

MINUTES
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION
September 6, 2022
City Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor King. Council Members Paul Fischer, Rebecca Waller, Michael Postma, Jason Baskin, Joyce Poshusta and Council Member-at-Large Jeff Austin

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Craig Clark, Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert and Police Chief David McKichan
Public Works Director Steven Lang, Assistant City Engineer Mitch Wenum, Fire Chief Jim McCoy, Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace, Park and Rec Director Dave Merrill, Human Resources Director Trish Wiechmann and City Clerk Ann Kasel

APPEARING IN PERSON: Austin Daily Herald,

Mayor King opened the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

Item #1: 2023 Proposed Budget and Tax levy – Mr. Dankert discussed his memo dated August 22, 2022 regarding additional direction needed from Council in order to set a tax levy and budget for 2023. Mr. Dankert noted that Council will need to approve a tax levy at the September 19 council meeting, and then that will be the maximum levy they could approve (unless a special meeting is held prior to September 30).

Mr. Dankert noted he has worked with staff and the Mayor and City Administrator to bring the proposed tax levy down from the initial proposal of a 7.05% levy increase, down to 5.01% and would include the newly proposed Building Inspector. Mr. Dankert also noted the following in order to get the levy at 5.01%:

- All outside agencies funding would need to be frozen at 2022 levels.
- The Mayor's additional Building Inspector request IS included as per the Mayor and City Administrator's direction.
- We would still budget (now) for a full contingent of 144.25 FTE's.
- Capital paid for by the General Fund tax levy would go from \$749,100 to \$680,100 for 2023. This is a \$20,000 reduction from the 2022 original budget.
- Contingency would remain at \$100,000, a reduction of our normal starting position of \$125,000 to \$150,000.

Building Inspector/Compliance Officer (new): Discussion ensued regarding the Building Inspector/Compliance official and the need for such based on the CRE report that Council recently received. Pros and cons of the position were debated, including how a citizen would access funds to try to fix their property up.

After further discussion, motion by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Austin to remove this position and the estimated \$80,000 in cost from the proposed 2023 budget and tax levy. Carried 5-2 (Council Members Fischer and Postma - Nay).

Council Member Baskin motioned to not approve any new employees for the 2023 budget. Motion dies for lack of a second.

Library Technology Coordinator (replacement): Discussion ensued regarding the Library Technology Coordinator position that was cut a few years ago. Questions were asked regarding duties and if the Library would be open more hours. Library Director Clinefelter noted the hours would not increase with any of the two requested additions.

Motion by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member Baker to not approve of hiring the Library Technology Coordinator. Carried 6-1 (Council Member Waller- Nay).

Library Aide (new): Motion by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Baskin to not approve of filing the newly requested Library Aide position. Carried 4-3 (Council Members Poshusta, Postma, and Waller – Nay).

August 15, 2022 - Proposed expenditure reductions/revenue enhancements: Mr. Dankert discussed the items reviewed at the last work session and questioned if Council requested any changes to that initial list that reduced tax levy needs by \$661,450. No comments noted.

Motion by Council member Baker, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Austin to approve of the \$661,450 of initial budget changes as proposed at the August 15 Council work session. Carried 7-0.

September 6, 2022 – Proposed expenditure reductions/revenue enhancements: Mr. Dankert discussed the next level of proposed changes based on direction from Council at the last budget work session. The proposed changes of \$162,000 would reduce the tax levy proposed to around 4%. Included in the expense reductions are \$55,000 for Riverland Ball Park netting, elimination of new iPads, carpet at the Senior Center will come from fund balance, and a \$25,000 reduction in hazardous housing removal funds.

Council discussion ensued regarding agreement of the proposed changes, except to increase the hazardous housing funds back up to \$100,000.

Motion by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Austin to approve of the net change of \$137,000 in the reduction of the tax levy, adding \$25,000 back to hazardous house funding. Carried 5-2 (Council Members Fischer and Poshusta – Nay).

2023 Proposed Tax Levy: With the above changes we have reduced the proposed tax levy from 7.05% down to 4.32% with the elimination of the Building Inspector and \$137,000 of additional tax supported changes. This would put the proposed tax levy at \$8,283,000 for 2023, a 4.32% increase.

Motion by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Austin to recommend to Council a tax levy of \$8,283,000 for 2023. Carried 7-0.

The item will be on the September 15, 2022 Council agenda.

Item No. 2 – Early Sunday Alcohol Sales

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Baker, to modify the Sunday sales ordinance to allow 8 am liquor sales.

The item will be on the September 19, 2022 agenda.

Item No. 3 - Administrative Report

None.

Item No. 4 – Open Discussion

Council Member Baker would like to talk about Pat Harty and his development concerns. He also asked when a closed session about union negotiations will take place.

City Administrator Craig Clark stated that will be coming up.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Waller, adjourning the meeting at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann M. Kasel
City Clerk

