

**SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
BUDGET WORKSHOP
SEPTEMBER 8, 2020
5:00 PM**

The Sept. 8, 2020 budget workshop was called to order by Mayor Lowell Helget at 5:00 PM at the Springfield Area Community Center. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Those present include Helget, John Mueller, Sam Hesse, Theresa Beckman, Mike Rothmeier, City Attorney Paul Muske (on Zoom), City Manager Joe Stremcha and City Clerk Amy Vogel. Others present include Wendy Krier, Marty Seifert, Dale Knutson, John Nicholson, Jim Rogotzke, Linda Roiger, Jill Riederer and Paula Thomas.

Motion by Mueller, second by Rothmeier to adopt the agenda. All ayes.

Seifert explained to the council the priorities of the Coalition of Greater MN Cities. Those priorities include items that may not affect Metro like LGA, economic development, annexation and land use, transportation, environment and energy, and labor and employment. He also noted that their board voted to freeze their due structure.

Thomas explained the ambulance budget proposal. The management fees with Allina are up and they are looking for more EMT's. She noted that she has been covering a lot of hours due to no volunteers for the Monday-Thursday shifts of 6PM to 6AM. They currently have 4 people going through EMT training. There is a possibility of fire dept members driving the ambulance with one EMT working with the patient.

The General Fund has recorded a proposed transfer of \$20,570, which is \$10/capita, to the ambulance fund due to increased costs. Stremcha asked for approval to meet with townships in the primary service area to request the same \$10/capita.

Proposed capital equipment purchases include 5 radios, a base radio and external antenna. They are considering a DBA (booster) instead of the external antenna because it is cheaper.

Allina and Thomas worked on a cost analysis for an ALS service. This is not possible until there is a stable list of EMT's. During the COVID-19 time period, the service is operating as an ALS service when Thomas is available.

Riederer recapped the community center budget. The budget was reduced with 8 hr/week being scheduled at city hall to allow for cross training. Since the approval of going to Office 365, all documents will be available anywhere and allows for this to happen.

The pool was budgeted pretty much status quo except there may be a need to make some changes to private lessons. Beckman asked to get the pool board involved with these decisions.

Roiger stated that the library wages were down about \$15,000 due to not replacing an employee after the resignation. She also noted that their new hours started today and will reduce hours open. She is planning on getting a new copier/printer/fax in 2021.

Rogotzke recapped changes he has implemented to cut any costs that he can. He is doing work for other depts versus hiring a third-party vendor. That dept will realize his wages and benefits. They have been working on finding additional renters for the medical center as well. There will be a 6-month review with Allina in October.

Nicholson stated that the police budget was down due to the proposed health insurance plan and new officers. They entered into a contract for tasers and are looking at body cams in 2021. They still have the original 800 MHz radios and chargers so may need to start replacing them. Mueller noted that he is concerned about the future of PERA with the discussions going on about defunding police depts and hearing about so many officers who are suffering from PTSD and going on disability.

There is a new animal control employee who has been doing a good job with networking with other counties to move animals after a period of time.

Knutson recapped the streets and parks budgets. Both were down due to health insurance changes. He is considering using Salonek's for snow removal on the small snow events and using Roiger for the large snow events. Another savings would be if they can hire high school students to help with mowing. Alley work is a priority to them.

He is proposing improvements to Martha Anderson Park and possibly East End Park. He would like to cut down the 2 tall evergreens and a dogwood tree, replace the evergreens with 15-ft trees, install a sprinkler system, add area to the southeast side, and do some work on the memorial that is there. The cost is estimated at \$5,000 and could be funded through the 410 park fund. He is going to work with the American Legion to create a memorial area for all veterans.

Stremcha stated that a 2% COLA was budgeted along with step increases for employees who reached their 1-yr anniversary. Staff agreed to go with CivicCMS and CivicClerk and have signed the contracts so that work could begin.

The health insurance renewal came back at 4.8% increase. Another option would be to switch networks from Aware (includes Mayo and Avera) to the High Value Network. This would save the city \$27,000 annually. Employees would see a reduction in their share of premiums as well. The council agreed to no changes on the VEBA contributions. The city reps will be meeting with the PUC reps on Tuesday, Sept 15 at 4 PM to discuss the insurance.

Stremcha noted that a 4% levy increase was budgeted due to the projected similar increase in tax capacity. The transfer to the 411 fund was increased to \$200,000 for equipment replacement. A city hall remodel was also included in the 411 fund budget. This may be done over 2 phases as to do it in smaller increments will not work.

With the state's current deficit, it is thought that there could be an unallotment of LGA to help fix the deficit. Ideas of where to cut if this should happen include reserves and cutting the transfer to 411 fund. Council reviewed the bond trends and how to fit new debt service with future levies.

Stremcha noted that he is proposing that the emergency managers are deleted and making dept heads more responsible. He noted that he took care of all the COVID-19 details.

A transfer of \$15,000 was budgeted to the EDA for future business opportunities. This will be a net increase of \$20,000 to the EDA as the transfer to the general fund of \$5,000 was removed.

Motion by Beckman, second by Hesse to approve scheduling a collaborative meeting with the townships in the ambulance primary service area to discuss a \$10 per capita contribution to cover the extra expenses. All ayes.

Motion by Mueller, second by Hesse to adopt Res #20-090801 approving the 2021 proposed tax levy at \$1,249,589 and setting the Truth In Taxation for Dec. 15, 2020 at 6 PM. All ayes.

The council agreed to wait until spring to sell bonds for the Central St project.

Motion by Rothmeier, second by Mueller to adjourn at 8:48 PM. All ayes.

Lowell Helget, Mayor

Amy A.Vogel, City Clerk