

MINUTES OF A BUDGET WORKSHOP OF THE ZION CITY COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 2017, AT 5:30 P.M. IN THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL, 2828 SHERIDAN ROAD, ZION, ILLINOIS

.....

Mayor Hill called the workshop meeting to order.

On call of the roll the following answered present: Commissioners DeTienne, McKinney, Frierson, McDowell and Mayor Hill. A quorum was present.

Also present: Police Chief Steve Dumyahn, Fire/Rescue Chief John Lewis, Accounts/Finance Director David Knabel, Public Works Director Ron Colangelo and Building & Zoning Director Richard Ianson.

BUDGET/FISCAL YEAR 2017/2018

Director Knabel presented an updated version of the General Fund budget. He stated that the updates included offsetting revenue for the ash tree removal project in the amount of \$306,620 and an adjustment to capital outlay for the IPRF Safety Grant from \$18,000 to \$7,812. He asked what the next steps are and how the Council wants to handle the deficit. He stated that he needs direction from the Council.

Commissioner McDowell stated that the Airsoft entertainment tax revenue in the amount of \$2,000 should be deleted as Airsoft is no longer in business. He asked why the Veolia Host Fees are budgeted at \$150,000 less than last year. Director Knabel stated that less volume is expected and a decrease in tonnage is anticipated due to less construction debris. Commissioner McDowell asked why Martha's Day Care rent is so low. Director Knabel stated that the rent is for the tot lot area only. Commissioner McDowell asked about appropriate uses for the IPRF Safety Grant. Director Knabel stated that these restricted funds can be used for turnout gear, body cameras, and any item on the approved items list.

Commissioner Frierson asked why the permits revenue line item increased by \$25,000. Director Knabel stated that he had used a conservative amount for Midwestern Regional Medical Center permits so he increased the total from \$275,000 to \$300,000.

Mayor Hill asked if police officers parked in squad cars at various obscure locations could park on the street instead and issue speeding tickets as there is a speeding problem on Sheridan Road. Chief Dumyahn stated that these officers are writing reports or entering data into their computers when parked.

Mayor Hill stated that the City will receive \$144,035 from the Rick Robin adjudication decision and that the City will be looking for cash not liens.

Commissioner McDowell stated that a \$1.2 million reduction is needed to balance the budget. He stated that he looked very closely at the Police and Fire/Rescue Department budgets. He stated that the Police Department would delay the body camera project until next year so he deleted \$65,000 for purchase of the cameras and equipment and \$47,000 for a CSO's salary to manage the program. He stated that the Fire/Rescue Department would cut the Paid-on-Premise (POP) Program in the amount of \$446,760. He stated that this cut would cause an increase in Fire/Rescue Department overtime. Commissioner McDowell stated that the Beach Park consolidation project must be stepped up allowing access to Beach Park Fire personnel to mitigate the elimination of the POP Program.

Commissioner Frierson asked if there are alternatives to limit overtime and worker compensation injuries occurring without the POP Program. Commissioner McDowell stated that stepping up the consolidation would be an alternative but it would depend on how the agreement with Beach Park "plays out" regarding the level of control that the City of Zion would have over personnel. Mayor Hill stated that the cost to go back to only one POP personnel per shift would be \$149,000 and that \$180,000 was budgeted for overtime. He stated that, if the City is awarded the SAFER Grant, the Department will have three additional firefighters which would help reduce overtime. Chief Lewis stated that POPs cannot cover for full time Firefighter/Paramedics per State law. He stated that maybe the unions could agree not to have to use full time personnel and allow the POPs to cover the shifts.

Mayor Hill stated that the Fire/Rescue Department average of worker compensation cases in the City was high. He asked if it had anything to do with Fire/Rescue Department personnel having secondary employment. Chief Lewis stated that it did not. He stated that they are too busy while on duty in Zion.

Mayor Hill asked what could be done about the ambulance “frequent flyers”. Chief Lewis stated there isn’t anything that can be done because they cannot deny service and they must respond. He stated that City ordinance prohibits charging residents for ambulance calls. Director Knabel stated that, after a set number of calls, residents could be charged per call, however, the City would most likely never collect as most charges are written off. Mayor Hill stated that these nuisance calls are causing an overload on staff and may contribute to the worker compensation issues. Chief Lewis stated that the number of annual calls increase by about 200 calls every year and about one half of those are not emergencies. Commissioner McDowell stated that the City needs a strategy for billing after two or three calls. He stated that the lack of an acute care center in Zion may contribute to the problem as such a center may help as a resource for non-emergency referrals. Commissioner McKinney stated that perhaps a policy should be developed similar to those alarm companies have for false alarms. Director Knabel stated that currently there are five employees out on worker compensation citywide, one of which is in the Fire/Rescue Department. He stated that the total amount of worker compensation for the Fire/Rescue Department alone is \$377,000. Mayor Hill asked why worker compensation in the Fire/Rescue Department is more than double that of the Police Department. Director Knabel stated that firefighters are a higher risk and they work more shift hours. He stated that firefighters traditionally suffer knee and back injuries due to lifting.

Commissioner McDowell stated that the Council still needs to cut \$700,000 from the budget.

Commissioner Frierson asked if the City had a health insurance high deductible plan. Director Knabel stated that a high deductible plan is available, but employees do not choose it. He stated that such a plan is not a benefit to the employee because the employee health care contributions are so low. Commissioner McDowell suggested that the City could join a health insurance pool with other municipalities but it could not happen during this budget year. Director Knabel stated that he met with the Village of Beach Park on this issue. He stated that the issue is under investigation and it may have to be negotiated with the unions.

Commissioner McDowell asked the Council members if they were committed to a balanced budget. Commissioner Frierson and Mayor Hill stated that they were. Commissioner McDowell stated that the Council should identify the areas of the City in which funds need to be invested. He asked what could be cut from the Building Department and Public Works.

Commissioner Frierson asked about the animal warden’s duties and call volume. Chief Dumyahn stated that the animal warden works Monday through Friday and is on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. He stated that he does keep statistics on calls and citations issued, however, he did not have the numbers available at the workshop.

Commissioner McDowell asked if the Public Service Program was essential. Director Colangelo stated that the program provides between 20,000 and 22,000 man hours of service each year. They perform downtown maintenance, maintain the train station, cut grass and weeds and serve all departments when called upon. Commissioner McDowell asked if these services could be contracted out. Director Colangelo stated that the City would never get the same service for the same money. Mayor Hill asked if the part time Public Service employee was needed. He stated that something should be done to “get him out of the truck” at the very least. Director Colangelo stated that he is needed and he would correct the problem. Commissioner Frierson asked if Public Service overtime could be cut. Director Colangelo stated that some of the services they perform can only be accomplished on Saturday which results in overtime.

Director Knabel stated that salary, benefits, and insurance make up for all but \$1.5 million of the budget. Mayor Hill asked how the employee contributions for health care compares to other municipalities. Director Knabel stated that the City’s employee contributions are common.

Mayor Hill stated that additional budget workshops will be necessary.

Director Knabel stated that eliminating the POP Program would net a savings of \$350,000 as approximately \$116,000 must be added back into the budget to cover overtime. The elimination of the body camera program

would net \$112,000. These two items combined result in a \$458,000 savings which leaves an additional \$774,000 yet to be cut from the budget.

Director Colangelo stated that he could reach out to three developers with projects on the horizon that are close to resolving their IDOT issues and will break ground in 2017/2018. He anticipates that the three projects will generate between \$150,000 and \$200,000 in permit fee revenue. Director Knabel stated that he could comfortably add \$100,000 in the permit revenue budget.

Director Knabel stated that he would contact Walmart regarding the possibility of extending the term of the sales tax rebate incentive in order to reduce the amount paid annually.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Council at this time, it was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner McKinney and unanimously approved the workshop meeting be adjourned at 6:27 p.m. Motion carried.

City Clerk

Approved April 4, 2017