

SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
October 2, 2007

Mayor Gainer called the Special City Council meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Councilmembers present included Councilmember Harris, Councilmember Rast, Councilmember Huff, Councilmember Trulove, and Councilmember McKeehan. Staff members present included Ms. Niemeier, Mr. Richardson, Mr. MacDonald, Mr. Sale, Mr. Simmons, Mr. Ableman, Mr. Winters, Mr. Behrens, Ms. Cooper, Mr. Mather, Mr. Campbell, and Ms. Showalter.

Ms. Niemeier provided the top ten priorities from the Council workshop in May and explained the process for this budget workshop. She stated that everything that will be presented has gone to City Council committees. She reviewed the cash flow and stated that we need to grow revenues and raise funding or cut spending.

Ms. Cooper stated that her discretionary request is for clerical help. There has been an increase in DUI and traffic ticket disputes. Myers litigation doubles their case load.

Mr. Winters explained their goals for 2008. He requested two full time firefighters from discretionary funds. They are low in volunteer response and they pay a lot of overtime. They have simultaneous calls approximately 11% of the time. They could cut their overtime with additional firefighters. Councilmember Trulove stated that he is worried about the long term impact and the demise of the volunteer program.

Ms. Niemeier provided a summary of the Administration budget. She stated that LEOFF I will go up. She stated that attorney fees are too high and we need to reach a reasonable level. That might be done through an in-house attorney. The Council agreed that they need a long term legal strategy. Ms. Niemeier presented the Finance budget. There is a high cost for IT. She would like a records clerk with discretionary funding. Documents are not digitized, there is no index and no disposal. Councilmember Trulove suggested an internship program to start the records clerk duties and to help with public disclosure requests.

Mr. Richardson explained his goals for 2008. He stated that there is same day service for 95% of inspections in the Building Department. He discussed the population changes from 1960-2007. There has been 24% growth over ten years. Growth does not pay for itself. We are reaching a point where we need to take a good look at our future.

Mr. Simmons stated that addition of the Administrative Clerk has been a life saver. Program revenue has increased and they have added multiple programs. He requested a shuttle bus from discretionary funds. The cost is approximately \$70,000-\$80,000. It could be used at least once every four days. They are looking at alternative funding and fundraising. Councilmember Trulove asked about the use of other vehicles, for example the Care Center's.

Mr. MacDonald stated that their budget for 2008 is \$16.2 million, which includes an additional staff person. They have taken on much more with fewer people. He stated that the Well 8 project is critical. He recommended a cost of service analysis for a full picture regarding rates. He stated that we received a \$1.4 million grant from the EDA for the Cheney Research and Industrial Park. We received 80% grant funding. Councilmember Trulove stated that it is incredible to receive eighty percent funding.

Mr. Behrens presented the Light Department organizational chart. He stated that he wants to fill the vacant Account Clerk job. He feels that connects and disconnects are very time consuming. We need to manage that better. Councilmember Trulove asked about the uncertainty of the power supply contract. Mr. Behrens stated that he will be approaching Council with decisions to be made.

Mr. Sale stated that he does a Monthly Accountability Review each month where they talk about what is important. He needs an administrative assistant, dispatcher, and police officer. He needs the administrative assistant the most. In his 3.5 years here he has never had everybody at work. They have worked on policies and training. Lexipol is a good value. Animal control was under funded.

Ms. Niemeier stated that there will be public hearings at the next four meetings. Councilmember Trulove stated that we will not get streamlined sales tax until 2009. Councilmember Huff stated that we can fund an additional firefighter, but we should wait on the grant. Councilmember Trulove stated that the hires may not be sustainable. Councilmember Trulove stated that we need to figure out our path for the future. Councilmember Harris stated that the long term solution is the utility tax. Councilmember Huff stated that the long term solution is also the economic impact that we will hopefully get. Mr. Sale stated that problems will be greater if we do not do anything. We will bring a choice of solutions to Council in 2008. Councilmember Trulove stated that the current expense fund is where the problem is. Councilmember Huff stated that he thinks staff did an excellent job. Mayor Gainer concurred. Councilmember Rast stated that he would like to see something done about security at City Hall. Ms. Niemeier stated that security is a Light Department issue because they own this building.

Councilmember Huff moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilmember Rast seconded. Carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

City Clerk

Mayor