

May 1, 2023 Mini Budget Retreat

Meeting minutes

1. Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Marla Thompson.

2. Roll Call

Present at the meeting were Alderman Allen Bumgarner, Alderman David Elder, Alderman Randall Mays, Alderman Phyllis Pennington, Alderman Gary Lagerfeld, and Mayor Marla Thompson.

A prayer was led by Jamie.

3. Items for Discussion

3.1. Budget Request Follow-up

A follow-up meeting to clarify the budget request items discussed in the meeting on March 27th was conducted. The budget requests included equipment and personnel needs for various departments such as the police department, fire department, and public works. Some highlights include the purchase of new firearms and vehicles for the police department, hiring additional firefighter positions, and allocating funds for a new truck for the street department.

Speaker 5 expressed concern over the discrepancy in the budgeted cost of equipping two firefighters. It was clarified that the amount listed (\$132,254) includes the base salary, holiday pay, and other benefits for each position. They also discussed the overtime and comp time issues within the fire department and the potential impact of hiring more firefighters to alleviate these problems.

A motion was made by [name] and seconded by [name] to approve the budget request follow-up items.

3.2. Recap of Approved items from March 27, 2023 Budget Retreat

A recap of the items approved during the March 27th Budget Retreat was presented to the attendees. The approved items included a 4% cost of living increase, a 2.5% 401k match, software for the administration and police department, new printers for the police vehicles, shotgun firearms, and three new police vehicles.

The fire department's approved items included the hiring of two new firefighters as well as a \$50,000 budget for a new truck for the street department. The discussion also covered the potential increase in the fire department's personnel numbers to meet future standards and insurance rating requirements.

A motion was made by [name] and seconded by [name] to approve the recap of items from the March 27th Budget Retreat.

3.3. Christmas Parade, Christmas Lights, New Flooring, Playground Equipment Discussion

The Christmas Parade was discussed, with concerns raised about the police department's ability to handle the safety and logistics of the event. The idea of the parade was considered a good thought but not feasible due to safety concerns. It was ultimately decided to eliminate the parade idea.

Discussion then moved to Christmas Lights for the town, but it was decided that new lights were too expensive to install at this time.

The topic of new flooring was not discussed in the provided text.

Playground equipment was discussed with estimates of \$41,500 for new playground equipment and tennis court rehab at the recreation center. The idea of applying for a grant to fund these improvements was discussed. More information and quotes will be gathered for review at a later time.

Motion to eliminate the Christmas Parade idea was made by [name] and seconded by [name].

3.4. Revenue Recap

A summary of the revenue situation was presented, including an additional \$17,000 in fire tax revenue for next year. This additional revenue will help offset costs for the fire department, such as hiring more personnel and paying overtime as necessary. There was a discussion about how to manage overtime expenditures and potential abuses, with the responsibility falling on the Fire Chief to monitor the situation.

The budget for new lights on poles along First Avenue and outdoor illumination for the Town Hall and Recreation Center was discussed, with the Board deciding not to allocate funds for the project due to its high cost.

The budget for new playground equipment and tennis court rehab at the Recreation Center was discussed. The Board considered applying for a grant to fund these improvements and requested more information and quotes before making a decision on whether to allocate funds for the project.

Motion to approve the revenue recap was made by [name] and seconded by [name].

3.5. Board input/Board Discussion

Summary:

The Board discussed the estimates for upgrading the Rec Center and the possibility of applying for grants to cover the costs. They considered pickleball courts, playground equipment, and other possible expenses. They decided to reevaluate quotes for the pickleball courts and playground equipment before making a decision.

The Board also discussed employee salaries and bonuses. A proposal was made to increase Chris Ecker's pay by \$10,000, but the Board decided against it. They also decided not to increase Christmas bonuses for employees.

Lastly, the Board discussed potential flooring updates for Town Hall. It was suggested that they look into luxury vinyl as an option instead of carpet, focusing on the front area and hallways.

Motion by [name], seconded by [name], to reevaluate quotes for pickleball courts and playground equipment and look into luxury vinyl flooring for Town Hall.

4. Adjournment

The board members and staff gathered for a meeting to discuss the budget, tax rates, and other concerns. During the discussion, the board reached a consensus on the tax rate, agreeing on 49 cents per hundred-dollar evaluations for the first draft of the budget. State-shared revenue projections were reviewed and decisions related to town vehicle usage and increased pay for the interim town administrator were also addressed.

While addressing the increased responsibilities of interim town administrator Jamie, board member Randall suggested an additional \$1,000 per month in salary and use of the town vehicle. Despite Jamie's reluctance, the proposal received support from other board members. They agreed to discuss the matter and make a formal vote during the next meeting scheduled for June.

Motion by [name] to adjourn the meeting, seconded by [name].