



Las Vegas

Agenda Item No.: 5.

AGENDA SUMMARY PAGE
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF: DECEMBER 12, 2011

DEPARTMENT: CITY MANAGER
DIRECTOR: ELIZABETHAN FRETWELL

Consent Discussion

SUBJECT:
FOR POSSIBLE ACTION REPORT AND DISCUSSION REGARDING CITY OF LAS VEGAS
PRIORITY*

*This item includes discussion and possible action regarding a possible update or replacement of the City of Las Vegas Mission Statement, Values and Priorities. The afternoon portion of the agenda will involve breaking the City Council into three work groups with no more than three Council members in each work group. City staff and the City Attorneys office will be represented at each work group. The work groups will be in the same room as the Council Retreat and are all open to the public. It is anticipated that Council members may move from work group to work group as part of this portion of the agenda. No action will be taken in the work group sessions - All Wards

Fiscal Impact

No Impact

Augmentation Required

Budget Funds Available

Amount:

Funding Source:

Dept./Division:

PURPOSE/BACKGROUND:

The City Council last met to discuss strategic priorities on March 3, 2010 and adopted six priorities. The purpose of this meeting is for City Council to identify and define their priorities with input from staff and citizens. Council will receive a report on six priorities that city employees have identified as well as a report on the results of the 2011 citizen survey. Council members and staff will also participate in small group discussions. In addition to the discussion on priorities, a communication exercise will be conducted so Council members and staff have an opportunity to better understand and discuss their personal styles and preferences.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve any new or modified priorities and direct staff accordingly

BACKUP DOCUMENTATION:

Submitted at Meeting PowerPoint Presentations by Thom Reilly and Maggie Plaster

Minutes:

THOM REILLY, President of The Reilly Group, thanked the City Council for their time. He recognized the importance of Council's efforts to consider priorities from the differing perspectives of management, staff and citizens before reviewing a PowerPoint presentation as it played on screens.

COUNCILMAN ANTHONY agreed with MR. REILLY'S presentation, but explained that the economy is preventing the predictability and confidence necessary to think big until we get out of this bad economy. MR. REILLY clarified long term thinking requires thinking beyond the recession.

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COUNCILMAN WOLFSON stated he shifted the emphasis on thinking big to thinking ahead which is something the Council and city staff are doing well. MR. REILLY agreed that part of thinking big is thinking ahead and the City Council is in a good position to do this. The City Council and staff have a good reputation and are in a position to think the unthinkable and push themselves and the envelope. One of the suggestions made by the Councilman included amending the agendas to a more user-friendly format.

COUNCILMAN BARLOW stated this is an opportunity for the City and Council to have the ability to forge ahead with the help of the City professionals, staff and dedicated employees. MR. REILLY agreed that thinking big and moving forward is a collaborative effort.

COUNCILMAN ROSS concurred with both COUNCILMAN BARLOW and COUNCILMAN ANTHONY. He wants to see the City become the governing body in the State that not only thinks beyond the current economy, but also outside the box in order to remain positive, aggressive and bold for the citizens. The City Council already thinks creatively and keeps the big picture in mind and staff is very competent in helping the Council do so. State law sometimes prohibits the Council from thinking as big as they want to, but City Ordinances can be changed and updated to accommodate new directions. MR. REILLY explained that recognizing the obstacles to thinking big is a huge step.

COUNCILMAN COFFIN thinks they are off to a good start because people are redefining their terms in a positive, albeit argumentative way and it is important to maintain a free exchange of ideas. He would like to further explore the controls utilized by the Council and city staff. He is still trying to figure out who is in charge in the City and whether or not the values and mission are created by individuals who spend all their time creating and not doing.

MAYOR GOODMAN stated the hard and challenging role is trying to get a clear understanding of City Councils role within the organization. It is challenging when the staff are so competent and well-oiled and it is a whole different game to days gone by. She wants to see Councilmembers getting their hands dirty and keeping involved with City staff to build a place for all of us to be proud of. She questioned how they can plan to move forward and be most effective without having to rehash the past. As a Council they sometimes float at the top without any real information on issues beyond their Ward. MR. REILLY stated the Council is most powerful and impactful when setting visions, values and budgets and allowing staff to keep the wheels moving. He acknowledged it can be difficult to balance the two.

COUNCILWOMAN TARKANIAN concurred with her peers. What is of importance or considered to be big to the Council may be far different to the issues most important to citizens. She is concerned that thinking big and focusing on the future may negate the needs and wants of her constituents. There has to be balance and a focus on the citizens.

Continuing with the PowerPoint presentation, MR. REILLY explained it is the soft skills that need to be brought to the table and these skills need to be sought in new employees. MAYOR GOODMAN asked if the government should be a support mechanism to the private sector, but MR. REILLY clarified it should become a partnership where government taps into the skill sets found in the private sector. Government has the ability to bring everyone to the table and power the negotiations and cooperative efforts. COUNCILMAN WOLFSON remembered several occasions where a phone call from the Mayor generated meetings and collaborations. It was the power of influence that initiated collaboration and negotiation.

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COUNCILWOMAN TARKANIAN summarized that the City Council is an agent of change, but transformation does not begin at the top but simultaneously on all levels. It can be messy but that is where the exciting skills and negotiations are made evident. When considering the big picture, MR. REILLY asked Council to consider that their own policies may often prevent them from moving forward.

COUNCILMAN ROSS commented on the importance of seeking new employees who not only have knowledge of theories, practical and technical skills, but also the soft skills needed in today's business environment. There has to be a reduction in bureaucracy to improve customer service. The City has changed dramatically from his first days on the Council and the City has met the challenge and is continually looking for improvement opportunities. Staff understands that businesses and citizens are the customer and staff's purpose is to serve the customer. MR. REILLY asked Council to consider how they are rewarding those employees who demonstrate the much-needed soft skills. Those who work beyond their classification need to be rewarded, acknowledged and encouraged.

MAYOR GOODMAN stated the first thing that came to his mind when taking office was the failure to openly communicate and the lack of personal consistency when meeting and talking with people. People who love their job are always willing to go above and beyond and this is something she sees exhibited by City staff at all times. Communication is the key to everything. MR. REILLY suggested using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) as a benchmark of their personalities and to better understand and communicate with each other. CITY MANAGER ELIZABETH FRETWELL agreed to provide Council with copies of the MBTI personality profiles. TED OLIVAS, Director of Administrative Services, agreed the personality signature was fairly accurate of his own personality and preferences. MR. REILLY stated working in this environment creates the need to be flexible and often switch between preferences. The MBTI results of staff and Council were then discussed.

The meeting was briefly recessed from 10:01 a.m. to 10:18 a.m.

After instructing the Councilmembers to jot down what they think the biggest priorities of the City should be from the perspective of the citizens, the business owners, the city employees, and the Council, MR. REILLY had them discuss the priorities they listed. CITY MANAGER FRETWELL explained to Council that every single city employee and manager had previously completed the same exercise. The Council's own expectations were much more personal in nature regarding their own interactions than previous responses. That may be a dynamic that has to be managed within themselves as opposed to with staff. MAGGIE PLASTER, Executive Assistant to the City Manager, organized the Council's comments on priorities and discussed their interrelatedness.

COUNCILWOMAN TARKANIAN wished there were not as many yes people and that people would stop telling the Council what they believe the Council wants to hear. COUNCILMAN BARLOW concurred. He expects his staff to bring him the good, the bad and the ugly instead of their perception of what he may want. It is his discretion to make decisions based on all of the facts and not what has been filtered for him. MR. REILLY pointed out there is an overlap of expectations regarding communication.

COUNCILMAN COFFIN clarified that his priorities were based on principles and the qualities that need to be exhibited to achieve City priorities and functions. MR. REILLY responded that good governance and how it operates is extremely important.

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CITY MANAGER FRETWELL briefly discussed the citizen surveys that were conducted and the benchmarking data provided in a Prezi presentation submitted for the record. MS. PLASTER then reviewed the presentation as it played on two screens and explained the survey method employed. She confirmed for COUNCILMAN WOLFSON the residents surveyed were Las Vegas residents but the survey does not reflect their intent or perspective.

In COUNCILMAN BARLOWS opinion, the City has gone gangbuster on economic development and thought the satisfaction rate should be higher. He questioned how the survey questions were worded to result in such low numbers and found it difficult to agree with the results. CITY MANAGER FRETWELL clarified his years wording was different in order to incorporate development downtown and economic development in terms of jobs. One of the things to consider is that many of the City Council's initiatives over the past couple of years are only just coming to fruition and subsequently just becoming visible to residents. Take the survey with a grain of salt and utilize it as another tool to help blend all of the information being presented. MAYOR GOODMAN read some of the survey questions to help Council understand what may have prompted certain answers.

COUNCILMAN COFFIN stated a sampling of 600 cannot provide accurate statistics on the needs of specific wards. Votes are unknown and the survey is a reach. COUNCILMAN ROSS also expressed difficulty accepting the results and questioned if there is a lot of national sentiment expressed by residents who may be expressing their feelings about federal issues.

Continuing with the Prezi presentation, CITY MANAGER FRETWELL asked the following staff members to discuss priorities identified by staff and employees: JORGE CERVANTES, Director of Public Works, on a Thriving and Sustainable Business Community; DAN FISCHER, Environmental Laboratory and Compliance Manager, on a Safe and Healthy City; MIKE MYERS, Fire and Rescue Chief, on Comprehensive Fiscal Stewardship; BRIAN KNUDSEN, Administrative Officer, on Community Attachment; KIMBERLY CHADWICK, Courtroom Support Manager, on Customer Service Excellence; and BRANDY STANLEY, Parking Manager, on a World Class Workforce. CITY MANAGER FRETWELL clarified these initiatives and priorities are being discussed for consideration and that staff is specifically speaking on areas outside of their expertise. The presentation is a summary of lengthy discussions previously held and the Council will have an opportunity to discuss them further after lunch. She confirmed for MAYOR GOODMAN that the information gathering was first conducted at the management level and then on a broader organizational level with input from every employee before the creation of the presentation.

The meeting recessed for lunch from 12:28 p.m. to 1:17 p.m.

CITY MANAGER FRETWELL explained the City's values and the process of developing them. In honor of rolling out the new values, the City is hosting a values conference with numerous special speakers that represent several professions and industries in order to help motivate the employees. Over 1,500 employees have registered for sessions. The City is trying to do something very similar to what the Cleveland Clinic has done for their employees and there is a lot being done to encourage and reward the new set of values. She asked the Council if staff got the priorities right and if they missed anything that may be necessary for reinforcement. MR. REILLY pointed out the overriding priorities discussed during the mornings session overlaps with the values presented in the afternoon portion of the Prezi presentation.

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MR. REILLY directed Councilmembers and staff to breakout into three small groups to discuss the priorities heard about in the morning session. They should consider issues from this morning such as job creation, job security or City safety. A group facilitator will report back whether the groups felt these are the appropriate priorities and which measurements accurately reflect the success of a priority. COUNCILMAN WOLFSON stated this process does not promote resolutions because Council needs more time to review information.

Breakout meetings began at 1:38 p.m. and the main session reconvened at 2:25 p.m.

MR. REILLY had one member from each group provide a brief overview of their discussions. MS. PLASTER stated Group 1 felt the Council's and staff's priorities aligned nicely. MR. REILLY noted that measures still need to be quantified. CHIEF MYERS reviewed Group 2's discussions which generally supported an alignment of staff and Council's priorities and the need for clear measurements. DAVID INGLEMEN, Director of Communications, reviewed Group 3's discussions which were very similar to other groups, but there was considerable time spent on whether or not a world class workforce was internal, external or both. COUNCILMAN ROSS added that the thriving and sustainable business community does not say a lot about jobs. We have to get a message out to the world about who we are because we are watched by both local, state and national governments in addition to domestic and foreign businesses and tourists. MR. REILLY suggested boasting that the City has a world class workforce, but cautioned the removal of that focus and how it would be perceived. COUNCILMAN WOLFSON stated morale is a big issue and it doesn't matter what you call it or how you measure it, but a world class workforce should be a focus. MAYOR GOODMAN would like to add that the term should be a world class city employee as opposed to the generic world class workforce, the emphasis should be on the City.

MR. REILLY stated there was a remarkable alignment between staff and the City Council. The next step is to take this feedback back to tighten it up and align it to the budget. Those are the next steps planned by CITY MANAGER FRETWELL, who clarified staff directives. The City Council should be comfortable with the number of priorities because they do not change drastically in short periods of time. Performance at the department and executive level should have cascading or institutionalization of goals that trickle down so it is very clear to everyone they are a piece of the puzzle. COUNCILMAN ANTHONY stated the challenge comes from returning to the office and forgetting about what was talked about today. It is critical to continue talking about these priorities to keep them at the forefront and keep them a priority.

MAYOR GOODMAN thanked MR. REILLY for his efforts and guidance through the process, as well as City staff for their hard work.

COUNCILMAN COFFIN encouraged everyone to come up and enjoy the Mt. Charleston Lodge with their families.