

The Regular Meeting of the Meeker Town Board was held Tuesday, October 6, 2009 at Town Hall.

Members Present	Mayor	Etheridge
	Trustees	Omer Mills Halandras Cook Strate Gerloff
Town Staff Present	Town Administrator	Day
	Town Planner	Smith
	Town Clerk	Cook
	Public Works Super.	Overton
	Chief of Police	Hervey
	Town Attorney	Viscardi
	Admin. Assist.	Niemi
Citizens Present	Nikki Turner	RB Herald Times
	Jeff Burkhead	RB Herald Times
	John Boyd	CNCC
	Jim Lichty	Archetype Design Group
	Rich Sales	University of Denver
	RBC County Commissioners	
	Approximately 60 members of the public	

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Etheridge called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

ROLL CALL

All Trustees present.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mayor Etheridge asked if there were any changes to the agenda, with none noted.

A motion was made by Trustee Halandras to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Trustee Cook. All ayes, motion carried.

APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS

Mayor Etheridge asked for questions or comments regarding the revised set of vouchers dated September 30, 2009. Trustee Cook inquired about item #37 under the Water Fund óCentral Computer Control Upgrade and what it was for. Day explained it was the system the Trustees had looked at during their capital projects tour on 7th Street. Trustee Omer inquired if the cost was mostly software or did it include hardware also? Public Works Superintendent Russell Overton stated it was everything. Mayor Etheridge asked for additional comments or questions with none noted.

A motion to approve the revised set of vouchers dated September 30, 2009 was made by Trustee Omer, seconded by Trustee Strate. All ayes, motion carried.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Presentation of public draft of the Town of Meeker proposed 2010 Budget and Budget Public Hearing Date.

Administrator Day stated budget changes were outlined in an attached memo, and had decreased due to lower revenues, other items moved around and the Fairfield donation reduced by \$10,000. Mayor Etheridge asked if there had been any notification to the County regarding the Fairfield change? Day stated not yet, but would be if the Board confirmed this proposed budget to be submitted to the public. Mayor Etheridge inquired if there was budgeting was still zero for mineral lease/mineral severance revenue, with Day replying yes. Day stated Systems Development had many projects and she was unsure if the Town had taken on more than they could do. She stated the Ute Road and sidewalks to the new elementary school would be priority and would work on the other projects as they could.

Day stated a contract had been entered into for the Energy Impact Grant (which will still have to go through the State's system) and the State was happy with the new budget. She also added it looks like the enhancement funding may be approved to be transferred to the other project (sidewalks along Sulphur Creek Road), with the requested being scheduled for October 29, 2009 (presentation at the NWTPR meeting). Mayor Etheridge inquired if Day could tell the Board more about the Energy Impact Grant, clarifying there was a contract. Day stated yes there was a contract, and Dave Morlan, Mr. Overton and she had worked to see what could be removed, reduced or postponed until 2011. She added within a few weeks the Town would possibly be able to begin the design work. Mayor Etheridge inquired if the whole design would need to be re-visited; with Day stating yes. Mayor Etheridge asked the Board if they had any questions. Trustee Omer stated he had a question under capital projects, asking if the \$500,000 for the sidewalks, curb and gutter on the west side of Sulphur Creek Road, was a definite amount? Day stated if the Enhancement funding is approved to be transferred it would be \$650,000, and may provide funding for the sidewalks along Ute Road, one of the items taken out of the project with energy impact funding. Day said the Town will have to match the Enhancement funding with a 20 percent match, maybe generating enough funding to get the trail to Market Street along the 2nd Street right of way. Trustee Mills clarified the location and asked if it would have to be fenced? Day stated it would be down 2nd Street only on one side and was unsure about the fence. Trustee Mills stated if the Town put in a trail, and said "use this" people might fall into the ditch, inquiring if the Town would be liable. Day stated those were things the Town would need to discuss.

Trustee Strate asked why there was \$10,000 budgeted for elections? Town Clerk Lisa Cook stated the Town had budgeted for a contingency which had not been done the past two years. She stated she had spoken with Nancy Amick, who stated she always budgeted for a contingency as there may be a recall or an issue with the ballot. Ms. Cook stated it was a good idea and hoped the amount would be more than sufficient. Mayor Etheridge asked for additional questions with none noted. She stated the next step would be to set the Public Hearing for November 17, 2009 for the proposed 2010 budget giving the public time to access the draft, allow for adjustments and questions to be addressed.

A motion was made by Trustee Mills to schedule the Public Hearing for the Proposed 2010 Budget for the Town of Meeker on November 17, 2009, seconded by Trustee Halandras. All ayes, motion carried.

Mayor Etheridge thanked Administrator Day and Ms. Cook for their work on the 2010 Budget and the memos to the Board summarizing changes made from the previous draft. Administrator Day thanked Ms. Cook for her hard work, with Trustee Mills adding his appreciation for the constant emails allowing him to see the others feedback.

Discussion concerning ordering a new police vehicle.

Chief of Police Bob Hervey stated he had spoken with Officer Amick, who had requested the Town purchase a pickup, stating his reasons were: 1) he didn't like the suspension on the SUV's, and 2) he liked the idea of having the dog closer to him. Chief Hervey stated the dog would be in the backseat of a four-door truck and the "insert"

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Officer Amick wanted to use was an ðE/Zö insert which allowed space for the dog and a seat for a prisoner with an advertised cost of \$1,795.00. He stated Officer Amick had said a pickup could also be used to pick up stray dogs when Animal Control wasn't available. Chief Hervey stated some of what Officer Amick had requested made sense and after checking with a couple automakers, he believed a pickup would be cheaper than an SUV. He stated Day had relayed that Board members had commented that a pickup might be harder on the dog for getting in and out, with Chief Hervey stating he didn't feel it would be an issue as the dog would be getting into the cab of the pickup and stray dogs would be put in the bed of in a portable kennel. Chief Hervey stated Mr. Overton had pointed out that they would need to use a toolbox in the bed for equipment, and toolboxes aren't known for keeping items dry. He added most of the equipment would be items that wouldn't matter if they stayed dry or clean, and the paperwork would be up front.

Trustee Halandras inquired if Officer Amick would drive the vehicle home each night and if they were concerned about gas mileage. Chief Hervey stated Officer Amick would take the vehicle home, and there wasn't much difference in gas mileage between a Crown Victoria sedan (based on their large engines) and the F-150 pickup truck. Trustee Mills stated he felt the police department would find a pickup to be handy, especially with a K-9 unit. Trustee Gerloff stated he was concerned about the dog, and inquired if the Town picked up the medical bills for the dog, with Chief Hervey stating yes. Trustee Gerloff asked Chief Hervey if an all-wheel drive sedan had been considered? Chief Hervey stated generally the bid was put out and they went with the lowest bid. Trustee Gerloff stated even with the insert in the truck, from the rocker panel down to the ground, there would be considerable stress on the shoulders of the dog, and the all-wheel sedan was just a thought. Mayor Etheridge asked if there were any additional questions with none noted.

Chief Hervey inquired as to what the Board would like him to do, with Trustee Mills stating he would like to see a pickup purchased. Trustee Gerloff stated he wasn't sold on a pickup in this situation but either vehicle was fine with and to consider the cost, inquiring if they were looking at a full size pickup with Chief Hervey stating yes. Mayor Etheridge stated the main concern would be price with a secondary concern the ease of access for the dog, telling Chief Hervey to go out to bid for what he was looking for. The Board concurred to request bids for a pickup.

OTHER TOWN BOARD BUSINESS

Mayor Etheridge inquired if there was any other Board business (i.e. Managers Reports or updates), with Day stating no. Mayor Etheridge stated a brief recess would be taken until 7:00 p.m. Day reminded audience members already present to complete the online housing needs assessment survey.

A motion was made by Trustee Gerloff at 6:40 p.m. to take a short 20 minute recess to allow the public time gather to hear the presentations, seconded by Trustee Halandras. All ayes, motion carried.

Presentations and Public Discussion concerning potential uses for Elementary School, located on Main Street between 4th and 5th Streets after school site is vacated in 2010. 7:00 p.m.

Mayor Etheridge recalled the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Mayor Etheridge stated she had a few comments she would like to make prior to the presentations, stating she had been hopeful there would be a roomful of people for the presentations and discussions and was pleased to see so many in attendance. Mayor Etheridge stated 5 ½ years ago when she ran as a trustee, there was an ad in the paper that simply stated ðif you love Meeker and want to see it get better, than apply to run for the positionö and was how she got here 5 ½ years ago, stating there wasn't much doubt in her mind with everyone present tonight, they love the community and want to see it get better. Mayor Etheridge stated as public servants, the focus for the Board would be to make the best decisions, in the best interest of the community as whole, including financial responsibility, long-term economic viability and to make decisions that are in concert with the community's culture. She stated she had been told ðsince the current building was 70 years old, then whatever decision we make for how we move forward with the area, literally is an opportunity of a lifetime.ö Mayor Etheridge stated a decision could only be as good as all of its best

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options, and the more options they had, the better the decision would be.

Mayor Etheridge stated the audience would first hear from the County's architect for what they had in mind for the site. She stated other presentations included John Boyd from Colorado Northwestern Community College (CNCC) regarding expansion in Meeker as well as Rich Sales from the University of Colorado at Denver. She stated the Board hoped the discussions would be positive, cooperative and focused on the topic; "what are the options?" She added there would be no decision made tonight as this was part of the process, for which she hoped would include the people in the room, and the community as a whole. She also asked the audience once the presentations were over, if they would like to add comments, suggestions, options or had questions, to come to the podium; provide their name and address for the record. She then introduced the first presenter: Jim Lichty of Archetype Design Group representing Rio Blanco County Commissioners.

Rio Blanco County Presentation Mr. Lichty thanked Mayor Etheridge and stated his firm (Archetype Design Group) had been working on a master plan for county facilities relative to the court house and other functions of the county. He stated the Commissioners had called asking if he could evaluate four specific sites which were: property north of Town referred to as Meeker Terrace (Option 4), stating property in that location had been offered to the County and was annexed to the Town. Mr. Lichty stated another site option (Option 3) was the old BLM facility located on Hwy 64, with the other two sites in the town square (Option 1 of Meeker School Site and Option 7 of Courthouse Square). Mr. Lichty stated Option 1 in the town square was presented to the Board a few months ago; the Meeker School site. He stated they proposed to have 5th Street vacated, building a portion of the new facility over the street to include the entire school property. He went on to say the proposed building (regardless of the site area) would be a 50,000 square feet (approximately) 48-bed facility housing a multiplicity of functions, primarily justice and law enforcement functions, as well as public meeting rooms, locker rooms for law enforcement and future expansion space in the lower level. He showed the audience how the facility would be laid out and overlapping into the vacated street, with the site plan including a good deal of parking to the east side with an addition of 151 parking spaces. Mr. Lichty stated the County intended to retrofit the existing courthouse as well as the new facility with geo-thermo heat pump system with the added benefit of allowing a snow melt system under the public parking lot. He also showed a rendering of what the proposed facility would look like from downtown, stating the proposed facility would be approximately seven feet taller than the existing building and set back approximately 15-20 feet from where the school currently sits. Mr. Lichty also outlined the advantages and disadvantages of the site.

Mr. Lichty presented the BLM site (Option 3), stating the area was approximately 2 acres, located on Hwy 64, and was an adequate site for the planned development. He outlined the advantages as well as the disadvantages of the site. He also stated the site did not easily provide for future expansion and development costs would be high. Mr. Lichty stated the Meeker Terrace site (Option 4) would be approximately three acres of property offered at no cost to the County, but the area had not been specifically defined. He stated development costs would go up if the property moved further north or away from the highway, and outlined how much water line and sewer lines would be needed to access the proposed site. Mr. Lichty outlined the advantages and disadvantages of the site, stating the site had the highest development costs of the four proposed sites. Mr. Lichty went on to present the proposed Courthouse Square option (Option 7), stating it would utilize the vacant land around the courthouse, connecting current operations to future operations, with this site option just hypothetical at this time. Mr. Lichty stated the front of the courthouse would be left with added ADA renovations, cutting a driveway through the block to create more parking (creating 68 parking spaces and removing 20 in the back), at the loss of the front lawn. He stated the red area depicted the proposed two-story facility which could be achieved under the Town's current planning and zoning codes. He added the development costs for this site would be relatively low, and the final phase of renovation for the courthouse would be included. Mr. Lichty also outlined site advantages and disadvantages.

Mr. Lichty outlined the development costs for each site, stating overall, the Meeker school site development costs would be \$1.2 million, the BLM site, \$1.8 million, the Meeker Terrace site, \$2.6 million and the Courthouse

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Square, \$457,000. Larry Beck ó 385 Park Avenue inquired if the last three sites Mr. Lichy had shown were of the same plan, with Mr. Lichy stating yes, as it was a free standing facility and had been designed to be built anywhere. Mr. Lichy showed the audience a spreadsheet which outlined the assigned value of each site, based on objectives (i.e. minimizing initial development costs, maximizing environmental cleanup), with the Meeker School site scoring 2.55 points, the BLM site scoring 1.04 points, Meeker Terrace scoring 1 point and the Courthouse Square scoring 3.41 points, which made it number one by the evaluation. Mr. Lichy concluded his presentation by stating the Courthouse Square wins the numerical race, stating Mayor Etheridge said it best: "We are here to discuss it."

Brian Conrado ó 449 Park Avenue stated the audience hadn't heard anything about the cost of the proposed facility and was important to the community as taxpayers. Mr. Lichy stated the information had been presented to the Board at the previous presentation, and was approximately \$15 million for the proposed facility on the Meeker school site. Mr. Beck inquired of Mayor Etheridge if they could get a copy of the presentation with the costs. Mayor Etheridge inquired of Mr. Lichy if the presentation could be linked through the County's website, with Mr. Lichy replying it would be up to the County. Mayor Etheridge asked the County to create a link on their website so the community could like to review the presentation.

Carol Parr ó 595 County Road 4 stated regardless of the location, she wanted to know where the money would come from; how would the County obtain it without raising taxes? Ken Parsons ó Rio Blanco County Commissioner outlined the State of Colorado's concerns with the existing facility as well as the various problems, stating it seemed more logical to put money into a facility that would meet the county's needs for the coming years; either renovating the old facility or build a new one and in the end the citizens of Rio Blanco County would pay for it. David Meece ó 3614 County Road 4 inquired if Mr. Parsons was saying it would be mandatorily forced upon the citizens of Rio Blanco County to build something, either mandated by the State, Feds or the community does it themselves and if that was the bottom line? Mr. Parsons replied ultimately that is what it comes down to.

Mr. Beck stated he had two questions, 1) how much had been put in the existing courthouse in the last three or four years and 2) what would trigger what Mr. Parsons just said "might be mandated?" Mr. Parsons replied it would likely be an inmate lawsuit, an accident or some act of violence where they weren't able to segregate inmates. He stated the money the County has put into the facility was approximately \$400,000 in the last few years for ADA renovations; elevator, vestibule and those types of things.

Donna Gutierrez ó 148 Main Street ó inquired if they could continue adding on to the existing courthouse and not build another building? Mr. Parsons stated that option had been asked for. Ms. Gutierrez stated she owns commercial property, and to get another tax increase would hurt. Ms. Parr stated at each proposed site Mr. Lichy had mentioned there would be room for expansion, asking if they took the courthouse or the elementary school, would there be the potential for further expansion on the site? Mr. Parsons stated yes.

Mr. Conrado stated he found it interesting there was no mention of Moffatt County; they have a new facility which hadn't been built in the middle of town. He added the other point he wanted to make, was that nobody mentioned the historic appeal of Meeker. Mr. Conrado stated there were many people who were concerned about preserving historic downtown Meeker; forming a committee that would do everything they could to try to prevent the loss of the Meeker School, and the picture the audience saw (during Mr. Lichy's presentation) wasn't a true representation of what tourists would see. He stated he grew up in Meeker and one thing the Town could always count on was tourism, and the community seemed to forget that. Mayor Etheridge thanked Mr. Conrado for his comments and stated that was what the Board was looking for; different opinions. She thanked Mr. Lichy for his presentation in regards to what the commissioners were considering and thanked Mr. Parsons for providing additional information. Mayor Etheridge stated she would like to hear from those who were specifically on the agenda before the meeting was opened for public comments, and introduced Mr. Boyd from CNCC.

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CNCC Presentation ó John Boyd ó CNCC ó stated he didn't have a presentation as the college wasn't to that point. He stated he was asked some time ago if the Meeker School became available would the college be interested in expanding in Meeker, and the answer was yes. Mr. Boyd stated the college was extremely busy and they were stretched right now with five major projects and as those projects finalized within the next two years they would focus more on what the college could do in Meeker as he believed there were opportunities for the college as part of the service area. Mr. Boyd stated if the Town decided to keep the facility and renovate it, the college would partner and assist in finding grants to help with the costs as the college wouldn't be able to do it themselves and had never been a commitment they looked at. He stated if the facility wouldn't be available, they would look at expansion in another area of Meeker, as they have been offered land also. He added it was the college's intent to grow in Meeker and treasure the partnership. Mr. Boyd stated that was all he could tell the audience at this time and offered to answer any questions

Nettie Fay Modlin ó 1023 Julie Circle inquired of Mr. Boyd if the college decided to expand, would there dorm rooms for out of state students and if it was in the overall plan? Mr. Boyd replied probably not at first, as they need to be careful not to spread themselves too thin and not be able to meet their commitments. Mr. Boyd reiterated the college would expand in Meeker, possibly in two years when the other projects were stabilized, and when expanding they want to ensure they can financially do what they promised. Mayor Etheridge thanked Mr. Boyd for his presentation. She introduced the next presenter, Rich Sales from the University of Colorado Denver ó Grand Junction office.

University of Colorado Denver ó Rich Sales thanked Mayor Etheridge for the introduction and invitation from the Town to be part of the discussion and evaluation of the site and the potential adaptive re-use of the building. Mr. Sales stated they had completed a historic assessment of the facility with current architectural inventory with specific cultural and time values of the building. He explained he was the western slope director for the center which utilized graduate students in architecture planning and landscaping architecture going into rural Colorado to help communities who may not have the staff or expertise to re-design facilities such as the Meeker School. Mr. Sales stated Meeker has maintained the historic fabric and character in the community which was very valuable.

Mr. Sales stated he was not present to speak against the needs of the County as he understood those are very real needs; he was there to speak about the school site. He stated when he looked at the project, he saw site placement, with the site in the heart of Meeker's downtown and the community needed to consider that. Mr. Sales stated the architectural value of the building was great; it is a WPA building and tied into what the community lives with everyday.

Mr. Sales stated another benefit was the facility really did have a scaled identity to the community and could remain a strong cultural asset. He added many recent funding sources were concerned with SMART growth. Mr. Sales stated the Department of Local Affairs recently did a couple of things; 1) looking at how we look at our downtown and 2) are more willing to fund projects that keep business downtown, keep governmental entities downtown, looking at adaptive re-use (whether it is a re-use of the school or a new courthouse). Mr. Sales stated in terms of economic development, the courthouse and the activity around it was great and hopefully the Town could maintain it, but also the potential of the school as it could have any number of incubator (retail) support or any type of cultural assets. Mr. Sales stated a program initiative was just announced through the Colorado Historic Society and State Historic Fund, specifically targeting economic development in rural communities; not saving historic buildings; but saving communities. He stated the details weren't in place yet, but the State Historic Fund would like to instill a sense of pride to local communities as well as preserving important places, using the fund to focus the resources as economic engines for re-development in rural communities. He added Meeker would be a poster child for the program, to come in and re-do the school, using State Historic Fund monies (up to \$500,000). He explained the money came from gambling and encouraged the audience as they consider the process to look at the opportunities. Mayor Etheridge thanked Mr. Sales for his presentation and

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asked if the audience had any questions. Shonda Otwell ó Interim Director Meeker Chamber of Commerce stated she had attended a Downtown Revitalization Conference a couple of weeks ago and heard about the same funding as well as the possibility of Brownsfield funding. Mayor Etheridge thanked Rio Blanco County, John Boyd and Rich Sales for their presentations.

Mayor Etheridge stated she had an email (attached) from Trina Zager-Brown with comments on the topic of discussion requesting it be read into the minutes of the meeting. Mayor Etheridge stated she would read the email and would then open the meeting to comments or suggestions.

Sparky Pappas ó 507355 Hwy 13 & 650 7th Street stated she was the spokesperson for the Historical Society of Rio Blanco County and their main concern was the elementary school be preserved and restored. She stated they didn't have a position on what was done with it other than it was preserved.

Steve Loshbaugh 890 7th Street stated he appreciated Mayor Etheridge's comments that this was a decision of a lifetime. He stated having served 20 years on the council, he couldn't think of any decision made that would hold a candle to this, it was a huge decision and was very happy to see it would be up to the public to decide.

Mr. Beck stated he and his wife moved to Meeker in 1999, and had been asked many times, "how did you find Meeker?" He stated his response was when looking for a place to retire they wanted a small town with friendly people, and had purchased their home close to downtown, so they could walk. He added they would have never moved to Meeker if there was a justice center in town as it would destroy the look of the town.

Donna Guttierrez ó 148 Main Street - Ms. Guttierrez stated her concern was where the inmates would be seen from her property, as they go outside for exercise during the day? Mr. Lichty stated the recreation yard for inmates would be approximately 1,500 square feet and totally enclosed, open only with a high overhead door providing fresh air and would not be seen from the outside. Ms. Guttierrez stated it would be nice to know that her children were safe and felt that was what people were more concerned about than anything, to know that they were safe. Mr. Lichty stated her concerns were valid and the proposed facility would address the safety concerns and enhance the citizens of Meeker's quality of life from a safety standpoint.

Nettie Fay Modlin 1023 Julie Circle stated she wanted to present the idea of an assisted living/housing development with a hospice area. She explained they could leave the building where it was, renovating it into an assisted living facility. Ms. Modlin stated she had heard for years that Meeker needed an assisted living facility and to her it is perfect as the elderly could walk to the library, the bank, the drugstore and the restaurants. Mayor Etheridge thanked Ms. Modlin for her suggestion, stating it was the type of thing she was looking for; other options so there wasn't just one option to choose from when the Board decided what to do with the property. Mr. Lichty stated, relative to Ms. Modlin's suggestion, it would be a good use for the building as it is one story, but moreover because the parking demands for that type of facility were lesser. Mr. Boyd added where he came from (South Carolina) there was an old school renovated into an assisted living facility, with the firm selling the tax credits. He stated the cost was almost nothing as they sold the tax credits to companies who needed them.

Gus Halandras ó 789 8th Street stated he remembered a discussion from 25-30 years ago regarding a prison in Meeker and concerns of safety. He stated they were all concerned and didn't think anything done by the County or the Town was going to be a foolish decision that would jeopardize people's safety.

Mr. Halandras stated there was another element to consider; Rangely was interested in landing the proposed facility. He stated it isn't Meeker versus the County, it isn't Meeker versus the hospital, it's the same pocket, the same children, the same people going downtown, we are all one, not one against the other, stating "let's just make the right decision." Mr. Conrado stated they keep hearing about downtown folding up if the jail wasn't built there. He stated there were so many things keeping downtown Meeker going, and believed that the town

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shouldn't be dependent on a justice center.

Avis Loshbaugh 6890 7th Street stated she would like to know some of the economic impacts they would have if the courthouse were added on to or the school was made into a justice center, compared to what the college would bring or a senior citizen facility? Mayor Etheridge stated she was unsure Ms. Loshbaugh's question could be answered tonight, but could be a side discussion for the Chamber of Commerce to have with their members, to discuss how businesses would be affected by certain entities downtown. She stated if the side discussion didn't provide answers, it would provide a better perspective. Ms. Loshbaugh stated that was what she would like, a better perspective as it was limited at this time. Ms. Guttierrez stated it would be hard to justify because businesses property taxes were going to go up and they know that, and if so, they need to be able to justify it. She added they would see revenue from the senior center, but if they weren't going to see revenue from the justice center, how were they going to pay the extra taxes? Mayor Etheridge agreed, stating that was why a discussion between business owners with the Chamber would have better answers than local government could provide.

Sandra Besseghini 6978 8th Street stated there appeared to be only a single approach taken by the County for the expansion or improvements that are required. She wondered if the County had looked at utilization of the school, particularly in view of the substantial grant funding that may be available to assist with renovations. Mayor Etheridge clarified that Ms. Besseghini was referring to what Mr. Sales had discussed, reusing the current building for the purpose of a justice center. Ms. Besseghini stated somehow combining it with the ongoing renovation of the existing courthouse, would perhaps lessen some of the impacts there. Mr. Lichty stated he had two comments, the first one regarding the economic impact question from Ms. Loshbaugh. He stated one of the economic impacts relative to money spent downtown in Meeker, stating there was roughly \$100,000 being spent in moving/housing jail inmates to different locations, with additional staff time and vehicle miles spent.

Mr. Lichty went on to address Ms. Besseghini's comment regarding the retrofitting of the existing facility for the justice center, stating remodeling parts of the school could be adapted to office use, without much modification, but trying to make security elements of a justice center move in an existing facility and the modifications necessary make it very difficult. Ms. Besseghini suggested leaving the jail and court facilities where they were, expanding them, and move the other offices into the renovated school building. Mr. Lichty stated it was the courts and jail systems that didn't work now in the existing facility. He stated the school could be adapted to a number of other uses and doesn't deny that, it just doesn't work for an integrated courthouse facility.

Jeff Madison 625 Garfield inquired if there was someone present who had been part of the decision by the school board to vacate the building? Commissioner Kai Turner stated when he was on the school board; they had been informed that due to excessive water leaks there were some significant structural issues. He added some of the footers were not safe and would be very expensive to correct or possibly could never be corrected to the standards they wanted. Mr. Turner stated the information he was familiar with at that time it would cost 105 percent of building new to restore the facility. He stated he didn't know if it had changed with the structural engineers the Town had, but was what the school board had been told at the time. Sparky Pappas stated she realized there were structural issues, but the administration building had been condemned, was brought back from the dead and is beautiful.

Reid Kelley 855 County Road 67 stated he didn't think the reason for an election had been discussed. Mayor Etheridge explained if there was an exchange of public property; the vote goes to the people. Mr. Reid stated Ms. Zager-Brown had suggested waiving the election, asking how that would be possible? Mayor Etheridge stated she was unsure of the exact details on that, and explained the reason for the property coming back to the possession of the Town, and it had been suggested the Town enter into a similar contract with the County.

Connie Theos (stating she lived in the county) stated the school should be saved for its great historic value, enhancing the historic character of downtown Meeker. She added she was interested in Site #4 but would

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address it with the County Commissioners on her own.

Si Woodruff ó Rio Blanco County Sheriff stated at present they have approximately 13 court days a month and the courts were demanding security be provided. He stated the jail issues were not simple, but as of today they have booked 640 people into the jail and in 2008 there were 800 booked, with the potential to put 900 people through an 18 person jail this year. He stated every time a department (police, state patrol or sheriff) hired another officer, arrests went up, more people were stopped, which means more people were picked up. He stated this was not the commissioner's burden to carry; it was the citizens of the community. He stated a comment was made ölargerö when building the new elementary school and it was built larger. If building a jail, they need it larger, to be as safe as possible and to build it so it lasts 75 years.

Travis Day 46 East Main stated he didn't have much of an idea of what to do with the old elementary building, and felt there wasn't enough consideration given to the Meeker Terrace site. Mr. Day stated there will be a need to build a new hospital and other governmental needs, and there is a need for more growth. He stated if water and sewer were run out that way, there was a lot of room for growth and the Town will grow. He added people will still come downtown as there are no other similar services available in the area.

Mayor Etheridge asked the Board for comments regarding the discussions. Trustee Mills stated thus far the Board had heard many good ideas. He stated he had a vision also and was similar to one discussed earlier, adding he wouldn't like to lose 5th Street or the courthouse lawn. Trustee Mills stated if the justice center stayed on the courthouse square and abutted the existing courthouse saving the elementary school for assisted living facilities or CNCC or another entity there was two, which would be a gain, not just sustain. He stated Mr. Day made a very good point regarding the water and sewer lines going out of town and would enhance Meeker, and there were alternatives if they stepped outside the box. He stated they could still keep the historic building and still use it for something viable, and they could still have a new courthouse and new jail. Mayor Etheridge inquired of the Board if they had any additional comments or questions with Trustee Halandras stating he agreed with Trustee Mills.

Mayor Etheridge stated she would like to make a few closing remarks, quoting Gus Halandras who had said; öwe are all one.ö The County, the Town, the hospital district, the rec. district, sanitation district and all citizens, we are all the same entity and hopefully this would be the beginning of a process where they can work together for what is going to be best for the community. She quoted öyou can please some people some of the time, but can't please all the people all the timeö stating eventually that will be case, but if they can please most of the people most of the time, wouldn't that be great. Mayor Etheridge expressed gratitude to John Boyd from CNCC Rangely, Rich Sales, Commissioners Ken Parsons, Kai Turner, and architect Jim Lichty the representation of the Meeker Chamber of Commerce, Rio Blanco County Historical Society and mostly to say öthank youö to the public for attending. Mayor Etheridge stated she couldn't tell them how appreciative she felt seeing faces in the audience, listening, communicating and supporting what their local government was trying to do, which is to make the best decision for the community. She stated hopefully the audience received more information, more education, having been a participant in local government and most importantly, providing their elected officials their perspective and was what the Board was seeking. She encouraged the audience to continue to be vocal, speaking to their commissioners, their Mayor, the Board of Trustees, the Town Administrator, County Administrator, Sheriff and Chief of Police, as they are their public servants and are present to do what is right for the community and what the citizens feel is right for the community. Mayor Etheridge thanked everyone again for their attendance and participation at the meeting.

Regular Meeting of the Town of Meeker – October 6, 2009

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Etheridge adjourned the meeting at 9:17 p.m.

Attest:

Mandi Etheridge, Mayor

Lisa Cook, Town Clerk