

MINUTES
SPECIAL CALLED
COUNCIL MEETING
BUDGET WORK SESSION
IN-PERSON & ZOOM
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2020

Members Present:

Mayor Steve Lawrence
Dr. Sonny Proctor-zoom
Kirk Raffield
Anne Sneve-zoom
Jim Looney
John Foust

Staff:

Brandon Douglas
Beverly Ragland
Lindsey Williams
Tara Benson
Lonnie Waters
Von Headrick
Adam Howard
David Hall

Guests in Attendance:

Jasper City Hall Lobby-zoom

Members Absent:

Legal Counsel:

R. David Syfan-zoom

Press:

Mari Livsey-Know Pickens
Dan Pool-Pickens Progress

Mayor Steve Lawrence asked Councilmember Kirk Raffield if he recognized a quorum. See a quorum, Mayor Lawrence recognized meeting as opening. He requested Development Director Lonnie Waters to provide the invocation. He requested Assistant Finance Director Lindsey Williams to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Lawrence advised that an agenda is in front of them and he entertained a motion to adopt the agenda. Councilmember Raffield made a motion to adopt the agenda with Councilmember John Foust providing a second. Motion to approve carried unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the first item under new business (Item A) Discussion of the 2021 General Fund Budget Revenue. Mayor Lawrence asked City Manager Brandon Douglas to bring forth information. He explained the budget process essentially began in February 2020 at the retreat. The budget year mirrors a calendar year beginning in January and ending in December. The millage rate has been set and work has been completed to establish the draft budget as presented. Without unforeseen issues, it is expected for the budget to be formally adopted at the Regular Council meeting on December 7, 2020. The budget was displayed to everyone on screen for reference. Revenues in the General Fund were discussed. There was explanation on the differences between the department request and city manager recommended columns. The last column of council approved will be the final amounts adopted. The initial department request showed a deficit of approximately \$550,000 before the change in millage rate and expenditure cuts.

City Manager Douglas moved on to the next item under new business (Item B) Discussion of the 2021 General Fund Budget Expenditures. The draft budget was displayed showing each individual department in the General Fund. There was brief discussion for each department. Discussion was had regarding the possibility of changing vendors for property and liability insurance coverage to GIRMA and the potential savings to the City. Many of the department budgets are largely made up with salary and benefits. Cuts were made where possible. There was attention paid to preserving funds in travel and education/training. There are State mandated certifications required for certain positions. It is not possible to have too much training in public safety. Discussion was had by Councilmember Dr. Sonny Proctor about itemization of charges for the line item in the Finance Department for the Economic Development contract with Pickens County. The City Manager Recommended column had items cut identified in yellow. This demonstrated the ability to reduce the proposed increase in millage rate. Some larger items were able to be removed from the General Fund due to the ability to utilize 2020 SPLOST funds that the City began receiving in August 2020. Discussions were had about the mandatory reduction of overtime in departments during the current fiscal year and how services were able to continue through careful planning of the department leaders. Special attention was placed on the number of employees in the Street Department. Mayor Lawrence commended the efforts of all departments for work completed while understaffed. Discussion was had about shifting positions to the correct departments where work was being done. There are many vacancies throughout the City with anticipation of filling them. Department budgets reflect salaries for those vacant positions in accordance with the approved pay scale.

City Manager Douglas moved on to the next item under new business (Item C) Discussion of SPLOST budgets. There is over \$700,000 in the 2014 SPLOST budget waiting to be used in its majority on the sidewalk project that has been delayed due to the ongoing Georgia Power reliability project. They have taken their time with the project by using ground penetrating radar to identify water lines to prevent any City loss. The list of potential 2020 SPLOST projects was displayed. Cash flow has been projected at \$65,000 monthly and projects were prioritized based upon funds availability. Explanation was given that certain items on the potential projects list were still being discussed in committee, so some details were not yet available. The purpose of the presentation was to demonstrate the idea of

how funds were planned to be used. Mayor Lawrence asked City Manager Douglas to elaborate on the need for an additional public safety post on the 515 Corridor. Assistant Fire Chief, Von Headrick further explained that current calls in that area were mostly commercial calls but with the addition of 300 plus homesites under development nearby, they would transition to include more residential.

City Manager Douglas moved on to the next item under new business (Item D) Discussion of the 2021 Enterprise Funds Budgets Revenue. The draft budget was displayed showing each line item of revenue and discussion was given on how the estimates were derived. There has been an identified need to partner with our neighbors to purchase water. Revenues in the water fund include an increase of \$10.00 on the base fee for all water accounts. Revenues in the sanitation fund include an increase of \$.50 per bill budgeted for all solid waste sanitation bills.

City Manager Douglas moved on to the last item under new business (Item E) Discussion of the 2021 Enterprise Funds Budgets Expenses. There was brief discussion of expenses in each department. One new position was discussed for coverage in the first half of 2021 due to retirement in Human Resources and a scheduled leave in water billing during a software conversion. That position is scheduled to be filled early in the year. There is a plan to put in zone meters to help identify leak detection in coming year. This will allow a savings in water as well as utilization of current staff in other areas as needed.

City Manager Douglas concluded his discussion of the draft budgets as they have been presented. He asked if there were questions or need for further discussion. A public hearing to discuss the budget is scheduled for November 9, 2020. Councilmember Sneve recognized all the departments and commended them for their work over the year by doing more with less.

After no further discussion, Mayor Lawrence asked for a motion to adjourn with Councilmember Foust providing a motion and Councilmember Raffield providing a second. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned.



Steve Lawrence
Mayor



Beverly Ragland
Finance Director/City Clerk