

**CITY OF TUCUMCARI  
MINUTES  
PUBLIC HEARING  
May 13, 2010**

The Tucumcari City Commission met for a public hearing on Thursday, May 13, 2010, at 5:00 p.m. in the City Commission Chambers. Members present constituting a quorum were Antonio Apodaca, Amiel Curnutt, Robert Lumpkin, Jimmy Sandoval, and Jim Witcher.

City staff members present were Bobbye Rose, City Manager; Mike Cherry, Assistant City Manager; Christine Dougherty, City Clerk; and Alex Madrid Streets and Sanitation Superintendent.

**Opening of the Public Hearing**

Mayor Witcher asked for a motion to open the public hearing. Commissioner Lumpkin moved to open the public hearing and Mayor Pro Tem Apodaca seconded the motion. Roll Call:

Sandoval	Curnutt	Witcher	Lumpkin	Apodaca
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

**Oath by City Clerk to Speakers**

City Clerk, Christine Dougherty swore in all those planning to speak.

**Street Lighting Recommendations**

Mr. Mike Cherry explained to the Commission that this issue has been discussed in the past and the issue at hand is the lighting from the I-40 Interchange at Route 66 to the Convention Center. Mr. Cherry reported that the area has 108 lights and the problem is the wiring. The wiring is 1000 volts and is single circuit. Mr. Cherry reported that this wiring is dangerous.

Mr. Cherry went on to tell the Commission that Mr. Wade Whitehead and Mr. Corby White from Xcel Energy have worked in conjunction with the City to determine what the options for getting the lights back on and how to get some energy cost savings.

Mr. Cherry explained the three options. Option one involves replacing the single series wiring at a cost of \$100,000 and keeping all 108 lights. All wiring would be replaced and the price includes installation. With this option, Mr. Cherry explained that the cost per light will be \$15.60 per month in electricity.

Option two involves replacing the wiring with 240 volt wiring with two wires. Mr. Cherry explained that this will be a parallel circuit which means that if one light goes out, the others will stay on. The cost to replace the wiring and installation in this option would also be \$100,000. The cost per light per month for electricity will be \$12.16. In this option, Xcel Energy will replace all the light heads.

Option three involves the abandonment of 70 of the lights, keeping 36 lights and replacing the light heads with energy efficient heads. This option will keep lights at the old truck stop, each existing business and at the Convention Center. The cost for this option is \$2500 in wiring and installation and

the electricity cost per light per month will be \$12.16 for an annual total of \$5253.12.

Mayor Witcher stated that he was an electrician in Amarillo for 25 years and likened the lighting problem to old fashioned Christmas lights. Mr. Witcher explained that if one light goes out, they all go out. Mr. Witcher also explained that when you repair this kind of lighting, it puts the load on other areas of the line.

Mr. Witcher explained that the City does not have \$100,000 for options one or two. Mr. Witcher also stated that he took a drive along west Route 66 and feels that option three will provide appropriate lighting.

Commissioner Lumpkin stated that he thinks options one and two are pricey. Mr. Lumpkin explained that option three seems reasonable and affordable while it will decrease the annual energy costs. Mr. Lumpkin said that existing businesses will have lighting. Mr. Lumpkin stated that a sign is needed to direct people to businesses. Mr. Lumpkin stated that a dark area with a lit business could draw a lot of attention. Mr. Lumpkin wondered if options one and two at a cost of \$100,000 would be reasonable use of public funds.

Mayor Pro Tem Apodaca asked if lights are cut off and taken down, will the line be replaced and can they be added back if needed. Mr. Cherry responded in the positive explaining that the conduit exists between poles that belong to the City. Mr. Cherry also explained that Xcel will sell the City the wire at cost.

Commissioner Sandoval asked if all the wire can be pulled up at one time. Mr. Whitehead responded that the problem is the conduit is burned up and can't be removed from the ground. Mr. Whitehead went on to say that the cost of wire has increased and Xcel does not want it to be replaced.

### **Public Comments**

Mr. Larry Bond who was in the audience asked how many lights will be at each business. Mayor Witcher responded that there will be three lights per business. Mr. Witcher went on to explain that the bases will always be there. Xcel will take the poles down and then the City can choose to cover them. Mr. Witcher stated that covering them is suggested because the bolts could ruin tires.

An audience member asked if the issue is a fiscal one; making option three the most practical. Mayor Witcher explained that if the City had the funds, option two would be desirable.

Commissioner Lumpkin stated that option three is the most practical and affords the City the option to add lights as needed.

Mayor Witcher asked if guardian lights could be used. Mr. Whitehead explained that the use of guardian lights was abandoned about a year ago.

Mr. Larry Bond asked if ARRA funds are available. Mayor Witcher stated that he had not heard that ARRA funds were available for this type of project.

Ms. Rose asked when Xcel planned to take the lights down. Mr. Whitehead responded that Xcel could work around the City's schedule. Mr. Whitehead explained that the light poles in Tucumcari are different than the poles anywhere else. The arms on the poles are very long. Ms. Rose asked if the

light poles can be left. Mr. Whitehead responded in the negative.

Mr. Jim Lafferty, who was in the audience asked how long the City has been paying \$20,000 per year for lights that did not work. Mayor Witcher responded that has been going on for two years.

Mr. Alex Madrid, Streets Superintendent stated that about a year ago, the lights were restored and only functioned for about three weeks.

Mr. Kirit Bhatt asked if the lights were out at exit number 229. Mayor Witcher responded in the positive explaining that there will be lights at the interchange, the truck terminal, the Paradise Motel, and then at the Payless Inn.

Mr. Whitehead explained that the wire in between the poles will be replaced and if the wire in any lights that go out is replaced, there should not be a problem.

**Items from Commissioners**

Commissioner Sandoval had no comments.

Commissioner Curnutt had no comments.

Commissioner Lumpkin thanked all those in attendance for coming and thanked Xcel energy for attending as well.

Mayor Pro Tem Apodaca stated that he could vote with a clear conscience now that the public hearing had been held.

Mayor Witcher thanked those in attendance for coming to the meeting. He thanked the staff, guests, representatives from Xcel energy and the press for attending.

**Adjournment**

Mayor Witcher asked for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Lumpkin made a motion to adjourn and Mayor Pro Tem Apodaca seconded the motion. Time noted: 5:35 p.m. Roll Call:

Curnutt	Witcher	Lumpkin	Apodaca	Sandoval
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

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James L. Witcher, Sr., Mayor

ATTEST:

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Christine Dougherty, City Clerk