

Salida Citizen Forum #4

AGENDA

October 27, 2014

Notes/Minutes

Jere reported to the group that Cynda Green resigned from the Forum earlier this morning, making a group of 11. Gayle Davis was not able to make the final meeting of the Forum. Jere mentioned that she had reached out to her for feedback on the proposed recommendation but Gayle had not yet gotten back to her.

In attendance:

- 1. Mike Rosso***
- 2. Forrest Whitman***
- 3. Mary Hay***
- 4. Dan Smith***
- 5. Lee Hart***
- 6. Holly Russell***
- 7. Sandy Farrell***
- 8. Lezlie Berkley***
- 9. Lisa Marvel***
- 10. Monika Griesenbeck***

Absent: Gayle Davis

- 11. Jere Thomas—Facilitator***
- 12. Emily Katsimpalis—City of Salida staff***
- 13. Christian Samora—City of Salida staff***

OUTCOMES

- Understanding of City's current communications
- Clarity on what is and is not working
- Identification of root causes and potential opportunities

- Agreement on 3-4 concrete recommendations to be presented to City Council

GROUP AGREEMENTS

1. Any email that pertains to the whole group should be cc'd with the rest of the group
2. Maintain our sense of humor
3. Once a decision is made the group agrees to embrace that decision.
4. Decisions will be made by majority vote. A quorum of 9 forum members is needed to take a vote on any item.
5. Audio recording is permitted for personal/internal group use only. Group agrees recordings will not be shared outside the group.
6. Meeting notes will be taken by City staff and sent to the group for final revisions and approval

AGENDA

In our final meeting the group will:

- 1- Review the summary and raw data charts below and propose additions/changes
- 2- Make final recommendations and vote on what to present to city council
- 3- Identify and vote on a format to present the recommendations and forum members to make the presentation to city council

Jere wanted to ensure that everyone left feeling good about the process.

Mary Hay told the group that she had looked up the word “transparency” in the dictionary; she read the definition. Mary did not think the process had gone the way she expected. She thought the Forum would be a citizen driven effort—not the City taking the lead. She had thought there would be an elected secretary, chair, etc. She said she did not understand why the staff was so involved.

She mentioned the Councilman Brown “Citizens’ Meetings” and thought they are a good example of connecting with and hearing from citizens. Mary sees many issues of transparency between the City and citizens. She mentioned the budget and having to file CORAs for things that should be readily available. She supports more newspaper involvement and agendas being released earlier. Mary doesn’t support the recommendations presented in the summary provided with the agenda. For one she thought the ombudsmen role should be modified in the recommendations, and that it should clearly state this would be a neutral party—not affiliated with staff or Council. Sandy Farrell seconded this idea.

Dan Smith brought a summary of his thoughts and the process of the committee. Dan thought the last meeting felt rushed and reflected that he thought the process would be more of sitting down with group members and hashing out several specifics to recommend to Council.

Jere asked how specific the recommendations should be. He responded not too much minutiae but still fairly specific.

Monika Griesenbeck said she concurred with Dan and Mary's comments. Monika believes there is a communication problem between the City and citizens, and this communication problem was why the Forum was formed. She questioned the process of the group and why a facilitator is needed. She noted her work on the deer task force and that task force had not needed a facilitator but rather functioned well with an appointed secretary, committee chair, etc.

Emily (staff) clarified why this Forum format was unique, and the related history of Dara and former Deputy City Clerk Audrey Gilpin hearing at a conference about this particular format as an innovative way to get citizen feedback. The format (4 meetings of only 1.5 hours, led by a facilitator) was made very clear from the beginning to Council and the Forum members, as this was a new format that Council agreed to try at staff's recommendation in order to have a focused, time sensitive discussion on one specific topic.

Monika said she was concerned for the subject at hand—citizen/city communication. Why for such a hefty/weighty subject is there a need for an outside facilitator that she feels has guided the Forum, and for the short time frame? She said the elephant in the room was the political divide on Council, the divide within City staff, and the citizen divide and the fact that a major political issue (2A petition) is in the wings.

Monika said she felt negative about the process and feels that it hasn't worked. She said that the biggest issue right now is the issue of transparency.

Lisa Marvel said that she thought tonight's meeting would be hashing things out together and getting to specific recommendations.

Lezlie Burkley said that she thought it was clear that a facilitator would be involved and was not surprised at the process and how it has gone. She pointed out that at the 1st meeting (and 2nd and 3rd) the group had every opportunity to change the process and the format.

Lezlie thought the facilitator for this part of the process worked very well. She thought that maybe further down the road there would not be a need for a facilitator (if group was to continue meeting on their own, etc.). She mentioned that Jere has been very neutral through the whole process and did a great job being neutral.

Jere then went through the plan/agenda as it stood for the evening.

Sandy Ferrell said she believes a confusing message is coming from the City and that there seems to be communication chaos in City Hall. She mentioned Council telling staff specific directions that are not followed through and brought up the creation of the Arts & Recreation Director, and how that was handled very poorly and was still not clear given Michael Varnum's position. Sandy believes the City must be extremely clear on what they're trying to communicate.

Jere then asked if she should continue as the facilitator, left the room and had the group vote. Mike Rosso voted for the meeting to continue with Jere leading as the facilitator. Dan Smith seconded. 2 opposed, with 8 in favor, the motion carried.

After this the group started going through each of the possible recommendations as listed under the raw data section for the last half hour of the meeting.

The group completed going through a few of the recommendations and realized they needed to request another meeting to complete the process. Also, the quorum was changed to 8 for the 5th meeting given that the group now has 11 members.

At the end of the meeting, all were in agreement that the process was going better. Monika mentioned she wasn't feeling negative about the Forum process anymore and thought Jere was doing her best to be a neutral facilitator and was in favor of Jere coming back for the 5th meeting to facilitate.

Deputy City Clerk Christian Samora will ask Council at the Nov. 4, 2014 Council meeting for permission to continue discussion to a 5th meeting. Jere Thomas agreed to facilitate the meeting free of charge.