

MINUTES

COUNCIL RETREAT SESSION TWO FEBRUARY 24, 2003 4:00 PM

Present: Mayor and Full Council

Also present: Pat McGarvey, Ann Hokanson, David Hoversten, Dan Wilson, Dennis Maschka, Paul Philipp, Jon Erichson, Jerry McCarthy, Austin Daily Herald.

Mr. Dankert presented his list of four goals for 2003 plus four other specific goals, all of which the council was okay with.

Jerry McCarthy presented some major projects of Austin Utilities for 2003 including regulatory issues.

Dennis Maschka presented his February 24 report with projects and the impact of 10, 20 and 30% budget cuts in his department. Lynn Koch raised the need to increase arena user fee rates and to achieve additional hours of ice rental.

Paul Philip presented the need for the communications system upgrades with Mower County. Cost to city expected to be \$500,000 to \$600,000. May need to explore the pros and cons of joining with Steele and Rice Counties in a regional dispatch center.

Mr. Dankert explained how these costs will need to be covered from the police/fire PERA refund money.

Chief Philip explained that narcotics is a big problem in Austin. As the City Emergency Management Director, the terror threat notices are taking time.

The Police Department officers may go to a ten-hour day. He also raised concern about court funding and levels of case backlog, as well as jail space.

Dan Wilson agreed with the \$53,000 cut to the Fire Department to help balance the city budget after LGA reductions. Fire Department pays a \$65,000 annual hydrant rental to Austin Utilities. Six new part-time fire fighters to start training soon. City gets \$93,000 each year from the two townships for fire protection.

The City Administrator presented his list of goals which will need to be revisited once the new administrator is on board.

The Administrator and Finance Director then handed out and reviewed a proposed 2003 – '04 budget reduction plan dated 2/24/03. Council suggested staff meet and bring back a later plan with different options for cuts, new revenues at a future session.

Patrick McGarvey
City Administrator