

**CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING**  
**March 30, 2006, 8:30 a.m.**

**CROCKETT CONFERENCE ROOM**  
**ONE AISD CENTER, 241 PINE STREET**

The City Council of Abilene, Texas met in a Special Meeting to discuss other projects considered by the 2005 Bond Election Advisory Committee. Mayor Archibald was present and presiding with Councilmen Sam Chase, Kris Southward, Anthony Williams, Stormy Higgins, and Councilwoman Laura Moore. Also present were City Manager Larry Gilley, City Attorney Sharon Hicks, City Secretary Jo Moore, and various members of the City staff. Councilman John Hill was absent.

1. & 2. Mayor Archibald called the meeting to order and gave the invocation.

3. City Manager Larry Gilley led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Archibald expressed appreciation to AISD Superintendent David Polnick for the use of their facility and noted what an asset the newly renovated facility is to the community.

Mayor Archibald stated today's meeting has been called to give Council the opportunity to review projects that were considered by the 2005 Bond Election Advisory Committee, other than the ones recommended for the Bond Election. The Mayor turned the meeting over to City Manager Larry Gilley to brief the council on the items listed on the agenda.

4. City Manager Larry Gilley briefed the Council on the process followed by the 2005 Bond Election Advisory Committee to determine their recommendations as well as other viable projects.

Mr. Gilley stated the 2005 Bond Election Advisory Committee expressed their pride in being asked to serve on this committee and took this opportunity to serve the citizens of Abilene very seriously. There were many great projects brought forth not only by staff, but also by the citizens of Abilene. The Committee not only reviewed the value the projects could provide for the citizens, but also the methods of funding for each proposed project and the method chosen to accomplish the goals. The Committee felt some of these issues could best be served and financed through property tax funding and the Committee's consensus of the most important ones have been recommended in the proposed Bond package. There were, however, many other projects that had equal value but could be more appropriately funded through other means. There were also programs that the Committee felt needed more investigation or study before recommendations could be taken to the community for property tax funding consideration. While the Committee's charge was to provide the Council with recommendations for a bond election, the Committee also felt it was their duty to provide the Council with feedback in areas that did not make the Committee's bond list but that needed the Council's attention. Mr. Gilley stated the goal for today's workshop is to receive direction from Council on how they desire staff to proceed with the following projects as referenced in the Bond Election Advisory Committee letter of December 15, 2005:

- Youth Sports Complex
- Abilene Fire Department/Mission and Community needs
- Lake Fort Phantom:
  - Park improvements and development

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- Privatization
- Water level stabilization
- Maxwell Golf Course irrigation system
- Library:
  - Expansion of South Branch and needed space
  - Consideration of a North side library location
- Drainage issues on Northway Drive
- Future Elm Creek projects and other storm water issues

Mr. Gilley stated Council has before them a copy of the Bond Committee December 15, 2005 letter, Special Revenue/Special Tax Projection Reports dated August 2003 from the Fort Phantom Lake Association concerning potential privatization of Lake Fort Phantom and revenue impacts of doing so, and information surrounding tourism/economic impact on Fort Phantom provided by the Abilene Convention and Visitors Bureau and as presented to the Bond Election Advisory Committee.

### **4.A. Youth Sports Complex**

The Abilene Youth Sports Authority presented to the 2005 Bond Election Advisory Committee a 17.6 million dollar youth sports complex. The Committee believed it to be a very worthwhile project and felt the project deserves consideration and that the citizens of Abilene should have the opportunity to consider the project. However, the Committee believed that funding for the project should come from alternative public and private funding sources, and not bonded property tax dollars. The project could provide citizens with an image and reputation of focusing on youth activities designed to build leadership and teamwork, while, at the same time generating additional sales tax revenue to the City from recreation and tourism. The Committee's recommendation to the Council and supporters of the project was to pursue alternative methods of public and private funding for this project.

Council and staff discussion included: 1) the increase in the project cost since the original presentation by the Abilene Youth Sports Authority; 2) possible locations and needed acreage for the complex; 3) possible funding mechanisms; 4) the positive financial impact as well as providing for local youth needs; 5) the importance of the complex being very accessible to meet many needs (i.e., children living in single parent homes); 6) the need for a Mayor/Council appointed board to oversee the project if public funds are utilized; 7) the project coming under a non-profit status; 8) various possible complex models/facilities, and; 9) the possibility of Abilene becoming a regional hub for athletic tournaments.

City Manager Larry Gilley will continue discussing with the Abilene Youth Sports Authority on how to proceed with the proposed twenty million dollar indoor and outdoor sports complex.

No Council action required.

### **4.B. Abilene Fire Department**

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Mr. Gilley stated while reviewing the Fire Department's proposal the Committee saw a change in direction, a change in the mission of the Fire Department. The Committee recommended that the fire protection structure and operation be revisited thoroughly, as it appears that 75% of all calls made by the Fire Department are for medical and emergency needs, not for fire suppression. The Committee found it hard to justify the expenditure for a new fire house and major equipment to be dispatched primarily for medical issues, therefore, the Committee recommends that the Council review the mission of the Fire Department and the needs of the community before any major funding recommendations are presented to the citizens for a vote.

Mr. Gilley asked Fire Chief Brad Fitzer to brief the Council on the Fire Department's mission and activities.

Chief Fitzer stated the Mission Statement for the Fire Departments reads, *"To deliver the highest quality service by protecting our community through risk reduction, emergency response, and public service"*. Chief Fitzer also read the Fire Department Vision Statement, *"We are committed to become a nationally recognized full-service Fire Department"*. Chief Fitzer briefed Council on the following statistics:

- Total Calls FY 84/85 – 3,769
  - Fire & Other 53% - 1,965 Calls
  - E.M.S. 47% - 1,804 Calls
- Total Calls FY 04/05 – 12,563
  - Fire & Other 23% - 2,840 Calls
  - E.M.S. 77% - 9,723 Calls
- FY 84/85 – FY 04/05
  - 39 fire related deaths
- Medical Emergency Response
  - AFD – 4 Personnel
  - Metrocare Ambulance – 2 Personnel
- Structure Fire Response
  - AFD – 16 Personnel on fire trucks
  - AFD – 1 Battalion Chief
  - AFD – 1 Lieutenant Inspector
  - Metrocare Ambulance – 2 Personnel

Chief Fitzer reviewed information surrounding the following issues currently affecting the Fire Department:

- Emergency Response Standards
- Recent Events
- Public Education & Community Outreach Programs
- Fire/Rescue Output Measures
- Future Direction
- I.S.O. Public Protection Classification
- Fire Insurance Costs

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Council and staff discussion included: 1) construction, equipment and staffing cost for a new fire station; 2) proposed sites for a new station; 3) population, density of population and type of target hazards that are studied when a new station is considered; 4) lessons learned from the Cross Plains fire; 5) how fire protection is rated; 6) the fire department is currently functioning as the first responder to medical emergencies and the City contracts with a private company for ambulance service; 7) staff noting the on going need for fire fighters and that fire suppression cannot be reduced to take over EMS (Emergency Medical Service); 8) older neighborhood needs versus newer neighborhoods needs should be considered; 9) staff noting the potential for fires comes from items in a house that burn; 10) staff explained the fire response process; 11) staff noting the need for a fire station in southeast Abilene and around Dyess Air Force Base, and; 12) determining if Abilene is an emergency response department versus fire suppression and what would be required if that responsibility is assumed.

Various options for Council consideration will be prepared and presented to Council at a later date.

No Council action required.

Council recessed for a break at 10:10 a.m. and reconvened at 10:25 a.m.

4.C. Mayor Archibald stated the Bond Committee supports the Lake Fort Phantom park improvements and development and also feels it is in the best interest of the City to identify the best and timeliest method by which the lake property can be privatized and the lake water level stabilized. The Committee feels the property owned by the City needs to be sold to encourage development and tourism of the Fort Phantom Lake area. Through privatization, the Committee believes the City would receive revenue generated from the sale of the property, and the City, County and Abilene Independent School District would benefit from property and sales tax revenue increases, and an important asset for Abilene would begin to be developed. The Mayor noted Council has stated support for moving forward with the privatization process.

Mr. Gilley stated the issue of privatization of Lake Fort Phantom was discussed at the Water Issues Workshop and the items addressed by the Bond Committee have been addressed by Council, and the study on the lake development is being moved forward.

Council and staff discussion included: 1) reviewing options; market analysis, subsidizing, investing, privatization, and next phase of study; 2) land already developed and occupants choices; 3) undeveloped land issues; 4) development questions, environmental and water supply protection (staff noted a previous study found development will not harm water quality); 5) staff noting next phase would better define guidelines for development; 6) legal issues in moving process forward; 7) encouraging developers and letting them front the cost; 8) possible public improvement district; 9) staff noting preference to waiting for Plan Use process and study, but noted Council can shorten the process; 10) purpose of Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Plan; 11) market value having been set by appraiser; 12) where greatest concentration of land for development is located; 13) areas of open acreage for development that the City owns; 14) from Master Plan stand point looking at possibly extending depth of lake lot; 15) water level issues and stabilization; 16) the possibility of harming the City's ability to rationalize seeking other water right projects in the future if artificially enhancing the

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elevation of Fort Phantom is pursued; 17) proposed alternatives and solutions to water issues, including consistent pumping of Hubbard water directly to treatment plants for blending and concurrent usage with treated Fort Phantom water as latest plant upgrade will allow; 18) current policy regulates when pumping for Hubbard is allowed; 19) the coordinated Use Study being one year from completion and adding another component to the study to address economic impact of various options; 20) cost to pump from Hubbard, and; 21) recreational and economic benefits of the Bond Committee recommendations and potential recreation and tourism revenue.

No Council action required.

Councilman Williams left the meeting.

4.D. Maxwell Golf Course irrigation system was considered after item 4.E.

4.E. Mayor Archibald stated as noted in the Bond Committee letter the South Branch library has been well accepted by the community, and the Committee feels expansion of rental or lease space might be necessary, as well as considering a singular North side location which might also be utilized. However, the Committee also feels that the library system in Abilene needs more coordination among the Independent School Districts, and the local universities.

Councilwoman Moore briefed the Council on an initiative she has undertaken to explore options and consider long term solutions in how to best serve the community in the area of library needs.

Ricki Brown, Librarian, briefed the Council on the success of the south side branch and on the north side possibilities. Ms. Brown addressed the pro's and con's of the cost effectiveness of the south side leased facility and access issues. Ms. Brown noted that Abilene is a model in the area of coordination between the Independent School Districts and the local universities and she felt the concerns the Bond Committee addressed in that area was due to the campuses not allowing public use of their libraries.

Council and staff discussion included: 1) the need for long term solutions; 2) the possibility of expanding the library system with several smaller branches on the north and south side; 3) educating the public on the coordinated use of the library system, and; 4) the future possibility of a new central library.

City Manager Larry Gilley suggested the City continue down the path that Councilwoman Moore, and those she has met with, have taken in reviewing options, cost and long term solutions in the area of community library needs.

No Council action required.

Councilman Southward left the meeting.

4.D. Maxwell Golf Course irrigation system was considered at this time.

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The Bond Committee letter stated, “The Maxwell Golf irrigation system should be presented to, and discussed with, the users of the course to determine if an increase in user fees could be implemented to fund these improvements to the golf course”.

Mr. Gilley asked Mike Hall, Director of Community Services to brief the Council on the Maxwell issue.

Mr. Hall stated the golf course manager feels an increase in user fees would interfere with the number of rounds of golf increasing, and that increases in that area are needed.

Other possible funding options for the replacement of the irrigation system will be explored.

No Council action required.

Mayor Archibald noted the Mayor’s Round-Up 5K Walk/Run in conjunction with the Founder’s Day celebration for the City’s 125<sup>th</sup> Birthday is to be held on Saturday, April 8<sup>th</sup>.

**4.F. Drainage issues on Northway Drive**

The Bond Committee letter stated, “A drainage problem exists on Northway Drive, in the Pasadena Heights residential district. The committee does not have the necessary information to include Northway in the Bond package, but believes the Council should identify the problem and the most cost effective solution”.

Mr. Gilley stated the Northway Drive issues are being addressed. Paul Knipple, Public Works Director noted the cost benefit of proceeding in an incremental approach in addressing the Northway issues.

**4.G. Future Elm Creek projects and other storm water issues**

**Drainage Utility:**

The Bond Committee letter stated that we need to remain aggressively focused on flood and drainage issues. Included in the Bond package is a substantial commitment to that focus. The committee did, however, choose not to include the Elm Creek project because they believe that the citizens of Abilene think that the drainage utility charge on their water bill, which generates approximately 1.6 million dollars annually, is for maintenance of the creeks. The hope of the Bond Committee is that the drainage utility will fund this Elm Creek project as well as some of the remaining storm water issues not included in the Bond package.

Mr. Gilley noted this issue would require a utility rate increase and would be discussed during the FY06-07 budget process.

Mayor Archibald stated the goal is to minimize and/or eliminate any flooding.

No Council action required.

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There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

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Jo Moore  
City Secretary

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Norm Archibald  
Mayor