

Joint Task Forces Subcommittee | Meeting 1 Minutes

The Bismarck Special Assessment Task Force and the Infrastructure Task Force Subcommittee met at 4PM on January 22, 2018 in the Bismarck Public Works Building at 601 South 26th Street. Present were: Commissioner Steve Marquardt, Commissioner Shawn Oban, Commissioner Nancy Guy, Brent Erickson (North Bismarck Resident), Joe Ibach (Special Assessment Commission), Dot Frank, (Bismarck-Mandan Homebuilders Association), Dustin Gawrylow (Manufactured Home Park Resident), Molly Herington (Bismarck-Mandan Chamber of Commerce), Sheila Hillman (City of Bismarck Finance Director), Nancy Deichert (Bismarck-Mandan Board of Realtors), Keith Hunke (City of Bismarck Administrator), Brian Ritter (Bismarck-Mandan Development Association/Bismarck-Mandan Chamber of Commerce), Mike Schmitz (BMDA), Gabe Schell (City Engineer) and Jason Tomanek (City of Bismarck Assistant City Administrator).

The members present discussed the difference between the previously-recommended City-wide street maintenance utility charge and the new utility rate fees that have been established for 2018. The difference between the two subjects relates to the determination that the monthly street utility fee could be considered a tax and a new tax is not authorized by North Dakota Century Code (NDCC). The Century Code does contain the authority and framework for a city to establish a water/sewer/storm water utility, which Bismarck has done and which includes the authority to impose taxes and fees and to establish rates necessary to support the utility.

The members present discussed developing a concept between a consortium of communities to present to the legislature in 2019 that would allow local jurisdictions to develop their own sources of revenue beyond sales tax and property tax, which are currently the only two methods allowed by state law. There was support for engaging the North Dakota League of Cities (NDLC) to help bring other interested communities together for the purpose of developing other methods of revenue generation.

Discussion was held regarding a design charrette to try and find efficiencies with construction methods relating to arterial roadways, street maintenance and utility infrastructure. The intent would be to determine what Bismarck can learn from other communities that may have other established practices that could be adapted for Bismarck's needs.

The subcommittee members considered programs available through the Bank of North Dakota (BND). It was noted that BND has a revolving loan program that would not currently be an option since no new applications are being accepted. It was also noted that the current general obligation bond rate may be better than a loan rate through BND's program but the BND rate may be better than the revenue bond rates the City currently receives.

The agreed upon next steps include engaging the NDLC to discuss developing a consortium of communities to develop recommendations for revised legislation enabling communities to craft their own sources of revenue through taxes or fees. In addition, the group agreed that it would be best to develop the estimated dollar amount necessary to fund infrastructure projects relating to maintenance, extensions of arterial roadways and new utilities over the next five years and then work backward to develop a method for funding the desired infrastructure improvements. It was also discussed consideration be given to shortening the Infrastructure Task Force's list of recommended projects to a "working list" of projects that could be completed over a five-year timespan.

The agenda having been completed, the meeting adjourned at 4:50PM.
Reported by Jason Tomanek.