



## **MURRAY CITY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL**

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The Murray City Municipal Council met for a Work Session on Wednesday, April 15, 2009, in St. George Utah.

### **Members in Attendance:**

Jeff Dredge	Council Chairman
Jim Brass	Council Member
Patricia W. Griffiths	Council Member
Krista Dunn	Council Member

### **Members Absent:**

_____ Robbie Robertson	Council Member
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### **Others in Attendance:**

Michael Wagstaff	Council Executive Director
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Chairman Dredge called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and welcomed those in attendance. Mr. Dredge asked Council Director Wagstaff to proceed with his presentation.

### **Establishing a Process to Discuss City Policy Direction**

Mr. Wagstaff distributed an informational packet of his concept of addressing City policy matters. He explained that a directive to him, when he came on board as Council staff, was to initiate some pro-activity measures to help direct policy in a streamlined manner.

He asked Council Members to look at the page with a triangle diagram showing *Council Goals and Creation of General Policy* that would apply to any municipality. The Council has a retreat to set some goals for the City, however, he has some ideas to formalize the process so that all members know the policies being set forth for the City and are making suggestions as a collaborative effort. Below are the strategy items that would help the policies come into play. The strategy items and how to implement them is what Mr. Wagstaff plans to address during this presentation.

He devised a meeting called the Council Initiative Workshop (CIW) to address these issues under Council prerogative. It would be a special meeting designed to discuss those strategies.

Over the last year, ideas and initiatives have floated around. The Council does not have the same tools as the administration, so the Council needs to utilize the tools it does have as effectively as possible. The Council needs a forum for these ideas to be expressed, discussed, refined and implemented as needed.

Mr. Wagstaff explained that a CIW would be dedicated to ensuring that Council Members have a forum to present, explore and refine ideas and initiatives. For example, one Council Member had an idea to license cats. With such an idea, the Council needs a forum to express the issue and take it to the next level from the Council side of City government. This meeting would give the opportunity to debate the concept and see how it fits into general policy of the City. From there the Council would work with staff members to develop a presentation and, if necessary, additional meetings would be held to discuss ideas from the presentation. This keeps everyone communicating and expressing thoughts. Concerns could be raised, as well.

The CIW is a tool to control City destiny as issues are explored. It encourages pro-activity and enrollment of others. The statute says that the Council can recommend and suggest to the administration. This meeting is a tool to formalize that process.

Mr. Wagstaff described a flow chart that begins with an idea. A CIW meeting is scheduled, which can be done by two Council Members calling a special meeting. An agenda would be put together and a presentation involving staff to meet the objective. It would be preferred to keep these meetings on Tuesdays to fit into current meeting schedules. Depending on the topic, appropriate department heads would be invited to participate.

As the initiatives proceed, follow up meetings would be scheduled, assignments made, refinement of ideas would take place and involvement would continue until ideas are implemented.

Mr. Wagstaff asked for questions and feedback on his suggestion of utilizing this tool for policy implementation. If this is not a tool Council Members would like to use in accomplishing goals he asked for that feedback now to refine the forum.

Mr. Dredge commented that he likes the idea of this forum to work through issues and he feels the logistics will work its way out as it is used.

Mr. Brass expressed concern that bouncing ideas off of others in a public meeting might be reported by the press as something Murray is already planning to do. By the nature of that happening, discussion will not be as open as a conversation between two people on the telephone. At some point it does have to come before an open meeting, such as Committee of the Whole, however, once it is discussed in an open meeting it may be reported as policy.

Mr. Wagstaff added that other cities do hold similar meetings and his hope is

that by the time the CIW is held it would be a legitimate idea because research had already been completed. The problem with not having a meeting format, rumors get bounced around and the topic is never discussed in a controlled environment. Between phone calls, the same message may not be relayed to all parties.

Mr. Dredge said that it depends on the relationship with the media. He says that it would be important to express to a reporter that this is a preliminary discussion. No policy is being set.

Mr. Brass agreed that would be critical to make clear.

Mr. Dredge liked the idea of a formal setting such as this and any idea from any Council Member would be given the opportunity to raise support or discover if there were no support.

Ms. Griffiths responded that she thinks of the Committee of the Whole meeting as a forum for that sort of discussion. She agreed that many of the meetings are devoted to administrative matters, however, it is a Council meeting. She also commented that the retreats are usually structured so that Council Members feel free to openly discuss issues.

Ms. Dunn agreed that when she first came on the Council, and received training from Shannon Jacobs, the Committee of the Whole meeting was explained as exactly that type of assembly. Over the last eight years, it has evolved into an administrative meeting. She asked the Council to think about how many times Committee of the Whole has been reduced to a 30 or 15 minute meeting because there has not been sufficient business for a full hour.

Mr. Brass said that the CIW could be held at the Committee of the Whole time frame.

Additional meetings should not be added if not needed, however, Mr. Dredge commented that it is difficult to have a candid discussion when many staff members are present, such as they are during Committee of the Whole.

Ms. Dunn added that staff can come to any meeting.

Mr. Wagstaff insisted that the tools of the Council are scattered and unfunctional. To create general policy, the Council needs to sit down and discuss what direction it wants to take, and how dollars should be spent on particular issues. Mr. Wagstaff commented that the Council is to make general policy decisions. As an example, if the Council decides it wants the City to become more green, then the administration says that to become more green, a more efficient vehicle policy is being implemented. He insisted that the Council can use this CIW tool to lead where the City should go.

Ms. Dunn stated that she feels the Council agrees with that intent, the question is what format should be utilized. She asked if a new meeting needs to be created or if the Committee of the Whole time frame would work. If the Committee of the Whole is to be used for Council initiatives, then the administration needs to clearly understand that the format of the meeting is changing.

Mr. Brass added that it must also be decided as to how often this meeting should be held.

Mr. Wagstaff has completed some research on this concept and stated that all other cities do this, however, each one handles it a little differently. He said it is consistently staged. He is gleaning information from the five other cities with a Mayor/Council form of government. An idea comes into play. If it receives buy-off at the first meeting then it goes further, if not, it dies. Ogden, Salt Lake and Provo all have similar processes. Committee of the Whole would be good, but it is usually a meeting for the administration to educate the Council on issues before the City.

Mr. Wagstaff pointed out that this is an opportunity to create a meeting that is open, but attendance is not encouraged, so that matters may be freely discussed. Some subjects need to be worked out among the Council first before being refined and brought to the administration.

Mr. Brass commented that ideas must come to the administration eventually. Some subjects are administrative not legislative. The Council decides whether or not to fund projects.

Mr. Wagstaff informed the Council that it can perform audits within its jurisdiction.

Mr. Dredge stated that the Council does need a forum for action in certain areas.

Ms. Dunn reminded the group of an audit previously done in power with two Council Members participating. This was an instance where the Council did initiate steps to make changes in a department. If the Council uses the Committee of the Whole for something like the CIW then the administration should be informed that it is no longer open for their matters and set some other time for City business or if a new meeting is created then it can be used strictly for Council matters and let the administration know that they will not have time for presentations.

Mr. Brass agreed with Ms. Griffiths that the retreats are generally a format that encourages open discussion. The administration usually does not attend, however, it is important for the minutes not be interpreted out of context. Mr. Brass feels that more communication does need to take place among Council Members.

According to Mr. Wagstaff, more retreats should be held, and preferably one

before budget so that general policy may be developed prior to budget sessions.

Whether it is the legislature or City issues, reacting to matters seems to occur more often than the Council being a leader in politics, stated Mr. Dredge.

Mr. Brass expressed his agreement with the idea of going over the budget as a Council before staff and budget hearings take place. Sharing of information and concerns is vital prior to meeting with administration. There are many discussions that should take place, and expensive propositions need to be openly discussed before decisions are made. Mistakes can be made and the City needs to be prepared.

Ms. Dunn remarked that when she first became a Member of the Council, budget was handled that way.

Mr. Wagstaff offered that regarding being a greener City, for example, Mr. Brass has expertise in that area and can educate the Council, then steps taken only after sharing information and completing research.

Mr. Brass explained that he walks a very delicate line because his expertise is due to his business, and he does not want to be in a situation where he is investigated again in the future.

Mr. Dredge said that is a good example, because as Mr. Brass can inform and educate the Council then the Council is able to go forward united with a policy made by all Members.

Mr. Brass stated that, for educational purposes, the EPA's decision on carbon dioxide and carbon emissions puts the City in serious trouble. There will be legislation that will impact Murray's utility. The only upside is that it will impact every Utah utility. It probably will not occur this year, because he believes that President Obama will not thrust that on an economy as fragile as the country is experiencing now. However, judicially he may not have much choice. It could easily mean an increase of \$20/MW in coal fired energy. Murray uses 65% of coal powered energy. That is two cents wholesale, four cents retail and current power rates are eight to eight and a half cents. The school district may need to raise property taxes because they are one of the biggest energy users.

Mr. Wagstaff foresees the CIW being used only as necessary, not as a regularly scheduled meeting. He indicated that this is a good example where Mr. Brass can educate the other Council Members. He expressed his pleasure that there is a lot of communication between Murray Members and it is something he wishes to encourage.

Mr. Brass stated that Salt Lake City received two million dollars for renewables and Murray received \$200,000. It is clear, under the current national administrative

policy, there is money available for renewables, and if Murray invests in renewables money will return to the City. There may be money available to help with developing renewables. He stated that his view is to use the green power to protect the coal. Murray should use the sale of renewable energy credits (REC) to offset the increases, and the City might break even.

**D** Ms. Durm commented that she would still like Council Members to get some feedback on topics before setting the CIW, so that there is support on the issue. She would not want to go to a meeting and have all other Council Members oppose the matter.

**R** Mr. Wagstaff added that it is great for a Council that communicates, however, that may not always be the case. Murray will have elections this year.

Mr. Dredge advised that this is an opportunity to set a precedent that this is how City policy is discussed and communicated.

**A** Mr. Wagstaff remarked that information would go out to Council Members prior to the meeting to give them an idea of facets of the issue.

Several in the group agreed that it should take three Council Members in concurrence to call a CIW meeting. It was also agreed that there should be pre meetings to discuss the fiscal year budget and the midyear budget. Members stated their positive response to receipt of meeting binders earlier, so that questions could be answered or discussed prior to the Council meeting.

**F** Mr. Dredge summarized, in conclusion, that the CIW meetings would be held on an as needed basis, with at least three members in agreement to call the meeting. All concurred.

Mr. Dredge adjourned the meeting at 8:13 p.m.

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Janet M. Lopez  
Office Administrator  
Murray City Municipal Council