

Kimball City Council
Joint Meeting with Economic Development Advisory/Loan Committee
April 5, 2016

A joint meeting of the Kimball City Council and Kimball Economic Development Advisory/Loan Committee convened in open and public session at 7:30 a.m. on April 5, 2016 at the Kimball City Hall. Present were Mayor Prunty and City Council members Warner, Shields, Schnell and Morrison. Also present were Committee Members Roger Wynne, Tammy Land, Larry Walker, Josh Enevoldsen, and Bob Abramson, City Administrator Ortiz, and City Clerk Russell. Committee member Fuss was absent. The public was not represented.

Notice of the meeting was given in advance by publication in the Western Nebraska Observer. Notice of the meeting was given to the members and a copy of their acknowledgement of receipt of notice and the agenda is on record at the office of the City Clerk. Availability of the agenda was communicated in advance notice and in the notice to the members. All proceedings hereafter shown were taken while the convened meeting was open to the attendance of the public except as otherwise indicated.

Wynne acknowledged the posted Open Meetings Act poster.

Prunty opened discussion on expanding the roles and responsibility of the economic development position. Ortiz commented that at the last City Council meeting discussion was held on some of the Citywide projects that needed to be done and the shortage of employees in some of the City departments. Overall, with the shortages, the question came up as to where the City is pertaining to the operational needs and City projects.

The City has struggled in the past with the Economic Development Director position and having someone who could grasp and assist with some of the projects. Warner had brought up the concept of having a person to help facilitate some of the projects. Ortiz commented on expanding outside the City's corporate limits, infrastructure and having someone to keep their finger on the pulse.

Ortiz and Prunty attended a conference sponsored by PADD which gave information on different resources available, i.e. Brownsfield grants, etc. The projects the City has are time-intensive. Ortiz said the City is falling behind in a number of areas, such as updating job descriptions and cross-training. Updating of the Comprehensive Plan is wrapping up so there will be a number of follow-up items on that from a zoning perspective.

Walker arrived at 7:39 a.m.

Schnell commented on the economic development difficulties and commented on the position being more of a community development director position. It is much more detailed as to what the person is doing for the existing development.

Ortiz indicated the Economic Development Director position was advertised and nine applications were received; however, there were no applicants with economic development background. Ortiz commented on the City services and providing infrastructure when developing and expanding.

Warner commented on broadening the economic development role and considering a second position. Her suggestion is to have a limited term to see if there are qualified people. Warner said there is a difference between an Economic Development Director who needs to go out and talk to people and someone to get the paperwork done. She feels like the City needs a good “paper pusher” whether for economic development or an assistant. She commented on the Economic Development Director as a cheerleader and marketer and someone else who is able to get the paperwork together. Prunty likes the idea but commented that a temporary person would be three months just learning the position. Warner added that if the person works out they could possibly fill in for the Economic Development Director position.

Discussion was held on staffing issues and Ortiz said a big part of the issues have to do with the budget but some of the issues are in trying to find the right person. Sales tax revenue is down and Wynne said in order to turn sales tax revenue around, there needs to be economic development. Schnell said it has been tough to get an Economic Development Director who understands the big picture.

Ortiz commented on the last hiring in 2013 and the top candidate refusing the position because he felt the City was behind the ball and had a long way to go before they are ready to do economic development. CDBG grants are due June 27th and the City does not have someone who is focused to put together information and follow up on and apply for grants. It is those little details that fall through the cracks.

Wynne agreed with Warner that someone does need to get the paperwork done. Discussion was held on paying for the position and Ortiz indicated the costs would be split with the utility and general funds.

Morrison mentioned Gary Person working as the Chamber Director at North Platte and taking his number one person from Sidney with him because she can get the paperwork done. Schnell commented on the WNED regional network and working together. Ortiz said Kimball cannot compete with Cheyenne and Sidney with regard to industrial development but Kimball can work on housing. Schnell commented on housing being part of the Economic Development Plan now and the City needs someone who can get out and understand what is available. There are programs coming down the pipe for expansion and they all need something different to expand on. Having an individual at the City who could understand and follow up on them would be beneficial.

Shields inquired about the position being temporary with no benefits. Ortiz said it would be a Special Projects Coordinator with the emphasis of hiring someone on a limited term. It would be less than 30 hours a week, and could be full time after a period of time. This position would be in addition to the Economic Development Director position, and the Economic Development Director position would not be filled at this time.

Further discussion was held on the position being temporary. Shields inquired if there is an opportunity regionally to share the position contractually. Ortiz indicated that the communities that would be interested are too far away. Warner said the WNEC group is trying to help communities out as much as they can.

Discussion was held on Kimball becoming a Leadership Certified Community. Ortiz said PADD would help coordinate this but the City would still need someone to assist. Ortiz added that he needs someone to take some of the load off of him and commented that the work load will be higher profile projects.

Land feels that the City will not get a qualified individual if it is a temporary position. Ortiz indicated that he has received information from an applicant that does have the skillset and does know that the position is temporary.

Discussion was held on grant writing.

Abramson indicated that the City is going to have to pay a pretty attractive rate and commented on 30 hours a week compared to full time with benefits. It may be easier to hire a full time person and split it between the departments. The number one thing on this person's list needs to be public relations. Discussion was held on the salary and Wynne commented on full time at \$45,000 a year plus benefits. Land agreed with Warner that it is a two person job. Wynne said that nothing is happening with economic development and the City is ready to get going with something. Prunty said if there are two people in this position that would be \$100,000 a year. Walker said that someone is needed to help get things caught up. Wynne said nothing speaks louder than the perception of being efficient and well-organized.

Ortiz will set a time next week for the Chair and Vice-Chair and himself to get together and review the applications and Wynne commented on having Warner create the job description. Economic Development Committee members would be willing to fund one-third to one-half of the position for a six month trial period. After discussion, Abramson said he would rather the position be full time and Enevoldsen likes the full time and six months' probation aspect.

There being no further discussion, Warner moved and Morrison seconded to open the Special Projects Coordinator position as full time with a six month probationary period. On roll call vote, the following votes were recorded. Aye: Wynne, Enevoldsen, Abramson, Land, Walker, Schnell, Shields, Warner and Morrison. Nay: None. Absent: Fuss. Motion carried.

There being no further business, Warner moved and Enevoldsen seconded the meeting be adjourned at 8:26 a.m. On roll call vote, the following votes were recorded. Aye: Wynne, Enevoldsen, Abramson, Land, Walker, Schnell, Shields, Warner and Morrison. Nay: None. Absent: Fuss. Motion carried.

Keith B. Prunty, Mayor

Rosemarie Russell, City Clerk

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK