

About the City  
by  
Councilman Kingery  
(*Review Continued*)

One very important consideration the Council and Mayor have kept in front of us during the booms is the ability to fund the operation and maintenance (O & M) of a facility that we might find easy to build during a boom. Anything that cannot be affordable to operate and maintain during the non-boom is not going to be a wise investment for the future. Booms have been great for building infrastructure like the library and college, and our schools years ago, however without careful planning, booms do not assure we can afford to operate them in hard times. This is always an important aspect of what we want for our community.

As I share this information with you, I want to be very clear about an important fact. We have had very good council members, Mayor and City Administrators during the time I have served. We believe in input from everyone, including staff. We always want all the information we can obtain before making decisions. We do not want to find out after deciding that there was important information we missed before making our decision. Decisions should be based on facts, not emotions. Objectivity needs to prevail over emotions or poor decisions will often be made. When mistakes are made, we must do our best to correct the situation as soon as possible. (And yes, we have made some!) It serves no one to concentrate on blaming, but it helps to find the cause and improve the methods to avoid making the same mistake again. I have been fortunate to work with exceptional Council members who have consistently put the good of the City before themselves. We care about this city and are proud that you have entrusted us to do our part to continue to make this a great small town to live in.

Another important issue helped the City Council, Mayor, City Administrator and staff be successful. We have had a very good working relationship with the County Commissioners. We have regular meetings with them and share our concerns, difficulties and successes with each other. We are all part of the same community and we can always accomplish more when we work together as a team. Our County Commissioners are exceptional people and we are very fortunate to have these elected officials as part of our community.

Some things to remember:

- Enterprise funds (water, sewer, landfill, garbage collection) by state law must operate as a business and fund themselves. Some exceptions can be made but basically fees generated must pay for the normal operation. We don't like paying high fees either, but unless we can cut expenses we must pay as needed. If you don't pay your share, someone else must pay your share. An example of several years ago comes to mind. The sewage from Natural Bridge Park had been pumped and was being delivered to our Waste Water

Department. The County Commissioners asked if the City would waive the fees as a way of saving the county some money. Sounds good, however the Waste Water Department is one of our Enterprise Funds. It must collect money to pay for operational expenses. Someone must pay, or we violate State Statutes. Waving the fee would be asking the 6,000 people living in Douglas to pay so the 12,000 people living in the County would not have to pay. Since the 6,000 Douglas residents are also county residents, they were really asking half the residents of Converse County to pay the other 6,000 county residents share of a County expense. Sometimes we forget that residents living in our towns are also county residents and already are paying through the county.

- When people cheat the system, they are making the rest of us pay their share as well as ours. You have every reason to be upset with them. When people living outside of Douglas fail to pay fees when using the Enterprise Funds, they are cheating each of us. Douglas is glad to provide the systems, please pay your fair share by going to the land fill and pay the required fees. What you place in dumpsters the 6,000 Douglas residents must pay for.
- We cannot always do what you want, partly because we all want different things, but mostly we have a responsibility to make decisions that are best for the community.
- When we do something you don't agree with, talk to us. Usually there are good reasons why we do what we do. Perhaps your feedback can help us be better.
- Sometimes we cannot share all we know, especially in personnel issues. Those items, by law, must be kept confidential. I assure you we always try to be fair.
- The newspaper has been very fair with us and we really appreciate that!
- Most of the community has been very supportive with us and we appreciate that. We try to keep you informed, we probably fail at times. For that we apologize.
- We hope we have set a standard that you will expect in the future. (You should expect a lot from us.)
- We want to be open minded and we hope you will be open minded also. That helps us do our best for you.
- We can accomplish more if we are part of the solution than if we are part of the problem. If you see a problem, help us fix it!

Thank you for allowing me this privilege and opportunity. It has been an honor and I have learned and enjoyed all of the 8 years. I feel confident that every other Council member and the Mayor during these last 8 years feel pretty much the same.

I believe we have had an exceptional Mayor during my terms and want to compliment Bruce Jones. He came a long way and has done more for this community and the north east Wyoming community than we will ever know. He cares! We all care!