

## **BUDGET, FINANCE AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

**November 24, 2009**

**2:00 P.M.**

Councilwoman Berz, Chairwoman, called the meeting of the Budget, Finance, and Personnel Committee to order with Councilpersons Ladd, Rico, Robinson, Scott, Gilbert, Benson and McGary present. Councilman Murphy joined the meeting later. City Attorney Michael McMahan and Shirley Crownover, Assistant Clerk to the Council, were also present.

Others present included Robert Ledford, Fredia Kitchen, Mark Keil, Jana Lowery, Dennis Malone, Jim Templeton, Jerry Stewart, Paul Page, Chief Williams, Daisy Madison, Jeff Eldridge, Dan Johnson, Rick Wood and Lee Norris. Larry Zehnder, Chief Parker, Donna Kelley, Jenny Lass, Doug Kelley, Richard Beeland, Bill Payne, Barry Bennett, Gary Hilbert, Attorney Bobo, and Mayor Littlefield joined the meeting later.

### **CAPITAL BUDGET DISCUSSION**

Chairwoman Berz stated that we wanted to pass the Capital Budget on first reading tonight; that she hoped there had been lots of conversations during the week and there was nothing left to say other than “yes”—Councilman Rico quickly said “yes”.

The discussions centered around page numbers, starting where the Council had left off on page 7. Councilwoman Scott’s concern was that in looking at different areas that the Council make sure they were prioritizing where the money goes in relation to the entire budget. Chairman Berz mentioned that we had very limited funds and obligations relating to Volkswagen and other areas are going on promises that we make in obligations year to year. She noted that the Council had the right to say “yes” or “no”.

Councilwoman Robinson initiated discussion regarding Stringer’s Ridge, noting that the City had committed to \$350,000 and were now short by \$75,000, questioning how this could be adjusted. Councilman Benson admitted to being a reluctant supporter, stating that this was contingent upon money available. He stated that he understood that more than the allotted \$100,000 was needed and asked Rick Wood to speak to this.

Mr. Wood explained that they were borrowing money from a National Organization, with the City’s part being \$500,000—that last year \$150,000 was put in, leaving a balance of \$350,000; that their lending agent understood their budget problem and that they were willing to work creatively and felt that it would be reasonable to split this over a two-year period.

Councilman Murphy related that there was a park in his district (Highland Park) called Tatum Park and the lease had expired, and the City needed to buy it now or lose it; that Highland Park Baptist preferred to sell this to the City, and this had been worked out by Adm. Zehnder with a three-year deal; that as of yet there was no price, and Mayor Littlefield was in favor of this. He suggested doing Stringer's Ridge the same way—that it would make sense, and we could make a commitment and also a contract.

Councilman McGary agreed with the idea of a contract, noting that \$100,000 was currently in the Budget; that they would like to see \$175,000 this year but asked for a “low ball” figure this year with a commitment for the remainder next year. Mr. Wood agreed that \$150,000 might be appropriate this year with a binding agreement for the remainder.

Councilman Rico noted that we budget year to year and could not worry about next year; that times were tough and Stringer's Ridge was lucky to get \$100,000. It was noted that everyone has pressures about parks in their districts, with Councilman Rico stating that he would just like to get East Lake Park cleaned up.

Councilman Gilbert mentioned the fact that bikers and out-of-town folks might come to our city just because of Stringer's Ridge, with Mr. Wood confirming that we already have close to three offers.

Councilman McGary, noting that quality-of-life is important, suggested taking part of the Police Precinct money and allocating \$150,000 to Stringer's Ridge, with a caveat to pay the \$200,000 next year.

Discussion ensued as to commitments made by Resolution or letter and also contracts, with Chairman Berz asking if we were saying to strike the wording of “subject to funds available”? Councilman Murphy noted that everything was always “subject to funds being available”. Mr. Wood was comfortable with this terminology, stating that TPL had not gone the extra step and asked for a contract.

Councilwoman Ladd initiated conversation regarding public art and the allocation for \$100,000, asking what we were getting for this other than a nice salary and management of grants? Councilman McGary did not have the budget readily available and Chairman Berz suggested that we come back to this issue. She asked if everyone was “okay” with \$150,000 for Stringer's Ridge, with Councilman Rico showing some reservation and Councilwoman Scott saying that she would prefer to wait until discussion is finished on the entire budget. Councilman Murphy wanted to make sure that Tatum Park is in the “09 Capital Budget.

Councilwoman Scott initiated conversation in regards to fire hydrants and annexed areas, asking for a figure from Chief Parker as to the cost of placing fire hydrants in areas already in the city where they are lacking. Chief Parker indicated that it would be well over one million dollars, with the cost per fire hydrant being around \$5,500. Councilwoman Scott advocated that we look at providing fire hydrants on an ongoing basis—maybe over ten years. It was noted that Chief Parker will come up with a plan by the first of the year.

At the point, Councilman Benson stated that it was imperative that we get a Capital Budget started tonight, noting that it could be amended down the road.

Councilman Gilbert had a question about the \$3 million dollars allocated to a “mesh network”, wanting an explanation of what this is. Mark Keil responded that it was like a spider web where all could talk to each other, including Public Safety with their laptops and the cameras; that everyone would be using this. Councilwoman Scott asked about unincorporated areas and was told we would not be moving into these areas yet. It was noted that this grant would not do everything and with \$3 million dollars we would include the most appropriate areas. Councilman Gilbert questioned what determined the areas and was told the stakeholders—Public Works, Police Dept, etc. Chief Williams added that it would be the same way they allocate officers in high crime areas.

Councilman Benson mentioned that the County wants us to match their \$20,000 discretionary funds going to the Library. The final decision was that this money could be found.

Councilman Gilbert questioned the funding of 125 automobiles, with Paul Page explaining that that we have some real aged cars that need to be replaced. Chairwoman Berz stated that \$3 million dollars is a lot of money for cars, with Mr. Page disagreeing, saying we really needed \$5 million. Councilwoman Ladd questioned the need for Crown Victorias for police cars with Mr. Page noting only a \$600 difference and accounting for extra features. He stated we were also looking at Focus and Fusion.

At this point, Chairwoman Berz went over the Capital Budget page by page, accounting for issues that had been raised. Discussion ensued regarding differences between Neighborhood Traffic Management and Paving needs. Ms. Madison noted that the suggestion had been made for CDRC money to go for neighborhood traffic management. Chairwoman Berz outlined the topics still under consideration to be the Library, Stringer’s Ridge, Public Art and Traffic Calming, with Councilwoman Scott adding fire hydrants.

At this point, Councilman McGary passed out a Public Arts Budget prepared by Adm. Zehnder that showed where the \$100,000 allocation was going. Adm. Zehnder noted that this was strictly City money. Councilwoman Ladd asked what sculptures we had purchased and was told the “Railway”. Councilwoman Scott still wished to talk about fire hydrants, stating that in her priority system, public art was not high on the list.

Councilman Benson asked if in allocating \$100,000 to Public Art and \$150,000 to Stringer’s Ridge if we were short any money and was told that it was “even”. Councilman McGary reminded that \$200,000 would be given to Stringer’s Ridge next year, provided that funds were available. Councilwoman Scott still questioned if Stringer’s Ridge should not stay at \$100,000 and delay going up. Councilman McGary responded “no”—that Mr. Wood had said with anything less than \$150,000, they would have to sell off a portion of the property. Chairwoman Berz noted that CDRC money would go to speed humps.

### **WELLNESS INCENTIVE PROGRAM**

Ms. Kelley, along with Jenny Lass, was present to go over this Wellness Program. She explained that it was an incentive to employees who participate and make changes; that it is a monetary reward and mentioned the Resolution on next week’s agenda authorizing a contract with ChipRewards, Inc. Under this contract employees will be allowed to earn points and chips can accumulate up to \$300.00. She noted that this was a fast-paced business right now, and we don’t want to get stagnant.

Councilman Murphy asked about employees who have no bad habits and how they would gain from this. Ms. Lass explained that the City rewards those who maintain a healthy status. He asked if smoking and obesity was addressed and was told “it is in there”.

Ms. Kelley explained that waist management was used as an indicator.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.