

Minutes of Budget Workshop held September 8, 2020

Budget workshop with the following present: Mayor Mark Bowen; Aldermen Jerry Stone, Sam Cortez, Erik Dahler, Ruben Gonzalez, Laura Reyna; City Secretary Josie Campa; Director of Public Works James McGrath; Police Chief Richard Priest.

Visitors: Frank Carrillo, Charles Cate.

Mayor Bowen opened the budget workshop at 8:12 p.m.

Before reviewing the proposed budgets for the Library, Animal Control and General Fund, the City Secretary told Council that she had incorporated 3% salary increases for all city employees. She told Council that the total for these raises was \$33,827.19.

The City Secretary reviewed the proposed Library budget and gave Council a copy of the email from the Library Director saying she had reviewed it and approved it.

The City Secretary reviewed the proposed budget for the Animal Control Department and said she had budgeted a "Reserve for Capital Improvements" line item totaling \$10,000.00 for future improvements to the kennels since she had some monies left over. She told Council she had received this request after she had drawn up the original budget. The City Secretary told Council the Animal Control Director had sent three bids that ranged from \$14,000.00 to over \$25,000.00. After discussion, it was agreed to take \$10,000.00 from the reserve fund that was being proposed for the Public Safety budget so that the kennels can be updated in the 2020-2021 FY.

The City Secretary then reviewed the proposed revenue for the General Fund with Council. After discussion, it was agreed to lower the Hotel/Motel tax line item from \$100,000.00 to \$70,000.00 due to plans to demolish the Days Inn.

The City Secretary reviewed the proposed General Operating Department's budget with Council. Discussion was held on hiring someone to assist the City Secretary that has finance experience to take over the finances of the city. The City Secretary told Council she is wanting an assistant that can assist with all duties, so she can start training that person for when she retires. After more discussion, it was agreed to increase the proposed salaries in this department by \$20,000.00, so that the city has a better chance of hiring someone with a financial background. The "Social Security" and "Retirement" line items were adjusted to go along with the increase in salary. Council also agreed to lower the "Professional Fees" line item from \$30,000.00 to \$20,000.00. The City Secretary told Council she would go back and tweak some of the line items to make up for the additional fees for benefits.

The City Secretary then reviewed the proposed Public Safety budget with Council. She asked for their thoughts on giving the Fire Department another \$6,000.00 a year and Council agreed on this increase. The City Secretary said she had set aside a "Reserve" line item to assist the Police Department with plans for next year. She said she had set aside \$40,000.00 however due to changes made earlier to animal control budget and salaries in the General Operating Department

this total was now down to \$20,000.00.

Police Chief Richard Priest told Council that his department would work with what is given to them. He said that a police vehicle is not as important as getting another officer, especially when the city gets the two convenient stores on the highway. After discussion, Chief Priest agreed to leave the \$20,000.00 in reserve and said if the money is needed somewhere else, Council can use it there.

Alderman Reyna asked about adding an annual alarm fee to bring in more revenue and Chief Priest explained how alarm calls work.

The City Secretary told the Council that the transfer from the General Fund to Animal Control would be increased from \$271,000.00 to \$281,000.00, as discussed earlier.

The City Secretary reviewed the Public Works' budget with Council. Alderman Reyna asked about whether an employee had been budgeted for the recycling program. The City Secretary told Council she had not budgeted for recycling, since nothing has been decided by Council at this time.

The City Secretary then reviewed the Culture and Recreation Department's proposed budget and told Council that the Tourism Promotion line item would drop to \$70,000.00 as discussed earlier when the hotel/motel tax amount was lowered by Council.

Alderman Gonzalez asked about what line item the fireworks are paid from and the City Secretary told Council in the past it has been taken from the "Tourism Promotion" line item since the 4th of July event has people here from surrounding VFWs. Alderman Gonzalez reminded us that fireworks costs can't be used out of Hotel Tax funds. He suggested an "Events" line item be set up. The City Secretary said she would look at the chart of accounts to see if a number can be set up for this.

The City Secretary then reviewed the list of bank accounts and their totals with Council.

The Mayor adjourned the workshop at 10:48 p.m.