

MINUTES
SPRINGERVILLE – EAGAR JOINT COUNCIL MEETING
January 11, 2007
6:00 P.M.

SPRINGERVILLE COUNCIL PRESENT Kay Dyson, Mayor
Pete Hunt
Mary Nedrow
Phelps Wilkins

SPRINGERVILLE COUNCIL ABSENT: Mark Baca

EAGAR COUNCIL PRESENT: Kim Holaway
Sue Chacon
James Nelson Jr.
Sue Chacon
Byron Smith, Jr.

EAGAR COUNCIL ABSENT: Sandra Burk
Gloria Eagar

SPRINGERVILLE STAFF PRESENT Scott Garms, Town Manager
Val Cordova, Town Clerk
Tom Malone, Public Works Director
Max Sadler, Fire Chief
Cal Smith, Assistant Fire Chief

EAGAR STAFF PRESENT Bill Greenwood, Town Manager
Howard Carlson, Fire Chief
Frank Adams, Assistant Fire Chief

PUBLIC PRESENT: Kevin Burk, Sue Sitko with the Nature Conservancy,
Judy Hayes WMI and Sam Adams.

Mayor Kay Dyson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed those present. Mayor Dyson led the Pledge of Allegiance and read a poem by Albert Rios.

She announced that our town managers have provided a memo on water issues from the last meeting and encouraged everyone to read it.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

ITEM #1 Fire District Formation: Discussion and action regarding the possibility of the formation of a fire district in the Round Valley area.

Facilitating the joint council meeting was Mike Hauser of Apache County Cooperative Extension who reminded everyone that his job is to keep everyone on task, focus on the issue and stay on time. He then turned the meeting over to Eagar Fire Chief Howard Carlson.

Mr. Carlson began his power point presentation regarding the possible formation of a fire district in the Round Valley area. He gave handouts on tax rates for assessed valuation of a home if a fire district was created. Both he and Max Sadler Springerville Fire Chief were surprised at the small amount after running the figures.

He said this would have to go to the public to approve a property tax, but it would still take about four years to get it to the voters for approval. Boundaries would have to be established. When boundaries are too far out ratings go down. Additional stations and equipment will be needed to provide the same fire protection to everyone.

Chief Carlson stated that in his opinion a municipal fire department is more cost effective than a fire district because they are under the umbrella of the towns. Volunteers are getting harder to find and keep. It's going to require more full time people. They train volunteers and lose them to the bigger cities where they find full time positions.

He also noted that as a fire district they will not be able to do city projects or help when city departments need help. Fire districts are a separate government entities with boards. He did not know if ISO ratings would go up or down. He suggested that Town's also having the capability of proposing a property tax for operations of emergency services.

Mayor Dyson disagreed and stated that they pay an administrator to manage the district operations not the board members. She also noted that in talking with the League of Cities, she was told that if the goal of having a fire district is better facilities then there are other ways than taxing. Such as (GADA) the Greater Arizona Development Authority. This is where towns can commit money from their Sales tax and State Shared revenues and go out to bond with GADA.

Councilor Ordonez asked what issues they were trying to address, and where do they start to get them resolved. He didn't feel that the problems had been identified clearly so that both fire chiefs could help fix them.

Mayor Dyson said she agreed, and asked what the critical need is? Is it personnel, or facilities?

Mr. Hauser explained that his observation was that some time ago when they decided to have joint meetings, this was one of the topics listed. There is not necessarily a need or an issue that is driving this but fact finding.

Mayor Dyson said this was the priority voted on at the last meeting. The idea was that if the two departments somehow joined together would it make a difference. The issues were; cost savings, provide more reliable man power, construction of facilities. She said she had talked to the League of Cities and Towns about this issue and was told that by entering into an IGA to build a structure together they wouldn't have to tax the people. She reiterated there are other options to meet those goals.

In summary, Chief Carlson reported that the income projections don't support forming a fire district and the costs would be higher to citizens.

Councilman Hunt stated that they should consider the five hundred thousand plus they would save the communities for infrastructure by forming a district.

Chief Sadler said that some of the things it takes to improve the ISO rating would fall on the town, such as improving infrastructure, delivery lines, water systems, response records, apparatus, training records.

Councilman Nelson felt that forming a fire district wouldn't benefit anyone but suggested both chiefs sit together and find better ways to cooperate and what direction they want to go.

Captain Cal Smith suggested that there might be a little misconception that by combining the two departments there would be a better department. He reiterated that the departments are operated by volunteers. There's no guarantee that there would be any better response if they were combined.

Councilman Ordonez agreed that creating a fire district wouldn't be the best solution but thought it would be helpful for the two departments to put together a presentation on combining the two departments.

Councilor Holaway stated she would like to see information on the ISO ratings including the current ISO rating, the deficits and how would combining the two departments or working more closely together increase the ISO rating in a presentation.

Mayor Dyson thought that maybe they could address these questions.

1. What's the best way to finance facilities other than the one she reported
2. How are you going to get more volunteers
3. Better service without duplication and the ISO rating.

Councilor Hunt said that he is familiar with ISO ratings. ISO ratings are significant for insurance rates but their savings are not significant. ISO ratings are not going to save us enough to finance a building.

In summary Mr. Hauser stated that the original issue was a discussion on the possible formation of a fire district versus staying two municipal fire departments. The presentation answered the pros and cons for all council members. Then discussion evolved into possible ways the two departments could working together more and are there ways to work together more to combine services.

He asked if there was enough interest or need to ask for a follow up report for the next joint council meeting.

After listening to the comments, Mr. Hauser suggested that the bigger issue would be to look at all of the agencies and how they work together, and ultimately how the two fire departments could work together.

Mayor Dyson reiterated that she wants to know how we're going to recruit more volunteers; both need facilities; and what's the best way to finance them. Is there a synergy in doing something together where we can save some money?

Mr. Hauser suggested that they leave the agenda to the two managers to decide how they are going to move forward and what additional information they will need to have.

ITEM # 2 OPEN SPACE: Discussion and action regarding open space issues.

Bill Greenwood presented in the packets a copy of the town of Eagar General Plan as it pertains to open spaces. After public hearings they have adopted a good written plan protecting them.

Ms. Sue Sitko with the White Mountains manager for the Nature Conservancy gave a presentation on her goal to help facilitate communities like ours to realize our conservation goals, protect open spaces and provide the resources and information.

She relayed some of the experiences they have had in Pinetop-Lakeside with regard to open spaces. She said they formed an Open Space Committee, made up of stake holders, representatives of different organizations. She sits on the committee as a representative of the Nature Conservancy and the Board of

the White Mountain Land Trust. She felt that the White Mountain Land Trust can be a better tool for the towns than the Nature Conservancy.

The White Mountain Land Trust is a local non-profit organization that represents various interests throughout Pinetop-Lakeside. They want to eventually encompass various aspects of conservation communities of the White Mountains. As a non-profit organization they can work with towns such as Springerville and Eagar to hold conservations easements, acquire conservation easements. They can be the non-profit entity for the towns to raise funds. They are also a member of the Open Space committee. This committee is charged with figuring out open space issues, and protecting these areas. Property values increase for homes and developments located around open space areas. She encouraged communication with Pinetop-Lakeside about their open spaces or to attend the White Mountain Land Trust meeting.

Ms. Sitko advised the councils that they have to sell the vision of open spaces, lay the ground work, get facts, and information, what are easements, how are they processed, what are the disadvantages, and advantages.

She suggested creating an open space task force with one person from each community who would work together researching all the options, learn about easements. The Forest Service has various access in conservation easements, dollars and incentive programs. The Land Trust Alliance organization tries to coordinate all the land trusts scattered around the country. She distributed pamphlets giving a basic overview on conservation easements. She said she didn't want to go into a detailed explanation of a conservation easement or restriction of development rights tonight but offered to come back to another meeting to go into more detail. She did explain that conservation easements would benefit private property land owners, which is the restriction of development rights

Councilman Hunt asked if zoning could be used to regulate areas, possibly require a percentage as open space.

She said that it was possible but it would have to go through a rezoning process to change that zoning again.

Ms. Sitko advised the councils to begin talking to property owners before they sell their land to developers if they do not want to lose the green belt area.

Mayor Dyson suggested meeting with all the realtors to share the vision after a plan has been approved by both councils.

ITEM #3 JOINT COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA ITEMS.

Mr. Hauser advised the councils they need to come up with agenda items they would like to see at the next meeting. The councilors were asked that they go around the table and each give their top two from the list.

- 1) Economic development/tourism
- 2) Big box ordinance
- 3) Parks & recreation
- 4) Water conservation, well development and formation of a water district
- 5) Mutual cooperation and sharing of resources/services
- 6) Sharing of water and sewer upgrades
- 7) RFP for consolidation of the two towns

Councilors Vote:

Sue Chacon

5 & 2

Phelps Wilkins	5 & 2
Kim Holaway	5 & 7
Kay Dyson	1 & 6
Byron Smith Jr.	1 & 3
Pete Hunt	5 & 7
James Nelson	1 & 5
Mary Nedrow	3 & 5
Vicente Ordonez	5 & 7

Mayor Dyson asked he would bring back updates under old business. She would like to see open spaces brought back.

Mr. Garms advised them that he would, but cautioned that some of the items may impact the new business.

Mayor Dyson said she would like to see transportation as a future agenda item.
Councilor Chacon stated that she would like to see veterinary services, incentives to bring services here.
Councilor Holaway asked about bringing back the fire departments as a separate topic or mutual sharing of resources.

Mr. Garms suggested looking at the broader view to see if there are any areas where we can work together.

April 19th at 6:00 p.m. was the suggested date that they next meet.

Councilman Wilkins suggested that big box issues also be considered on a future agenda and distributed CD's on what happens to small towns when they come in.

ITEM #3 Adjournments:

Pete Hunt/Kim Holaway motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

Kay Dyson, Mayor

ATTEST:

Town Clerk

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Springerville and Eagar Town Councils in special session on Thursday September 21, 2006. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and a quorum was present.

Dated this 18th day of October 2006

Town Clerk