

Town of Ransom Canyon  
City Council Meeting  
February 11, 2003  
Minutes

The City Council of the Town of Ransom Canyon met in open session at 7:00 P.M., Tuesday, February 11, 2003. Council members present were Mayor Robert Englund, and Councilmen Leon Whetzel, David Peterson, Dick Hulslander and Glen Robertson. Councilman Kyle Ashley was absent.

Attorney John Sims was present.

Mayor Englund led the silent meditation.

Minutes of the January meeting were approved by unanimous vote on a motion from Dick Hulslander, second from Glen Robertson.

Leon Whetzel expressed concern about the way the expense for the Vermeer Chipper had been entered into the record. He noted that this is a purchase that is covered by grant revenue that has been guaranteed by SPAG. The financial report recorded this as an unbudgeted capital expenditure and any offsetting revenue was not listed. Melissa answered that the auditor will list this as expenditure, but grant revenue will offset the purchase on our financial report. Mr. Whetzel said he would accept it as long as the auditor agreed to this accounting.

David Peterson asked if the city should be keeping an eye on a budget amendment to allow for the expected revenue shortfall in earned interest, expected to be \$20,000 or so. Mayor Englund answered that this is a good possibility that will be considered as the budget proceeds further into the budget year. Mr. Peterson moved to approve the financial report and pay the claims and demands. Dick Hulslander seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

There was one tax refund in excess of \$500 for a duplicate payment. The refund of the duplicate payment was approved on a motion from Glen Robertson, second from Dick Hulslander. All approved.

The council discussed contracting to offer a credit card service to Ransom Canyon taxpayers and water utility customers. Ms. Verett explained that a company called Official Payments.com is now contracting with the Lubbock County Appraisal District, but had indicated that they would not contract with Ransom Canyon due to low volume. Mr. Arthur Skopik had referred Ransom Canyon to another on-line banking company, but Ms. Verett looked at the web site and did not think the company projected a mature banking attitude that would be needed in this circumstance, there were no references supplied, and so she did not believe this would be a good investment of time or money.

Another alternative was a company called GDS, Governmental Data Services, Incorporated. Their handling charge would be 3.85% minimum. With this company there would be no expense to Ransom Canyon, but the handling charge lessened the benefit to be gained.

The last option was a merchant account through Citizens Bank. The contract would cost Ransom Canyon a \$50 set up charge, and \$300 to \$500 per year in monthly fees.

Ms Verett explained that there was no city advantage to be gained by taking card payments. The city has over a 100% tax collection rate, and the city has almost as high collection rate for the water-sewer utility accounts. The only reason to enter this enterprise would be to offer a service to customers.

The council discussed this, and Mr. Whetzel commented that at 3.85 % service charge on a normal tax payment of \$1,000 or more would negate the frequent flyer benefit that might be gained through use of the card. Mr. Hulslander agreed with this analysis, saying that there really would be no benefit to be gained by use of the card, if the only reason people wanted to use the card was to increase their frequent flyer miles.

The council concluded that for Ransom Canyon at this time the available contracts would not offer the citizens a very good deal, and the issue was concluded.

The General Election date is May 3, 2003. Three offices are up for election this year, Mayor and two Aldermen. The election was ordered by unanimous vote on a motion from Dick Hulslander, second from Leon Whetzel. The terms that are ending are: Mayor Englund, David Peterson and Kyle Ashley. Filing for office will be February 17 through March 19. Early voting will be conducted at City Hall April 16 through April 29. The last day to receive an application to vote by mail is April 15.

Harold Needham delivered the Operations Report. Work at the South Lake Shore lift station will be complete this week. Work at the sewer plant continues. The contractors have hit water in their efforts to remove the head works of the old plant. City Engineer Bernie Gradel is not making progress on the water tank due to the uncertainty of increased water supply on our contract with the City of Lubbock. For this reason the Mayor, Mr. Whetzel, and Bernie met with City of Lubbock engineer Ches Carthell to discuss this two-year-old request.

Mr. Whetzel explained that in this meeting Mr. Carthell explained that he understood Ransom Canyon's request to increase the contract limits of 860,000 gpd to 1.6 million gpd. The annual volume increase is also of concern. In addition, Mr. Whetzel explained that the guaranteed pressure is of concern because the contract stipulates 35 pounds of pressure, and Lubbock regularly supplies at least 60 pounds of pressure. On the night of the July 2000 fire, the City of Lubbock increased this pressure to over 100 pounds. The city used over 400,000 gallons of pumped water, not including the tanker water to fight the fire. Ransom Canyon has a safety concern in requesting an increase. Ransom Canyon also could effectively still double in size if the 140 existing undeveloped lots plus the 250

lots planned in developments on the South Rim and the back entrance were to have houses built on them. Mr. Whetzel commented that the South Rim must have new, adequate water supply and emergency water capability included in any development that would be approved by the city council. Mr. Whetzel said this should be a “must have” for the developer to provide prior to plat approval from the council.

Mayor Englund explained that Mr. Carthell suggested that it was time for Ransom Canyon to take this request directly to Lubbock Mayor McDougal, and this letter is being drafted. The council will work to get this issue resolved so that Bernie can proceed with plans for the new water storage tank. When the CO bond was issued by Ransom Canyon, our understanding was that Lubbock would amend our contract, but two years have passed without officially changing the items of concern.

The current tanks hold 125,000 gallons each. The elevated tank can be 50,000, 75,000 or 100,000 depending on the defined capacity need.

David Peterson asked Mr. Needham about the recent amendment to the sewer plant plans. Mr. Needham explained that he and Mr. Whetzel met with the engineers and the contractor to discuss a change to the head works system. Allen Doggett suggested a better inflow system, and a change from a Flygt pump to a Gould’s pump. This change will not cost more, it may possibly cost less.

Mayor Englund reported for the Building Control Committee approval of one house plan on Mescalero and an add-on for a house on South Lake Shore. The committee also has approved two landscape projects.

The committee requested that the council require dual mode smoke detectors. The council will consider this requirement in building code ordinance amendment form next council meeting. The cost of a dual mode detector is \$40 instead of \$7.00. Mr. Hulslander asked if the committee ever completed their cost comparison work on the 40 year roof -50 year roof recommendation.

There was a water line break January 27, 2003 in the 6” line from Buffalo to Ransom Canyon, and during the repair process, the city could not find a cut-off valve so they could make repairs. As a result, the water to the city was turned off for a time. Mr. Needham said there was no back feed from the tanks. The valves on the city side did not seem to be where they were thought to be. The work went far into the night, the city workers were assisted by the Lubbock County work-release prisoners, and also by the Mayor and the Mayor Pro-tem Peterson. Harold explained that the valve was possibly left off the original drawing, and the council agreed that the line needed to be fixed right at this time while attention is focused.

Harold also reported that Lubbock Electric has a used 175 kw generator for sale. Harold explained this might be a good thing to have for the water, city hall and the shop.

Harold reported that the operations department did not really have a need for a fire hydrant at the new sewer plant, that the fire department would not be called on to wash it down because a 2" line was being built into the new plant, and that this line would be sufficient for the needs of the sewer department.

Wayne Rawls explained that the need for the fire hydrant was brought up by Chief Rand McPherson at last meeting. The fire department perceives a need at the east end of South Lake Shore Drive for a fire hydrant to fight fires, and thought it would be less expensive to install one while construction was underway on the plant. Mr. Whetzel asked Wayne if the fire department knew of other locations where a hydrant would be useful, and Wayne explained there was a location near Mesquite that was underserved due to development. Mr. Whetzel asked Wayne to report back to the council next month with a listing of hydrants, locations that were underserved and recommendations so that the council could look at the total needs picture and understand the actual cost. While all homes in Ransom Canyon are within fire hydrant range, some hoses would have to be placed over and around fences and other construction, challenging the capability to deliver water to some locations.

Harold reported to the council that he had obtained bids to landscape the flower beds in front of city hall, and the bids were around \$3,000 for watering systems and plantings. Harold commented that it appeared there were other things in the works that would take funding priority over this project. The council agreed that the work could probably be done in-house for considerably less than \$3,000. This item is officially passed over.

The council approved new fire department officers on a motion from David Peterson and second from Glen Robertson. The new officers are: Fire Chief Rand McPherson, Assistant Fire Chief Jim Waters, Medical Captain Mark Cooper, Treasurer Steve Oldham and Training Captain Rob Keinast.

The fire department liaison is Dick Hulslander, unanimously approved on a motion from Leon Whetzel and second from Glen Robertson.

Police Chief Wayne Rawls reported one traffic accident this month at the back entrance. He is attending a school this week that will guarantee Ransom Canyon will have a basic disaster plan that will be approved. This plan is written on the state template with no wording changes and will be ready to submit to the regional coordinator, Steve Reddish. This school Chief Rawls is attending is part of a TEEEX assessment training. 15 million dollars is available statewide for emergency services, with awards to be administered by SPAG. Ransom Canyon could possibly benefit from these grant funds, but the TEEEX assessment must be completed first. The Chief will complete this administrative work and will follow up on possible grant funding possibilities.

Chief Rawls prepared a history of the ISO rating at the Mayor's request. In 1995 the ISO made an onsite inspection, and Ransom Canyon qualified for a 7 rating: (10 being the lowest indicating no fire coverage) with this equipment in working order: 1 pumper, 1 tanker, 1 foam apparatus and 1 responder. The ISO recommended that the city needed an

additional pumper, (done), fire station for additional pumper, (done), upgrade from a 2½“ line to a 4” line on pumpers, (done), and upgrade to a 2 ½” line for a fighting line. (done), install a community warning system (done), upgrade water supply sources, (10” line done), and appoint a fire marshal (done). In addition, the ISO said the city should reduce wood roofing materials (done.), and additional water storage, and that is in progress with the new water tower.

The city has undertaken other projects: a residential pre-plan database( in progress) , fire hydrant upgrades (quick connects installed), establish Emergency Operations center, Disaster Plan (in progress) , TEEEX Domestic Preparedness Assessment ( in progress), replace Rescue Truck and Replace Tanker(in progress CIP 2004 budget).

There were 2 fire calls and 2 EMS calls this month.

The Property Owners Association is hosting the Annual Triathlon May 25, and requested that the city waive the “no swimming” ordinance for this event. Mike Greer announced that the insurance coverage for the event has been increased to 5 million. Dick Hulslander stated that he would need to abstain from the vote because his wife is the POA contact, but that he supported the action. Glen Robertson moved to approve the waiver, David Peterson seconded the motion. Leon Whetzel also voted to approve the waiver, so the motion passed with three voting aye, and one abstention.

The council had a lengthy discussion and lively debate about a policy for contents of the web page. They discussed ways and means to include or not include businesses, churches, the homeowners association and city departments. They discussed the unique nature of Ransom Canyon, and the highest and best way to serve the community through the web page instrument.

The stats on the page show numerous “hits” and steady, frequent visitors to the site. The [www.ci.ransom-canyon.tx.us](http://www.ci.ransom-canyon.tx.us) site is informative and all business, which seems to be a common rule of thumb with city and government entity sites. These were the instructions that were given to the designer, Ron Gaddis. Ron is still adding to the site in the way of information, history, photos and department information.

The Archive search engine is unique to the Ransom Canyon site. This capability in other city sites is a prohibitively expensive option.

The council did not reach a consensus on the question of who, what, where, how and why the website would extend its reach to cover or not cover local events that are not city department related. David Peterson agreed to write a communications policy, and will bring this back to the council for further debate.

Harold Needham mentioned that he, David Peterson and Mayor Englund had interviewed three finalists for the job of water/wastewater operator, and that an offer will be made to a good candidate this week.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 on a motion from Leon Whetzel, second from Glen Robertson. All approved.

Melissa Verett  
City Administrator