

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the City Council of the City of Lava Hot Springs, Idaho held Thursday, January 6, 2011 at 5:30 p.m., Lava City Hall, 115 West Elm Street, Lava Hot Springs, Idaho.

Present: Marshall Burgin, Mayor  
Rita Anderson, Councilperson  
Phil Beeson, Councilperson  
Newt Lowe, Councilperson  
Cathy Sher, Councilperson  
Canda Dimick, City Clerk

Guests: Gail Palen, Vicky Lyon, Scott Pearhill and Mike Vice

The mayor called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

**1% Tourism Enhancement Proposals (Each proposal will be considered separately and each presenter will be given three minutes to introduce their project.)**

**A) Lava Chamber of Commerce Marketing Project – Scott Pearhill, Project Presenter and Chamber Representative.**

Scott Pearhill presented the Lava Chamber of Commerce Marketing Project proposal. He stated that this is a basic marketing project for the Chamber so that the Chamber can better know who the customers are that come to Lava and to better know what to do to attract them here. As a side bar element, they have offered to create for the chamber a logo and slogan that the chamber could use in mailings and promotions in newspapers, etc. The chamber does not have to be committed to use the logo and slogan.

The marketing companies that the Chamber Committee has talked to have told them that they cannot begin to market until they do the grunt research first. The company which the committee has selected (Fourth Gear) is reputable. Mr. Pearhill stated that he called the three references which all gave glowing opinions and that this is a very basic marketing project. The proposal is just Phase I of the marketing plan.

Fourth Gear has been operating in the Salt Lake Area for 14 years and seems to be experienced in what Lava needs. The consultant is familiar with Lava and vacations in Lava frequently. Councilperson Sher asked if the firm had done any projects similar to Lava's project. Mr. Pearhill reported that the firm has done a similar project for Kaysville, Utah to recruit and retain employment opportunities. The references were impressed and expressed that Fourth Gear went over and above the contract requirements. Councilperson Anderson asked if any Idaho firms were considered. Mr. Pearhill explained the committee had talked to one firm from Pocatello. The focus was to get an unbiased lodging view. The committee felt that if they can get "heads in beds", they also eat at the restaurants, shop in the stores, go to the hot pools, etc. They choose the firm because the majority of Lava's existing customers are from the Wasatch front, so they were interested in a firm from that area.

The Chamber Committee members were Todd and Tyler Victor, Tiffany Unsworth, George Katsilometes, Evelee Hill, and Scott Pearhill. The project will benefit everyone and information will be available for others to use. The focus is to increase business in the off seasons.

Attendees at the focus group which was held in November, 2010 organized by at Evelee Hill was questioned. Mr. Pearhill reported that the focus group in November was Evelee Hill's personal effort with her own customers. Brett Gee attended the focus group personally not as a representative of Fourth Gear and that all firms that were interviewed had equal access and right to make proposals.

Councilperson Sher stated that she could see some good potential in the proposal but expressed concern that the committee is mainly lodgers; she stated that she felt that there needed to be a broader focus than lodging. Mr. Pearhill stated that the committee is mainly lodgers because they have the interest and need. They have chosen the firm and the research will be done on a broader scope. The consultants will conduct all surveys.

Mr. Pearhill explained that branding is a process to express ourselves and market Lava Hot Springs. The chamber doesn't have a slogan or a marketing plan. Branding would not be a municipal branding. Mr. Pearhill explained that the community could hire a firm to design a slogan, logo and advertizing, but the benefit of having the marketing study done is that everyone would know what type of marketing would attract more business.

Gail Palen stated she supports the proposal; she said that she looks at it as community development. We need to get rid of the valley and peak seasons. Councilperson Sher stated that she likes the community development aspect of the proposal but she is concerned that it is not mentioned in the proposal. There is a very small group being surveyed which all comes through the lodging. She said that as she had looked at Fourth Gear's logo and website and that she did not feel that they have the experience of marketing a destination resort town. She would like the concept to be broader; some may want to focus on bringing families to Lava; however we do have two (2) bars in town which should not be excluded. She also feels the consultant needs to be experienced in tourism development communities and winter recreation. She would prefer a consultant from Idaho.

Vicky Lyon stated that if the council could give some kind of commitment as to their support of the concept even if the council would like other firms considered, it would help the committee move forward. Councilperson Anderson stated that the committee had spent a lot of time on the proposal; however she feels that there needs to be a lot of steps taken and changes made before thousands of dollars are spent on marketing to bring more people to town and they leave with a bad experience. She said that there has been a problem with cleanliness and some other issues in Lava. She said that word of mouth is the best advertizing. Mr.

Pearhill reported that things need to start somewhere and Lava needs to take steps to increase winter recreation. Increase in off season visitors will bring more tax dollars, money for businesses to put toward repairs, street cleanliness, etc.

Councilperson Sher suggested committing \$4,000 toward step 1 and 2 of the project and accept the \$1,000 donation ~~to hire~~ contingent on hiring a firm that is experienced in winter recreation resort destination areas, preferably from Idaho.

Mike Vice stated that he was representing the Greater Lava Hot Springs Prosperity Foundation formerly Horizon's. Mike reported that the 2010 census shows the poverty level in Lava Hot Springs 13.4% which is an improvement over the 2000 census. The west is expanding; Idaho is the 4<sup>th</sup> fastest growing state in the United States. The Greater Lava Hot Springs Prosperity Foundation is in support of the marketing proposal. He suggested that the firm who is selected for the proposal pull information that has already been compiled from other community groups such as, comprehensive plan, Prosperity Foundation (Horizon), etc.

A motion was made by Councilperson Sher to reserve \$4,000 from the 1% fund, contingent upon other consultants and funding partnerships. The motion died for lack of a second. The council recommended that the committee revamp the proposal and bring it back with a different perspective.

**B) Lava Chamber of Commerce Holiday Enhancement Project – Gail Palen, Project Presenter and Chamber Representative.**

Gail Palen, representing the Chambers Holiday Decoration Committee, introduced the project concept. The purpose is to build off season visitors. The proposal is to put up solar white light strands with garland on the decorative light posts. The white lights could be left up for 3 months. The committee would like to dress up the community to show that the city does care and celebrate the holidays. They would like to purchase the solar lights after they go on sale at the end of the season.

Concerns on the solar system were expressed due to no sun light on areas of Main Street and past experiences with vandalism. Councilperson Beeson questioned if the brackets come with the solar lights and will they fit the type of street lights the city has or a different style of panel connection. It was stated that the solar panels are on picks that go into the ground, therefore, brackets would need to be designed to hold the solar panels at the top of the posts.

Ms. Palen suggested that different styles of garland could be used through the other season such as leaves for the Oktoberfest, etc. Councilperson Sher suggested funding a portion to see if the solar strands would work. Councilperson Anderson suggested that the committee do more research on the kits. Councilperson Beeson stated that the city will assist in the installation but a committee needs to be formed to help put up the decorations. Storage concerns

were discussed. The chamber has a storage unit which could possibly be used to store the decoration.

The proposal was tabled for further research. The council agreed that they would support the project if the committee can get a one strand to experience with to see if they work. Gail will contact the distributor to see if they will send out a strand to try.

**M.R.&E., Contract Renewal, County Franchise Research & Bill.**

The city clerk reported that the county does not have a franchise agreement with M.R.&E. The county franchise agreement is with P.S.I., and there is a verbal agreement between P.S.I. and M.R.&E. on boundaries. The franchise agreement does not impact incorporated areas. The city's contract is up for renewal in April, 2011.

Councilperson Beeson suggested that the city go out for competitive bids. The city clerk suggested that the bid proposal include the contractor doing the billing for the commercial accounts. She explained that the commercial accounts take a considerable amount of administrative time. The storage of the extra cans is also a burden. The city clerk was instructed to write up specification options for the bid proposal which the council will review at the next regular council meeting.

**Motion to adjourn into executive session to meet with city staff, city attorney and prosecuting attorney regarding pending litigation matters as provided by Idaho Code 67-2345 (1)(f).**

City Clerk reported that even though the City Attorney was ill that he had emailed an opinion to her that she would like to discuss with council. A motion was made by Councilperson Anderson adjourning into executive session to discuss information regarding pending litigation matters as provided by Idaho Code 67-2345 (1)(f). The motion was seconded by Councilperson Sher. Lowe – aye, Sher – aye, Anderson – aye, Beeson – aye, unanimous.

**Motion to reconvene.**

A motion was made by Councilperson Anderson to reconvene back into regular session. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Beeson. All voted aye, unanimous.

**Motion to adjourn.**

A motion was made by Councilperson Lowe to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Beeson. All voted aye, unanimous. The meeting adjourned at 7:08 p.m.

---

Trish Avery, Transcriber

---

Marshall N. Burgin, Mayor

---

Canda L. Dimick, City Clerk (proof read)

Approved January 13, 2011