

**MINUTES OF A COUNCIL WORK SESSION
BLANDING CITY COUNCIL HELD ON
JUNE 16, 2020
AT 6:00 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

Present:

City Mayor:

Joe B. Lyman

City Councilmembers:

Kd Perkins

Cheryl Bowers

Logan Monson

Logan Shumway

Robert Turk

City Manager:

Jeremy Redd

Finance Director:

Kim Palmer

Economic Development Specialist:

Pratt Redd

Others: Lynne Shumway

I. Visitor Center Overview - Jeremy Redd

Mr. Redd gave a brief overview of the Visitor Center and its inception:

- The Center was opened 18 years ago.
- In the beginning the Center established a 3-point mission statement that has been adhered to continuously over the last 18 years.
- CNHA has provided merchandise to be sold since the beginning. Items that are tied to the community and local area have been placed in the center.

II. Financial Review/COVID Impact - Kim Palmer

The following financial information was shared and discussed:

- The Center is funded by TRT taxes and room taxes. The Center generates revenues from sales, CNHA sales and donations.
- The Center is also funded using additional general fund dollars.
- The average amount supplemented by additional funds has been \$22,000. This is the average over the past four years. For the 2021 budget year, the operation of the Visitor Center will require an additional cost to the City of \$56,000. This is mostly due to the reduction in room tax because of the COVID pandemic and the County withholding the City's portion of the County's TRT tax funds.

III. Visitor Center Operating Agreement - Jeremy Redd

Mr. Redd told Council the agreement with CNHA would expire in mid-July. He asked Council to determine whether they wanted to move forward with the agreement or move in another direction with the Center.

Lynne Shumway, Visitor Center Manager added the following information about CNHA:

- CNHA strives to promote the area with the items they provide to the Center.
- CNHA does not charge the City, but pays the City a portion of what is sold.

- CNHA does promote activities for children at local state and national parks.

Councilmember Perkins stated that CNHA has a board that approves all items that are sold through their 501(c)(3) organization. She further stated that what is sold in the center is a reflection on the community.

Council discussed several options for the future of the Visitor Center including:

- Continuing the status quo.
- Closing the museum portion.
- Not offering any merchandise, offering merchandise from local businesses, continuing with CNHA, putting out an RFP for the merchandise to be sold.
- Leasing the facility to an outside entity to operate.
- Taking an entirely different direction with the building.

In conclusion, Council determined that there was a need for providing visitor information and requested further discussion on the Center be held over the next few months in Council meetings. City staff was asked to provide additional financial information as Council further discussed the future of the Center.

Councilmember Bowers motioned to adjourn the meeting and Councilmember Turk seconded it. Mayor Lyman repeated the motion and asked for discussion. Hearing none, he called for a vote. Voting was as follows:

Those voting AYE

Councilmember Perkins
Councilmember Bowers
Council member Monson
Councilmember Turk
Councilmember Shumway

Those voting NAY

None

Work Session ended at 7:32 p.m.

By: _____
Kim Palmer, Deputy Recorder