

Meeting Minutes
State College Borough Council
Work Session
Monday, April 11, 2005

The State College Borough Council met in a work session on Monday, April 11, 2005, in the State College Municipal Building's Council Chambers, 243 South Allen Street, State College, PA. Mr. Daubert called the meeting to order at 8:17 p.m following a special meeting.

Present: Thomas E. Daubert, President of Council
Catherine G. Dauler
Elizabeth A. Goreham
Craig R. Humphrey
Janet K. Knauer
Jeffrey R. Kern
James H. Meyer

Also present: Thomas J. Fountaine, II, Borough Manager; Carl R. Hess, Director of Planning; Mark Whitfield, Public Works Director; Amy J. Story, Borough Engineer; Edward Holmes, Facilities Coordinator; Thomas R. King, Chief of Police; Ronald Davis, Assistant Borough Manager; Amy R. Miller, Recording Secretary; members of the media; and other interested observers.

Public Hour. There were no comments from the public.

Public Cameras Monitoring Plan. In the fall of 2004, a one-year evaluation of the three public cameras was conducted by the CCTV Citizens Advisory Committee. One of the recommendations to Borough Council by the Advisory Committee was to experiment with live monitoring of the cameras during peak activity periods for a period of one year to determine if live monitoring impacts the level of criminal activity that occurs in the public camera areas and to evaluate whether the monitoring results in more identification of persons committing crimes in the camera areas. The committee believes that the cameras are not being used to their full potential and that live monitoring could enhance their effectiveness. The Public Camera Monitoring Plan that was developed by the CCTV Citizens Advisory Committee was attached with Council's work session agenda. Staff supports the committee's proposed monitoring plan.

Chief King said that three-quarters of the 600 people surveyed responded they were comfortable with the live monitoring. He also said the Committee recommends the live monitoring on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights from 11 pm-4 am by a downtown safety enhancement patrol officer beginning July 1. The position would be paid by the Downtown Improvement District (DID) and employed by Penn State as part of a three-way partnership with the Borough. The DID would be willing to sponsor an additional officer who will monitor cameras. These individuals would be trained by the police supervisors regarding the policy of monitoring and what type of activity should be reported to the police officers. Criminal activity such as disorderly behavior, violence and vandalism will be monitored; but all decisions would be made by a police officer in the field. All reports would be logged and an officer would do all regular field reports. Chief King explained that the effect of the cameras has shown a modest reduction in the crime rate in the Beaver Avenue area, while in the non-camera areas crime had increased by 10 percent. The committee feels that the cameras have yet to reach their full potential and the lack of monitoring may be why they are not reaching this level.

Ms. Goreham asked if the cameras are generally focused on the street; it was her impression that the quality of the tapes was not good enough to identify people. Chief King responded that the cameras are equipped with night vision and are high quality cameras which can clearly identify facial features, hair, and lettering on t-shirts. However, if the cameras are not monitored then the zoom feature could not be used for proper identification. Chief King explained the person monitoring would be in the basement of the Borough Police Department watching a monitor and would utilize a joystick to move the cameras around for optimal viewing. In addition, the cameras would not be able to show views through windows; shading appears on the cameras to eliminate those views.

Mr. Meyer questioned the percentage of surveys returned by each gender. Chief King responded that gender was not used in the analysis.

Ms. Knauer commented on an editorial that appeared in the *Collegian*; she would like the public to know that Council is responding to their concerns. Ms. Dauler also commented on the same editorial about monitoring cameras and said whoever wrote the piece did not have the correct facts before writing the editorial.

Mr. Daubert said one thing that bothers him most is that the people monitoring are not properly trained. Chief King responded the monitor would be a paid position and training would be provided. The purpose of the cameras is not to give people a hard time. If a citizen has an issue, then we encourage them to come forward. Chief King also said there were 250 cameras

throughout the Borough and Penn State; certain cameras will be monitored at different times and some will remain stationary but constantly recording.

Kristin Kofmehl, 210 W. College Avenue, Apt 4, asked Council to keep in mind that officers will be called in to further investigate. Ms. Kofmehl said her views of the cameras have changed over the year. She is now in favor of the cameras knowing that more women have been affected and a lot of money has been invested in the cameras.

Ms. Knauer said having been on the committee this past year, she has become less opposed to them. It is her hope the cameras will reduce the crime and assaults taking place in downtown. Mr. Kern agreed and added that citizens should keep in mind the Borough cannot afford to hire additional police officers but the use of technology will help with crime reduction.

Ms. Dauler hopes Council agrees with the committee's recommendations; one reason she is in favor of the cameras is the hope of identifying assailants.

Phil Wagner, 409 E. Fairmount Avenue, reminded Council the sophisticated software of the cameras blocks out windows and buildings. The cameras only focus on the individuals. In addition all activity is recorded, so if there were allegations that one of the student monitors was trying to get even with someone, there would be documentation for backup.

Mr. Daubert said the camera monitoring will be included for vote in the next regular Council meeting.

Parking Revenue Control System (PARCS) And Bond Issue. Staff presented an update on the Parking Revenue Control System at its April 1 meeting. The presentation included an outline of the bids for the revenue control system and issues related to the overall parking system. Mr. Fontaine said in order to meet the current Beaver Avenue Garage opening schedule, Council was asked to award the contract for the revenue control system on April 18. A revised pro forma for the Parking Fund, revised to reflect the bids received today, was presented. Council was also asked to review the projects to be included in the 2005 Bond Issue and provide direction to staff for: (1) the bid award for the PARCS and (2) the projects to be included in the 2005 bond issue.

Mr. Holmes began by summarizing the only bid received from CTR Systems in Warrendale, PA. The base bid, for the revenue control for the Beaver Avenue Garage, came in at \$273,000. Alternate No. 1 gives Council the opportunity to delay installation of pay-on-foot operations in the Fraser and Pugh garages for up to one year; bid was \$755,628. Alternate No. 2 gives an immediate award of the equipment to convert the other garages to pay-on-foot operations; bid was \$730,911. Alternate No. 3 enables the parking meter equipment and smart card system integration into the meters and garage equipment; the total bid was \$453,588 split between the Parking Fund (\$181,435) and the General Fund (\$272,153).

Mr. Daubert asked why the alternates were so much more than the base bid; Mr. Holmes responded that both alternates involve some other construction such as removal of booths and changing lane configurations. Ms. Dauler asked staff if they were familiar with CTR Systems; Mr. Holmes replied the Borough has been working with CTR Systems since 1994.

Mr. Meyer asked how many bid packages were requested; Mr. Holmes said three packages were requested, however only one bid was received.

Mr. Humphrey asked if the architect, Tim Haas, gave the Borough his opinion. Mr. Holmes replied that Mr. Haas is analyzing the bids and will give a written recommendation to the Borough. Mr. Fontaine added that Mr. Haas has recommended converting to pay on foot for all three garages at the same time. Mr. Humphrey then asked if there was a money-back guarantee with this system; Mr. Fontaine replied the only guarantee is that there are systems such as this in garages all over the world and they operate very effectively. Mr. Kern added that these systems are in other cities all over the country and if the project was delayed then there would be more confusion. Payment should be consistent at all the garages. Delaying pay on foot for one year would add \$25,000.

Mr. Daubert said no decisions would be made at this time. However, Mr. Fontaine said Council needs to make a recommendation next week on the Revenue Control System in order to achieve the project completion schedule with the Beaver Avenue garage. Ms. Kanuer asked where this would leave the Borough in terms of expenses. Mr. Fontaine replied the costs that were mentioned with the exception of the Fraser Street intersection would be paid for by the parking fund. In 2008 the parking fees will have to increase. Mr. Fontaine said the amounts are unclear at this point but may be in the area of a 25% increase in the off street parking system. The Mayor asked if employee salary projections were available for the next couple of years; Mr. Fontaine replied he was not prepared to answer at this time but would have figures available next week. Mr. Daubert questioned why personnel expenses go up with pay on foot systems. Mr. Fontaine said there still remains a need for personnel at all times even though they would not be collecting revenues.

Mr. Kern asked if a wayfinding system could be used if the other parking systems are not the same. Mr. Holmes said because the vendor that submitted the bid is the Borough's current

vendor the central processing system will be the same for the three garages, therefore the capability is there. However, if we award Beaver Avenue Garage the base bid and also award the alternate for the parking meters and smart cards, a customer might use a smart card in the Beaver garage but not be able to use it in Fraser or Pugh. All three garages would have different methods of payment.

Mr. Kern asked if batch processing of credits cards would eliminate fees, therefore allowing credit card usage. Mr. Fontaine said staff is continuing to explore the ideas of credit card payments, but the issue will not be solved by the time the bid is awarded.

Mr. Fontaine said staff would revise personnel costs to the best of their ability for Council's review.

Ms. Dauler asked if the whole package is not accepted at this time will the wayfinding system still be possible. Mr. Holmes responded the software will already be there but would involve some additional work to implement. Ms. Dauler said Council wanted the garage to be built quickly and felt it important to get the job done; however, pay on foot was not brought up until later. She asked Council to remember they wanted things to get done quickly and correctly.

Mr. Meyer suggested Council consider the need to change the street meters and question if it is really needed. There are 757 meters with about \$650 cost per meter. Mr. Meyer felt the expense was not necessary at this point.

Michael Freeman, 723 W. Nittany Avenue, commented on the \$650 cost per meter. He said if the Borough will spend that much money why not switch to the system Harrisburg uses; which is one meter for every eight cars. Collections would be faster and one machine could be bought for the price of each meter. Mr. Holmes said the \$650 per meter is not a true cost. Also included with the cost are the smart card recharge equipment and the software to integrate the system in the garage system. The base bid does not include the costs for the smart cards; which is why some costs increased. Smart cards are not beneficial to be used only in garages and not in the street meters.

Mr. Daubert asked how much money the Borough should borrow; Mr. Fontaine said the Borough would have to borrow roughly \$6.3 million to finish the Beaver Garage with the pay on foot bid. The pay on foot for the other garages would cost another \$730,000, excluding the meters. The McAllister Desk would cost another \$182,000.

Mr. Kern suggested borrowing as much as possible because borrowing will cost more next year. Ms. Goreham and Mr. Meyer disagreed. Ms. Goreham added that \$10 million is a lot of money and should be given careful consideration.

Mr. Kern questioned the debt rating over the next 3-5 years. Mr. Fontaine said the figures have come from the Borough's financial advisor; at this time the Borough has the capacity to borrow the full \$10 million but revenue will have to be dedicated to provide debt service which may mean a significant tax increase.

Mr. Kern, Mr. Daubert and Ms. Dauler are in favor of borrowing the full \$10 million. Ms. Goreham, Ms. Knauer, Mr. Humphrey and Mr. Meyer would prefer to borrow less, between 7 and 8 million dollars.

Holiday Courtesy Parking Report. Staff completed its review of the 2004 Courtesy Parking Program and Council received a report at their April 4 meeting. The report included the data collected during the 2004 holiday program and provided comparison data for other periods. Mr. Fontaine said staff recommends the courtesy parking be continued only during the holiday season. The report has also been provided to the State College Downtown Improvement District (DID) for their review.

Chief King presented data on the courtesy cards issued. There were 2,040 courtesy cards issued in 29 business days; of the 2,040 cards issued they were issued to 486 different vehicles. Analysis shows that 97% of all vehicles receiving courtesy cards got four or fewer cards within those business days, which indicates there was no substantial abuse of the cards being issued. Revenue collected during that time was \$68,000 from meters, garages and tickets. Revenue brought in during January was \$70,000 and May was \$72,000. January and May were used for comparison because students were out of town during those months as well as during the holiday season. Chief King stated revenue obtained during the courtesy program from meters and municipal parking lots was \$62,000, \$49,000 in January and \$64,000 in May.

Chief King said Council questioned the impact of sales and the courtesy parking program. Data states that 53% of the local business owners surveyed indicated customers responded favorably to the courtesy parking program. Thirty-seven percent of the businesses also responded favorably to the free parking and 68% said they had either the same or greater sales during that time; however 32% reported a decline in sales.

Prior to 2004 the courtesy parking program existed during the daytime; the committee recommends the courtesy parking expand to again include the daytime hours during the holidays, however extend the parking hours to 10 pm evening and weekends and expand the merchant

validation to include all three garages. The committee feels this would encourage customers to use the garages. Merchant validation costs could be split three ways between the Borough, the DID and the customer. Currently the Borough only offers courtesy parking from Thanksgiving through New Years holidays.

Theresa Sparacino, Director of the DID, remarked that she makes this speech every year and it does get tougher and tougher downtown. During the holiday season, the Downtown needs to compete with the outlying department stores, malls and shopping plazas. The DID receives many comments regarding free holiday parking being the reason they are shopping downtown in the evening. Residents consider the hassle of shopping downtown along with the parking. If the public is given constant reasons why not to come downtown, it would be detrimental. The key is to let citizens know that shopping downtown is not as difficult as they think.

Mr. Kern said the downtown consists mostly of specialty shops. In addition most people who work downtown shop downtown. All the free parking is not going to bring people downtown to shop. Ms. Sparacino agreed but also said free parking helps, and the majority of purchases are made in the evenings and on weekends.

Mr. Fontaine said the Borough participates in two other free parking programs with the school district during home football games and with Pennsylvania Centre Stage except during the Arts Festival and home football games. Those two other programs are not up for discussion at this time.

Mr. Kern asked how many merchants are currently validating parking. Ms. Sparacino replied validation has increased since the three way cost split. Currently there are about 70% of the merchants, dentists, and professional offices. Advertising consists of parking validation symbols in the windows for those that validate. Mr. Fontaine said details have not been worked out at this time if garages go to pay on foot.

Ms. Dauler asked for written recommendations from the committee; Mr. Fontaine said he will see that Council receives a copy. The recommendation is to continue offering the holiday courtesy parking program, but eliminate free parking in surface lots and garages. Ms. Sparacino recommends continuing the free parking in the lots and garages.

Mr. Fontaine said this item will be on the April 18 agenda.

Commercial Incentive District (CID). Discussions were postponed to next week's work session.

Items of Information. Chief King alerted Council to the "Modified Madness" scheduled on May 21 and 22 at the Bryce Jordan Center. This particular event has been turned down by many towns, but was brought to State College by Penn State and the region has been supportive. Council agreed to use of the downtown streets for the "Neon Lighted Car Show" which is Saturday night, but all other events are at the Jordan Center. Carlisle and Harrisburg were previous hosts of this event and have had problems. Because State College is accustomed to hosting large groups of people, the Borough Police Department, Penn State Police and the State Police are confident that things will not get out of hand.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 10:27 pm:

Respectfully Submitted by:

Cynthia S. Hanscom
Assistant Borough Secretary