RAYMOND C. CABALLERO
MAYOR

CITY COUNCIL

JAN SUMRALL
DISTRICT NO. 1

ROSE RODRIGUEZ
DISTRICT NO. 2

LARRY M. MEDINA
DISTRICT NO. 3

JOHN COOK
DISTRICT NO. 4

DANIEL S. POWER
DISTRICT NO. 5

PAUL J. ESCOBAR
DISTRICT NO. 6

LUIS G. SARIÑANA
DISTRICT NO. 7

ANTHONY COBOS
DISTRICT NO. 8

SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
AUGUST 12, 2002
5:00 P.M.

The City Council met in special session at the above place and date at 5:15 p.m. Mayor Raymond Caballero present and presiding and the following Council Members answered roll call: Jan Sumrall, Rose Rodriguez, Larry M. Medina, John F. Cook, Daniel S. Power, Paul J. Escobar, Luis G. Sariñana and Anthony Cobos. Absent: None.

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AGENDA

FY 2003 Budget Summary

Mayor Raymond C. Caballero explained that questions raised during the FY 2003 Budget Hearings would be answered during this meeting. He noted that the City of El Paso contained 33 City Departments and that Mr. Bill Chapman, Deputy CAO of Financial and Administrative Services/Chief Financial Officer, was in attendance to make a presentation and address City Council Members' questions and concerns.

Mr. Chapman presented Council Members with a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file in the City Clerk's office) and stated that through the presentation he would address questions and concerns by City Council Members raised during the FY 2003 City Department Budget Hearings. He began by relaying that the City of Dallas, Texas would lay off 250 of its workers and another 250 positions would lie vacant in order to meet their budget. He then compared other Texas cities to El Paso regarding the amount of property tax collected and the amount of sales tax collected as part of their budgets and noted that El Paso was comparable to the median. He mentioned that at the beginning of Fiscal Year 2002, the fund balance was $24 million and noted that at the close of Fiscal Year 2002, the fund balance would be at or very near that same amount. He then commented on the proposed City Department reorganization plan and noted that a Deputy CAO for the Public Safety position had been added; however, the position was not funded for Fiscal Year 2003 nor was the Deputy CAO for the Transportation Department. He mentioned that funding was available for Deputy CAO for Financial and Administrative Services and Deputy CAO for Municipal Services (formerly known as Public Works) Department. He noted that there would be a $2.5 million shortfall within the Solid Waste Department and recommended eliminating the once-a-month manual pick-up for yard waste collection. He advised it would be cost effective to permit once a week yard waste collection and added that homeowners would then need to purchase, at a $5.00 cost, an additional Solid Waste receptacle to place the yard waste in. He asked Council Member's assistance to resolve the elimination of $2.5 million shortfall in the Solid Waste Management budget.

Representative Sumrall revealed that she would have no objection to the once-a-week yard waste collection.

Representative Cook questioned the cost of the Solid Waste Management receptacles.

Mr. Chapman responded the cost to the City was $50.00 and would be paid for in approximately ten months.

Ms. Emma Acosta, Solid Waste Management Director, remarked that the Department was not charging a fee for the cost of the receptacle; however, the fee was a charge for the yard waste collection service. She clarified that the container would continue to be the property of the City of El Paso and noted that the Solid Waste Management Department did not have a shortfall in the fund; however, if the manual collection system was done away with, the Department would not be required to utilize its reserves.

Mr. Chapman interjected and stated that there was shortfall and would continue due to the removal of monies from the fund balance. Additionally he noted that the City must have the resources in order to cover expenditures each year.

Representative Cobos questioned whether the City had not transferred $4.5 million dollars from the Solid Waste Department to the General Fund.

Mr. Chapman responded that the City would be recovering costs from other City Departments to include Sun Metro, the Airport and Solid Waste Management and explained that studies had been conducted to determine what costs would be incurred to provide services to El Pasoans. He explained that a federal circular had determined what damages the City streets incur due to large vehicles.

Mayor Caballero further explained that Sun Metro and Solid Waste Management were enterprise funds and were reviewed separately. He questioned whether Council Members could offer suggestions so as not to utilize the Solid Waste Management funds.

Ms. Acosta explained that by eliminating the manual collection a savings of $1 million would be established and she noted that approximately 10% of homeowners would purchase an additional receptacle. Additional monies would provide revenue to the fund eliminating the need to utilize the fund balance and allowing the transfer of the $4.5 million to the general fund to proceed.

Mayor Caballero questioned whether Ms. Acosta might provide information regarding cutting services or increasing fees so as to generate additional funds.

Representative Sumrall questioned why an additional fee would be charged for yard waste collection if trash collection were to take place on the same day.

Ms. Acosta responded one driver collected approximately 1,000 pick ups and with the addition of another receptacle, more time would be needed as the route would now be extended. She noted that there would not be additional manpower, but rather the solution would be to shorten the routes due to the addition of more receptacles.

Mayor Caballero reiterated that the fee charge had always been $5.00.

Mr. Charlie McNabb, Chief Administrative Officer, explained that the $5.00 fee had been based on not only the cost of the receptacle, but also the additional service and length of time of necessary. However, if necessary, the cost may be reduced due to the number of requests for additional receptacles.

Mayor Caballero asked Council Members what the best course of action to take would be.

Representative Escobar asked whether the additional fee would cover additional wear and tear on the truck/equipment.

Mr. McNabb expressed that the additional fee would address those issues; however, only time would tell whether or not the City would need to continue to charge the additional fee.

Representative Escobar suggested the Solid Waste Management Department continue charging the additional fee.

Representative Cobos questioned whether the receptacles had been purchased with Certificates of Obligation and whether consideration had been given to charging an "upfront" fee for the cost of can rather than recovering the funds over a 10-month period.

Mr. Chapman explained that previous City Council Members had decided additional charges would not be made for residential pick up service.

Representative Cobos mentioned that the first receptacle for residential service was provided at no charge; however, he suggested charging the residents the $60.00 or $75.00 fee for the second receptacle, therefore eliminating the need to finance them.

Mr. Chapman relayed that all but ¼ of the residential customers had been provided receptacles.

Mayor Caballero thought residential customers might have an adverse reaction to the additional $60.00 charged on their bill.

Mr. McNabb communicated that many residents would not need an additional receptacle. He explained that it would be less difficult if the City paid the capital costs rather than passing the costs on to homeowners.

Representative Cobos reiterated it was his suggestion that the homeowners pay the $60.00 up front.

Mayor Caballero asked each Council Member to add their suggestions to Representative Cobos' suggestion.

Representative Sumrall questioned why the City could not revert to twice a week garbage collection service, to include yard waste collection and charge those homeowners requesting an additional receptacle.

Mayor Caballero said he understood that an incredible savings had occurred by utilizing the side loaders; however, the Solid Waste Management Department continued to utilize the rear loaders for yard waste collection service. He did not think it was necessary to establish twice-a-week garbage collection service.

Representative Rodriguez questioned the number of homes requiring yard waste collection.

Ms. Acosta responded that currently 100,000 homes require yard waste collection; however, that number could increase 40,000 due to the delivery of the last remaining receptacles. She explained that due to lack of manpower, the Department must collect yard waste manually and noted that at some point there would not be a sufficient number of laborers to collect the entire City's yard waste manually. She clarified that in the event a homeowner's trash and yard waste materials did not fit into one receptacle, the homeowner would then need to request an additional receptacle or dispose of the yard waste at the one of the newly established "Citizen Collection Stations".

Mayor Caballero reminded Council Members that there are individuals who utilize the desert as their trash receptacle.

Representative Cook questioned Ms. Acosta as to how other cities had handled this same issue.

Ms. Acosta revealed other cities have banned yard waste from landfills; however, they had initiated composting programs and/or the "Citizen Collection Stations". She informed Council Members that yard waste was expensive to collect and dispose of in the landfills. She mentioned that other cities have utilized the private sector to collect yard waste; however, the yard waste disposal was then placed in landfills. She elaborated on composting programs utilized by other cities. She suggested offering El Pasoans more service, i.e., additional receptacles at an additional cost.

Representative Cook questioned what the costs would be to establish the composting stations.

Ms. Acosta did not have that information.

Mayor Caballero questioned whether the composting stations would generate funding or would lose monies.

Ms. Acosta responded it was dependent upon whether the City would give the compost away or sell it.

Representative Cook would like to see a combination of the Citizen Collection Stations and the $5.00 additional receptacle fee.

Ms. Acosta would provide Council Members with worksheets prepared by the Solid Waste Department that detailed the cost analysis regarding the suggested solutions.

Mayor Caballero questioned Ms. Acosta whether the Solid Waste Department had conducted surveys or accumulated any public opinions.

Ms. Acosta relayed that the Department had conducted a survey; however, the survey addressed only curbside recycling and not yard waste collection. She offered to conduct a yard waste collection survey if Council Members so desired.

Representative Cook expressed his interest in receiving literature/information regarding the composting stations and proposed cost analysis.

Representative Sumrall remarked that the citizens of El Paso want twice-a-week pick up service, even at an additional charge.

Representative Power questioned whether the special pick up service would be eliminated.

Ms. Acosta asserted that the special pick up service would not be eliminated and noted that the minimal fee for special pick up service was $15.00.

Representative Power questioned whether the $5.00 additional charge would be sufficient to offset the wear and tear on the equipment, labor costs, etc. He was opposed to charging homeowners $60.00 for an additional receptacle and suggested that it might be necessary to increase the $5.00 fee for an additional receptacle as he felt more homeowners would be participating.

Ms. Acosta explained that an analysis had been compiled based upon a 10% participation rate; however, in the event additional participation were noted, additional equipment and manpower would be needed.

Mr. McNabb expressed that under the City's new accounting software an "activity based management module" existed from which determinations could be made regarding the actual cost to pick up an additional receptacle. He noted that through the cost analysis, it might be determined that a decrease in the fee would be necessary.

Representative Sariñana questioned whether the $5.00 fee was not an option for the homeowner.

Ms. Acosta remarked that a number of homes had requested the additional receptacle for the yard waste.

Representative Sariñana wondered whether homeowners had the option of canceling the second receptacle.

Ms. Acosta responded yes and explained that the Solid Waste Department carried a surplus of receptacles. She added that the receptacles were the property of the City; however, in the event the receptacle sustained damage, the Solid Waste Department would replace the receptacle, at no cost, or make the necessary repair(s). She explained that the Department would not charge the homeowner to replace the receptacle under normal wear and tear conditions; however, in the event the receptacle were damaged by a vehicle, the homeowner would be charged for a replacement.

Representative Sariñana suggested privatizing yard waste collection.

Mayor Caballero stated that it was worth investigating.

Mr. McNabb remarked that the idea had been discussed as a possible option; however, the best viable option, currently, would be to utilize a second receptacle.

Representative Sariñana felt that his constituents could not afford the fee for the additional receptacle.

Ms. Acosta made known that the Solid Waste Management Department would expand the permanent recycling sites to include "Citizen Collection Stations" that would allow the citizens to dispose of yard waste and/or additional trash that would not fit inside the receptacles. She added that citizens might take their yard waste directly to the landfill if they so desired.

Representative Sariñana reiterated that he would like to see the yard waste collection privatized as he opined it would save the City monies.

Mayor Caballero communicated that he was open to studying that option.

Representative Cobos asked Mr. Chapman what the cost to the City was for yard waste disposal at the landfills per cubic yard.

Mr. Chapman explained that a liner for a landfill was between $1.3 to $1.8 million dollars, paid every other year.

Ms. Acosta responded that per ton, the cost to the Solid Waste Department was approximately $8 to $10 dollars to landfill; however, she did not have the exact figures for yard waste only. She added that the Department paid to the State of Texas approximately $1.50 per ton as a tipping fee for landfilling. She explained that the Department would not have to pay the $1.50 to the State if yard waste were not landfilled.

Representative Cobos asked that the $1.50 tipping fee savings be included in the composting program.

Ms. Acosta would comply.

Representative Cobos questioned where the $1.7 million dollars to clean up illegal dumping came from and subsequently answered his own question by reaffirming the monies came from the Solid Waste Management Department. He questioned what the cost for the "Citizen Collection Stations" would be.

Ms. Acosta responded that the "Citizen Collection Stations" were not yet in existence; however it was her understanding that by initiating these collection stations, the amount of illegal dumping would be curtailed.

Representative Cobos explained that by creating the "Citizen Collection Stations" the City would save some of the $1.7 million dollars set aside for the cleaning up of illegal dumping. It was his suggestion to offer the public the option of paying for an additional receptacle or taking their yard waste to the Citizen Collection Station.

Mayor Caballero asked how many Citizen Collection Stations would exist.

Ms. Acosta responded it was her vision to establish five Citizen Collection Stations.

Representative Cobos advised Ms. Acosta to establish more than her requested five stations and opined that the more Citizen Collection Stations in existence, the less illegal dumping would occur. He reiterated that the public utilizes the deserts and alleys to dump illegally as a matter of convenience; however, if the City would make the Citizen Collection Stations convenient, less and less illegal dumping would occur.

Ms. Acosta noted that approximately three rolloffs, at a cost of $5000.00 per rolloff, would be stationed at the Citizen Collection Stations; however, these rolloffs were considered "Capital" equipment and would be amortized over time.

Mayor Caballero suggested purchasing 15 additional rolloffs to allow for five additional Citizen Collection Stations.

Representative Cobos was in favor of the Mayor's suggestion.

Mr. McNabb explained that the suggestion of 15 additional rolloffs could be accomplished; however, site selections would need to be identified.

Ms. Acosta added that the rolloff trucks would need to be included.

Representative Power suggested two Citizen Collection Stations per representative's district.

Representative Cobos suggested utilizing a local waste collection service to pick up the rolloffs.

Mayor Caballero asked that Ms. Acosta investigate the costs for the suggestions.

Ms. Acosta responded she would provide Council Members with two cost analyses as to how much it would cost the City to pick up the rolloffs and how much it would cost the City to hire an outside waste disposal company to pick up the rolloffs.

Mayor Caballero believed that these suggestions were commendable.

Representative Cook responded that with the estimated $1 million dollars generated from the $5.00 fee for the additional receptacle, each representative's district could conceivably contain 16 Citizen Collection Stations.

Representative Escobar questioned where the monies generated from individuals ticketed for illegal dumping went and asked that those funds be utilized for the Citizen Collection Stations.

Mr. McNabb remarked that those funds generated by individuals ticketed for illegal dumping were deposited in the General Fund.

Representative Cobos commented that he was supportive of partial privatization and commended Ms. Acosta for a remarkable job. He asked that the City consider partial privatization of specific areas of the City such as the foothills of the mountains.

Representative Medina remarked that privatization might succeed initially; however, following the first year of the contract, the contractor might possibly raise rates and/or lay off employees or have the employee's benefits reduced. He noted that the great majority of El Pasoans were satisfied with their trash collection, especially in regard to the automated trash collection service. He was supportive of instituting two Citizen Collection Stations per Representative's district and asked that Solid Waste Management post notices and signage, in English and Spanish, in the City's alleyways explaining the consequences and fine structure of illegal dumping. He added that it would be extremely beneficial to note the nearest Citizen Collection Station on the notices and signage.

Ms. Acosta announced that following the implementation of the Citizen Collection Stations the Solid Waste Management Department would initiate a Public Awareness Campaign. She stated that for the record, it was her request that the Solid Waste Management Department be allowed to bid competitively with the private sector.

Mayor Caballero confirmed with Ms. Rita Rodriguez, City Attorney, and Mr. Charlie McNabb, Chief Administrative Officer, that the Council Members had requested an additional 11 Citizen Collection Stations for a total of 16 collection stations, with the minimal three rolloffs at no additional cost. Secondly, El Pasoans wishing to pay for an additional receptacle may do so at a cost of $5.00 per receptacle; however, that charge may vary at a future date.

Mr. McNabb responded that by September 1, 2002, five Citizen Collection Stations could be established.

Ms. Acosta noted that in the near future a donation of six rolloffs would be given by members of the private sector and added that the Solid Waste Department would be purchasing additional rolloffs soon.

Mr. McNabb reiterated that the five Citizen Collection Stations would be established as close to September 1, 2002, as possible and added that additional receptacles would definitely be available by September 1, 2002. He noted that the process for site selection for the additional 11 Citizen Collection Stations and purchase of the three rolloffs would be initiated in the interim. He was skeptical regarding the issue of establishing the three rolloffs, initially, as it was his opinion that the three rolloffs per site would not be utilized to their fullest capacity.

Mayor Caballero added that the elimination of the extra pickup would be implicit in the Resolution language. He then asked Mr. Chapman whether the implementation of these suggestions would balance the Department's budget.

Mr. Chapman opined that it would and added that other considerations would be addressed with RFP's.

Mayor Caballero thanked the Council Members for the suggestions.

Representative Sariñana questioned whether it would not be feasible to have an outside waste collection agency pick up the rolloffs.

Mayor Caballero agreed with Representative Sariñana's suggestion.

Mr. McNabb reiterated that the City would investigate that suggestion and added that the Solid Waste Management Department would be accepting a donation of six rolloffs in the near future. He added that the Department would consider either purchasing the additional rolloffs or leasing them, whichever option was the cheapest.

Mr. Chapman added that additional rolloff trucks would need to be purchased.

Representative Power questioned whether or not it would be prudent to, at the onset, fine individuals and/or businesses not properly maintaining their yards or parkways, additionally, allowing the individuals and/or businesses 30 days to comply. However, if following the 30 days, no action was taken to clean the property, Solid Waste Management would clean the property at the expense of the individual and/or business owner.

Mr. McNabb remarked that citations could be written; however, the City could not clean the property without notifying the individuals and/or businesses.

Representative Power did not want to belabor the point; however, action must be taken regarding individuals and/or businesses that flagrantly disregard City laws.

Representative Cobos asked that the Citizen Collection Stations be located in areas of the City with a high ratio of illegal dumping, specifically in Districts 2 and 8.

Mayor Caballero also noted that District 4 notes an incredible amount of trash and debris located along McCombs and Railroad.

Mr. McNabb suggested budgeting the monies now and allowing proposals to be drafted and City Council Members would make the final decision regarding the placement of the 16 Citizen Collection Stations.

Representative Medina requested additional funding for environmental inspectors as well.

The Solid Waste Management Department issues had been resolved; therefore, Mr. Chapman then discussed issues regarding adding one new fire station to be located at or near the outskirts of the City. He explained that to build one new fire station would cost the City an estimated $1.5 million in capital monies; to purchase the ambulances, fire trucks and necessary equipment was an additional $745,000 and finally to pay the personnel was an estimated $919,000.00, for an estimated total of $3.2 million. He quoted from a memorandum he had written in 1999 regarding annexing land in far east El Paso and stated "response times for emergency services would be negatively impacted". He added that the cost was not borne by the annexed land but rather the city's taxpayers.

Representative Cook noted that ambulance crews were no longer sitting in wait at convenience stores located throughout the City but rather at the fire stations themselves improving response times considerably. He noted that to characterize matters pertaining to the annexed land and longer response times would be an unfair comparison.

Mr. McNabb explained that the biggest impact was situated at or near the peripheral areas of the City.

Representative Cook noted that due to moving the ambulances to the fire stations longer response times would be common.

Mr. McNabb disclosed that the City would be purchasing "paramedic pumpers" to aid in the response time dilemma.

Mayor Caballero provided that the "paramedic pumpers" would be a good investment for the City.

Representative Sumrall agreed that paramedic pumpers would be of great value; however, the City was currently short 30 EMS personnel. She suggested the City conduct an EMS training class as soon as possible.

Mr. McNabb responded that a fire training class of 35 individuals was currently being held and noted these trainees would also be cross-trained as paramedics.

Ms. Lisa Turner, citizen, questioned what the difference was between a "paramedic pumper" and a "regular ambulance".

Chief Loretta Jordan, Medical Assistant Chief Fire Department, explained the difference was the ambulance transports the victim(s) and continued advanced life support. She referred to a newspaper article in this morning's **El Paso Times** newspaper and clarified publicly that the Fire Department carried "AEDs" (automatic external defibrillator) on every pumper, ladder, batallion and rescue vehicle. She then proceeded to explain to Council Members how an AED worked.

Mayor Caballero asked Ms. Jordan what equipment would be carried on a "paramedic pumper".

Chief Jordan responded the paramedic pumpers carry a monitored defibrillator, a more advanced AED and drugs to assist the patient in stabilizing their pulse. She added that the paramedic pumper had established a 4.5-minute average response time at locations on the periphery of the City.

Mayor Caballero responded that Council Members were very responsive and receptive of these paramedic pumpers; however, more ambulances would be needed for the periphery. She noted that paramedic pumpers and EMS ambulances carried a paramedic on the units.

Representative Medina asked Chief Jordan whether problems existed in the cross-training budget.

Chief Jordan noted that as many paramedic classes would be scheduled as per the contract. She clarified that only one fire pumper had been equipped with monitored defibrillator and accompanying drugs; however, all other fire pumpers were equipped with "AEDs". She explained that the monies would be used to equip with monitored defribillators and accompanying drugs the six paramedic pumpers. She noted that the approximate cost to install a monitored defibrillator and drugs was $24,353.00 for the paramedic pumpers.

Chief Roberto Rivera, Fire Chief, noted that Chief Jordan relayed all pertinent information to Council Members.

Representative Sumrall questioned what role the pickup trucks would play as first responders.

Chief Jordan responded that the pickup trucks would continue in the capacity they were in now and added the trucks were equipped with AEDs. She noted that individuals riding in the trucks were either ECA or Basic EMT level paramedic/fire fighters.

This concluded the Fire Department discussion.

Mr. Chapman began the next discussion and introduced the concept of moving the Parks Maintenance Division to Public Works Department. He stated that the Zoo/Parks Maintenance merging would now be called "Zoo Recreation Department".

Mayor Caballero noted that the concept regarding merging the Parks Maintenance Division to the Public Works Department was just an idea.

Representative Cook noted that out of the 50 resolutions to be considered for the reorganization plan of the City of El Paso, many had merit; however, paragraph 41 was something he could not support, specifically moving the Maintenance Department to the Street Department. Paragraph 42, the merging of Zoo and Parks & Recreation Department and paragraph 38 the merging of the Fire/Police Communication Dispatch were also ideas that he could not support.

Mayor Caballero asked that discussion regarding the Fire/Police Communication Dispatch merger would be discussed later in the meeting.

Representative Sumrall was uncomfortable with the concept of conglomerating all maintenance under the Street Department as she thought they should be separate. She thought that the administration of Zoo and Parks & Recreation should fall under Dr. Torgerson's supervision; however, the Zoo and Parks & Recreation activities should remain separate. She suggested that investigating whether similar areas of the two departments could be joined together.

Mayor Caballero noted that Council Members could make changes to the proposed reorganization, as nothing was set in stone, and thanked Council Members for considering his proposals.

Representative Rodriguez expressed her concerns regarding street median neglect and wondered whether the City parks would be neglected as well.

Representative Medina questioned the cost savings associated with the transfer of the functions of Parks Maintenance and Public Works Building Maintenance.

Mr. Chapman expressed that during the months when park maintenance would be slow; the park maintenance individuals would be utilized for street maintenance and vice versa. He cited as examples that the park maintenance personnel would be utilized during the heavy rainfalls to assist the Street Department and then return to their regular duties such as the preparation of ball fields for the summer leagues.

Representative Medina said he understood Mr. Chapman's explanations and stated he would be in support of the maintenance personnel merging with the Street Department. He stated that many trusted individuals had commented to him issues pertaining to the desperate need of maintenance at the libraries. He suggested that if the merging of the maintenance personnel did not pass City Council Members, he would be in support of contracting seasonal Parks employees, such as for the summer.

Mr. Chapman responded that Parks seasonal employment opportunities existed for laborers.

Representative Medina recommended increasing the seasonal contracts, in the event the merging of the Parks & Recreation Maintenance and Street Maintenance personnel issue did not pass. He stated he was not in favor of merging the Zoo Maintenance personnel, as the Zoo Maintenance was very specialized and should be considered separate.

Representative Power commented that he would not support the Parks & Recreation Maintenance personnel merging with the Street Maintenance personnel. He added that Mr. Daryl Cole, Street Director, was an expert in asphalt and stated that he felt uncomfortable second guessing specialists and he did not want to do that. He feared that moving the Parks & Recreation and Zoo Maintenance personnel would create a "disconnect" and added he would not want to impede the service and quality of life to the El Paso community. He reiterated that he would be against the merging of the maintenance personnel; however, he added that he would like the Library maintenance to be a function of Parks & Recreation maintenance. He added that he was not in support of Zoo Maintenance personnel merging with Park & Recreation Maintenance personnel.

Representative Escobar commended the Mayor for his interest in the City's reorganization; however, he had reservations regarding the Building Maintenance personnel integrating with Street Department Maintenance and stated he could not support that at this time. He did suggest correcting problems in the Building Maintenance Department. He stated that the City should appoint a Parks & Recreation Director and he exclaimed that through his office he had heard complaints regarding the Parks & Recreation Department.

Representative Sariñana commended the Mayor for his efforts in bringing change to the City Departments; however, now was not the appropriate time to consolidate the Parks Maintenance personnel due to the ensuing Bond projects. He was in agreement with Representative Power's suggestion as to bringing the Library Maintenance under the direction of the Parks & Recreation Maintenance personnel.

Mayor Caballero interjected that he would provide a report to the Council Members as to the feasibility of the Library Maintenance personnel becoming a part of Parks & Recreation Maintenance by August 27, 2002. He stated that due to lack of personnel in the Building Maintenance Department, it took longer for matters to be resolved and he would investigate that.

Representative Sariñana suggested increasing the staffing table for the Building Maintenance Department.

Mr. McNabb explained that Parks & Recreation Maintenance personnel had no experience regarding the complicated HVAC systems utilized at the museums.

Representative Sariñana explained that he was referring to the landscaping at the libraries and museums, not necessarily the buildings themselves. He noted that when calling other cities he discovered that the Street Departments had competitively bid with the private sector and he suggested that El Paso follow suit. He added that he would not support the combining of Parks & Recreation Maintenance and Zoo Maintenance.

Representative Cobos questioned whether Street Department Maintenance ever experienced a slow season.

Mr. Daryl Cole, Street Director, noted that during the winter season the Street Department spends six months crack sealing City streets; however, those same individuals clean storm drains during the summer months. He stated that a slow season per se did not exist.

Representative Escobar commended Mr. Cole for a good job.

Representative Cobos suggested the Parks & Recreation Maintenance Department maintain the libraries and museums and questioned what entity currently maintained the landscaping at the libraries and museums.

Mr. McNabb responded that those duties were currently assigned to the Parks & Recreation Department.

Mr. Ray Cox, Acting Director of Parks & Recreation, responded the Parks & Recreation Department maintained many, but not all, the libraries and added that the Public Works Department also maintained the landscaping at City libraries. He explained that the grass mowing had been maintained on a contractual basis and that summer seasonal personnel were utilized for manual watering.

Mr. McNabb interjected that the number of seasonal, full-time equivalent positions was 87.76 for the Parks & Recreation Department.

Representative Cook stated that Mr. McNabb's comment would offset the argument.

Mr. Cox also noted that the full-time maintenance personnel, working in the field, were not only maintaining the parks in the summertime but were given other duties in the winter. He noted that a "slow period" for Parks & Recreation maintenance personnel did not exist and added that the Department operated 27 or so facilities throughout the City of which each facility required maintenance on its plumbing, electrical and other such maintenance.

Mr. Cobos noted he would not support items 41 and 42 as this may jeopardize the Bond issue.

Mr. Caballero remarked that he valued the Council Members' concerns.

Mr. Jerome Tilgman (spelling), citizen, questioned what the cost savings would be regarding the consolidation of Parks & Recreation maintenance personnel with the Street Department.

Mayor Caballero noted that the numbers had not been quantified and explained that the reasoning had been that the maintenance personnel performed much the same functions, and additionally, by adding personnel more streets would maintained efficiently. Finally, he noted that the maintenance of the streets and/or parks would be "seasonal".

Mr. Tilgman noted that elements may be inadvertently left out in the policy changes and questioned whether or not input from the personnel had been received.

Representative Cook noted that Council Members rely on the information received from the "troops in the trenches", subsequently that information would be utilized in order that the Council Members make informed decisions.

Representative Escobar added that he also depends on those employees' opinions as it is ultimately their responsibility to perform the requested work/duties.

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Mr. Bill Chapman, Deputy CAO of Financial and Administrative Services/Chief Financial Officer, then addressed the next item on the Agenda as moving the Grant Functions from the Mayor's Office to be placed under the Financial Services Department.

Representative Cobos noted that Mr. Chapman would be overseeing many City Departments and questioned what other Departments would be under his tutelage.

Mayor Caballero answered that in the future a Department Head for the Economic Development Department would be named; however, at this time, Mr. Chapman would be available to sign documents, etc.

Representative Cobos commented that it would not be responsible for the City to give one individual so much authority as issues regarding checks and balances may be raised. He added that Mr. Chapman would be given overwhelming authority over many City Departments.

Mr. McNabb interjected and noted that it was he who currently supervised all City Department Heads and added that the purpose of the reorganization was to allow the Department Heads to report to their specific Deputy Chief Administrative Officers. He explained that the Grants Department personnel reported to him directly.

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Mr. Chapman moved to the next item for discussion as consolidating the "911" functions and explained that currently five individuals would be undergoing cross training. He explained that a new position would be placed on the staffing table, "Public Safety Telecommunicator" due to the technical specialties required for the 911 system. He explained that the position grade for the Public Safety Telecommunicator would be a GS25 and added that call taker positions were GS18 and dispatchers were GS22 positions. He then recommended that the program be allowed to commence with City Council Members' approval, as a pilot program.

Representative Power questioned whether the transferring of Emergency Dispatch personnel would then be eliminated.

Mr. Chapman responded that was correct.

Representative Power questioned whether the testing would be only for individuals from within Fire and Police Departments or would other interested parties be allowed to test for those positions.

Mr. McNabb commented that if the individual requested the cross training, that person would be given the training. He noted he had received remarks from Council Members regarding issues of additional stress placed on the personnel and stated he would be awaiting the results of the pilot program.

Representative Sariñana questioned how Fort Bliss personnel were conducting their 911 issues.

Mayor Caballero explained that Fort Bliss maintained its own facility; however, the military had requested participation in the City's 911 emergency dispatch operations.

Representative Sariñana mentioned that he had spoken with Police Chief Carlos Leon and it was Chief Leon's assumption that it may take approximately 2.5 years to cross train all interested individuals. He wondered whether or not it would be feasible to send City employees to the Fort Bliss emergency operation center for training.

Mayor Caballero noted that Fort Bliss would be invited to come to the City's facility as "participants"; however, not as trainers.

Mr. McNabb explained that the five individuals to be cross-trained had been scheduled for graduation and would incur a cost of approximately $5,000.00. He explained that if the need to expand the operations was approved the City would enter into talks with Fort Bliss as to whether it would be fiscally sound to train City employees at the Fort Bliss facility.

Representative Sariñana questioned the length of the pilot program.

A member of the audience remarked that it was her understanding the classroom training for the five individuals would be for 11 days followed by successful completion of 80 EMS emergency calls and 40 fire emergency calls.

Mr. McNabb remarked that following the successful completion of the pilot program, an actual class grade would be evaluated by the Civil Service Commission for those promotional positions.

A member of the audience, currently a Fire Department Communications employee, stated that Fire Department Communications personnel receive the 911 medical calls for Fort Bliss, which were forwarded to William Beaumont Hospital.

Representative Medina asked for the salary ranges for current 911 call takers.

Mr. Chapman responded class grade for call takers was an 18 and the class grade for dispatcher was a 22.

Representative Escobar questioned the salary for a supervisor position.

A member of the audience, currently a Fire Department Communications employee, remarked call takers were a class grade of 18; however, dispatchers were a 20, a position under Fire Department Communications was a 22 and the supervisors were graded as 25s.

Mr. McNabb stated that a class grade of 25 might not be the final class grade for the supervisory position. He explained that he requested the Personnel Department to estimate the class grade for the supervisor position, as the new class for the position had not yet been analyzed or defined.

Mayor Caballero asked Chief Leon to comment on the transition from uniform to civilian dispatchers, which took place several years ago.

Police Chief Carlos Leon remarked during budget hearings in 1977 the same issue regarding consolidation was discussed. He explained that prior to 1977 only police officers manned the 911 communications operation; however, shortly thereafter was determined that civilian personnel would answer the 911 calls with Sergeants and a Lieutenant overseeing the civilians. He noted that the civilians were successful and that the Police Department was requesting the civilians be promoted to the positions of the Sergeants and Lieutenant.

Mayor Caballero noted that a turnover rate of 27% was noted for the Police Department Communications and only a turnover rate of 5% on the Fire Department Communications. He questioned Chief Leon as to why such a high turnover rate was evident under the Police Department Communications Operations.

Police Chief Leon responded that many reasons existed; however, the biggest reason was the volume of calls received.

Representative Medina questioned what that number was.

Ms. Mary Kosack, Police Department Communications Director, explained individuals have been promoted to dispatcher or supervisor. She added that individuals have not passedd their probations or have promoted to the Fire Department Communications Department.

Mayor Caballero questioned whether or not any individuals had promoted to the Police Department Communications.

Ms. Kosack responded no and added that Fire Department Communications positions were dispatcher positions; however, Police Department Communication's positions were call takers, dispatchers and supervisors.

Representative Sumrall stated that she understood the number of Police Department dispatched calls were five times that of Fire Department dispatched calls and questioned whether this information had any bearing on why the turnover rate was so high for Police.

Ms. Kosack responded that was possible.

Representative Cook stated that the numbers vary depending on who you speak with and gave statistics on dispatched calls received from the Fire Department Communications.

Mr. McNabb noted that in the same seven-month period as noted in the statistics given by Representative Cook, that the 911 system could only record 7,000 calls.

Mayor Caballero communicated that he had received information that was not the same as what Representative Cook had been given.

Ms. Cosack clarified that she had from January to July, Fire and Fire Medical dispatched calls totaled 57,826 for 39 fire dispatchers.

Mayor Caballero stated that during the seven-month period, per dispatcher the number of Fire Department calls would equate to 200 calls per month. In the event there were 20 workdays per month, the average number of calls per dispatcher, per day, per shift would be 10.

Ms. Cosack agreed with the Mayor's arithmetic.

Other Council Members then requested the same information that the Mayor had.

Mr. McNabb cautioned the Council Members as to the arithmetic of the emergency calls as many other variables had not been considered such as the length of the calls, the complexity of the calls, etc. He stated that, if necessary, a National Consultant could be brought in for clarification. He stated while undergoing the pilot program a consultant could be considered.

Representative Sariñana questioned what the average time frame for each 911 call was.

Mayor Caballero stated that a determination could be rendered; however, his concern was whether the Police Communications dispatchers were under more duress than the Fire Communications dispatchers.

Medical Assistant Chief Loretta Jordan, clarified that the Police Department Communications personnel consisted of two different positions of call takers, who took the calls, and dispatchers who dispatch calls. She explained that the Fire Department Communications personnel totaled 38 to include the Public Safety Senior Dispatcher position, all of whom received, as well as dispatched both Fire and Medical units.

Police Chief Leon agreed with Chief Jordan's statement as Fire Department Communication personnel have dual responsibilities for call taking and dispatching; however, he noted that there must be some way to make a comparison between Fire and Police Communications. He then explained the procedure used by the Police Department Communication personnel.

Mayor Caballero commented on the possibility of acquiring a building in which the Regional Emergency Dispatch Center would be located. He explained that other entities such as the University of Texas at El Paso Police Department, the Sheriff's Department and many others would be included in the vision for the Regional Emergency Dispatch Center. He concluded by stating that with proper training civilians would be utilized for the new Center.

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At this time, Mr. Chapman noted items that had been included in the Budget Resolution but were not recommended at this time were:

1. Moving the Traffic Engineering Department under the Street Department.

Representative Sariñana remarked that there was not enough support for that issue at this time, in his opinion.

Mr. McNabb mentioned that the suggestion of moving Traffic Engineering under the Street Department had been discussed during previous budget hearings; however, the recommendation was to study the issue further before bringing the matter to Council for approval.

Representative Sumrall was not comfortable with the title "Building Permitting" and suggested "Building Permits".

Representative Cook included the word "inspecting" for consistency.

Mayor Caballero stated the name could be changed at a later date.

Representative Power explained that the within this year's budget a suggestion had been made to utilize (his word "floaters") accountants to evaluate whether or not City Departments were using monies properly and asked that rather than utilizing these temporary accountants, permanent positions be included in the staffing tables for each of the City Departments.

Mr. Chapman interjected that the accountants would be receiving training from the various financial services departments within the City, OMB, Purchasing and Comptrollers; however, ultimately the responsibility would lie within the Financial Services Department itself for evaluation of the documents for fiscal oversight for proper internal control. He noted that the accountant positions would be permanently placed with the various City Departments.

Representative Power questioned which City Departments would receive those accountant positions.

Mr. Chapman stated that review was underway and noted that a possibility was mentioned that one accountant would be placed under the Museum Department, another for the cultural Departments such as zoo, libraries and parks.

Representative Power mentioned that the Building Services and Engineering Departments desperately needed one individual.

Mr. McNabb used as an example the Airport, where one Assistant City Attorney was placed permanently; however, this same Assistant City Attorney has been utilized for other City Council and administration matters.

Representative Cobos noted that during Mr. Terry Williams', Deputy Director of Building Services, presentation he had expressed his concern and desire to hire more plan reviewers and building inspectors. He stated that in order for El Paso to grow its tax base it would be wise to invest in those City Departments directly affected by building the tax base. He noted that Building Services was a positive revenue generating City Department and had implemented a "Data Clerk". He explained that the position would insert notations so that the architects could review comments/concerns/problems over the internet without having to travel to City Hall. He stated that the position salary would be $32,000.00 for the first year, with the addition of two plan reviewers at a total cost of $102,000.00.

Mayor Caballero stated that Representative Cobos' recommendations would be carefully considered within the budget.

Representative Sumrall stated that she would like to see $60,000.00 be included for the STARZ program.

Representative Medina agreed with Representative Sumrall's suggestion.

Representative Rodriguez questioned why an item was dated 2001.

Mr. McNabb explained that it was due to clerical error.

Representative Rodriguez asked that for Resolutions 11 and 12 the language "and Council" be included.

Mr. McNabb noted that merit increases were selected by Department Heads and approved by the Mayor.

Representative Rodriguez questioned why merit increases were brought before and/or approved by the Civil Service Commission.

Mr. McNabb responded Department Head merit increases were not brought before and/or approved by the Civil Service Commission.

Representative Rodriguez questioned why it took 30 to 60 days before Council Members could receive information regarding the quarterly report and asked that the Resolution be changed to read "30 to 45 days".

Mr. Chapman remarked that the Department would take every measure to meet the 45 days and added that with the conversion to the new "PeopleSoft" software that request might be easily met.

Representative Medina questioned the renaming of the Arts Department and its budget regarding the inclusion of a position for the public arts.

Mr. Chapman responded no and explained that the City's FY 2003 budget was half way through and added that there was not sufficient funding to justify the position.

Representative Medina stated that a position was to be temporarily placed under the Arts and Culture Department for approximately one to two years; thereafter, the position would be independent of the Arts and Culture Department. He stated that the Arts and Culture Department would be devoting many hours developing a Master Plan for the Public Arts Commission.

Mayor Caballero stated that consideration would be given for the public arts position.

Representative Cobos remarked that the Building Services Department was extremely important to the building of the City's tax base.

Mayor Caballero suggested Representative Cobos document his plan(s) to include the costs for more positions. He commented that Mr. Terry Williams, Deputy Director of Building Services, had recommended including the data entry position that would post recommendations, problems and complaints to the City's website. He stated that the recommendation to add two plan reviewers would be vital for the Department to lessen the time taken to review basic plans. He asked that Building Inspectors be added to the Department's staffing table.

Mr. Daniel Salazar, citizen, stated Mr. Terry Williams, Deputy Director of Building Services, had proposed increasing fees that would generate approximately $450,000.00 in increased revenue and the inclusion of the positions, as proposed by Representative Cobos, would cost the Department $312,000.00. He asked that the Planning Department be fully staffed as this Department has accepted more responsibilities and projects. He asked for documentation pertaining to annexed properties specifically tracking on a yearly basis, what revenues had been generated from the annexed properties versus expenses of the annexed properties.

Representative Power clarified that he would like to see a permanent accountant in the Public Works Department and added the Arts Resources Department had developed a template for downtown Special Events; however, funding for the special events had not been budgeted for. He questioned whether or not $60,000.00 could be set aside for the downtown special events.

Mayor Caballero suggested that Representative Power document his suggestion and provide that document to Mr. Chapman for review.

Representative Cobos questioned whether or not Council Members would support funding additional plan reviewers for the Building Services Department.

Representative Sumrall stated that Council Members support additional plan reviewer positions for Building Services every year.

Representative Cook suggested Council Members email their suggestions/ideas to the Mayor and Chief Administrative Officer.

Representative Cobos suggested holding another budget hearing meeting prior to the vote.

Representative Sariñana suggested moving the "Land Development" to the Engineering Department and questioned whether this was appropriate. He stated that initially "Land Development" had been placed under the supervision of the Engineering Department; however, had subsequently been moved under the Building Services Department.

Mayor Caballero would research that for Representative Sariñana and provide an answer to his question.

Representative Sumrall suggested Representative Medina hold a "Question and Answer" session to answer all Council Members questions.

Mayor Caballero agreed and asked Representative Medina to schedule a Legislative Review Committee of the Whole to provide for a "Question and Answer" session.

Mr. McNabb questioned whether or not the meeting would be held in the evening or during the day.

Representative Sumrall stated the meeting should be held during the day.

Representative Sumrall moved to adjourn the Fiscal Year 2003 Budget Hearing meeting; Representative Cook seconded.

Representative Medina reminded Council Members that funding for the additional positions would need to be located.

Representative Cobos remarked that $24 million was in the fund balance and Council Members could either leave the monies there or use the monies and invest in the City's tax base.

Representative Sumrall suggested when Council Members email the Mayor and Chief Administrative Officer their suggestions, please include all other Representatives in the email as well.

Ms. Rodriguez remarked that it would be inappropriate to deliberate in the emails.

Representative Sumrall stated the information would be strictly to keep Council Members informed.

Representative Cook suggested sending the suggestions to Mr. McNabb, Chief Administrative Officer, solely.

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APPROVED AS TO CONTENT:

Richarda Duffy Momsen, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Rita Rodriguez, City Attorney