

# **MINUTES OF THE STUDY SESSION/RETREAT OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF CHINO VALLEY**

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2013  
6:00 P.M.**

The Town Council of the Town of Chino Valley, Arizona, met for a Study Session/Retreat in the Chino Valley Area Chamber of Commerce Boardroom, located at 175 E. Road 2 South, Chino Valley, Arizona, on Tuesday, November 5, 2013.

Present: Mayor Chris Marley; Vice-Mayor Darryl Croft; Councilmember Mike Best; Councilmember Linda Hatch; Councilmember Pat McKee; Councilmember Lon Turner; Councilmember Don Wojcik

Staff Present: Town Manager Robert Smith; Town Attorney Phyllis Smiley

Attendees: Facilitator Lance Decker

## **1) CALL TO ORDER; ROLL CALL**

Mayor Marley called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

## **2) Welcome and Opening Comments.**

Lance Decker led discussions on various related topics within each agenda item.

### Workshop Goals and Objectives

- Goals: Develop rules for how the group will work together and issues to focus on to take the Town where it needs to be.
- Objectives: Negotiate an understanding of, and agreement on, policy-maker roles and responsibilities and improve Council's ability to work effectively as a team, achieving beneficial goals for the community.

Mr. Decker reviewed the session's agenda, his rules of engagement for the meeting, storyboarding techniques to help participants remember what was discussed, and the five-step issue development model that assures all participants a part in the discussions.

### Possible Projects Important to the Town's Future

- Sewer: expansion in general, to some or all properties, and along SR 89.
- Water.
- Roads and Streets: complete project, Road 4 South extension.
- Economic Development: efforts and programs; business growth; industrial and/or

- recreational development at Old Home Manor; jobs.
- Development Services: General Plan; clean up the Unified Development Ordinance; organize medical marijuana growers.
- Property tax.
- Youth recreation and programs.
- Educational system improvement.
- Increased communication between Council and staff.

### 3) Summary of Council Interviews.

#### Common Themes from Interviews

- *Planning for the long term future:* medical marijuana; issues to focus on; long term policies; water.
- *Economic development:* property tax; community vision; light industry and commercial business; county, state, and national challenges; supporting positive activities; legal issues.
- *Problems from the past:* rumors; mistakes; uncompleted projects; perception of elected officials by community.
- *Leadership and opportunities:* using available talent and all contributing; meeting controls; divided votes; Open Meeting Law; communication, 'surprises' incomplete information; transparency; behavior; distractions; Council's/staff's role.
- *Interpersonal conflicts:* interpersonal relations; Open Meeting Law; threats from citizens; truthfulness; unclear information.
- *Management and staff:* truthfulness; communication; staffing; transparency; respect and trust.
- *Finance and fiscal issues:* past legal issues; finding solutions; assisting citizens within legal bounds; sewer system expansion; property tax; economic downturn; long term debt; infrastructure; school's bond issue.

#### Degrees of Conflict

- Conflicts over decisions processes, finance and budget, and personal beliefs/philosophical disagreements were generally easy to address.
- Conflicts over trust and extreme dislike/hatred were harder to resolve.
- Officials needed to focus on things they could change, not those they could not.
- Officials needed to find a balance between getting things done and the necessary bureaucracy, by using, for example, in-house labor for projects, process autopsies, and study sessions to address Council's questions.
- A process autopsy was a quality improvement process in which participants assessed what was done right, what was not, and what to do differently in the future.

#### Topics to Address

- Building trust, honesty, truthfulness, civility, individual attitude, and accountability.
- Open communication with manager and staff and communication protocols.
- Management / magistrate relations.
- Forward vs. backward view.
- Working together for positive change.

4) The Council-Manager form of local government.

Summary

- Mayors and councils make policy, while the manager and staff implement such policy.
- Councils create not just goals, but a vision, and through the budget process, the objectives and revenues to accomplish them. Once Council develops the vision, they delineate actual deliverables clearly and understandably.
- Managers execute, enforce, apply, and achieve said visions and goals; they develop a budget able to deliver the projects and programs.
- There were many 'grey areas' that challenged elected officials.

Examples of Such Challenges

- Misconstrued communications.
- Misunderstandings and mis-expectations breaking down council's vision.
- Advocating on behalf of citizens without using the official's influence to benefit a certain group of citizens.
- Speaking as private citizens.
- Functioning within the law, while citizens' perceptions are otherwise.
- Providing information to citizens without advocating something.
- Unresolved community misperceptions.
- Council members being citizens and homeowners, but under public scrutiny.
- True conflicts of interest vs. the appearance of such.
- Staff vs. Council expectations regarding procedures.
- Council members not having enough time, information, or understanding to make informed decisions.
- Staff setting policy and asking for Council's approval.

Setting Policy

- If councils do not set policy, staff will fill the vacuum based on the Town's needs. If staff proposes policy and councils decline to discuss it, nothing gets done. If councils do not define deliverables, they have difficulty administering the manager's performance evaluation.
- Conversely, councils need appropriate information from staff to make such policy and it must not appear staff is asking for a rubber stamp.

Mayor Marley recessed the meeting at 11:05 a.m. and reconvened it at 11:17 a.m.

5) Review of the roles of Manager, Mayor and Council members in Chino Valley.

Council Roles

- Direct manager and/or attorney to negotiate on legal matters.
- Represent the Town, but individual members do not speak for the whole Council, unless asked to.
- Policy-making, not fault-finding; address details after determining policy.
- Meet with manager upon request.
- Take ownership of the subcommittee chaired.

- Provide vision for the Town, address the big picture, solve problems.
- Make inquiries of staff and work with staff to get things done, and contact manager regarding direction to or complaints about staff.

#### Manager Roles

- Negotiate contracts as assigned.
- Take direction from council, and run his business, which is staff.
- Communicate to council.
- Delegate to (sub)committees.
- Maintain separation between management and magistrate.

#### Pitfalls

- Confusion.
- Lack of leadership.
- Being too busy with interpersonal issues.
- Lack of team dynamic.
- Distractions getting in the way.
- Faulty communication and unreal expectations.
- Lack of established boundaries.
- Communications without violating the Open Meeting Law.

#### Procedures to Improve Relations

- Staff sends information to all councilmembers when requested by one or some.
- Councilmember requests requiring two hours or more of staff labor should go through whole Council; otherwise, ask the manager directly.
- Mayor summarizes Council's direction to staff at the end of discussions.
- Staff contacts Council when parameters change on a topic after meeting discussion.
- Subcommittee chairs to receive training.
- Update Town Code related to duties and responsibilities of council, town manager, and town clerk using League materials.
- Council sets quantifiable goals for manager.

#### 6) Lunch: "Racing under the yellow flag".

Mr. Decker related that due to the time, he would not read the article, "Racing Under the Yellow Flag," but it was in the packet and participants could read it later.

Mayor Marley recessed the meeting at 12:36 p.m. and reconvened it at 1:40 p.m.

#### 7) Code of Teamwork and Cooperation.

##### Code of Commitment, Teamwork and Cooperation

##### Commitments

#1 - Move forward with partners, without regard to past offences, for the good of the city and its future.

#2 - Communicate frequently, with highest quality to ensure all partners have the same

information.

#3 - Ask and give information to partners; inform them of a change of mind; and maintain Open Meeting Law.

#4 - Consider collateral effect on Council, staff, and citizens before speaking or acting on a town topic that involves the town.

#### Possible Solutions for Challenges Related to #2 and #3

- Schedule study sessions to communicate and discuss current.
- Reserve a portion of a regular meeting to communicate and discuss current issues.
- Do not restrict meeting times.
- Postpone items for which Council had not reached consensus, without putting them off too long.

Councilmember Best left the meeting at 1:48 p.m.

#### Expectations

#1 - Keep the channels of communication open. Don't allow concerns, rumors, innuendo or gossip to fester. Resolve concerns as soon as possible.

#2 - Keep public comments focused on issues, not people.

#3 - Preserve your relationships with kindness and respect; direct persons making unflattering comments about partners to the partner.

#4 - Keep partners informed about things that affect them; avoid surprises.

#5 - Take responsibility to actively correct misquotes by the press or individuals.

#6 - Keep relationships positive; quickly resolve differences.

#7 - Publicly celebrate success; help each other achieve.

#8 - Respect each other's personal and physical space.

#### Expectations of Administration / Staff

#1 - Return telephone calls and contacts from the public and elected officials as soon as possible, but under all circumstances within 24 hours; agree upon delivery times.

#2 - Emergencies noted by elected officials need staff's immediate attention.

#3 - Meet agreed deadlines for deliverables.

#### Commitments to Administration / Staff

#1 - Deal with management level staff on constituent services, not line staff.

#2 - Be clear and reasonable on expectations for delivery times and deliverables.

#3 - Give issues the appropriate priority; recognize that there are few true emergencies.

#4 - Treat the staff as professionals and with respect; follow the "Golden Rule."

It was up to each councilmember to abide by this Code, since there was no mechanism to keep them accountable. If anyone violated the Code, it was up to the others to "call that person out."

8) Improving performance as policy makers.

## Processes and Projects to Help Improve Performance

### Council and Staff

- Consider actions, check emotions, and respond appropriately.
- Preserve each others' self-esteem.
- Avoid surprises.
- Use email only for brief information and discussion items; handle sensitive issues by phone or in person.
- Pose questions in such a way as to avoid misinterpretation.

### Council

- Everyone contribute to discussion.
- No grandstanding on issues.
- Contact other councilmembers directly regarding concerns and objections to their agenda items.
- Contact staff and/or attorney for concerns about agenda items.

### Manager

- Provide status reports during Council meetings.

### Staff

- Forward information provided to any councilmember to all councilmembers.
- Provide information in a timely manner.
- Tighten up agenda item process.

Mayor Marley recessed the meeting at 3:15 p.m. and reconvened it at 3:25 p.m.

## 9) Confirming agreements from today's discussions and planning for action.

Mr. Decker explained the process for preparing for an upcoming half-day strategic planning session, at which Council will set policy and select project priorities. Council agreed to five critical goals that must be done in the next two to five years that will form the basis for the strategic plan:

- Industrial park at Old Home Manor;
- Infrastructure development;
- Quality of life;
- Clean up UDO;
- Smart economic development.

Once Council developed the framework for the plan, they will submit it to staff, who will develop an implementation plan for it. Staff will bring it back with their comments and recommendations. Council will then final the document and have something for which to hold the manager accountable.

### Topics Agreed Upon

- Clarity on roles.
- Enhanced communication.

- Elements for a strategic plan.
- Behaviors to be addressed, such as trust, honest communication, and positive active listening.
- Email standards.

#### Action Plan Issues to Address

- Facilitator to prepare summary of retreat and send to Manager in two weeks.
- Manager to provide electrical consumption information on solar panels to Council in two weeks.
- Clerk to clarify requirements related to meeting agendas and the agenda item process to Council in two weeks.
- Finance Director to provide procedure to Council related to direct deposit.
- Manager to direct staff to correct misspelling on Town website this week.
- Manager to meet with Economic Development Subcommittee to discuss future actions related to EDA applications.
- Manager and Economic Development Subcommittee Chair meet with subcommittee to discuss roles, responsibilities, and things to address.
- Manager/Council to clarify that Council was responsible to assign contract negotiations to staff.
- Manager/Council to place item on the next agenda regarding manager/magistrate matters.
- Mayor and Manager to keep Council discussions on policy and out of "the weeds."
- Manager to work with attorney and Mr. Decker to improve more thorough verbal communications and reinstate regular progress reports.
- Manager to schedule next retreat.
- Council to complete forms for next retreat.
- Manager to work with human resources, Vice-Mayor Croft and Mr. Decker to address personal accountability.
- Mayor to incorporate teambuilding moments in meetings.
- Facilitator to provide Council with an instrument to help them keep track of trust issues.

#### 10) Closing remarks and meeting evaluation.

##### Meeting "Autopsy"

##### Positive Outcomes

- Participants met, talked, and listened to each other.
- Participants learned a different approach to addressing their issues.
- Participants identified tactical and strategic issues.
- Participants identified actions to take at their next retreat.
- Participants addressed foundational issues and were now ready for a higher level.
- The food was good.

##### Negative Outcomes

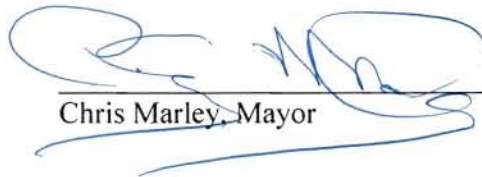
- One Councilmember had to leave early.
- The room was a little warm.

What We Would Change

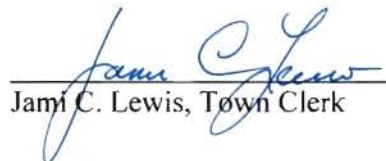
- Work on the superstructure.
- Need to apply strategies.

11) ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Marley adjourned the meeting at 4:11 p.m.

  
Chris Marley, Mayor

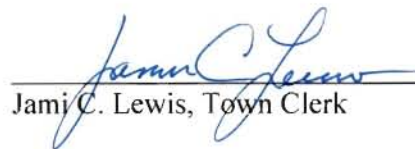
ATTEST:

  
Jami C. Lewis, Town Clerk

CERTIFICATION:

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Study Session/Retreat of the Town Council of the Town of Chino Valley, Arizona held on the 5th day of November, 2013. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this 10th day of December, 2013.

  
Jami C. Lewis, Town Clerk