

City of Robins, Iowa Goal Setting Report

November 16, 2015

Mayor:
Chuck Hinz

City Council:
Marilyn Cook
Roger Overbeck
Don Norton
Brad Sevcik
Mike Peebler (out-going)
Dick Pilcher (in-coming)

Lori Pickart, City Clerk



Facilitated by:
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CITY OF ROBINS, IOWA GOAL SETTING SESSION 2015

Introduction

The City of Robins requested the Institute of Public Affairs (IPA) to assist the city with goal setting. IPA agreed to organize and facilitate a process that involved the following steps:

1. Prepare a questionnaire to identify recent accomplishments, issues/trends/concerns, potential new initiatives/programs/policies and suggestions to improve organizational effectiveness.
2. Conduct a goal-setting session with the elected officials and key staff.
3. Prepare this final report.

Goal Setting Work Session

City Council Members and the Mayor held a work session conducted by the IPA on November 16, 2015. In attendance and participating at this meeting were Mayor Chuck Hinz and Council Members Marilyn Cook, Roger Overbeck, Don Norton Brad Sevcik, Mike Peebler (out-going) and Dick Pilcher (in-coming). Also in attendance and participating in this meeting were City Clerk Lori Pickart, Deputy City Clerk Liz Schura, Public Works Superintendent and Building Official Vince Bading, and Planning and Zoning Administrator Dean Helander.

Major Accomplishments

The following were identified as major city accomplishments during the past two years:

- Continue to keep tax rate low
 - Controlled spending
 - Lowest taxes in metro area
- Addressed sewer utility rates
- Financial participation in first segment of regional Dry Creek/Indian Creek trunk sewer project
- Implementation and growth of REDI; REDI became a viable committee
- Three new business developments
- Getting new restaurant
- Obtained A1 bond rating Moody's
- Leaf pickup implementation and adjustment of private contractor
- Developed a replacement schedule for city vehicles and bigger ticket items
- Expanded South Troy Park with 2 additional ball diamonds
- Supported Robins baseball team
- Working on completing the connection to the Cedar Valley Nature Trail at South Troy Park (in process)
- Completed trail head enhancements on CVNT and Main Street
- Streets are in great shape as many have been improved with new overlays
- Progress on completion of central section of Main Street paving; acquired 2 properties to date
- Completed Chester Road reconstruction project
- Utility extensions to allow for growth of city
 - Extended sewer and water to NW corner of city to assist in development of area
- Retrofitted water to the Wood 1st and 2nd Additions
- Repaired Grand Court drainage problem
- Repaired NCPR/Irish Hill drainage problem
- Corrected draining problem between Heartleaf and Chester Road
- Worked on Zieser Farms drainage area
- Cleaned several ditches to assist flow of water
- Cleaned up major storm damage
- Created water safety loop between Robinwood Drive and N. Woodland Drive
- Created/updated Citizens' Complaint process
- New fire truck on the way
- Hired full-time Streets Department employee
- Completed voluntary annexations

Issues, Concerns, Trends and Opportunities

The following were identified as issues, concerns, trends, and opportunities that may affect future city services, policies, finances or operations:

- Continue progress of city growth while keeping taxation low
- Expansion of commercial tax base
- Infrastructure growth keeping pace with and allowing for city growth
- Need for “City Center” – new City Hall/Community Center
 - Also consider Library/Historical Center
- Need to evaluate overall city staffing needs
- Evaluate the need for a full time police officer/chief.
- We need to look at the pay for our elected city officials to assure it is competitive and motivational.
- Tower Terrace’s future and what it means for Robins.
- Additional ways to assist and promote REDI
- Need to renew annexation agreement with Hiawatha
- Top soil preservation and replacement
- Impact of state property tax legislation on city revenues
- Need to make a decision regarding Northwest Regional Retention Plan

On-Going Commitments/Obligations

The following were identified as on-going commitments/obligations for the upcoming 24 month period:

- Continue participation in regional Dry Creek/Indian Creek trunk sewer project
- Continue sanitary sewer infiltration/remediation activities
- Complete blacktop or concrete remainder of seal coated streets
- Continue to move forward with Tower Terrace Road/I-380 interchange and lobby for funding
- Continue drainage improvements in neighborhoods
- Continue implementation of the plan to improve appearance of Main Street
- Construct urban cross section of Main Street from Troy Road to Mentzer Road
- Continue to retrofit water in existing subdivisions
- Utility obligations of city related to Flynn/Luloff properties (on hold)
- South Troy Park – add trail and bridge to connect to Cedar Valley Nature Trail
- Woodland Drive trail connection
- Continue economic development initiatives and continue support for REDI
- Develop 5-year city staffing plan
- Develop plan for downtown/original town revitalization
- Develop water and sewer extension policy
- Make a decision regarding Northwest Regional Retention Plan

New Priority Projects, Programs, Policies and Initiatives

The Mayor and City Council reviewed potential new projects, programs, policies and initiatives for consideration and selected the following as priorities for the upcoming 24 month period:

- Develop a formal employee evaluation process
- Evaluate need for potential expansion of RBI-type programs to involve community (flag football, dodgeball, kickball, sand volleyball)
- Develop plan for future growth of municipal buildings
- Work on sewer development/sewer connection fees
- Renew 28E annexation agreement with Hiawatha
- Develop maintenance agreement with Hiawatha regarding Robins Road and other joint jurisdiction roads

Organizational Effectiveness

The Mayor and City Council reviewed a variety of ideas relating to improving organizational effectiveness to accomplish the selected goals and priorities. After review and discussion, the Mayor and City Council selected the following steps to improve organizational effectiveness:

- Continue the goal for the Council and City Departments to control spending
- Hold work sessions every six months to review the status of implementing the priorities identified in this goal setting report; use the goal setting report as a guideline for city actions
- Continue to explore methods to enhance communications with citizens
- Conduct financial impact/cost-benefit analysis of proposed new major developments/annexation requests
- Update Policy Manual

Final Comments

It was a pleasure to once again assist the City of Robins with this goal setting process.

It is important to note that the prioritization of projects and initiatives is not “cast in stone.” They can be modified as new circumstances may occur. It is recommended that an “action plan” be developed to accomplish the planning goals. The action plan would define the steps that would be needed to accomplish each goal, identify who is responsible for implementation, and establish a timeline for accomplishment. As identified in the Organizational Effectiveness initiatives, it is recommended that the Action Plan be reviewed at least semi-annually by the Mayor, City Council, and staff to monitor the status of implementing the goals.

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