



## MINUTES OF WORK SESSION OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF YOUNGTOWN, AZ

THURSDAY, March 19, 2009, TOWN CLUBHOUSE, 12033 CLUBHOUSE SQUARE

1. Call to Order Mayor LeVault called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. Welcome guests from Sun City Fire District, Assistant Fire Chief Jim Haner and Board Member Jack Leonard.
2. Roll Call Council present: Mayor Michael LeVault, Vice Mayor Jacob Duran, Councilmembers Lucille Rethford, Margaret Chittenden, Dorena Mello, Shirley Oglesby, and Susan MacKay. Staff present: Town Manager Lloyce Robinson, Town Attorney Michelle Swann, Town Engineer David Gue, Chief of Police Kimberly Johnson, Public Works Manager Mark Hannah, Finance Officer Jackie Hoffman, and Town Clerk Letty Goldberg.
3. Business
  - A. Report by Town Manager Lloyce Robinson on Youth programs (ROBINSON).  
Town Manager Robinson
    - In February of this year Council asked about the status of youth programs for Youngtown residents. In Fiscal Year 2005/06 a person was hired to coordinate youth programs. In Fiscal Year 2006-07 budget reflects concerns about costs and staff time. Vince Micallef, as Community Services Director, was doing it all, turning on lights, marking the fields and running the sports program and summer youth program. Summer youth program on Town campus was a liability issue although worthy intent.
    - Worked with Youngtown Charter School to provide activities for youth during summer months. Contracted with National Youth Sports (NYS) to provide team sports for two years. In January Mark Hannah and I met with a representative of NYS and came to Council with a contract for approval. Contract was not signed by NYS.
    - There is a new group in El Mirage called the White Tanks Youth League provided team sports for youth from Surprise, El Mirage and Youngtown. El Mirage is one of our partners. They have facilities, money and staff.
    - Concerned about youth sports and the condition of Uribe Park. I brought a sample of rocks that come to the surface of the playing field at Uribe Park. I walked out on the field and picked up a sample of the rocks that are continually rising to the surface. In addition to rocks, there are holes that could cause trips and falls. The field was never properly prepared. The Uribe field needs to be improved.
  - Mayor LeVault
    - Do we have a rough estimate of costs to put turf in shape? It is critical to have an outlet for children in all communities including Youngtown. We are struggling to make ends meet. Need to be partnering instead of duplicating efforts.
  - Councilmember Mello
    - Are students from Youngtown Charter School participating? How do our kids get to El Mirage? Maybe we could get nonprofits to partner for transportation to games held elsewhere. Maybe they could use our parks for practice, piggybacking off their program. Some churches have buses and want to get involved with youth.
  - Town Manager Robinson
    - Todd Anderson contacted Public Works Manager Hannah regarding use of Uribe field. We are looking for a minimum monetary commitment. Big costs are at night when they use the field lights.
  - Public Works Manager Hannah
    - Costs for lights at Uribe Park for basket ball and football fields are about \$6,000 for the year. Adult football team, called the Headhunters, would like the lights on at the field. Spoke with manager of the team. They have contacts with professional sports. Cardinals Charities helps set up sports programs – parks and players.

Councilmember Retheford

- We are obligated to provide a youth sports program if at all possible. Budget is very critical this year. Parents need to take part in this. It can't all be the responsibility of the Town. Council has to consider the health, welfare and safety of the entire Town.

Councilmember Mello

- We need a survey of parks resources. Need to know what is available as options for coaches to use as practice fields.

Mayor LeVault

- Perhaps Agua Fria Ranch Homeowners Association would let groups use Coyote Crossing, the green space in the north part of the subdivision.

Councilmember Retheford

- Youth shouldn't be transported to another district, activities should be here. We should have a map in the Village Reporter of resources available for outdoor activities.

Councilmember Chittenden

- I'm concerned about youth on their bicycles. They can get around Town but El Mirage would be too far. I've received complaints about the lights not working at the basketball court at Schliefer Park.

Public Works Manager Hannah

- The light switch had been vandalized but has been repaired.

Councilmember Oglesby

- Some of the sand and gravel companies may be willing to donate materials needed to fix the park. CEMEX may have the resources we need. They have helped with parks in other communities.

Councilmember Mello

- What about additional parking where the drainage ditch is?

Town Engineer Gue

- The price would be high to do a culvert and fill to create parking.

Mayor LeVault

- We need more information. Cost of upgrade of Uribe Park playing field. Number of Youngtown youth participating in El Mirage sports programs. Getting nonprofits involved. Staff is to report back at another work session.

B. Report by Town Manager regarding Citizen Police Oversight Committee (ROBINSON)

Mayor LeVault

- I'm going to let Mr. George Ehmer make his comments first. It was his appearance at the last Council meeting following a letter to the Mayor which requests the creation of a citizen's police oversight committee.

George Ehmer, Youngtown resident

- I have done independent research on this subject and the police oversight committee needs to have teeth in it.

Town Manager Robinson

- We all believe in transparency in government. We appreciate input from our citizenry. Two weeks ago Mr. Ehmer asked the Council to create a citizens police oversight committee. I don't want to reinvent the wheel so I asked other city managers about their experiences with police oversight committees which I reported to you in the COAC in your Council packet. I don't think this committee is necessary. Council is governed by voters and laws. Who would manage the committee? We don't need another level of government. We don't have staff to manage it. We already have an effective policy in place.
- Regarding Mr. Ehmer's complaint. It has been through the process and an outside investigation was completed. We are waiting for the written report.

Mayor LeVault

- The police department is a unique organization. We have spent an inordinate amount of time on our Police Department. We are concerned with the health and safety of our officers. We have global perspective – overall good for the Town. Community Pride is based on the old principle of beat cops, police officers will be assigned to zones. Needs of the community need to be met by our Police Department. Small town values and attributes – keeping our residents safe. There are many neighborhoods where you can't feel safe.
- We need to explore the oversight committee further.

Chief Johnson

- I've only spoken to one Police Chief regarding police oversight committees. Chief Fraser didn't see it as doing much good for police department.
- Community Pride program is doing a "soft opening" before its' "grand opening". Officers will be assigned to zones where they can get to know the residents and the residents can get to know their officer. Information can then travel both ways. Officers will get out of their vehicles and interact with the residents.

Councilmember Mello

- Need to be accountable. Need as many avenues as we can. Need citizens to embrace our Police Department. Police Department works for our citizens. I don't want citizens to feel afraid of retribution.

Mayor LeVault

- Citizen with a problem can talk with the Chief, the Town Manager or the Mayor to start the process.

Councilmember Chittenden

- Complainant should do a ride along with the Police Officer at 2 a.m. No better Police Department than we have. They have a job to do and do it well. Riding with an officer they would change their mind about what goes on with the Police Department.

Vice Mayor Duran

- I respect the Police. The main thing is that respect goes both ways. It is the responsibility of Management to investigate complaints.

Chief Johnson

- A complaint should go to the Police Officer's supervisor and then proceed up through the chain of command. But no matter what level the complaint comes in at, it will go through the process. The process is there and it works. If there is a complaint, I want to know what my officers are doing. There are checks and balances.

Councilmember Chittenden

- I'd like to see a survey in the Village Reporter regarding the Police Department. I'm looking forward to the zones. I walk at night and I feel safe. I am careful. This is a small town where you can go to the Police Department and talk to the Chief.

Councilmember Rethford

- I'm overwhelmed by criticism of our Police Department. We have oversight built in. I don't recommend this committee.

Chief Johnson

- We have a survey for victims of crimes to determine that they received the information they needed from the Department. Even anonymous complaints to the Police Department are given preliminary investigation to determine if they merit further investigation. We welcome both compliments and complaints.

Town Manager Robinson

- I'm requesting that Council give the Community Pride program six months to prove itself. It's like a train, the engine has started and the cars need to move behind it.

June Miller, Youngtown resident

- People are afraid to go to the Police. When I was Police Commissioner here, residents would come to me and I'd report their concerns to the Chief. Now I tell them to go to the police.
- A suggestion about lights in parks. There are places where they have meters that you feed coins for the lights to be on.

Town Marshal Dan Connelly

- The Face of Youngtown Committee developed a survey for Youngtown residents distributed at the GAIN event more than a year ago. The Police Department had the highest rating of all the departments. We could use that survey again to get residents' views.

Town Manager Robinson

- We will plan to bring this back to Council at a Work Session in September.

4. Public Comments

Regular Council Meeting: Thursday, March 19, 2009 immediately following Work Session.

Adjournment.

Motion to adjourn – councilmember Chittenden

Second – Vice Mayor Duran

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

/s/ Michael LeVault

Michael LeVault, Mayor

Attest:

/s/ Letty Goldberg

Letty Goldberg, Town Clerk

Minutes approved at the April 2, 2009 Regular Meeting.