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#### **(Neb)-Scottsbluff Wants To Cut Subsidy To Zoo**

By: John Axtell Posted at: 06/05/2019 09:00 AM

SCOTTSBLUFF, Neb. (KNEB) - An overflow crowd filled the Scottsbluff City Council chambers Monday evening as supporters of the Riverside Discovery Center zoo came out in force to urge the council to continue the city's subsidy of the facility and its programs.

The city stepped forward a decade ago when finances threatened to close the RDC, approving a contract providing \$350,000 in annual funding but with the understanding the zoo would be self-sustaining at the end.

Mayor Raymond Gonzales told the audience that the council still supports the zoo and feels it is important, but that the city can't continue giving \$350,000 a year after the contract ends.

Gonzales said city revenues have continued to decline to the point that the council eliminated the parks director position when it became vacant, the city planner's job remains open, and employees are shouldering a larger share of health insurance costs.

Discovery Center Executive Director Anthony Mason told the council the zoo has taken and continues to take steps to cut costs including personnel adjustments while also looking for ways to increase revenue.

One way he plans to explore in the coming weeks is asking other nearby city council to also provide financial support.

RDC Board President Jordan Colwell told KNEB News that Mason and his board will continue to provide the city with financial reports and projections as requested by Mayor Gonzales, as well as working with the council on options and finding a level of support workable for both.