

Minutes of a joint meeting of the Logan Municipal Council and the Cache County Council convened on Tuesday, April 29, 2008 at 5:30 p.m. in the Logan Justice Building Public Meeting Room, 290 North 100 West, Logan, Utah, Logan Municipal Council Chair Tami W. Pyfer, conducting.

City Council members present: Stephen C. Thompson, Jay A. Monson, Tami W. Pyfer, Herm Olsen, and Laraine Swenson. City administration present: Mayor Randy Watts, Recorder Lois Price, City Finance Director Richard Anderson, Library Director Ronald Jenkins.

Cache County Council members present: Chair John Hansen, Gordon Zilles, and Craig Petersen. County administration present: County Executive Lynn Lemon, County Clerk Jill Zollinger, Sharon Hoth, and Pat Parker.

Members of the press, city staff and approximately fifteen citizens were present.

2008 RECREATION, ARTS, PARKS & ZOO (RAPZ) TAX CHANGE – WILLOW PARK ZOO UPDATE.

Craig Petersen distributed information compiled by the County on the Willow Park Zoo RAPZ appropriations. Since 2005, revenues of approximately \$472,000 in RAPZ tax had been distributed to the zoo. The accounting showed an unexpended balance of \$278,000. Mr. Petersen confirmed that as stipulated by a county ordinance, 10% of total RAPZ revenue had been distributed to the zoo in 2008.

(Since the agreement last year between the City and County to divide Willow Park Complex property, the zoo was operated totally by Logan City.)

Craig Petersen said the concern of the RAPZ Committee was some of the money was being used for operations rather than to enhance and improve the quality of exhibits. He said the committee recognized that some funds were encumbered for parking lot improvements. That those improvements had not taken place and more money was requested for the parking lot this year was also a concern.

Finance Director Richard Anderson explained one important city goal was that the zoo become self-sustaining. Funds were encumbered for parking lot improvements and capital projects but were also used for zoo operations. Mr. Anderson said this policy had been approved by the committee and should not come as a surprise.

Gordon Zilles said the zoo application should specifically detail RAPZ tax projects as was required of other applicants.

Rich Anderson said the city wanted to see the zoo grow and improve, but self-sufficiency was also a goal, and RAPZ funding was critical to meeting it.

Mr. Petersen said maybe “we (the RAPZ committee) should change our expectations.”

Rich Anderson asked if the County Council understood RAPZ funds would be used for zoo operations. Agreement was expressed.

Lynn Lemon did not disagree with the city's goal for the zoo but said initially it was understood RAPZ funds would enhance zoo exhibits, not pay for zoo operations.

Councilmember Pyfer said these types of misunderstandings could be avoided if a member of the City Council sat on the County RAPZ Committee. She offered to represent the City Council.

John Hansen reiterated there was the expectation that RAPZ tax funding would enhance and improve zoo exhibits.

Steve Thompson said the city was attempting, after careful evaluation, to focus its expenditures.

Lynn Lemon expressed concern that the city was withdrawing general fund monies from zoo support. Mr. Anderson responded that financially there was no other option and emphasized that zoo self-sufficiency had been a goal for several years.

Jay Monson wanted the County Council and those in attendance to know that there was strong support among the City Council for the zoo and its continued growth.

CACHE COUNTYWIDE LIBRARY SYSTEM

Jay Monson submitted a report to the County and City Councils in behalf of the Cache Countywide Library System Study Committee. Members of that committee were: Brian Chambers, Craig Petersen and Kathy Robison of the County Council; Tami Pyfer and Jay Monson of the Logan Council. Jay Monson was committee chair.

From the report, Jay Monson summarized "Facts and Figures about a Cache Countywide Library System":

“1. The County Council has the authority to establish a countywide library system. The law does not require voter approval. However, the county may ask for a “voter opinion” in an election. The county cannot impose a tax levy upon a city with a current library tax levy without approval from that city.

2. A Cache County Library Board would be organized with seven directors chosen from throughout the county, appointed by the county executive with advice and consent of the county council. Local libraries could have advisory committees for that particular branch library. Future libraries could be organized.

3. As per state code, a countywide library tax levy may be assessed not to exceed 0.001 of taxable value of property to fund a countywide library system. To illustrate: Based upon total operating costs for all Cache libraries for 2007 (\$2,257,972) a rate of .000575 could be assessed. This would amount to \$56.93 annually on a \$180,000 home—taxable value of \$99,000—or about \$4.60/month to be part of a countywide library system. State School Land money coming

to Cache County (approximately \$190,000 in 2008), could help set up a countywide library system, e.g. establishing a computer network, daily courier service to all libraries, etc.

4. All citizens of the county would have open access to every library. A countywide library card would allow citizens to access total countywide collections of materials at any branch library. A computer would link all libraries; all materials would be available at any branch library and could be returned to any branch library. A new daily courier service would function between all libraries for this purpose.

5. If all current libraries were part of the same system with a county tax levy funding all operating costs to cities, money now being used to finance their library services would be available to those cities to pay off library building debts, or to cut city taxes currently going to their library fund. A city with a debt free building could retain ownership of their building or convey it to the countywide system. Cities with building debts would retain ownership of their building until retiring the debt. Thereafter they could either maintain ownership or convey it to the countywide system. A city deciding to keep ownership of a building would pay maintenance costs or could work out a shared expense agreement with the county system. The County would pay maintenance costs for county-owned buildings.

6. Libraries of the future will not only assist those who read for pleasure and who need centers of information, but will also increasingly assist patrons with search technology which is becoming more complicated, and will likely transition into centers of culture and as gathering places for citizens of all ages in a wider array of services.”

Councilmember Monson said members of the study committee had, by letter to all cities and towns in the county, requested to be put on agendas to talk about the advantages and disadvantages of countywide library services.

Councilmember Monson said “protectionism” was a “big thing” in Cache County that he did not understand. He added that the study committee was very concerned about the 6,400 people in Cache County who did not have access to any library. Lynn. Lemon pointed out these citizens had library access through the State Bookmobile and the Providence Library.

Gordon Zilles said there was a concern among some citizens about putting “one more tax” on those who did not use library services. On the other hand, he knew the high cost of keeping an inmate in jail for one day, and his preference would be spending tax money on libraries. He wanted to know more about the county library proposal.

Jay Monson said he didn’t know when a countywide system might be implemented since it was up to the Cache County Council but study committee members were committed to meeting with elected officials of other cities and towns in an attempt to clear up misconceptions about such a service.

Chairman Pyfer hoped a financial analysis would be done comparing city costs for their libraries to the cost of a countywide system.

Laraine Swenson said she was a proponent of “E-Libraries” which could be set up for a fraction of the cost being discussed.

Mayor Watts stated that the city and county were revisiting what had been talked about for many years. He said Logan needed a new library building and was considering putting the option of a general obligation bond to the voters. He said if the bond election was defeated, the city would renovate its existing library. He emphasized that the proposal of a countywide system was a separate issue.

There being no further business, meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Lois Price, City Recorder