board and members of the public discussed different ideas. Mr. Kaminski noted that he will research the possibilities and bring this matter before the Board to ask for the Town's support.

Chris Mulkerns noted that she had been asked to place the "Western Community Foundation Fund" on the agenda. She explained that a development agreement with SolarReserve was entered for them to put \$300,000 into an endowment fund to be used for "support for education and charitable purposes of the Town of Tonopah and surrounding communities". She pointed out how the money has been split up between accounts (Library and Town) and that it is still available collecting interest. Ms. Mulkerns added that the possibility of having a scholarship was discussed in the past. She stressed that this would be the Board's decision. She pointed out that there are guidelines how the money can be spend. Chairman Downing suggested the Board setting up the scholarship

this year. The other Board members agreed. Ms. Mulkerns emphasized that a contribution to this fund is tax-deductible and that the possibility of donating to this fund needs to be advertised on the community. She added that the Town is not allowed to donate tax dollars to the fund.

Tonopah resident Horace Carlyle voiced concerns about the fact that the Tonopah Historic Mining Park Foundation controls all assets of the park but the Town pays for its operation. He stated that the Park will be one of the first things to go in hard times. He added that the Foundation is supposed to bring in more funding but is not doing its job. Chris Mulkerns emphasized that the Foundation is currently getting funding from mining companies to help pay for the restoration of two head frames. She added that they are conducting various fundraisers to offset the cost as well. Mr. Carlyle stated that the Foundation should generate permanent funding to the point that the Town does not have to worry about its operation. He suggested using money from the Western Community Foundation Fund. Ms. Mulkerns stressed that this money cannot be used to pay for operating cost. Vice-Chairman Tom Seley pointed out that apart from the initial contribution by SolarReserve, they have been donating a lot of money to Tonopah organizations, schools, etc. He stressed that a lot of people do not realize how much they have been contributing.

Administrative Manager Chris Mulkerns stated that Marla Zlotek of the District Attorney's Office had sent a memo at the end of August stating that the Town cannot operate tours through the solar plant as it would be using taxpayer's money to tour/advertise a private company. Board member Don Kaminski noted that SolarReserve has since been working with the owners of the Mizpah hotel, Fred and Nancy Cline, to facilitate tours. Ms. Mulkerns explained that SolarReserve had hoped to help promote the Town and bring in additional revenue for the Town through charges for the tour. She noted that it could still be a possibility to start and end the tour at the Mining Park in order to bring additional visitors to the park. Tonopah resident Robin Rivero suggested having a link on the Town website for people to be able to get to the tour website and sign up for tours online.

Board member Jerry Elliston inquired whether it is correct that the Town only has two employees who take care of the Town maintenance. Chris Mulkerns stated that this is correct but that the Town was fortunate to have additional help throughout the summer because of the Summer YouthWerks Program. She added that it is traditionally budgeted to hire two part-time employees for the summer and that one of these employees is currently still working as his hours are so limited due to school that the Town can possibly keep him until the end of the fiscal year. Ms. Mulkerns emphasized that the Town could use more help and that it would be possible to budget for another position for the next fiscal year. She stressed that the Town has not had the money in the past to be able to hire another full-time position. Board member Tom Seley pointed out that the Town uses the crew from the Division of Forestry a lot to aid with the Town maintenance. Jerry Elliston inquired whether the Town was required to hire two positions if an experienced worker left the Town. Utility Manager Joe Westerlund explained that he has been trying to get a book together with pictures and explanations of all jobs the utility staff takes care of so that anybody would know how to handle certain situations if there ever was a need for it. Ms. Mulkerns added that this would help maintain everything until new staff was hired.

Board member Don Kaminski asked whether it is the Town or County that takes care of the banners in Town. Joe Westerlund stated that they are the Town's banners. Mr. Kaminski pointed out that some are starting to tear. Mr. Westerlund explained that this is due to the current bucket truck not functioning properly and having to purchase a new one. He stressed that this has been budgeted under capital projects for the current fiscal year, but that the cost is way higher than anticipated due to having to buy a new one instead of a used one. Only new items qualify as a capital project. Mr. Westerlund added that there are other projects that take priority over taking down the banners. Tonopah resident Cindy Kaminski pointed out that if there are so many projects to take care of at one time, hiring a part-time position would make sense. She added that this person would not have to be skilled as they could take care of all jobs like emptying the trash cans on Main Street. Chris Mulkerns stated that this will have to be discussed during budget time. Chairman Duane Downing noted that the Town may collect more revenue due to the recent annexation. Joe Westerlund pointed out that skilled people are probably not willing to work for the Town starting at \$13 an hour. If the Town hires unskilled personnel, staff will have to show them how to do every job. Cindy Kaminski suggested hiring retired people who have the skills but only want to work a few hours. Don Kaminski proposed having local clubs such as Rotary help with certain projects. Joe Westerlund stressed that staff is working as diligently as possible and that they are completing projects in order of importance. Chris Mulkerns added that the trash gets picked up every week, but there are certain areas where it would have to be done every day.

Board member Jerry Elliston asked whether all Town vehicles have decals on them so that residents know of the services the Town provides. Joe Westerlund noted that all TPU vehicles have decals but not all Town vehicles do.

Jerry Elliston pointed out that he does not feel it is acceptable that the sidewalks are in bad condition and will get fixed when Main Street is redone in a few years. He asked if the Town can complain about the public safety. Chris Mulkerns noted that the Town Board can send a letter to the Nye County Board of Commissioners. Duane Downing explained that such letters have been sent in the past. Chris Mulkerns added that certain sections of the sidewalk have been fixed recently.

Mr. Elliston referred to the public hearing regarding the annexation when ranchers brought up grazing rights and having animals at large. He stressed that the animals are not at large if the ranchers have grazing permits. He noted that he believes this was not emphasized enough during the hearing. Duane Downing stated that a resolution by the Town Board exempting residents outside a certain radius from the section of the ordinance regarding livestock would solve this problem.

Tonopah resident Cindy Kaminski stated that this workshop has been an excellent forum and she suggested this be done a couple times a year.

Ms. Kaminski pointed out that the Central Nevada Museum board is still not getting a set budget form Nye County. Allen Metcher has been trying to contact County Manager Pam Webster about this matter but so far there is no solution. She stressed that this is not acceptable as it is already October, four months into the fiscal year, and county residents are being taxed a museum tax to fund the museum in Tonopah and Pahrump. She added that she wants to find out if the Pahrump museum knows what their budget is.

Fire Chief Rob Elliott stated that emergency services need to be improved in Tonopah in order to save lives. He stressed that there is not the time to wait for a hospital to open in a few years. Solutions need to be found soon. Chief Elliott pointed out that Nye County's requirements for volunteers are too strict and that they should be happy to have people want to volunteer in Tonopah. Jerry Elliston suggested contacting Nye County to find out what it takes to have Chief Elliott recognized as a trainer. Duane Downing noted that all firefighters should be EMT certified. Chris Mulkerns stated that the money for that training is in the budget.


4. Public Comment

None.

5. Adjourn

The public workshop adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

Minutes transcribed by:

  
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Kat Galli, Deputy Town Clerk

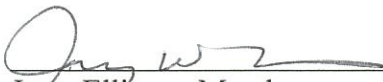
Approved:

  
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Duane Downing, Chairman

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Tom Seley, Vice-Chairman

  
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Janet Hatch, Clerk

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Don Kaminski, Member

  
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Jerry Elliston, Member

