



Approved

**CITY OF YPSILANTI
CITY COUNCIL – BUDGET MEETING MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS - ONE SOUTH HURON ST.
YPSILANTI, MI 48197
TUESDAY, MAY 29, 2012
6:00 P.M.**

I. CALL TO ORDER –

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL –

Council Member Bodary	Present	Council Member Robb	Present
Council Member Jefferson	Present	Council Member Vogt	Present
Council Member Murdock	Present	Mayor Schreiber	Present
Mayor Pro-Tem Richardson	Present		

III. INVOCATION –

The Mayor asked all to stand for a moment of silence.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE –

"I pledge allegiance to the flag, of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

V. INTRODUCTIONS –

Mayor Schreiber introduced Fire Chief Jon Ichesco, Director of Public Services Stan Kirton, Director of Fiscal Services Marilou Uy, Firefighter Union President Ken Hobbs, former City Council Member Al Robinson, Police Chief Amy Walker, Treasurer Kim Teamer, former Treasurer Joyce Jordon, and former Assistant Clerk Pat Mills.

VI. AGENDA APPROVAL –

Mayor Schreiber asked Council if they wished to add a closed session after the public meeting to discuss an opinion from City Attorney Barr.

Council Member Vogt moved, supported by Council Member Richardson, to add a closed session after the public meeting.

Council Member Murdock stated there was no new information in the memo that Council did not already know about.

Mayor Pro Tem Richardson stated she supported the closed session because Mr. Barr had stated it was confidential.

Council Member Bodary agreed with Council Member Murdock and said he didn't feel there is any information specifically relating to any pending litigation with Council.

Council Member Jefferson said he didn't feel there was a reason to go into a closed session.

Mayor Pro Tem Richardson withdrew her support for the motion and Council Member Vogt indicated he only moved to add a closed session because he had not seen the memo from Attorney Barr, and he thought the Mayor wanted the closed session.

On a voice vote the agenda was approved as presented.

VII. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION –

Mayor Schreiber read the rules for audience participation.

1. Kim Teamer, City Treasurer, 7199 Willington Lane, Ypsilanti, MI shared the responsibilities of her position as City Treasurer and stated her position should not be cut or combined. She added that she has worked for 21 years and only has 4 years before retirement and her position is written in the City Charter. She also shared that she is the President of the Washtenaw County Treasurer's Association.
2. Al Robinson stated that he supports Ms. Teamer and her position being retained. He stated his experience working with Ms. Teamer and said he knows she is a very valuable member of the community and he supports her position being retained.
3. Pat Mills stated she worked for the City Clerk in the Clerk's Office for 26 years and shared her relationship with Ms. Teamer. She shared that in her time at City Hall there was support staff in the Treasurer's office and Ms. Teamer is currently doing the work alone and keeping the records wonderfully on her own. She asked that other options be explored in order to retain an employee who, in addition to serving as the President of the County Treasurer's Association, has given 21 years of excellent service to the City.
4. Mildred Williams, of the Eastern Highlands area at Cornell and Roosevelt, stated that, as a city tax payer who knows Ms. Teamer, she agrees with all that has been said. She shared that Ms. Teamer is very efficient and after viewing the charter, the position should not be eliminated.

VIII. REMARKS FROM THE MAYOR –

Mayor Schreiber thanked the speakers for their comments. He added that the discussion of combining the Treasurer's position was only a suggestion offered by one council member and the Council as a whole is not anywhere near deciding to cut or combine the position.

Council Member Murdock asked who provided the buckets that were at each Council Member's desk.

Fire Chief Ichesco raised his hand and stated he brought them because he believes strongly in symbolism and thinks it is a positive message. He stated Council has a mission and it is time to move forward. He said he is speaking not just as Fire Chief but also as a citizen and this is a serious problem that is far more serious than we've had in the past.

Council Member Jefferson thanked those who came in to support of Ms. Teamer. He added that Council has very tough decisions to make and they will carefully consider each comment.

IX. BUDGET DISCUSSION/DELIBERATION –

Mayor Schreiber reviewed the items that had been previously discussed and introduced the possibility of a solid waste fee as a revenue option. He also suggested placing the Water Street Bond on the ballot again in November.

Council Member Murdock stated he doesn't see any indication that putting the Water Street Bond initiative back on the ballot in November will produce different results and he doesn't feel it is realistic.

Mayor Schreiber explained that Council needs to determine which revenue increases they wish to pursue. He added that if Council doesn't find additional sources of revenue cuts will have to be made to pay the Water Street debt.

Council Member Bodary agreed with Council Member Murdock's sentiments that the voters do not support a Water Street millage. He added that vacant positions should not be refilled and any position that comes open should come before Council before being refilled. He stated that we need to make the cuts that we know will work and that will help move us forward another year.

Council Member Vogt stated he agreed with the sentiments of the other council members. He added that he doesn't feel the voters will support any tax increase proposals and they have voted to cut positions as opposed to increasing revenue. He expressed his feelings that the voters have taken a risk hoping that cutting jobs would work to sustain the budget and that at this point we need to do what the voters have asked us to do by cutting positions and prove to them the taxes are needed and job cuts alone will not work.

Mayor Pro-Tem Richardson stated she doesn't believe these drastic cuts can be made in one year. She agreed that if the city cannot find additional sources of revenue cuts would have to be made.

She asked Fire Chief Ichesco what the status of the grant was.

Fire Chief Ichesco answered the funds have just started being released and Jackson is the only city to have received one out of five.

Mayor Pro-Tem Richardson expressed her desire to look for alternative revenue options outside of taxes. She stated that while she does not agree with everything our Governor has done he has thought out of the box and used new ideas. She stated that we can continue cutting and that may never be enough.

Council Member Murdock stated Council needs to evaluate the level of service we want to provide. He added that we cannot provide the level of service we want and support the City on grants alone.

Fire Chief Ichesco stated receiving the grant money will save future leadership within the Fire Department as it allows people to leave and/or retire and move younger members into higher positions. He added we have not put in the effort to find alternative ways to provide the service and the State has done a very poor job supporting fire service.

Fire Chief Ichesco asked for a closed session to discuss a proposal that he feels is not ready to be presented to the public.

Mayor Schreiber stated that there were only a few very specific reasons Council could convene into a closed session and asked what the reason for the closed session would be.

Attorney Barr indicated he would talk to the Fire Chief to discuss the matter.

Mayor Schreiber asked what needed to be done in order to move to a more collaborative Fire Authority.

Fire Chief Ichesco answered policy makers need to agree to take action on the matter. He added that it has been looked at in the past and discussed the mutual aid between the city and surrounding communities.

Mayor Schreiber stated this sounds like something the new City Manager should look into when he comes on board.

Council Member Bodary mentioned the statement that the City is more of a mutual aid provider than a mutual aid acceptor seems to indicate that the Fire Department could continue to provide the same level of service with less staff.

Fire Chief Ichesco explained that to meet the standards for structure fires, all of the staff would have to come, however, everyone is not working at the same time. He stated with a lack of staff the firefighters would have to "do what they can and wait" until additional help came along.

Mayor Schreiber asked if there were any other questions for Chief Ichesco. He indicated there was also a memo from Interim City Manager Frances McMullan regarding additional furlough days and he asked her to go over her findings.

Interim City Manager McMullan stated the consensus from staff indicated the workload would not change by adding additional furlough days; it would impact customer service and our ability to turnaround processing for citizens.

She added there was more support to move to a 4-day workweek to provide a more consistent and predictable schedule as opposed to trying randomly to schedule furlough days.

Mayor Schreiber asked that Council make decisions based on revenue increases first and move to cuts second.

Council Member Murdock stated the only revenue increase that seems possible is the Street Light Assessment District and he feels we should move forward with that. He added that switching to LED lighting would save approximately \$150,000 a year and he would like to see this done in combination with the Special Assessment District. He suggested staff create a proposal for street lighting similar to the one in Allen Park and said we could do this based on footage or lot size, but did not think this could be done on assessed value.

Mayor Schreiber explained it was done based on the area that was lit and whether it was public or private. He added that the more area that was lit the higher the assessment.

Council Member Murdock stated, as this could be assessed against non-tax paying entities, it would at least bring in funds from churches and EMU. He added that he feels this revenue source would be for FY14 by the time everything was properly sorted out.

Mayor Schreiber asked if there was any objection to asking staff to continue working on a proposal for a special Streetlight Assessment District. With no objection from council he stated the next item was a Solid Waste Special Assessment fee.

Council Member Murdock stated he thinks it is difficult to make a case for this and he doesn't see what we would gain from doing it.

Council Member Vogt indicated he agreed with Council Member Murdock but felt we needed to collect any fee for any service that we can collect, so that service pays for itself, as long as it is

legal, without a vote from the public. He added that we need whatever revenue we can get as it all benefits the city in some way or another. He stated we had already come to a cliff it was just a matter of when and how hard we hit.

Mayor Schreiber stated 2/3 of our residents are renters and it need to be as easy as possible to dispose of waste and added that he also agrees with Council Member Vogt.

Council Member Jefferson stated he agrees as well. He added that because the ballot proposals did not pass the citizens will have to pay in another way in order to maintain services.

Council Member Robb stated it is a lose-lose situation and expressed concern over the anger citizens would have.

Council Member Murdock stated he has ideas for some alternatives. He added he doesn't see some of the ideas Council are considering helping to solve any of the problems. He stated is still skeptical about a functional Fire Department being beneficial to saving money or improving services. He added that our Fire Department often arrives often 10 to 15 minutes before HVA does, which can make a big difference in a life or death situation, and he feels this is highly valued by the citizens. He added that though we show up before them, HVA is funded from the "indigent fund" from the county and we get nothing.

Mayor Schreiber mentioned charging a fee for emergency services provided by the Fire Department.

Fire Chief Ichesco explained the difficulties in collecting such a fee.

Mayor Schreiber stated the Street Light Special Assessment could bring in \$500,000 and another \$300,000 could be brought in from solid waste which brings an additional \$800,000 of revenue to the city.

Council Member Murdock stated he thinks Council needs to be careful with how they are designing taxes on fee based services.

Council Member Vogt stated he agrees however the point is to come up with something that is an additional revenue source and having services pay for themselves and are not being subsidized from the General Fund.

Council Member Bodary stated in the next year Council is going to have to look at more creative ideas to bring in more revenue and/or eliminate expenses. He added that he agrees with charging a fee for trash services and feels if we implement that trash is going to be dumped elsewhere.

Council Member Murdock asked how many vehicles were being purchased in FY13 and FY14 and if they needed to be purchased.

Council Member Robb stated that, not counting reoccurring expenses, we could save \$301,000 by cutting purchases in FY13.

Mayor Schreiber asked if we could wrap up the discussion of a Special Assessment on Solid Waste and then move toward discussion on the motor pool.

Council Member Robb stated that he had been discussing the Special Assessment for Street Lighting for 6 months now and we have not seen progress even though it is worth \$600,000.

Council Member Murdock stated the lighting Special Assessment is the priority.

Mayor Schreiber stated that we pretty much have a balanced budget for FY13 but needed more savings for FY14.

Council Member Robb stated that he wants to find \$500,000 more to keep Police and Fire positions.

Chief Amy Walker indicated there were four retirements and none of the positions had been filled. She added that the Records Clerk was transferred to the Building Department and 10 other positions were cut with means there have been 15 lost positions since 2009.

Mayor Pro Tem Richardson asked if it was possible to charge more for police services at special events.

Chief Walker answered that is something to look into. She added that they encourage special events but that means extra security and safety is her first priority.

Council Member Bodary asked if we had a budget for this year or if we were still ironing out the details.

Mayor Schreiber answered we do have a balanced budget if we take the money out of the motor pool for FY13 and reducing the Fire Department staff by seven positions.

Council Member Vogt stated he thinks we have to make the cuts and have to assume there were no grants or any other source of money.

Mayor Schreiber explained that during the period of the grant there can be no layoffs.

Interim City Manager McMullan additionally explained that Council passed a resolution to abide by the requirements for being a recipient of the grant and one of these requirements was to maintain the current level of staffing, which means two positions would need to be filled.

Council Member Vogt stated we could delay the implementation of the layoffs until we know if we have received the grant or not.

Mayor Schreiber asked if the FY13 plan was sufficient.

Council Member Murdock indicated he had additional options he wished to explore and would have them prepared for the meeting next Tuesday. He added that some of the things we have been discussing for the next year's budget could be implemented for this year's budget.

Mayor Schreiber clarified what options staff should continue to explore. He confirmed that Ms. McMullan and Ms. Uy had enough information to move forward. Mayor Schreiber then asked if there were any comments by Council, Managers, or Staff members. Seeing none he moved to Audience Participation.

X. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION –

1. Firefighter Ken Hobbs stated he wants to emphasize that firefighters are equally as important as police positions. He discussed the consequences of laying-off seven firefighters. He expressed concern over gambling with public safety. He added that elections are coming up and cutting 7 firefighter positions will make it very difficult for any of the Council to get re-elected.

2. Leonardo Christian, 7 S. Normal, Ypsilanti, MI stated it seems as if Council is dragging their feet. He suggested looking at other cities to find alternatives that may work for the City of Ypsilanti. He stated that instead of trying to see what we can do for next year we need to see what we can do today for this year.
3. Scott Madison, Fire Lieutenant, stated he doesn't know how the Fire Department will maintain efficiency with less staff. He added that they earn their money even when they are not fighting fires by providing EMS services, responding to gas leaks, and checking downed power lines. He asked what is the minimum going to be, as far as the number of staff that the Fire Department can operate under.

XI. REMARKS FROM THE MAYOR –

Mayor Schreiber expressed appreciation for all of the speakers. He discussed the difficulty in the present situation and said he believes Council should still consider placing another Water Street millage on the November ballot.

XII. ADJOURNMENT –

Resolution No. 2012-108, adjourning the City Council Meeting.

RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF YPSILANTI:

That the City Council Meeting be adjourned, on call, by the Mayor or two (2) members of Council.

OFFERED BY: Council Member Jefferson

SUPPORTED BY: Council Member Vogt

On a voice vote the motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:26 p.m.