

MINUTES OF A WORKSHOP/SPECIAL MEETING OF THE ZION CITY COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2010, AT 4:00 P.M. IN THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL, ZION, ILLINOIS

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Mayor Harrison called the meeting to order.

On call of the roll the following answered present: Commissioners Flammini, Jim Taylor, DeTienne, Shantal Taylor and Mayor Harrison.

CITY'S ORGANIZATION & BUDGET

Mayor Harrison stated the purpose of this workshop is to review the current budget and start to look at next year's budget. In the spring of 2010, the Council reduced the City's deficit by cutting \$2,000,000, which resulted in almost a balanced budget. Recently Lake County announced another large reduction in the EAV, whereas every organization relying on tax dollars will suffer. Mayor Harrison stated the City understands the need for continued services and support in public health and safety, so we can least afford to eliminate these services. Mayor Harrison stated he has asked the Council to look at budgetary issues now rather than waiting until the spring.

Larry Pannell stated, per the county's EAV projections:

- For May 1, 2011 through April 30, 2012; the 14% drop in EAV equates to \$885,177 less revenue for the City for that fiscal year, and
- For May 1, 2012 through April 30, 2013, the 10% drop in EAV equates to \$543,752 less revenue for the City for that fiscal year.

If there are any shortfalls in any of the City's special funds, the General Fund also has to make up the difference, further affecting the deficit. Mr. Pannell also referred to the current revenue and expense report, noting various revenue sources, which are below anticipated amounts.

Mayor Harrison stated it is vital that the Council find new revenue, continue to reduce costs, combine functions or areas to save funds, and possibly combine functions or areas with other taxing bodies. Every taxing body in Zion, along with taxing bodies in other communities, is going through these same struggles. Even though City employees stepped up by taking 0% pay increases, layoffs were still necessary. Mayor Harrison asked each Commissioner to review their areas for ideas on what can be done to help. Mayor Harrison stated he recommended, and the Council approved, reducing his own salary by \$40,000.

Commissioner Shantal Taylor stated the following:

- Salaries of non-emergency Department Heads should be reviewed and reduced.
- The City is too top heavy, and should consider reducing salaries.
- Legal fees should be reduced, and the City should consider hiring a single attorney versus a firm.
- Building Codes are still under old standards, and the new Building Director is working to bring these up to date.
- Foreclosures need to be addressed, as there are currently 485 foreclosures, which are public health and safety issues.
- All information should be disclosed, noting Finance withheld information from her.
- The Building Department can't sustain any further personnel cuts.
- Janitorial services at City Hall cost \$21,000, noting these services should be reviewed, as the individuals are doing a poor job.

Commissioner Shantal Taylor stated the College of Lake County invited African American leaders to a meeting, and she was the only Council member attending. Commissioner Shantal Taylor stated it would have been good for Mayor Harrison to attend this meeting. Mayor Harrison stated he has met with the President of College of Lake County on several occasions. Commissioner Flammini stated as a member of the City Council he never received an invitation, so he never could have snubbed this meeting.

Commissioner Shantal Taylor stated Senator Bond has appropriated funds for projects with Youth Build, noting a forum with Lake County Housing will be held Saturday, September 18. Mayor Harrison noted Senator Bond has not delivered on other funds promised.

Commissioner Shantal Taylor stated the Building Department endured severe cuts this past spring. Mayor Harrison stated the Council had a decision to make, and the question was to either cut a Policeman, Fireman or Building Inspector. In some departments attrition and retirements occurred rather than layoffs.

Commissioner Shantal Taylor stated City buildings have been unkept for too long, and Elliot Eldridge is doing all inspections at the same time he is performing management duties.

Mayor Harrison stated the City cut legal fees drastically during this past year, noting a single attorney can't provide needed services for all specialties. Mayor Harrison stated he held a meeting with the legal firm regarding expenses, however several unforeseen lawsuits since that time caused additional expenses. Commissioner Shantal Taylor stated the city attorney attends all of the Department Head meetings. Mayor Harrison stated the city attorney attends all Department Head meetings and has Monday morning office hours in Zion all at no charge to the City. Commissioner Jim Taylor stated the City has retained a full time attorney in the past, and the City spent more money during that time, due to needing outside specialty attorneys for labor, environmental, prosecution and other issues. Commissioner Jim Taylor stated labor negotiations create additional legal fees, noting pending Police arbitration. Commissioner Jim Taylor stated other unions are asking for salary increases.

Commissioner Jim Taylor stated the City needs to look at a systematic procedure again, in order to develop priorities. Mayor Harrison recommended the Council study the revenue and expense report, as well as the EAV information, in order to provide recommendations, so decisions can be prudent and in the best interest of the community. Mayor Harrison stated this is not about one issue or one department, as the Council looks at every aspect of the budget. The City Council will continue to prioritize the budget, similar to the same manner in which it was accomplished this past year.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Council at this time, it was moved by Commissioner DeTienne, seconded by Commissioner Shantal Taylor and unanimously approved the meeting be adjourned at 5:04 p.m. Motion carried.

City Clerk

Approved September 21, 2010