

January 14, 2022 County/City Growth Discussion

The City Council of the City of Idaho Falls met in Special Meeting – Joint Meeting with Bonneville County Elected Officials, County/City Growth Discussion, Friday, January 14, 2022, in the Bonneville County Commissioners Hearing Room located at 605 N. Capital in Idaho Falls, Idaho at 12:00 p.m.

There were present:

Roger Christensen, Bonneville County Commissioner
Bryon Reed, Bonneville County Commissioner
Jon Walker, Bonneville County Commissioner
Rebecca L. Noah Casper, Mayor
Michelle Ziel-Dingman, City Council President
John Radford, City Councilor
Thomas Hally, City Councilor
Jim Freeman, City Councilor
Jim Francis, City Councilor
Lisa Burtenshaw, City Councilor
Kathy Hampton, City Clerk

The meeting began at 12:00 p.m.

Commissioner Christensen stated he is hopeful for future meetings and to continue to work together. He believes a lot of the discussion items are legislative-type issues.

Review List of Concerns and Priorities:

City Elected Officials –

Councilor Freeman’s concerns included the roads going in and out of the city from 5-lane to 2-lane to 5-lane, and sewer district boundaries.

Councilor Burtenshaw shared the same concerns, particularly the road issues. She also recognized that departments work well together, although she is unsure of access to the county to answer any follow-up questions.

Councilor Radford’s concerns included preserving the difference between city and rural environment and how to make this efficient to serve more people to prevent sprawl. He believes this has improved over time, however, he believes changes should occur in conjunction with the city and the county. Councilor Radford’s concerns also include roads and right-of-ways (ROW). He indicated extending services outside of the city boundary was discouraged due to sprawl, however, the city has debt with the current infrastructure. He believes there has not been a lot of coordination with Parks and Recreation, and he is very open to tax savings to prevent repeating efforts.

Councilor Hally is hopeful that county planners have recognized that the city has emphasized infill. He believes the city has been distanced from revenue by not taking care of infill. He also believes safety and roads (there should be cooperation), traffic, recreation, library, and sewer (he wants all to have access to sewer versus septic tanks) are issues. Councilor Hally indicated the city and county share common problems, and there should be the desire to solve problems and work cooperatively. He wants the entire county to prosper to make this area a nice place to live.

Councilor Francis’s concerns included the E911 dispatch working group, including funding and division of cost for the Law Enforcement Building (LEB) and the multi-agency board. He believes there should be cooperation with waste disposal and industrial compost (there should be an incentive for city residents for less waste into the landfill), cooperative funding for selected parks that the community as a whole uses (such as Noise Park), the infrastructure act money should be looked at for projects, additional Joint Power of Agreements (JPAs) for other intersections, and a policy on aerial fireworks.

January 14, 2022 County/City Growth Discussion

Council President Dingman's concerns include pursuing a resolution to library issues, the potential to expand public transit to county residents, E911 working group, and all economic development coordination. She noted county residents may not be city residents although all city residents are county residents. She believes, due to the councilmembers being contacted by residents, this conversation should evolve. She also believes there should be additional JPAs.

Mayor Casper briefly reviewed a previous list containing: fees and intergovernmental discounts (eliminated); city county reciprocal agreements and burial for indigents (eliminated); connectivity; geographic information system (GIS) information sharing and computer-aided design (CAD) software; collaborating on traffic; recycling; and federal grant money collaboration.

County Elected Officials –

Commissioner Walker believes all items have been previously addressed and discussed. He also believes there should be a process in place to work through items, and building relationships is important through face time/personal meetings.

Commissioner Reed stated he would like to complete an Area of Impact (AOI) agreement in the coming year. He is also hoping to convey a better message that city and county are working together. He believes the city and county working together is occurring although he recognizes not all will agree but all should respectfully find a compromise. Commissioner Christensen's concerns include ways to tackle individual issues, and observation of understanding the AOI and the Comprehensive (Comp) Plan.

Discuss Definition of Process and Governing Statutes:

Area of Impact/ Comprehensive Plan/Policies Involving Area of Impact –

Commissioner Christensen presented the following slides with general discussion throughout:

AOI Agreement and Comprehensive Plan Amendment

Definitions –

- AOI – a geographical area negotiated between the county and city defining where the city is expected to grow.
- AOI Agreement – a written agreement between the city and county for the AOI. It generally outlines the plans, policies, and development standards to be followed within the boundaries of said AOI.
- Comprehensive Plan – A document adopted through the public hearing process that establishes a criteria to follow for future land use decisions to guide and regulate future development and growth within the jurisdiction of the governing board.

Process for Adopting or Amending AOI –

Commissioner Christensen reviewed State Statute 67-6526. He believes communication between the county and the city is an area to work on. He also believes coordination has been missing to make the county process valid. He noted the Comp Plan applies to areas in the city's jurisdiction.

Current AOI and Percent Annexed – Impact Area versus City of Idaho Falls

City of Idaho Falls within Impact area – 16,482.14 acres, 71.4% of total impact area is city annexed

Impact area – 23,064.25 acres

City annexed outside of Impact – 653.21 acres, 3.8% of city annexed is outside of Impact area

Commissioner Christensen believes issues should be resolved up front. General comments followed.

January 14, 2022 County/City Growth Discussion

Commissioner Christensen displayed several examples of subdivisions that access 65th S. He identified city annexation and county areas. Discussion followed regarding roadway improvements required by the developer. Commissioner Christensen also displayed the 49th S and Holmes Avenue area stating this project will require ROW acquisition. He noted the county is very careful with eminent domain as that will increase the cost. He stated this intersection was higher priority than the 49th S and St. Clair intersection. Commissioner Christensen displayed the 49th S and St. Clair intersection. Discussion followed regarding roadway improvements. Commissioner Christensen displayed area north of town. Discussion followed regarding access onto substandard county roads. Discussion also followed regarding impact fees and the effect this may have on rising homeowner costs. Commissioner Reed believes impact fees will affect property taxes. Councilor Freeman believes impact fees discussions could be coordinated with the city and the county. Commissioner Christensen believes impact fees are a complicated issue. Councilor Burtenshaw believes the various impacts to the city is from pressure from outside of the city. Commissioner Christensen displayed 33rd N and 5th W area. He encouraged development of this road prior to other development in this area. He also displayed 5th E and 65th N noting there is a proposed annexation for a portion of this area.

Discuss Annexation Policies:

Mayor Casper distributed the Statement of Annexation Principles. She clarified policy is to use the law although the city intends to abide by these Principles. Councilor Burtenshaw prefers to add the process of the city gaining the county ROWs to the list of concerns. It was noted this may need to occur sooner than later. Discussion followed regarding the frequency of future joint meetings as well as extension of utilities into the county.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 2:07 p.m.

s/ Kathy Hampton
Kathy Hampton, City Clerk

s/ Rebecca L. Noah Casper
Rebecca L. Noah Casper, Mayor