

CITY OF POCA TELLO, IDAHO  
CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION  
JANUARY 14, 2016

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AGENDA ITEM NO. 1: Mayor Brian Blad called the City Council Study Session to order  
ROLL CALL at 9:00 a.m. Council members present were Roger Bray, Steve Brown, Jim Johnston and Gary Moore. Council member Michael L. Orr arrived at 9:05 a.m. Council member Craig Cooper arrived at 9:24 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2: Representatives from the African Sister Cities Subcommittee  
AFRICAN SISTER CITIES were not present to discuss the Subcommittee's goals and  
SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE projects, as well as Council's policies and expectations. As a result, Mayor Blad continued to the next agenda item.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3: Hannah Sanger, Science and Environment Division Manager,  
PORTNEUF RIVER presented information to the Council regarding the Portneuf  
VISIONING UPDATE River Visioning effort, including identified challenges and opportunities, as well as opportunities for public input.

Ms. Sanger mentioned efforts to establish a process to restore the Portneuf River and enhance the tourism, economic development, fish and wildlife habitat, recreation, and other quality of life benefits that the Portneuf River provides are being discussed. Most citizens feel the concrete channel is an eyesore. Other methods to maintain the river levees can be researched. Ms. Sanger outlined identified constraints regarding the river channel. 1) Levees and concrete channel are US Army Corps of Engineers projects. As a result, 6,000 cfs flow is required. In addition, vegetation and other management decisions must be approved by the US Army Corps of Engineers; and 2) There is limited public property along the river.

Ms. Sanger gave a brief history of the river showing areas that have been modified and changes to the river channel that resulted in negative results. She also described issues with erosion and contaminants distributed into the river through different sources. Upstream, Chesterfield Reservoir and the Downey Canal were completed in 1912, so water levels in the Portneuf dropped during summer months. Throughout town, grazing and human use resulted in bare river banks. The banks were stabilized with riprap. However, the hillsides eroded due to fire and overgrazing – so furrows were installed and grazing was banned. But in the upper Portneuf, hillsides continued to erode from intensive agriculture. Individuals continued to straighten the river and install small levees to limit spring flooding. Others looked to deepen and straighten the Portneuf more to clean out the debris and limit spring flooding. After the 1962 and 1963 floods, the City obtained the necessary votes to move forward with a bigger project.

It was noted that in 1960 as many as 15 sewer lines were still dumping into the river. Efforts were made to beautify the river.

Ms. Sanger explained the current levees do not have vegetation for cooling and no floodplain to dump the sediment onto. She added that straightened rivers erode and cause erosion downstream due to scouring. The river that the railroad straightened in the 1860s reappears when groundwater is high. Ms. Sanger reported that restoration projects are making a positive difference today and there is much less pollution coming into the river. However, it is still visible from sources such as sediment from Marsh Creek.

Suggestions of how the river can be accessed so it can be utilized and beautified for alternate uses were reviewed. Many of the suggestions shared were from areas that have rivers with a concrete channel and the cities worked with U.S. Army Corps to enhance the area.

General discussion followed and the Visioning Plan funding and timeline was reviewed. 1) The Visioning Plan will prioritize projects for implementation based on a likely timeline; and 2) The Visioning Plan will identify likely sources of funding. New ideas/concepts are needed. If new ideas are not adopted, the funding will be spent on what is currently in place.

In response to questions from Council, Ms. Sanger stated the project is from the Portneuf Gap to the Fort Hall Reservation. She explained concerns with issues upstream are drawing the attention of Portneuf River groups. These groups are slowly reaching out to land owners regarding the river's needs. Ms. Sanger mentioned other conservation groups have shown interest in the visioning project.

General discussion regarding clean/treated water the City dispenses into the river below the Water Pollution Control treatment plant followed. The needed cfs for the river would need to be verified with the Corps to see what their requirements are. It was determined that additional evaluation of the river's water flow is necessary to determine options that would be acceptable to the Corps and other interested Government agencies.

Ms. Sanger explained the river area from the Portneuf Gap to Fort Hall Reservation will be the focus for upcoming public meetings. The timeframe for Public Outreach and input is January thru May 2016. A Public Open House will be held Tuesday, February 9, 2016, 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Pocatello Community Charter School. Online comments will be received thru February 9, 2016. Ms. Sanger announced that she is willing to meet with groups to give a 20 minute presentation regarding the River Visioning Project. She noted the Visioning plan should be completed in October 2016.

Mayor Blad called a recess at 9:50 a.m.

Mayor Blad reconvened the meeting at 9:57 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4: Sean White, Mercer representative; and Nicole Harms, Human HEALTH BENEFITS Resources Consultant; presented information on the Mercer PRIVATE EXCHANGE Marketplace health benefits private exchange so that Council PRESENTATION-MERCER could ask questions for clarification as needed. Human MARKETPLACE Resources staff is seeking guidance from the Council on whether or not staff should continue exploring a private exchange as a viable option for the City's health benefits plan for Fiscal Year 2017.

In response to questions from Council, Mr. White explained the difference between private and public exchanges for medical benefits. He feels the Private Exchange gives a broader choice for employees to choose a health insurance provider based upon what they understand for their personal health care needs. The program being discussed is a Private Exchange and he reviewed megatrends in health benefits due to multi-generational behaviors and needs; explosion of technology and data; broad regulatory changes; dramatic changes to payor/provider roles; and growing consumer accountability.

Mr. White noted a private exchange is a multi-carrier exchange offered by benefits consultants/brokers. The benefits include: collaborative buying focused on cost reduction, access to multiple carriers, focus on self-insured, fully-insured, or both; and may offer a range of ancillary benefits in addition to core health.

In response to questions from Council, Ms. Harms explained the proposed program would eliminate a lot of paperwork currently required to process health benefits. The decrease in processing paperwork will allow Human Resources staff to assist employees in other areas. She explained Mercer pays the vendors/providers and the City pays Mercer a lump sum to provide this function.

In response to questions from Council, Mr. White explained the employer has the option to have one or multiple companies (8 are available) as insurance carriers. Mr. White gave a brief overview of the on-line portal allowing employees to choose a plan.

In response to questions from Council, Shelli Stayner, Mercer Representative, explained their company has worked with the City for 12 years and will continue to go to bat for the City to get the best price for premiums and benefits. The proposed health benefit package will also look for the best premiums/benefits.

General discussion followed regarding key exchange features, employer impact and employee impact. It was mentioned that many employees choose a higher deductible for their medical plan while trying to maintain a healthier lifestyle. If the Market Place option is chosen, staff will need to be educated on the program so they can plan for alternate premium costs.

In response to questions from Council, Ms. Stayner explained combining cities for health coverage has not been a good choice for most cities in Idaho. She recalled that Pocatello looked at this type of coverage in the past and opted not to participate.

In response to questions from Council, Mr. White explained if the City was to decrease participation in the medical benefits by 100 employees the outcome would depend on the insurance company. He noted a shift in employees/population, depends on the remaining members and the amount of claims for that group.

Ms. Stayner mentioned if Fire Department employees leave the City's insurance, Blue Cross has indicated there will be a 10% increase in premium costs because there will be less employees.

A demonstration of the Mercer Market Place website was given by Mr. White.

Ms. Harms asked if staff should continue pursuing the Market Place option. She explained a decision will need to be made by April 2016 whether to move forward with the proposed plan.

It was the consensus of the Council for City staff to continue investigating the Market Place concept. Council asked that a test site be developed that will allow employees to weigh-in on the proposed decision. The test site shall have a sample of standard Market Place options.

Mayor Blad adjourned the meeting at 11:44 a.m. and announced that Council will meet with Fire Union members followed by Police Union members to discuss general Union topics in the Paradise Conference room. Agenda Item No. 5 Council Working Lunch will be held immediately following the Union meetings.

APPROVED:

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BRIAN C. BLAD, MAYOR

ATTEST:

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RUTH E. WHITWORTH, CMC, CITY CLERK

CITY OF POCA TELLO, IDAHO  
CITY COUNCIL WORKING LUNCH  
JANUARY 14, 2016

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Mayor Brian Blad called the City Council Working Lunch to order at 12:43 p.m. Council members present were Roger Bray, Steve Brown, Craig Cooper, Jim Johnston, Gary Moore and Michael L. Orr. Also in attendance was Ruth Whitworth, City Clerk.

Discussion centered on economic development at the Airport, upcoming legislative issues and general City topics. No formal action was taken.

There being no further discussion, Mayor Blad adjourned the lunch at 2:01 p.m.

APPROVED:

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BRIAN C. BLAD, MAYOR

ATTEST:

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RUTH E. WHITWORTH, CMC, CITY CLERK