

**COUNCIL WORKSESSION, MONDAY, JULY 20, 2015 AT 5:30 P.M.
CITY HALL 2nd FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM**

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 P.M. by Council President Duval with the following members present: Mayor Vern Powers, Odom, Niemeyer, Goebel, Krings, Hoops, Skutnik. Absent: Harrington

Others present: Joe Patterson (City Administrator), Pete Kortum (Police Chief), David Ptak (City Attorney), Kimberly Jacobitz (City Clerk), Jeff Hassenstab (Park & Recreation Director), Kent Gilbert (Fire Chief), Rebecca Matticks (Museum Director), and Amy Hafer (Library Director).

Moved by Skutnik, seconded by Niemeyer that the Worksession Agenda be adopted. The motion carried.

Council President Duval stated that the Open Meetings Act is posted on the wall of the 2nd Floor Conference room and that prior to this meeting a notice was posted on the bulletin board at the City Building, that each Councilmember and Mayor received a copy of the proposed agenda and that an agenda for such meeting, kept continuously current, is available for public inspection and that said meeting is held in open session. The motion carried.

Discussion of Fireworks

Council President Duval stated that she had requested the discussion on fireworks. She had received multiple complaints during the most recent time period for selling fireworks in the City of Hastings.

The City Council members reviewed the dates that fireworks were permitted to be sold in the City of Hastings compared to other cities in the state. They discussed the possibility of shortening the time period allowed.

The number and types of organizations/businesses selling fireworks were also discussed.

Joe Patterson stated that the amount of sales tax from the firework stands is minimal. There were 15 permits for firework stands issued in 2015. The City of Hastings charges a fee of \$300 per permit.

Fire Chief Kent Gilbert informed the group that the Fire Department did not transport any injuries caused by fireworks this year.

The Council decided that there was no interest in changing the length of time allowed for selling fireworks in Hastings at this time.

Discussion of Restaurant Tax Ordinance

Joe Patterson stated that this discussion was put on the agenda per request from Councilmember Chuck Niemeyer, who wanted additional conversation and feedback from the community.

The Council discussed what the City of Hastings could potentially do with the restaurant tax collected. They expressed concerns that the money should be put towards specific projects, tourism and debt reduction, not maintenance and operation items. Joe Patterson gave a few areas where the funds would be beneficial: Smith Complex, AquaCourt, or the Museum's debt reduction.

Kearney and Grand Island already have a restaurant tax in place. Grand Island's restaurant tax is tied to payment of the Heartland Events Center at State Fair Park.

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The difference between 1% or 1.5% tax on both food and drink is a comparison of \$400,000 or \$600,000. Councilmember Krings asked what would happen if the City collected taxes over the State's \$700,000 threshold? Dave Ptak made the point that the State Statute is unclear on how that situation would be handled. Joe Patterson stated that the City could adjust the percentage, if we collected more than our projections.

A Sunset Clause for the tax was also discussed.

Dave Ptak will prepare a draft ordinance and send it to City Council members. Joe Patterson will construct a list of projects for the City Council to review.

Moved by Niemeyer, seconded by Skutnik that the Mayor and Council go into closed session at 6:05 PM for the discussion of negotiations and litigation. The motion carried.

Moved by Krings, seconded by Skutnik that the Mayor and Council resume open session at 6:42 P.M. The motion carried.

Moved by Krings, seconded by Goebel there being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting be adjourned at 6:42 P.M. The motion carried.