Meeting Minutes
State College Borough Council
Work Session
Friday, April 1, 2005

The State College Borough Council met in a work session on Friday, April 1, 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 12:05 p.m.

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

Also present: Thomas J. Fountaine, II, Borough Manager; Carl R. Hess, Director of Planning; Michele Nicolas, Director of Human Resources; Mark Whitfield, Public Works Director; Mike Groff, Finance Director; Amy R. Miller, Recording Secretary; Ronald A. Davis, Assistant Borough Manager; Thomas R. King, Chief of Police; Edward C. Holmes; Facilities Coordinator; Timothy Grattan, Information Systems Director; members of the media; and other interested observers.

Public Hour. There were no comments from the public.

Intercity Bus Facility. In 2004, Penn State University advised the COG Transportation Committee of the need to relocate the intercity bus station to make way for PSU development plans on West Campus. Because the Borough expressed a desire to relocate the facility in or near the downtown, the COG Transportation Committee recommended that the Borough and Penn State University organize a steering committee of representative stakeholders to explore site possibilities for such relocation. Elizabeth Goreham has chaired this committee. The University hired Synergy Real Estate Corporation (Synergy) to facilitate the site selection process. The consultant prepared a final report identifying four sites for further consideration. Council discussed the Committee's recommendations and also considered comments from the Planning Commission and the Transportation Commission.

Council was now asked to develop specific comments to guide the Committee and Penn State in evaluating and selecting a final site for the bus station, and whether local government should play a role in the management of the bus station in the future.

Mr. Meyer said he did not remember Council stating the bus station should be downtown. He believed the committee formed the opinion themselves. Mr. Daubert agreed and said the only stipulation was that the station remain conveniently located.

Mr. Kern said PSU is proposing to develop a parking garage at the White Course Drive extension which will connect to Corl Street, and he thought the new project offered an excellent opportunity to include a bus station at this location at a lower cost.

Mr. Daubert felt the site at Atherton Street and College Avenue is too congested, not large enough and should not be considered.

Mr. Humphrey was in favor of the Garner Street and Beaver Avenue location. Mayor Welch replied that the owner of the property, Ed Friedman, was in favor but then wrote a letter stating he was no longer interested.

Mayor Welch said if the parameters have changed and economic development is no longer being considered, then Council may need to send a new charge to this committee or perhaps to COG because it is a regional issue.

Ms. Goreham said the priority of the station should be convenience to students, so the location should be adjacent to campus. If economic development is removed as one of the criteria, then downtown sites drop out of consideration and White Course Drive becomes the number one site for development. The University should be asked if they are willing to reconsider this location or another equally convenient location for the terminal. Council agreed. Mr. Daubert added that the terminal should be located on an established CATA route.

Mr. Fountaine said originally there were 17 sites being considered by the committee and they narrowed the choices to four. Mr. Daubert felt sites should not be narrowed to just those four sites chosen by the committee and that Council should reconsider previous sites. In addition

Mr. Kern said the committee should be told to change the criteria, rethink the process and eliminate the urban downtown business district as a possible site.

Mr. Fountaine said there were issues why Penn State did not want to pursue the White Course Drive site and this site was not evaluated as closely as the other sites chosen. The Mayor added that Bob Finley stated Penn State is willing to do something on an interim basis during the two-year construction time. Mr. Daubert said the best approach is to tell the committee and Synergy to reconsider other locations.

Mr. Fountaine continued that the Borough's involvement with the bus terminal is because of a mutual agreement with the University; the University owns the property and the Borough manages it. The Borough asked for authorization to lead this project. Mr. Daubert disagreed and said the main concern should be the citizens regardless of whether the Borough has a financial or management interest in the project. He recommended that Council agree not to relocate the bus facility in another municipality. He also recommended that the Borough not manage the facility any longer. Mr. Meyer agreed the bus terminal is important, but feels it is not the Borough's responsibility to manage it and leadership should be given to the University. Ms. Dauler agreed.

Mr. Kern suggested adding additional criteria of financial ability. Mr. Fountaine responded there was a financial feasibility side to the study. He recommended a report of Council's comments be made to the committee, including that additional sites should be considered (specifically a Hastings Road site but there may be others as well) but that a downtown site not be considered.

Parking Revenue Control System and 2005 Bond Issue. Mr. Holmes presented updates on the Parking Revenue Control System. The presentation included an outline of the bids for the revenue control system and issues related to the overall parking system. Bids for the PARCS will be received on April 11. 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.

Staff also provided a brief report on the second part of the bond issue for the parking garage. Council discussed rolling several General Fund projects into the second part of the borrowing which will occur in May 2005. Staff reviewed the borrowing with Council and began the discussion about the General Fund portion of the issue; the discussion is expected to last over several meetings of Council.

Mr. Holmes indicated alternates were requested for replacement equipment in other garages, for parking meter equipment, and smart cards, all at Council's request. He also said that Council has made a commitment to pay-on-foot for the Beaver Avenue garage but chose to evaluate proposals to replace revenue control equipment in Fraser and Pugh garages with pay-on-foot equipment. Combining the new and replacement equipment proposals would yield the best possible pricing, but there are other considerations as well. One important thing to consider is a need to create a uniform parking system because consistency would be less confusing for the customers. A uniform parking system would allow the use of pre-paid parking cards throughout the garages. A single system would also allow the Wayfinding signs to be implemented. This project had been included in the Capital Improvement budget but the various equipment in the existing garages made the project more difficult. Mr. Holmes continued with possible scenarios: (1) Council adopts the Base Bid and delays the decision on Alternate 1 equipment, (2) Council adopts the Base Bid and Alternate 2, committing immediately to replacing equipment in Fraser and Pugh garages, or (3) Alternate 3 (meters and smart cards) can be combined with either of the above or rejected independently.

Mr. Holmes explained choosing the Base Bid and Alternate 1 scenario would allow time to evaluate pay-on-foot, would defer cost of converting Pugh and Fraser, could result in dual operating systems, and could result in patrons having a smart card for Beaver and parking meters but could not use the card in Pugh or Fraser garages. Choosing the Base Bid and Alternate 2 would guarantee a consistent operation in the least amount of time, would be the least confusing for customers and staff, would limit dual system possibility to a maximum of 8 months, would maximize the potential of new systems and would minimize staff dedicated to the parking operations. Mr. Holmes said staff and the consultant recommend adopting Alternate 2 when the Base Bid is awarded.

Mr. Kern said different methods of payment create problems and now would be the time to make changes although the budget may not allow it. Mr. Daubert said if the money is not in the budget then the equipment should not be considered. Furthermore, he said, the pay-on-foot system in the Pugh garage was not successful. Ms. Dauler commented that the systems should be consistent with one another.

Ms. Goreham questioned the life expectancy of equipment; Mr. Holmes could not answer the question and would get the information from the architect.

Ms. Knauer asked about the construction schedule. Mr. Fountaine replied that Alternate 2 construction time would be eight months and Alternate 1 would allow deferring the award up to a year for the other garages. Mr. Holmes added that it would take a minimum of 16 weeks to get the equipment and have it installed; the eight month delay means that the contractor could not start the other garages until Beaver garage is up and running. Mr. Kern asked if conversion of the other garages could take place before the Beaver garage. Mr. Fountaine responded that closing Fraser Street would be required and without Beaver being open congestion would be a problem.

Mr. Daubert asked if any of the garages would still take cash for payment. Mr. Holmes replied yes all garages would take cash; a smart card would not be required.

Regarding the bond issue, Mr. Fountaine said figures include items for the parking revenue control system (PARC) as well as the Beaver Avenue garage. The total estimated cost for the PARC system for the Fraser garage is $750,000; meters were $120,000; realignment project is $750,000, an increase over the original estimate of about $250,000. McAlister Parking Deck also requires immediate repairs estimated at $182,000. Last year $9,995,000 was borrowed leaving a balance of $8,439,000 to be borrowed. The total capacity of the bond to remain bank qualified is less than $10,000,000. There is capacity for additional borrowing if Council wants to consider some of the items previously discussed such as street reconstruction, the service building project, the Westerly Parkway storm sewer and the CDBG streetlight project. Total estimated debt service stands at about $1.4 million. The target date for the sale of the bond is May 2 and there will be additional discussion. Mr. Fountaine said the issue at this time is deciding whether to borrow the whole amount or use money from the parking fund. Mr. Daubert said discussion of this item will continue at the work session on April 11.

Fire Study Discussion. At the February 28th meeting, the COG General Forum received, discussed and referred to the participating municipalities the consultant's evaluation of the fire companies as provided by the ad hoc Fire Program Evaluation Committee.

Mr. Daubert said one question raised by the study is whether to have a paid Fire Chief or Training Coordinator. Mr. Daubert also felt some of the assumptions made in the report were poor in that they assume housing consists of primarily single-family homes when, in fact, half of the population in the Centre Region lives in high rises and apartment buildings. He argued that our housing stock creates less demand for fire protection than in a normal community. This is why COG spends very little on Alpha Fire Company but it gives a bad impression on the fire company. Mr. Daubert said the Alpha Fire Company does a much better job than the report shows.

Mr. Humphrey said his impression of both the hiring and promotion procedures are that of a 'good ole boy' network. Mr. Kern agreed and said it would be advantageous to get rid of the so-called fire fraternity; unfortunately it is an organization that is 100 years old and will not happen overnight.

Mr. Groff offered comments because he is a life long member of the Alphas, and has 28 years of service in many capacities over the years, although it has been seven years since he was active. He said he is proud to be a life long member but Council should be concerned with membership and community involvement with the Alphas. The fire response time is not as prompt as it has been in the past, and the retention of membership and no central leadership are problems. Recommendations for a career chief, training and recruitment officer and retention officer are in response to these issues. Mr. Groff observed that a great deal of money had been spent on satellite stations and equipment, but if people are not there to staff the facilities then the agency's ability to respond has not been improved by adding those facilities.

Council recommends the following:

1) The Consultant assumed that the majority of housing was single family detached, while about half of the Centre Region population lives in multifamily housing units or dormitory buildings. These buildings are generally built to a higher fire code standard, thus they do not require as much in terms of fire services. By using cost per person as a benchmark for the Alpha Fire Company, the consultants have not taken the nature of the housing stock into consideration. Thus, the accuracy of the per capita cost benchmark data is questioned.

2) The study indicated that a "good old boy" network existed in the fire service, and permeated the "hiring" practices, or member selection process. The personnel practices need to be improved to eliminate appearances of bias and to select members based solely on merit principles.

3) The report reflected that the Alpha Fire Company did not make its constitution available for the consultants to review. Why was this document not made available for the consultants?

4) The need to improve the practices and procedures used by the Alpha Fire Company is evident from the study. Several recommendations included in the study will be controversial within the community and within the fire company. It will take time and skillful negotiation with the fire company to implement the more controversial changes, especially those recommendations that go the heart of the volunteer fire culture. Can a formal process be established that will allow dialogue between the fire company and the community's elected leadership on an ongoing and regular basis?

Police Staffing and Grant Opportunities. The Borough has an opportunity to obtain two separate grants that would provide funds to hire additional police officers. The grant deadlines were such that staff had to file the applications before Council approved the programs. The grants would provide for an additional School Resource Officer for the Middle Schools and a Victim Centered Intensive Case Management Officer. No officers will be hired unless the grant funding is approved. Although there is an expectation that the Borough and the School District would continue to fund the School Resource Officer after the four year grant program is concluded at the 75/25 level, the Case Management Officer would not be retained by the Borough if the grant is no longer available. The two projects are described below. Neither position would be filled until 2006. Unless Council objects, the staff will continue to pursue these two grants for additional police staff.

School Resource Officer - Middle Level Schools
Total Project Costs: $86,400
1st year Federal Funds: $64,800, Local Match: $21,600

The program will place a uniformed police officer in the State College School District Middle Level Program to serve as a resource to students in grades 6 to 8 and staff. It will follow the nationally recognized School Resource Officer model, and will work to prevent delinquency, deter crime and drug abuse, discourage gang activity, and stop violence. The officer will team teach the Life Skills curriculum with the middle school health teachers. The project is intended to enhance safety and security in and around schools and is supported by the State College Area School District. If awarded, the SCASD will contribute 75% of the resource officer's salary. The Borough would not be responsible for any additional funding until 2006.

Victim Centered Intensive Case Management (VCICM) Unit
Total Project Costs: $399,998 for two years; 100% Federal Funds

This project will consist of:

- A State College Police Officer to serve as the Victim Centered Intensive Case Manager;
- Counselor Advocate from the Centre County Women's Resource Center;
- Limited legal services for underserved groups from Mid-Penn Legal Services;
- A project technician;
- Overtime for a Domestic Violence Probation Officer for Centre County Probation; and
- Enhanced information systems.

The State College Police Officer assigned as the Victim Centered Intensive Case Manager will be 100% federally funded and will:

- Train police officers to identify domestic violence incidents for referral to the Unit;
- Visit victims in the field who may benefit from advocacy and/or investigation of their cases, and assist them in accessing services and safety planning;
- Follow-up to hold offenders accountable for their actions through investigation, arrest, and prosecution of violent offenders, and close judicial scrutiny and management of offender behavior;
- Develop and make available to the judicial system a database which records offender contacts so that entities in the judicial system are better informed when making decisions on arrest, bail, sentencing, etc.

Chief King indicated that the Borough's cost of 25 percent would not be increased. Mr. Daubert asked why there is a need for a uniformed police officer in the middle schools. Chief King responded that the officers are currently teaching life skills using two officers at the middle schools. The schools would prefer not to give up this type of education, but it does reduce the number of officers available for patrol. He said the money will be used to continue the life skills program and will not pull from existing staff. Council agreed to proceed with the condition that when the funding expires so do the positions.

Fraser Street Development. An agreement with the Downtown Improvement District (DID) has been prepared to designate DID as the redevelopment agency to carry out the Cineplex Development project on Fraser Street, and setting forth the terms for this to happen. Council was asked to review the document and make final comments so that a final agreement can be presented for Council's approval on April 4.

Mr. Daubert asked what the DID has to do with the Fraser Street realignment. Mr. Fountaine answered the realignment of the intersection will affect the project and the Borough, DID and the developer should have interchange before final decisions are made. However, the Borough does have the ability to make final decisions. Mr. Daubert then questioned the signalization of streets and said it is the Borough's business not DID's. Mr. Fountaine replied that it is imposing some cost on the developer for changing signals as a result of the project. Mr. Daubert also suggested rewriting paragraph #20 (Conflict of Interest) to put the same restrictions on the Board of DID relating to family member involvement. Mr. Fountaine said because the Board of the DID is a 501(c)(3), there are already restrictions included. The original draft did include a clause for the DID but because the conflict of interest provision for DID needed to reflect the nature of the corporate structure, the clause was removed. Mr. Hess agreed and said the Borough Solicitor agreed as well.

Mr. Meyer questioned the definition of "multiplex" in paragraph #4. He suggested changing the wording to set a minimum number of theatres. Council agreed and suggested a minimum to be 10.

Ms. Goreham asked what would happen to the project if there were no bidders; Mr. Fountaine said the final deal would be negotiated and if not complete by 2006 the land becomes property of the Borough.

Central District Meeting of the PLCM. The Central District meeting of the Pennsylvania League of Cities and Municipalities is scheduled for April 26 in Williamsport. Individuals who will attend the Central District meeting are Council members Knauer, Dauler, Daubert, and Humphrey as well as the Mayor and Manager. Also, the PLCM annual convention will be held in York, Pennsylvania June 26-29. Individuals planning to attend are Council members Daubert, Goreham, Humphrey, Dauler and Kern.

Adjournment. There being no other business, Mr. Daubert adjourned the meeting at 2:05 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by:

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Cynthia S. Hanscom
Assistant Borough Secretary