



Agenda Item No.: 42.

AGENDA SUMMARY PAGE
CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF: JANUARY 6, 2010

DEPARTMENT: ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

DIRECTOR: TED J. OLIVAS

☐ Consent ☒ Discussion

SUBJECT:

Report and possible action on the 2011 Federal Legislative Agenda - All Wards

Fiscal Impact:



No Impact

☒ Augmentation Required



Budget Impact Available

Amount:

Funding Source:

Dept./Division:

PURPOSE/BACKGROUND:

Each year the City Manager's Office develops a Federal Legislative Agenda based upon meetings with the Mayor, City Council members and each City Department. The Agenda includes the City's appropriation priorities, legislative issues, public lands priorities and other legislative topics of interest to the City. This document is used to guide federal lobbying efforts by the City and its federal lobbying firm, Ball Janik LLP. Staff will provide an outline for the 2011 Federal Legislative Agenda.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council approve the 2011 Federal Legislative Agenda and direct staff accordingly.

BACKUP DOCUMENTATION:

Submitted at Meeting - City of Las Vegas 2011 Federal Legislative Plan and PowerPoint Presentation by Staff

Motion made by GARY REESE to Accept the report

Passed For: 7; Against: 0; Abstain: 0; Did Not Vote: 0; Excused: 0

RICKI Y. BARLOW, LOIS TARKANIAN, STEVE WOLFSON, OSCAR B. GOODMAN, GARY REESE, STEVEN D. ROSS, STAVROS S. ANTHONY; (Against-None); (Abstain-None); (Did Not Vote-None); (Excused-None)

Minutes:

TED OLIVAS, Director of Administrative Services, appeared with VICKI CRAM, Ball Janik, LLP, the federal lobbying firm in Washington, D.C., who works very closely with the federal delegates and their offices to carry forward the legislative agenda.

MR. OLIVAS stated this plan is the result of discussions from all level of the organization, and it reflects the needs of each department. He showed a PowerPoint presentation and explained that this plan will guide MS. CRAM on a daily basis on behalf of the City. The only difference in

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this year's plan is Section 9, the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA), and Section 11, the Energy Policy and Sustainability Initiative. The City considers itself a leader in this regard, and the federal delegates consider the City the leader on this, but City staff wants to ensure a clear message is sent on what the City is doing for sustainability.

MR. OLIVAS outlined Fiscal Year 2011 Federal Appropriations requests, as well as Section 7, which is a summary of the higher topic legislative issues with a narrative supporting or not supporting a particular topic. He continued with other sections of importance.

COUNCILWOMAN TARKENTIAN confirmed that the City could be seeking authorization to use public, private partnerships to manage City-owned facilities located on land acquired through federal and other types of funding. MR. OLIVAS indicated this has been an item of concern for a number of years. The City is telling the delegates that they need to make a change in this regard. It will remain on the Public Lands Agenda until action is taken.

The Councilwoman verified that the directors' input was obtained. MR. OLIVAS added that a collaborative effort from them was necessary to identify the issues, the goals and to craft a guiding plan.

MR. OLIVAS continued and summarized the funds obtained last year.

MS. CRAM outlined the issues they will be working on, such as the Fiscal Year 2011 Appropriations Project. Criteria and parameters for these programs are looked at, and not all federal accounts are earmarked. They will try to appeal to the interest of the delegation and address current needs, such as job creation, and look for a project where federal funding provides an incentive for getting them started. Most earmarks range from \$200,000 to \$1 million.

MS. CRAM gave an update on some of the bills. A jobs bill will be passing through Congress. Before the House recessed, it passed the Jobs for Main Street Act, which takes some of the Targeted Assets Relief Program funding and provides \$48.3 billion for infrastructure, \$27 billion for highways, \$8 billion for transit, \$2 billion for sewer and drinking water, as well as funding to hire or retain teachers, law enforcement personnel and firefighters. The Senate will take up its version of the bill in the next month, and she will be working very hard to make sure there is money that will be targeted to localities experiencing high unemployment.

Regarding transportation reauthorization, MS. CRAM indicated two priority projects were submitted a year ago to the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee in anticipation that the bill would authorize all highway and transit projects. They all expired September 30, 2009 and have been operating on short-term extensions ever since. The Senate has not put out a call for projects. The House Committee has drafted a bill that will have no projects in it, no formula and no funding mechanism. The House has been eager to move forward and complete that bill but the Senate and the White House have been trying to pass a longer term renewal and push for the rewrite into the next Congress. So, it is unclear how this reauthorization will play. The jobs bill extends the current law until September of 2010, but it has only gone through the House and not the Senate.

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The House has passed a climate change bill, but the Senate has been moving more slowly. A Senate version bill was released by Environment Public Works Committee Chairman BARBARA BOXER, and it has one significant improvement; it has permanent funding of the Cap and Trade Program for the Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant.

Since the Environmental Protection Agency recently announced it will be moving forward with regulating greenhouse gases under its Clean Air Act, several new Senate proposals have emerged, including a bi-partisan approach spearheaded by SENATOR CAREY LINDSEY GRAHAM of South Carolina and SENATOR JOSEPH LEBERMAN of Connecticut. She will be working with the delegation to ensure that the Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grants stay in the final bill.

MS. CRAM spoke on sustainable communities. The recent appropriation measure puts \$150 million for HUD for sustainable communities research planning and implementation. She has already met with HUD to try to position the City with available funds.

COUNCILMAN REESE thanked MS. CRAM for the report and asked about the Health Care bill, specifically who will be affected and who will be able to pay the health care. MS. CRAM replied that the Senate just completed its version of the bill and it might be similar to the House version. It is unclear how it will affect the City; it may increase some of the health costs, but it will not take effect for about three years.

COUNCILMAN REESE pointed out that the City is under a larger microscope than those in Washington. He heard that some of the Senators are being given large sums of money for their votes. He feels this should be monitored. MS. CRAM responded that particularly in the Senate, where there is a requirement to have the 60 votes in order to overcome a filibuster, it becomes a form of "bribery".

COUNCILMAN ROSS appreciated the communication but would have liked to have the report before the meeting. MS. CRAM added this is a living document that changes throughout the year.

Regarding the ARRA, COUNCILMAN ROSS pointed out there were 541 awards in the State of Nevada and 5,658 jobs reported because of these awards. He asked how many jobs are truly created in Southern Nevada because of the ARRA. MR. OLIVAS responded that these numbers are reported by the State, and he does not know how to validate this.

MAYOR GOODMAN was unhappy with the lack of accountability that the entire process has. The City is at the bottom of the totem pole and at the mercy of people doing things that cannot be figured out by locals. MR. OLIVAS stated that he can report accurate information, as it relates to what the City of Las Vegas is doing, but cannot validate what the State reports. The City Council will be provided with the actual number of jobs on the monthly report.

COUNCILMAN ROSS noted that it is important that the Council has a clear understanding of what the residents of the City are getting out of this.

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MS. CRAM discussed with COUNCILMAN ROSS that regarding the public land request, there is a group of public lands bills that are working their way through Congress and the Senate. She has been talking with the delegation on how much of this could be included if there were a larger public lands bill.

Regarding the energy policy and the sustainability initiative, COUNCILMAN ROSS stated that it is important to do everything possible to make the City of Las Vegas the "green city" in the United States. He would like to see the City of Las Vegas in the forefront of every possible effort in regards to renewable energy systems, energy sources and recycling.

COUNCILWOMAN TARKAMIAN opined that the federal government needs to help in order to prove that the City of Las Vegas is the most green city. She referred to the names of the individuals helping the City and asked if there are any Republicans helping the City. MS. CRAM replied that as part of the transparency process, members of Congress have to sign their names next to earmarked funds. Appropriation requests are submitted to everyone in the City's delegation.

COUNCILMAN BARLOW asked for the percentage of money that the City actually receives from the appropriation fund. MS. CRAM replied that they ask for approximately \$4 million and actually receive a guess-estimate of a little over \$2 million. MR. OLIVAS added that he could provide more accurate information to the entire Council.

MS. CRAM indicated that it would help her efforts if the Council were to communicate with the delegation.

COUNCILMAN ANTHONY pointed out that the I-15 Freeway has become a significant problem, and many people from California want to drive to Las Vegas, but it takes them many hours to drive back and forth. If this continues, they will stop coming to Las Vegas. He asked that discussion continue as it relates to the I-15 Freeway improvements. MR. OLIVAS agreed and stated that the Project Neon for safety related to the City's ability to have an effect on the Spaghetti Bowl and I-15 Freeway. There are other jurisdictions that are responsible for portions of the I-15 Freeway, but Project Neon is directly related to the I-15 congestion. MAYOR GOODMAN added that at the next Council meeting, TOM SKANCKE, who is the City's lobbyist, will be making a presentation regarding transportation.

MAYOR GOODMAN asked MS. CRAM if Washington knows that many of the City's constituents are drowning. MS. CRAM replied that it does and is trying to help to the best of its ability. MAYOR GOODMAN noted that the City has been granted \$24 million, but it does not help. In this economy this is serious business, everybody is on pins and needles and entitled to some answers. He hopes this is made clear to the delegation. MS. CRAM remarked that the jobs bill will help.

DEAN FLETCHER, President, Las Vegas Firefighters Local 1285, stated that the Fire Chief forwarded to the City Administration applications to try to get the Saver Grant to recruit more firefighters, but it was not mentioned in the presentation. The deadline was extended to January 15, 2010. He wanted to clarify if the City has applied for that grant. CITY MANAGER

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FRETWELL responded that the City did not apply for the grant. The grant specifications would inhibit the Council's ability to change staffing levels or do layoffs in the fire department as a result of taking the grant.

MR. FLETCHER indicated that people can access the information, which is easy to understand, on the website and through iaff.org.

COUNCILWOMAN TARKANIAN asked for information on what the grant would provide and what problems would arise if the City accepted it. Understanding the specifics would be helpful.

MAYOR GOODMAN pled with MS. CRAM as it is important that everything that can be done will be done to address the needs of this City. It is a serious issue for those who have lost their homes, jobs, and cannot feed their families. It is important to put a face on the problem so that they will know that individuals are sorely affected with this problem. The message has got to get back to Washington.

COUNCILMAN REESE thanked MR. OLIVAS and MS. CRAM for the report.

COUNCILWOMAN TARKANIAN verified that this presentation is available to the public. CITY CLERK BEVERLY BRIDGES indicated that it will be scanned and attached and available on line the next day.

ANTHONY HODGES, Las Vegas resident, stated he knows many people back in Washington, and he can shake Washington up. This is a great State and a contributor to the nation. He opined that only five people representing the City are not enough.

