

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF**  
*August 15, 2007*  
**VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT – ITEM 51**

1 **Discussion and possible action on a proposed amendment to the Interlocal Agreement**  
2 **between the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority (LVCVA), Las Vegas, North Las**  
3 **Vegas, Henderson, Boulder City, Mesquite and Clark County concerning redistribution of**  
4 **hotel room taxes (estimated revenue loss over 5 years - \$2,800,000) – All Wards**

5  
6 **Appearance List:**

7 OSCAR GOODMAN, Mayor  
8 DOUGLAS SELBY, City Manager  
9 GARY REESE, Councilman  
10 LARRY BROWN, Councilman  
11 STEVE WOLFSON, Councilman  
12 RICKI Y. BARLOW, Councilman  
13 LOIS TARKANIAN, Councilwoman  
14 STEPHEN D. ROSS, Councilman  
15 TOM McGOWAN, Las Vegas Resident

16  
17 20 minutes

18  
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21 **MAYOR GOODMAN**

22 Item 51 is discussion and possible action on a proposed amendment to the Interlocal Agreement  
23 between the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority of Las Vegas, North Las Vegas,  
24 Henderson, Boulder City, Mesquite and Clark County concerning redistribution of hotel room  
25 taxes, the estimated revenue loss of two million eight hundred thousand dollars over five years  
26 and this pertains to the entire City of Las Vegas, all six Wards. So –

27

28 **CITY MANAGER SELBY**

29 Mayor and Council just by way of background on this item and how it came into be in front of  
30 you today. Approximately eighteen months, well, let me – backup and tell you what this money  
31 is. Approximately ten percent of the room taxes that are collected regionally are reallocated  
32 among local governments, based largely on population. The City of Las Vegas gets a substantial  
33 amount of money from that fund that goes into our Parks Development Program. This has been  
34 in place for about ten years. About eighteen months ago, Clark County began looking at the  
35 distribution of these funds and determined that their need for regional parks was significant and  
36 that they would like to see more of the funds that are generated in the unincorporated areas of  
37 Las Vegas going to the County funds for parks development.

38 We negotiated, the – City Managers with the County Manager for approximately eighteen  
39 months, really not – very successfully, but, because in all cases, this would divert revenues,  
40 future revenues, away from the other City governments. What we have before you, though, is an  
41 agreement that I represent is probably better than the alternative.

42 The County has presented this agreement which gradually starts to take the growth increment of  
43 room taxes and allocate it specifically to the entities that it's generated in. Under this plan, the  
44 City would lose approximately two point eight million dollars of growth in the next five years.  
45 The alternative to this, and the County has put us on – notice that they have introduced an  
46 Ordinance to, that possibly would act on August 21st. The alternative is that the County  
47 basically takes the entire amount of room taxes generated in the unincorporated areas and keeps  
48 that in their coffers in effect this year. That impact to the City would be approximately twenty  
49 seven point five million dollars over the first five years. So we present this item to you for your

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50 consideration with a weak recommendation, I guess, that it's probably the lesser of the evils in  
51 terms of the revenue loss potential.

52

53 **MAYOR GOODMAN**

54 All right. Thank you, Dr. Selby. I'll – start off the discussion, if I may. I've – been intimately  
55 involved with this issue, not only as the Mayor and a member of this Council on behalf of the  
56 City of Las Vegas, but also as the Chair of the Las Vegas Visitors and Convention Authority.  
57 I've been privy to the discussion from its conception. This is a situation where the City should  
58 feel hostage to the whims and caprice of the County. About forty years ago, and I guess a  
59 kinder, more gentler time, an agreement was reached between the various entities and that  
60 agreement was massaged and finally combed down to have a distribution of monies based on  
61 population, of where the monies would be expended to build regional parks.  
62 Nobody builds a better regional park than the City of Las Vegas. Nobody has the kind of parks  
63 that we have and by entering into this kind of extortionate practice, the County basically is  
64 telling us that they will take our place with this money and build the regional parks. If I could  
65 believe that, I wouldn't have a problem. How do you like that? I don't believe that. They  
66 haven't built a regional park in I don't know how long. They don't build parks like we build  
67 parks and they won't put it in writing. If they put it in writing, if they pass it in their ordinance, I  
68 wouldn't have a problem with it cause then I know our taxpayers, the people who live in our City  
69 will be well served. But if they just take the money away from us and don't allow us to build the  
70 parks for our constituents which interestingly are their constituents as well, the City being in the  
71 County, I believe is a very dangerous practice.  
72 I'm going to vote against this. I'm going to urge the County, the Council to vote for it because  
73 it's cutting off our nose to spite our face to give up this kind of money, but somebody, and I'm  
74 doing it on behalf of all of us, has to have a vote which sends a real loud clear message that the  
75 City of Las Vegas doesn't like this, that we have to do it because this at least protects our  
76 taxpayers to a certain extent, even though we're being robbed – of the monies that we spend for  
77 such good causes.

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78 I'm happy to hear from anybody else.

79

80 **COUNCILMAN REESE**

81 Thank you, Your Honor. I was fortunate to meet with the Mayor and participate in a phone  
82 conversation with a couple of the other mayors in Clark County and I'm sure, I won't speak for  
83 them but I think they feel the same way we do. I would like to see where they're gonna build  
84 these parks. I think that it's important. Are they gonna build a regional park in the City of Las  
85 Vegas? Are they gonna build a regional park in Boulder City or Mesquite? We don't know  
86 where, what they're gonna do with this money, and that really bothers me a lot.

87 I talked to some of the County Commissioners who was very adamant and mad at the State  
88 during the legislative session taking money away from Clark County and they really, they was  
89 really adamant about it, they was mad. And here they're doing the same thing to us, and I think  
90 that they need to know that we are – mad. I think that as the Mayor spoke of, we have built great  
91 – parks in the City of Las Vegas, plus we have rebuilt a lot of our older parks in the City of Las  
92 Vegas. And we welcome anybody and everybody to come and use these parks. And I – know  
93 Mayor asked us all to support this, but I think I've been just as adamant against as the Mayor has  
94 from the word get go and sometimes I cut my nose off to spite my face, Your Honor. So I'm  
95 going to vote against it also.

96

97 **MAYOR GOODMAN**

98 Councilman Brown.

99

100 **COUNCILMAN BROWN**

101 Thank you, Your Honor. Likewise, the first impression was, especially coming off the  
102 legislative session, local governments in unison were talking about the State just going after  
103 money that have traditionally provided us with some revenue streams and – the response as far  
104 as the reason why the justification was simply was because the State can do it. And that was the  
105 first impression that I – got when briefed on this is asking certainly, the LVCVA and some of the  
106 member agencies and even some of personnel at the County why they're doing this. What's their

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107 intent? Has the City failed to do regional parks? Have other local cities failed to step up and  
108 build these type facilities and no one has really answered that "why" question and the most  
109 legitimate response I've heard to date is basically because they can and I'm going to support it,  
110 Dr. Selby because, as you mentioned, it's the lesser of two evils. It truly is and this is a process  
111 that's been in place not ten years but originally started, I think, forty-six years ago. It's been  
112 amended a few times and it's always been a source for the Convention Authority to the local  
113 governments and even including Mesquite and Boulder City a few years back to allow them  
114 additional revenue streams outside our traditional general budget to do some things.

115 And the City certainly has stepped up, as Mayor Goodman has indicated, over the past decade  
116 and done some phenomenal parks, a nationally recognized programmable space, open space  
117 trails and it's important to note for the record that this particular revenue stream that we've  
118 received from the Convention Authority, we haven't taken a few million dollars and just gone  
119 and built a park with that. We've used that revenue steam to bond tens of millions of dollars for  
120 the regional parks of regional significance, of national significance.

121 So I – agree that the City perhaps in our record, our track record could be put against anybody in  
122 southern Nevada and most local governments nationwide on what was accomplished. But the  
123 bottom line is they can do what they are intending to do and I'm gonna support it. I would just  
124 ask the County, in – making this change, to be very specific, to indicate to the local cities what  
125 their intentions are. This – can't be viewed as the County taking. It can't be viewed as the  
126 County going to take an additional five or ten millions dollars a year and build parks of regional  
127 significance. They can't –. I would implore them to be very specific and target some areas, not  
128 just in unincorporated County but throughout the valley that along with what we've done with  
129 the snipler dollars, put these dollars into some type of coordinated and cooperative system where  
130 their plans fit into the City plans and North Las Vegas and Henderson, cause then those tens of  
131 millions can turn into hundreds of millions to truly build these regional facilities. And that's  
132 what's needed. Ten – million dollars now doesn't even get you a pocket park in the  
133 neighborhood. So I would ask them to be specific. I would ask them to take the precedent that's  
134 been set with the snipler dollars and to view these new revenues as just an additional supplement  
135 so we all as local governmental agencies here in Southern Nevada, we all can work towards a

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136 greater good, a parks plan that regardless of where it's built and what jurisdiction, truly serves all  
137 the residents.

138 And that would be my – ask to the County is. Let us – in on the planning. Let us cooperate and  
139 coordinate. And we may have some BLM land. Perhaps these dollars can go towards those  
140 lands or the County may have lands that the City could help. I've – been one to always support  
141 the co-mingling of park dollars among public agencies and there's no better example than snipler  
142 as far as that. Some of those projects, Connie earlier, certainly her role in what she's done  
143 identifying those type projects.

144 So I, Your Honor, with all due respect I'm going to support the motion because as much as I  
145 think it's hypocritical, the County taking and doing what they've criticized the State of doing, I  
146 think in the bigger picture, as long as this money doesn't go into the black hole of bureaucracy  
147 across the tracks, I'll support it because there is a larger goal and a bigger vision as far as parks in  
148 Southern Nevada and this certainly could be a key component.

149 Regardless of what agency ends up that additional money, as long as it goes back into the public  
150 good and the public interest, I will support it.

151

152 **MAYOR GOODMAN**

153 Very good. Thank you. Councilman Wolfson.

154

155 **COUNCILMAN WOLFSON**

156 Yes, Your Honor. Thank you. The only thing I'd like to add is in additional to echoing the  
157 comments of Councilman Brown, is that in our briefings, it's my understanding that we  
158 considered our options and we're really in a corner as far as options, but we considered what  
159 legal action or what legal remedy we have and we've been advised that we'd lose. It's a losing  
160 remedy, if you will. In other words, if we wanted to say no to this and take our chances and go  
161 to court and challenge the action of the County, we've been advised that we'd probably lose. So  
162 with that in mind, we're in this boxed corner, if you will, so we really have no choice.

163

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164 **MAYOR GOODMAN**

165 Well, the statute – permits the distribution of monies based on the site where the monies are  
166 generated. So therefore, the Strip being as affluent as it is generates substantially more monies  
167 than any of the other entities from their casino tax dollars. Wise people in the past recognize that  
168 notwithstanding the clear language of the statute which would preclude, as the councilman  
169 referenced us as being successful in court. Wise people who concern, who are concerned about  
170 this valley and about the constituents who live here, they realize that the monies should  
171 be distributed on a population basis. That's what makes sense, that you divide it up where the  
172 people are and let the people have these beautiful parks, which was the purpose of the law. But  
173 now we're playing territorial games and this is the beginning of, I believe, a very unhappy  
174 situation and as Councilman Brown indicates, very hypocritical context where they were crying  
175 and screaming and bleeding like stuck pigs when the money was taken from them by the  
176 Legislature and now they're turning around and stabbing us with the same blade.

177

178 **COUNCILMAN BARLOW**

179 Mayor?

180

181 **MAYOR GOODMAN**

182 Yes, Councilman Barlow.

183

184 **COUNCILMAN BARLOW**

185 I would just like to say, just to put on record, that I too concur with the Council in regards to the  
186 position that the City has been placed in and it puts us in a very peculiar spot. The City of Las  
187 Vegas has built some of the most attractive and beautiful regional parks and I believe that we  
188 have the ability to continue to do so if in fact this burden would not be placed on us. But with  
189 that being said, it would be different if in fact the County would have laid out a plan as to where  
190 in fact they were going to propose these future parks. But they have not done so and I too agree  
191 that there should be a way or should have been a way for us to divide these dollars amongst the  
192 population. I understand that we're – our back is up against the wall, we're, we've been pushed

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193 into a corner and for that I would not be supporting this particular item either, just for principles,  
194 for the record. Thank you.

195

196 **MAYOR GOODMAN**

197 All right. Councilman Brown. Councilwoman Tarkanian, please.

198

199 **COUNCILWOMAN TARKANIAN**

200 Oh boy. I agree with everything our fellow councilmen, my fellow councilmen have stated.

201 They summarize quite well what our situation is. I particularly support Councilman Brown's

202 very specific suggestions as to how we can work together for all, with an emphasis on the fact

203 our City residents are also County residents. And as the Mayor stated, even though the site of

204 where the rooms are being built is in the County, the population of the individuals who work

205 there, to a great extent, are in the City. I will, with extreme disappointment vote yes on this item

206 and I'm voting yes in order to protect the City residents from losing everything they currently

207 have under the threat by the County of the alternative of taking away everything. They would

208 lose monies they now have and the County then is saying to us, if you don't do this now, then

209 we'll take what you're getting now as well as what you would be getting in the future. I just feel

210 so disappointed because if we're all working together for the residents of our area, we have to

211 work together. This is not working together. This is hitting one of the entities and several of the

212 entities over the head with a hammer.

213 So I, it's with, I would, I really like the members of the County Commission, I respect them very

214 much, but I'm extremely disappointed in the situation.

215

216 **MAYOR GOODMAN**

217 Thank you, Councilwoman. Councilman Ross.

218

219 **COUNCILMAN ROSS**

220 And Your Honor, I can't let this go either. As much as I'm trying to keep my mouth shut, I just

221 want the residents of this City to recognize that the efforts that Clark County is going forward

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222 with to impose upon the City of Las Vegas will make it harder for us to provide those great  
223 amenities that the City is so well known for. And to let them know to be watchful of the County  
224 as they move forward because we don't have anything written down. We don't have any  
225 assurances that money's going to be spent as they said it would be and to watch them and to hold  
226 them accountable as the years go by in regards to those dollars leaving the City of Las Vegas and  
227 going to Clark County.

228 Thank you, Your Honor.

229

230 **MAYOR GOODMAN**

231 Thank you.

232

233 **TOM McGOWAN**

234 May I make a public comment?

235

236 **MAYOR GOODMAN**

237 Yes.

238

239 **TOM McGOWAN**

240 Thank you. Tom MccGowan, Las Vegas resident. Nothing in fact, law or reason prohibits or  
241 otherwise limits all seven members of this City Council from voting unanimously and deny this  
242 item. I don't trust Clark County government as far as they can throw a grand piano and I can  
243 throw a grand piano. You, if you fail, will fail standing up and you shall not have failed. If you  
244 do anything else, you shall have failed. That's the public perception and the parks are the  
245 property of the public. Thank you for your wisdom.

246

247 **MAYOR GOODMAN**

248 All right, I'll ask Councilman Brown to make a motion.

249

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250 **COUNCILMAN BROWN**

251 Thank you, Your Honor. I would ask the Council support in taking of the lesser of two evils, but  
252 **I would move for approval** and incorporate the comments made by the Council Members  
253 especially those pertaining to requesting the County to allow us to be part of the process and  
254 become far more specific in their planning.

255

256 **MAYOR GOODMAN**

257 And thank you, that's a motion. Let's vote, please. Post. Motion carries. **(Motion carried with**  
258 **GOODMAN, REESE and BARLOW voting NO)** Motion carries.

259 All right, thank you very much.

260

261 **(END OF DISCUSSION)**

262 **/da;cv**