

CITY OF IOLA
02-04-2013

A special called meeting of the City Council of the City of Iola was held on February 4, 2013 at 6:00 p.m., at the Creitz Recital Hall in the Bowlus Fine Arts Center. The purpose of the meeting was to hold a city / county joint governing body discussion.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Shirley called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Mayor Shirley, Council Members Wicoff, Stewart, Toland, Ford, Becker, Kilby, French and Franklin were present. Also present was Administrator Slauch, and City Clerk Hutton. County Commissioners Works, Williams and Talkington were present as well as members of the press and visitors in the audience.

INTRODUCTIONS:

Fred Heismeyer moderator for the evening introduced himself and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

PRIORITIES:

Dr. Heismeyer asked the group to rank their top three items from the last meeting they would like the group to work on.

1. Included items on economic development, hospital and fire/ems.
2. Included items on economic development, fire/ems, housing, hospital, and infrastructure.
3. Infrastructure, schools, housing, ems.

Dr. Heismeyer then asked the group how the two entities could work together to accomplish these items.

Economic Development – work together to promote positive aspects of the county as a whole.

Mr. Works noted that the city is part of the whole county as a special interest group within the county.

Mr. French noted that hiring a firm to do a commercial on the entire county.

Mr. Becker stated that for every \$1.00 a group spends on a lobbyist in Washington there is a return rate of \$220.00. The entities should look at federal funding to relocate business to the area.

Mr. Toland stated that the collaboration of the county, city and Iola Industries to support an economic development person is a great stride.

Mr. Works stated that the county and the city are part of the SEKRPC. The city of Humboldt is identifying their strengths and weaknesses, have recently become an E-Community, started a revolving loan fund with tax credits to entice businesses.

Mr. French stated that we need to nurture those businesses are here and act on rumors of those that might be leaving. Come up with a county-wide package to present to interested parties.

Mrs. Ford noted that we need to promote the good things in the area for instance the new hospital, need to have the facilities ready to support the businesses that could come in. Moving forward to improve housing, schools etc.

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Mr. Toland stated that he would like to see the city and county work together to build a sidewalk to the hospital on Kentucky. This is a need and both could work together as a team and pool resources to get it done.

Mr. Stewart stated that the two groups need to project the positive.

Mrs. Ford stated that we need to promote the county as a safe place to live.

Mayor Shirley noted that the Project 17 is good for all involved and if any of the counties within the 17 obtains a business it helps Allen County.

Mr. Becker noted that we need to take advantage of building things around the hospital that coordinate with the hospital.

Mr. Works stated that both groups need to continue to support the hospital for its continued success.

Mr. French stated that should include tomorrow's technology to draw more patients to the hospital.

Mr. Williams noted that the employees of both groups get along well and work together on a day to day basis all of the time.

Mr. Toland noted that we need to change the dialogue, focus on the positive. Project the image that we have our act together.

Fire/EMS

Mr. Williams stated that the group needs to look at it as strictly an economic issue, get the past and the personalities out of the way and it becomes easy to solve.

Mr. French stated that it is an obvious duplication of services.

Mr. Williams noted that the group should look at all the services we want to offer to the county as a whole and make it happen.

Mr. Works stated the county made one services five years ago and the city duplicated the service only with a lower level of service.

Mr. Works stated that Iola is only interested in money where the county is interested in saving lives.

Mr. Toland stated that the city is interested in working together and our only emphasis is not money.

Mr. Williams noted that both entities are great. Iola is providing a service to their community. Economically it doesn't make sense to have both services.

Mr. Works wanted to know who was going to hold them accountable if the services merged.

Mr. French noted that the five-year moratorium is in place can the two groups forget about that agreement and work together.

Mrs. Ford noted that the city has to keep our fire department no matter who runs the ambulance.

Mr. Williams noted that the group needs to figure out who has the authority of holding those accountable. How do we get there?

Mrs. Ford wondered if there were examples of places that have gotten to this point that we could observe.

Mayor Shirley noted that the hospital trustees seem to be doing a good job, could we not model that for the EMS service.

Mr. Talkington stated that if the people don't show a public outcry for a change then things don't change. Each entity should come up with a wants/needs list and then come together.

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Mr. Wicoff stated that there are good services across the county. The city employees are cross trained in both fire and ems. Need to develop a brochure with data about the county to promote the area. Iola makes up about 40% of the county and those citizens are paying double tax on the ems service this should be a motivation to merge the services.

Mrs. Franklin would like to see better coverage for county fire.

Mr. French wondered how the city council could move forward to get this thing going.

Administrator Slaugh stated that it could be added to a future council agenda to discuss personnel and economic facts.

Mr. Toland wondered if we couldn't think even further outside the box developing a public safety board and deciding what would be the best level of all safety services that could be provided at the county level at a cost we could afford.

Infrastructure:

Mr. Works stated that while sidewalks were not part of a county function the county and city could work together to create the sidewalk to the hospital. Noting other ways to come together for the benefit of the county as a whole possibilities included the county gas pumps they are putting in. Purchasing more fuel in bulk could result in a cost savings. The message needs to get out to both groups of employees we are going to cooperate and work for the citizens as a whole.

Mr. Toland wondered when the next meeting would be held not wanting to lose momentum. Discussion centered around possible meeting dates.

Gene Myrick stated that progress was happening in the room. Possibly need to put both groups in a room together and "hug" until an agreement could be reached. Need to get our schools up to technology standards.

ADJOURNMENT

7:46 p.m. Motion made by Council Member Toland and was seconded by Council Member Ford to adjourn the meeting. All in favor. Motion carried. As the vote was unanimous, the meeting was declared adjourned.

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Approved by the City Council of the City of Iola, Kansas this 11th day of February, 2013

Mayor, William A. Shirley

City Clerk, Roxanne Hutton