

**CITY OF HARAHAH
MAYOR AND HARAHAH CITY COUNCIL
BUDGET HEARING
April 22, 2015**

The Mayor and the Council met on the above date for a budget hearing.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the Mayor called the Meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Tina Miceli, Councilman Baudier, Councilman Benton, Councilman Huete, Councilman Johnston, Councilman Wheeler, Municipal Clerk Nicole Lee, Maintenance Director Edwin Lauricella; Recreation Director Stu Foley, Robert Hines, Finance Director

Absent: City Attorney Anzelmo

Mayor Miceli said an email was received this a.m. from Councilman Huete and in an effort to cooperate she talked to the City Attorney and he suggested the resolution be placed on the agenda, but upon further conversation the City Attorney cited the law which states that an agenda shall not be changed less than 24 hours before said meeting. A remedy is that the agenda be amended at the meeting with a unanimous vote of the council. The mayor is concerned about the letter of the law and the transparency of the meetings.

A motion to amend the agenda was made by **Councilman Huete** and seconded by **Councilman Baudier**.

The mayor called the vote, it was as follows:

YEAS: Baudier, Huete, Johnston, Wheeler

NAYS: Benton

ABSENT: None

MOTION FAILED

Councilman Benton explained that the change was known prior to this meeting and she felt this was not necessary

ADDRESS THE COUNCIL

None

BUDGET DISCUSSION:

RECREATION

Stu Foley explained the needs of the recreation department.

Councilman Johnston questioned the uniform fees.

Robert Hienz, Finance Director – explained the line item concerning fees for uniforms.

Mr. Foley said that the only uniforms the city pays for are the All-Star uniforms which the playground keeps.

Councilman Johnston asked about several line items.

Mr. Hienz said these were the numbers that Mr. Foley said he needed.

Councilman Baudier asked about how the Pump to the River project was affecting the playground. There are 40 year old poles that have been removed and the contractor wants to place the same poles back in the ground and asked about the agreement with the Curtis school.

Mr. Foley said that the Curtis activities have never been in the way of the playground's activities. He added that they have paid for over \$70,000 of improvements.

MAINTENANCE

Edwin Lauricella, Maintenance Director said he had no problem with the budget presented by Mr. Hines. He said that a new flush machine will be needed in the near future. He said it breaks the clog and clears the drain but it does not get the debris out.

Mayor Miceli asked about the cost of the machine.

Mr. Lauricella said the machine cost \$55,000 about 20 years ago. It can handle an 18" drain – but only works if the line is not broken.

Councilman Johnston suggested that street repairs monies should go to Capital – he said \$250,000 should be taken from the \$270,000 allocated to street repairs and sent to revenues for Capital Projects.

Mr. Hienz said that there should already be \$700,000 in Capital Projects.

Mr. Lauricella said that he understood that expensive projects should come out of Capital Projects.

Councilman Baudier asked about the \$111,812 in the Capital Project line item now.

Mr. Hienz said that the \$111,812 would be eliminated because the \$250,000 would replace it.

Councilman Wheeler asked about the salaries and group hospitalization line items.

Mr. Hienz said that the \$6,000 was Carlo Ferrara's salary and he would look up about the group hospitalization.

Harahan Sr. Center

Mr. Hienz presented the budget and said the director was fine with the figures given.

LIGHTS

Mr. Hienz said this was based on the bills from last year.

After discussion with Entergy, the Council felt the bill was high.

Mayor Miceli said she had met with Entergy to discuss saving options.

Councilman Baudier asked about the projected revenue versus the actual revenues.

Mr. Hienz said that the projected revenue was based on only the first 2 months of 2015 multiplied out and wasn't relevant.

CIVIL SERVICE

Mr. Hienz said he will be looking into the civil service budget concerning a \$7,000 expense in 2014. He had not found relevant information concerning it.

REGULATORY

Mr. Hienz said only the salaries have changed drastically.

Mayor Miceli said she wants to talk to the council members about the regulatory position. Some have declined the jobs due to salary requirements and lack of a pension. There is someone getting his certification that she will bring to the board.

Councilman Benton asked about the workman's comp - she questioned the rate.

Mr. Hienz said he will look into the workman's comp to make sure they are paying the correct rate.

Councilman Huete said that 2014 had the most personnel in this department.

Mayor Miceli said she would like input from the council concerning this problem.

Councilman Johnston suggested they add to the salary line in case a full time director is hired.

Councilman Wheeler agreed.

Mayor Miceli said that additional dialogue was needed for this line item.

Councilman Johnston said that amendments are inevitable.

Councilman Huete asked if the \$65,000 is for the 2 part time employees.

Mr. Hienz said it also included the regulatory clerk.

Mayor Miceli repeated that more conversation is needed on this point.

Councilman Huete asked if one person could handle all the permits and inspections for the city.

Mayor Miceli said the answer was yes and no depending on where and how the city grows. She also stated that vacations and illnesses need to be considered.

Councilman Benton asked how it's working now.

Mayor Miceli said that the two part time people had systematically eliminated the back log from November & December all on a 15 hr. work week. Flexibility and availability is where we need change.

Councilman Baudier said that complaints have come in from business owners concerning time restraints. He feels a well ran department could be self-sustaining.

Mayor Miceli said that talks with the council need to take place.

Councilman Baudier is concerned that if contractors can't come in at a time convenient to them, they will proceed with the job without proper inspections.

Mayor Miceli said that structure that have been non-conforming for years and presenting hazards to their neighbors need to be addressed. Code enforcement is very important because it will endanger our first responders.

Councilman Baudier said that out of town banks that own blighted property are a big problem.

Mayor Miceli explained that the city attorney has drafted blighted property ordinances and will help out in the future.

Councilman Benton asked about the regulatory fees.

SEWERAGE

The revenues that are budgeted are what has been collected in the past. The service charges are paid by the residents and new connections are based on new construction.

COURT

Mary Helen submitted a budget that Mr. Hienz used. He also said that Digicomm was not paid in 2013 and other bills were not paid.

Councilman Baudier said that if he was presented with a bill from 2013, he would not pay it.

Councilman Huete said that they were told that the city was not going to be invoiced until the city was reimbursed by FEMA for the storm damage.

Mayor Miceli said that FEMA guideline are difficult to adhere to.

Councilman Benton asked about the hospitalization numbers that have fluctuated so much throughout all departments.

Mr. Hienz said he does not know why it doubled from 2013 to 2014.

ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Hienz said these figures are based on the previous year.

Councilman Huete asked about the salaries.

Mr. Hienz said that \$20,000 was for an additional hire so \$165,000 is for everyone here.

Councilman Johnston said that a jump of \$41,000 was a little steep.

Mr. Hienz said he will look into the matter and email the answer to the council.

Councilman Johnston asked about the life insurance match.

Mr. Hienz said he will look into that line item.

SANITATION

Mr. Hienz said this is based on last year's figures.

Mayor Miceli said that a plan needs to be formulated to deal with sanitation.

NON-DEPARTMENTAL EXPENSES

Mr. Hienz said the figures are generally correct.

Councilman Johnston asked about the Workman's Comp increase.

Mr. Hienz said an audit found monies owed and it was assessed.

Councilman Baudier asked about banking fees.

Mr. Hienz said the bank is required to keep about \$2,000,000 as collateral which they cannot invest so they assess fees on the city.

Mayor Miceli asked about the councilman's insurance.

Mr. Hienz said the ordinance must be passed that states that health insurance has to be included as part of their salaries. The city attorney is looking into the problem. He discussed the FEMA money that will be refunded.

Councilman Johnston and Wheeler said that this is presumed revenue and should not be in the budget.

Councilman Johnston asked about the appearance bond fees.

Mr. Hienz said that the fees have been miscoded and they are still investigating the matter. It should be increased.

Councilman Johnston asked about this misc. revenue and why it had diminished.

Mr. Hienz said that adjustments were made for money the city did not owe and a credit from Workman's Comp came in to the city. He also said the taxes for garbage are no longer received.

Mayor Miceli said that the budget does not include email archiving. The cost would be \$1,800 for 5 years and she had spoken with Paul Johnston for help with the money. The total cost of putting everything on line would be approximately \$100,000. Email for every employee has not been addressed.

Councilman Johnston said that their email is not listed on the web site.

Mayor Miceli asked that the council email her their wish list for what should be listed on the web site. She said that Nicole will handle the web site and there will be a training session for the web site.

Councilman Benton said that the business list is not up to date.

Mr. Hienz said the city is in the middle of an audit and the auditors will be asking each councilman questions.

REPORTS

Councilman Baudier stated that he and Councilman Huete had concerns about the proposed Resolution. They would like to see the insurance change-over not take

place until January, 2016. He acceded that is ultimately the mayor's decision, but we need to have input on this.

Mayor Miceli reiterates that the decision was not taken lightly. It was a difficult decision. We need to take care of our employees. I don't want to hurt any one person - but one decision may not be good for everyone. She would like to help any employee caught in this situation. The city has large financial problems. Moving forward - everything needs to be on the table. She thanked Councilman Baudier and Councilman Huete for putting forward the resolution and an AG opinion could be used to clarify the open meetings law.

Councilman Benton said that she had asked if the change could be put off until the end of the year, but the Mayor said that the city does not have the money to keep the old insurance. She wondered if there were any method the city could use to help the family affected by this.

Mayor Miceli said that possibly ways could be found to help the family affected. She would like the community to become involved.

ADDRESS THE COUNCIL

Chief Tim Walker said there are more employees in his department affected by the higher co-pays.

Mayor Miceli said that the old insurance plan was very rich plan, but the city can't afford this plan any more.

ADJOURN

A motion was made by Councilman Huete and seconded by Councilman Wheeler to adjourn at 7:26 pm.

The Mayor called for a vote, it was as follows:

YEAS: Baudier, Chatelain, Huete, Landry, Murray

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Tina Miceli, Mayor

Nicole Lee, Municipal Clerk

A. The following matter involving pending litigation may be considered (Court, Case, Number, Parties):

1. Phillip Canella vs. Arch Ins. Co., City of Harahan, Todd A. St. Cyr, and Allstate Ins. Co.; 24th JDC, Case 744-961, Div. "I".

2. Suzanne K. Scalise vs. City of Harahan LA, Anne Gordon, Louise Slayden, Ronald Gordon, Gail Gordon; 24th JDC, Case 744-986, Div. "O".

B. The following matter involving prospective litigation for which formal written demand has been made may be considered.

C. The following matters involving discussion of the character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of:

Name: