

**CITY OF ALAMOGORDO, NEW MEXICO  
JOINT CITY COMMISSION/COUNTY COMMISSION  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
OTERO COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
OCTOBER 30, 2001; 3:00 P.M.**

**MAYOR DON CARROLL COMMISSIONER DON COOPER**

**MAYOR PRO-TEM JOHN VAN DOREN COMMISSIONER ED COLE**

**COMMISSIONER INEZ MONCADA CITY MANAGER PAT McCOURT**

**COMMISSIONER RON GRIGGS CHF DEPUTY CLK TERESA GUTIERREZ**

**COMMISSIONER STEPHEN EASLEY**

Call Meeting to Order, Roll Call, Invocation, and Pledge of Allegiance.

The Meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. Absent from the City was Commissioner Inez Moncada. Present from Otero County was County Commission Chairman Richard Zierlein, County Commissioner Tim McGinn, County Commissioner Mike Nivison, and County Administrator Ruth Hooser. The Invocation was given by Commissioner Richard Zierlein, and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Don Carroll.

**1. Discussion on funding for the various programs provided to County residents by the City (Library Services, R.S.V.P. Services, La Luz Home Bound Meal Services, and Senior Transportation Services).**

Commissioner Zierlein said the County's fiscal position had not improved since their budget was initially done. There were more organizations than just the City which the County helped to support. While the County would like to help the City more, they just couldn't. Mayor Carroll said the overall concern was with the level of services the City provided to County residents. Furthermore, the County's funding was down from what it had been in past years for these programs. The Library funding caused the greatest concern.

Commissioner Zierlein said the County was looking at the possibility of increasing their Gross Receipts Taxes by 1/8th of one percent. They would like one-half of that (1/16th) to go to health care costs, and the other one-half (1/16th) to go to programs such as these.

Mr. McCourt said he was especially concerned with the R.S.V.P. and Senior Center programs. Those programs tended to have lower budgets and the clientele they served tended to be lower income people. Often, these home

bound meals were the only meals some of these people received. Also, the R.S.V.P. programs supported organizations throughout the entire County.

Commissioner Zierlein assured everyone that it wasn't the County's feeling that these programs were the first to be cut because the County was just looking to pass the responsibility. Commissioner Nivison agreed and said the County had tried to meet its obligations. This budget year they had already cut seven positions through attrition and had not funded even one dollar for capital improvements. Until they could see where they could provide the everyday services, they had to look at their budget the way they did.

Commissioner Easley said the City may have to look at cutting services through these programs when the cuts needed to be made. Commissioner Zierlein suggested an alternative option, such as charging a \$10 annual fee for each Library card issued.

Mayor Carroll thought he had recently read where there was an infrastructure Gross Receipts Tax of one percent which the County could impose to the County residents in outlying areas. Commissioner Zierlein and Nivison both stated that they were not aware of the availability of that, but they would look into it.

Commissioner Zierlein said what had hit the County the hardest recently was the new State mandates on adult and juvenile detention, as well as road funding cuts which had been made by the State.

Commissioner Easley said that there were really only three options; increase funding, decrease services, or a combination of both. He felt that economic development would be the least painful of all ways to increase revenues. He stated that he would be glad to work with the County on these types of issues. Commissioner Nivison agreed with economic development; they needed to figure out a way to bring jobs to town.

Commissioner Zierlein said the County was looking at the July 2002 time frame to put the proposed 1/8th Gross Receipts Tax election to a vote of the people. Mayor Carroll and Commissioner Easley both felt that the County would need to make sure it did a real good sales job on this election on all the County residents, but especially on the County residents that were also City residents as to why they should be taxed further to pay for County services.

Commissioner Nivison said the County needed to take care of existing businesses and to diversify. Our greatest existing business was natural resources.

Mayor Carroll said the County had asked the City its priorities for funding. He felt that needed to be turned around with the City asking the County what their priorities were. Commissioner Zierlein said their priority was to work with the City

to fund everything they could, the best they could. Commissioner Easley said the biggest disparity was in the Library Services funding. County users comprised one-third of all the users at the Library, and City users comprised two-thirds. However, on an \$800,000 total Library budget, the County only paid \$45,000 towards its share. Commissioner Zierlein said that was why he had suggested an annual fee for Library cards as one option to try and raise funds. Commissioner Griggs said the City may have to look at implementing fees for those residents who used City facilities, but who resided in the County outside the City limit lines.

Commissioner Nivison said he found it interesting that all taxes went to the State first, and then a portion was sent back to the County and City; however, the State will have a \$3 billion surplus as of next year. Commissioner Easley said everyone needed to talk to our Legislators to shake some of those monies loose to be distributed to the counties and cities.

Commissioner Zierlein said they needed to get the detention issue straightened out. Otherwise, he felt it would cause several counties in New Mexico to go bankrupt over the next few years. The State mandated all these requirements, yet they did not help with funding except minimally. Commissioner Griggs asked how the City could help on that issue? Commissioner Zierlein said he had worked on trying to get a Bill into the Legislature and passed where an extra \$10 would be assessed on anyone receiving a citation within the County. The money which could be generated from that would net approximately another \$800,000 to Otero County alone.

Mayor Pro-Tem Van Doren felt the bottom line was that if the County was not able to support the programs that had been provided to its residents, then there was no alternative but to stop the programs.

Commissioner Zierlein said the County was looking at budget adjustments in about six to eight weeks. At that time they would look to see if they could find any other funding to send to the City. When the budget adjustments took place, it would be listed on their agenda. The time frame was probably in late January for this. Mayor Carroll said hopefully the County's mid-year budgets would allow them to provide at least the level of funding to the City which they had provided to us last year.

The Meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

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Mayor Donald E. Carroll

ATTEST:

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City Clerk Angie J. Rahn

(SEAL)

(Prepared by Chief Deputy Clerk Teresa Y. Gutierrez)

Approved at the City Commission Regular Meeting of November 13, 2001.



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