

PRESCOTT, ARIZONA  
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING  
(AS REGIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
LOCAL GOVERNMENTS)  
NOVEMBER 5, 2008

A SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING OF THE PRESCOTT CITY COUNCIL, IN THEIR ROLE AS MEMBERS OF THE REGIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, WAS HELD ON WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2008, at the StoneRidge Clubhouse, 1601 N. Bluff Top Drive, Prescott Valley, Arizona

1. Call to Order/Introductions

Dinner was served at 5:30 p.m. and Mayor Skoog called the meeting to order at 6:25 p.m.

PRESENT:

Mayor Wilson  
Councilman Lamerson  
Councilwoman Lopas  
Councilman Luzius  
Councilman Roecker  
Councilwoman Suttles

ABSENT:

Councilman Bell

YAVAPAI COUNTY: Supervisors Carol Springer, Thomas Thurman, and Chip Davis.

CHINO VALLEY: Council members Gloria Moore, Ron Romley.

DEWEY-HUMBOLDT: Mayor Earl Goodwin.

PRESCOTT VALLEY: Mayor Harvey Skoog; Vice Mayor Harold Wise; Councilmembers Lora Lee Nye, Fran Schumacher, Mike Flannery, Mary Baker.

CLARKDALE: Mayor Doug Von Gausig.

COTTONWOOD: Mayor Diane Joens.

2. CYMPO Discussion – Concept of expanding the mission to include an Association of Governments  
Mayor Jack Wilson, Prescott and Larry Tarkowski, Town Manager - Prescott Valley

Mr. Tarkowski reviewed the different ways that communities have created associations of government. He said that they wanted to bring up the question of

whether there were other issues associated within the region. He said that the Maricopa Association of Governments actually came together originally for wastewater, not transportation. He said that Jodi Rooney, Executive Director of CYMPO, made it clear that the MPO funding mechanism is for transportation only. He said that when they do have a conversation about regional cooperation in a formal setting, it would need to have its own funding source because MPO's money is strictly dedicated to transportation.

Mayor Wilson said that there are a number of cooperative efforts, such as the pipeline. There are other issues to possibly consider, such as a regional sales tax, and looking at regional roads. He said that he thinks it is time for the region to step up, and this is one way of doing it and they wanted to get the discussions started.

Mr. Tarkowski said that some are familiar with the Megapolitan Study, which suggests a future blob of population running from Sierra Vista all the way to Prescott. He said that one thing they need to keep in mind is they do not have a formal mechanism today where they dialogue between the four communities, other than CYMPO. He said that other areas have expanded through associations of government. He said that if they were going to be a part of it, they would hopefully have their stuff together so they can interface with those in the Valley.

Mr. Norwood said that it would be appropriate for transit or an airport authority; he does not know if the regional sales tax would be the appropriate vehicle. Mr. Tarkowski said that it could be whatever is chosen collectively. He said that economic development on a regional basis could have a place at the table, and possibly joint water recharge, or animal control.

Mayor Wilson said that every one of the COG's is different around the State. They are stronger together than they are apart, and this would allow them to optimize their strengths. He said that some of these discussions are occurring without an association, but there are going to be more and more issues in the future.

Mayor Goodwin said that he has had experience working with a COG in California and he made the following points. If they put a board together composed of elected officials from member agencies, they run up against people that are elected for one purpose being asked to serve another. They may find that those will see the first purpose as more important and pay little attention in the regional activity, or the opposite may occur. He said that it is hard to get people elected for Purpose A to perform in Arena B.

Mayor Goodwin also said that in order to give any power to the regional agency they have to give up power from each own jurisdiction. An example was land use planning; when people go it alone they use a parochial viewpoint. They may take

a cherry pick and leave the rest to the county. When Dewey-Humboldt was incorporated, most of the area was within the Central Yavapai Fire District, but not all of it. There has been some giving up of authority in creation of the town.

He said that there is a strong regional approach already with flood control and the library district. They could create or install a groundwater replenishment project that would take over recharge costs and the cost of importation. They have to be prepared to give up some power.

Councilmember Wise asked if it was set up for one issue, if the other aspects could be brought in at different times. Mayor Wilson said that any type they chose would have that latitude. He said that good plans are defined by change that comes with reality. He said that with an organization like what they are discussing they would need to expect change.

Mr. Tarkowski said that Councilmember Flannery was involved with the formation of the MPO, and at one point they almost became an association. Councilman Flannery said that at the time there was a hesitation. They wanted to start small. He said that he thought the bigger and faster they grow, the one issue most critical is land use—the common denominator to most growth issues.

Councilman Roecker asked what the public would want to see out of an organization such as is being discussed. Councilwoman Nye said cooperation. William Emerson said it would depend on how they structured it. Councilman Flannery said that they had issues with building standards and they came together and worked it out so that all of the surrounding jurisdictions worked under the same standards.

Mr. Emerson said that they have a lot of different “publics.” He worked in the MAG environment from 1976 to three years ago, and when he first became involved they had very limited goals. They added new committees to address issues that were brought to the group.

Supervisor Thurman said that they will have to sell it; some will have it harder to get something done in the County because it makes more bureaucracy. He said that they are stronger together.

Supervisor Thurman asked about the redundancy with CYMPO, or if they would become an arm of the COG. Mr. Tarkowski said that is how it is done with MAG. He said that the board would be made up of elected officials with a number of different functions, with CYMPO being one of them.

Supervisor Thurman asked how it would be funded if the whole area decided to do a project; if they would create a taxing district. Mayor Wilson said that it has been done both through a replenishment district as a taxing body, or also as a pro rata distribution. Mayor Goodwin said that if they select the method of shares

paid by each agency, the propriety is really low because there is not enough support to fight for it in the budget.

Attendees were asked for a show of hands for those interested in further study. A majority of those in attendance raised their hands.

Supervisor Springer said that it is another layer of government, and she does not think it is an appropriate time to talk about setting up another layer of government requiring funding. She said that they already have a good functioning organization with CYMPO. With water, they have the Water Advisory Committee and the Coalition. She said that unless they can show to her that they have a specific project need, she has a real problem with the idea of 1) creating another layer of government, and 2) the issues people gloss over is how difficult it will be to ask individual cities and the county to give up certain powers in order to make the group have the power to do something. She said that will not be an easy task.

Richard Parker said that there has been a lot of work focusing on housing and its cost, and the ability to get grant funding and administer it. He said that grant funding for rehab is administered through NACOG. He said that he has been on the periphery of that, and asked who would host it. He said that as Mayor Goodwin pointed out, the issue is not defined by jurisdictional boundaries, it is regional.

Mr. Tarkowski asked if they would be interested in allowing the respective planning staff members to get together and do some research; and find out what is being done in other areas, not just Phoenix and Tucson. He said that they could see how they are looking at collective governance. He said that they all have as a goal of not expanding services and making better use of the revenues they have. If there is some way to formalize their interaction, there would be some value to that. Mr. Norwood said that he is not opposed to that, but everything they are talking about is a COG function. Where he came from the COG handled everything from Police Department Academy, training, GIS, 9-1-1; they did all the things that local governments could not financially support.

Mr. Norwood said that this proposal is not inexpensive, and based on yesterday's election they are kidding themselves to think they could get much money. He is all for a coordinated effort to look at it. He said that it seems like NACOG should be a player.

Councilman Roecker said that on the big issues, such as transportation and water, they are already doing it. He was wondering what big item the Prescott or Prescott Valley's Mayor would be willing to give up control of. Mayor Wilson said that it is not giving up; it is cooperating, and his first issue he would like to see addressed is land use planning.

They were asked if they were proposing to remove NACOG and create their own COG, or they were referring more to a unified regional approach on land use planning. Mayor Wilson said that he would like to see a much closer coordination among the four entities, rather than countywide. He said that they have not looked at NACOG; the next step is to look at the options.

Councilwoman Nye said that they should go at least that far. Mr. Emerson said that they could look at what they could do less expensively and more effectively, and more research is warranted.

Mayor Wilson said that it appears that the general consensus is to do more research; they have opposition to more government or taxation, they could do it at the planning level of the communities.

3. Update and Invitation to participate in Air Aware Program  
Richard Parker, Community Development Director - Prescott Valley

Mr. Parker said that back in 1999 there was an orchestrated regional effort to look at air quality, prior to being in a nonattainment status. He said that the study had several stages, and looked at issues where pollutants may be coming from, whether dirt roads or work burning stoves. They not only identified the issues, they also worked through a visioning process on how to get the word out. He said that it was addressing air quality regionally, and it was a good process,

Mr. Parker said that Air Aware was the educational piece where they talked about giving talks in the communities, to students, and adopting ordinances regulating burning of fuels, where burned, how, treatment of roads, etc. He said that Prescott Valley did adopt Air Aware as part of the natural resource element of the General Plan.

He said that where they fell short was in identifying a coordinator, and he has been asked to rekindle this effort. He said that he has someone that will be going to the schools and may be able to put together some staffing. He said that they have addressed the wood-burning stoves with adoption of the 2006 Building Codes, but his directive today was to determine whether there is any desire to rejuvenate the Air Aware project regionwide.

Councilman Flannery said that this is one of the programs under CYMPO that has been on the table for awhile. They were going to assign someone as the coordinator, but because of funding, no one was assigned. He said that it is a regional issue and appreciated it being put on the front burner. He said that they are looking to Prescott and the other communities to open the doors to go into the schools. He said that there is a strong bike group in Prescott that they may be able to work with.

Councilwoman Nye said that she serves as the liaison on the Regional Council, and for the past six years she is shocked in the change of the air driving back and forth between home and Flagstaff. She said that she moved to Prescott Valley because the doctor told her to get out of the Valley, so she pays attention to the air. She said that some of it is drift from California, but there are some things here that can be done.

Supervisor Thurman noted that one of the reasons it has been so bad is because they are continually doing prescribed burns. He said that when the winds change from the south, then they get the Phoenix smog as well as the California air, and they have been having some tremendous forest fires.

Supervisor Thurman said that with lot splits in the County, there are new dirt roads and that is a huge problem. Councilwoman Nye said that they need to work in those areas where they can do something. Supervisor Thurman said that they could have the wood stove regulations go countywide.

Mayor Wilson said that Prescott has an active bicycle committee, and also Prescott Alternative Transportation, and he would like to use whatever materials have been developed with those groups, as well as getting them on the City's website. Mr. Parker said that they will develop a web page identity for Air Aware as well.

Mr. Parker said that they brought this issue up to see if there is an interest to address it regionally. Vice Mayor Schumacher said that they are so tied together regionally; if one entity does something and the others don't it is kind of useless. She said that she goes to California all the time and she's noticed the air the last few times is clearer in downtown LA than it used to be. She said that they should work together in a combined effort.

Councilwoman Lopas said that when her brother was born he had severe asthma and at four years old, they moved to Prescott to save his life. He went from being in the hospital every other month to never again. She would like to help on whatever campaign is developed. She said that is why a lot of people come to the area, and she would like to be part of it.

Mr. Tarkowski said that they were the first place in the country that chose to analyze its air prior to being in nonattainment, and the tri-city area received awards for that. He said that ten years ago they had outstanding air, and perhaps they need to update that analysis.

Supervisor Thurman said that they need to consider that if people get concerned about it, they may end up with automobile emissions testing. He said that rural Arizona has squelched efforts to bring it here, but it is a factor.

Mr. Parker said that he would get a PR piece out.

4. Proposed Verde County Formation  
Tom Thurman, Yavapai County Supervisor - District 2

Supervisor Thurman said that Chip Davis and others from the Verde Valley area are present tonight regarding this issue. He said that there has been some talk again about the timing of possibly splitting the county, so he has reviewed the State Statutes to see how the process works. He said that right now it is mandated that they go to five supervisors when the county hits 200,000, by Federal census, so in 2010 they will be mandated. Instead of taking on more supervisors, there is a group that is interested in considering the Valley Verde splitting off and forming its own county. He said that to the taxpayers, as a whole, it would only cost one more supervisor, but there are some criteria.

He said that back in 1983 La Paz County did it, but it was much easier then. He said that the entire county would have to approve this; it would go to Jan Brewer to start a Committee to get the required signatures, with the required number around 25,000 to 30,000 signatures of qualified electors. Then they would have to determine where the boundary would be.

He said that right now, a lot of the different taxes come in based on population, such as vehicle license taxes, PILT funds, schools, and these would all have to be broken up. He said that the hardest thing would be the ongoing lawsuits. At Yavapai County, they get an average of one to two lawsuits a day.

Supervisor Thurman said that as everyone knows, the jail tax did not pass, so he was in meetings all afternoon on how to find funding. If they break the county up they will have to do an IGA with the new county regarding transportation. The main jail is in the Verde Valley, but main juvenile detention is on Prescott's side of the mountain. There would be a need for duplication of services, such as another county recorder, assessor etc.

He said that tourism is a big thing in Sedona, but it is broken 2/3 in Yavapai County and 1/3 in Coconino County. Logically they would like to get Coconino out, and get all of it in the "Verde Valley" county. He said that there are a lot of things that have a negative impact.

He said that if they are going to five supervisors and want to switch to two counties, it needs to happen simultaneously.

He said that with the economic downturn, this is a tough time to create more bureaucracy. He is not really for it, but some of the people believe that the reason they want to do it is because of the water; he does not believe that is true. If they go to five supervisors, the Verde Valley area would have two and that could be a healing effect.

He said that he is unable to give the names of those behind this at this time, but he has been told emphatically that Chip Davis is not behind it. He said that there is a lot to consider, but he wanted to bring it up tonight to get some comments from the others.

Supervisor Davis said that they came tonight to listen to the presentation. He said that the issue of a new county has come and gone on a five-year cycle. He said that it has always been a concern; some view the Verde Valley area as the “red headed stepchild.” He does agree that this would be a good time to consider it since they will be looking at dividing the county among five supervisors after 2010.

In response to the previous discussion on a COG, he thought the council of governance was going to be more of a replacement of NACOG, since NACOG includes areas in Navajo and Apache County. His assumption was that the Yavapai County Council of Government would bring those decisions closer to home. The same theory applies with talk of a new county. If people decide it makes more sense for the Verde Valley area to govern themselves, it may be appropriate.

The process was reviewed again, noting that it is a four-year process. They go to petition, requiring 20% of the registered voters; goes to Governor’s Office; she creates a Commission made up of people from outside Yavapai County; they look at financial feasibility and assets division; goes to voter process for county name; then they elect supervisors the same year as presidential election.

Councilwoman Nye asked if it was cost-effective to have duplication of services. Mayor Wilson said that he sees it as a yin/yang relationship and he would like to see more on it. Supervisor Thurman said that they would have to start in the Spring of 2009. To do this they have to have a special election to vote before they know how to split the county, and a special election will run \$125,000 to \$150,000.

Mayor Goodwin said that he lived in a county that went all the way to the ballot. He served on the Governor’s commission for a year-long study and as the former County Administrator, the process is like a divorce, with all of the assets splitting, bank accounts, dividing up of operations. He said that the year-long study by the commission developed a report which had all of the logic on how they split law suits, assets, etc. He said that also during the one-year period they also did some things to work on the basic issue that started the petitions, and at the end of the process, when the ballot measure came before the public, it did not pass, because the reason it started was resolved during that one-year process.

Councilwoman Schumacher asked why it was so secret. Supervisor Thurman said that it is not secret, but the committee wants to have some things in order before they go public with it.

Councilwoman Schumacher asked what the core reason was for wanting the split. Supervisor Thurman said that all he heard was that they could rule their own roost and have more control with what goes on in their area.

Mr. Tarkowski asked if the County was prepared to talk about the failure of the jail initiative and impacts that there may be. Supervisor Thurman said that they have not talked about it since the election, and it is not on the agenda.

Mayor Joens of Cottonwood said that the mayors and managers have been meeting for the last year and for several months they discussed the concept of a Yavapai Association of Governments. She said that she worked very hard on that and it was a “no go”; she was wondering why it had changed.

Supervisor Davis said that on the analogy of a divorce, not all are controversial.

Councilman Lamerson voiced concern with the state shared revenues coming back to the counties. He said that based on the numbers from Yavapai County, it seems logical that it wouldn't make sense to split them up.

Councilwoman Suttles said that she sees their situation, and she sees nothing wrong with doing what they choose to do. She would support them looking at it again and not shutting the door.

Mr. Emerson said that if this was an amicable division, there are three ways to form a new county; a statewide initiative, a countywide initiative and legislation.

Supervisor Springer said that because of the redistricting they are going to face, she does not care one way or the other. It is up to the people of the Verde Valley who want the county to initiate the action. Her only point is if they do not do it now, they should probably never do it. Once it goes to five supervisors, it will take away the separate identify of the Verde Valley.

Councilwoman Nye said that many people in the room just got off a bus that toured Yavapai County and she felt great pride traveling through the county. She has a hard time thinking of them not working together. She thinks they are stronger as a whole, and she is sorry to hear some of the statements made. They need to work harder so they don't feel some of those feelings.

Mayor Von Gausig said that the people in the Verde Valley area don't know any more about this; he and the other mayors did not have any idea of this taking place. He said that getting out of the county is not the general sense in the Verde Valley.

Councilman Roecker said that he finds it ironic that during the first part of the meeting they were talking about getting together as a unified government, and

during the second half of the meeting they are talking about splitting up. He said that it makes no sense and it is nonsense. Councilman Lamerson said that they don't like it. Supervisor Davis noted that it was not his idea.

Mayor Wilson said that the most insightful comment made was if they have problems, they need to talk more and get away from the "they and us." They need to throw out all the problems on the table. Mayor Skoog said that is exactly why they have these meetings.

5. Adjournment

Ms. Hadley said that the next meeting is scheduled to be hosted by the County.

There being no further discussion to be held, the Special Meeting of the Prescott City Council, in their role as members of the Regional Association of Local Governments, adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

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JACK D. WILSON, Mayor

ATTEST:

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ELIZABETH A. BURKE, City Clerk