

Chester City Council Special Called Meeting
Budget Workshop
May 11, 2020, 6:00 pm
Minutes

PRESENT: Mayor Wanda Y. Stringfellow; Council Members Annie M. Reid, Susan Kovas, Carlos Williams, Angela Douglas, City Administrator Stephanie Jackson, HR Director/Municipal Clerk Carla Roof and Marc Wood.

ABSENT: Councilman Killian, Councilman King and Councilwoman Tinker.

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Stringfellow called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

PRAYER: Councilwoman Reid led in prayer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mayor and Council recited to Pledge of Allegiance.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: FY 2020-2021 Proposed Budget Expenses - Administrator Stephanie Jackson - Administrator Jackson informed Council that at the last workshop, we had a shortfall of 273,000.00. Mr. Wood and Administrative Jackson went back to each Department Head and made cuts. A review of the cuts was presented to Council in the amount of \$227,388.62. Last week we discussed that eliminating these positions and not providing a salary increase that we would be able to balance the budget. After going back to the drawing board, some expenses had to be changed and the revenue coming from the County would be less as well. Mr. Wood will review with Council and make recommendations to Council.

Discussion took place concerning outsourcing Public Works. Mayor Stringfellow discussed the use of inmates for grass cutting and partnering with the County Recreation. Much discussion took place. Mr. McBeth joined the meeting and discussed options of contracting out Sanitation and CND. We would do backyard service, street sweeping and leaves. We would have half of the employees that we have now, and this would be a tremendous savings. An RFP would have to be submitted. Much discussion took place.

Administrator Jackson stated that several municipalities will be working the month by month and may have to adjust each month. Discussion took place concerning the pool. At this time the pool is closed, and we are trying to move forward with opening the pool.

Mr. Wood indicated the Governor indicated that public pools are on the list that can be re-opened on Monday, May 18, 2020.

Mrs. Jackson informed Council the bidding for Evergreen Cemetery will need to be approved and a request to have a special called meeting on Monday, May 18, 2020, to approve. The emergency ordinance for meeting electronically will expire and if Council would like, we can revise the ordinance on May 18, 2020.

Opening bids for grass cutting and to discuss the emergency meetings. Councilwoman Kovas made a motion to meet on May 18, 2020 Reid seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas stated that we can take fireworks and Christmas Lights from Hospitality Funds. This will be a savings. We have money in Way finding for signage, this will be a savings. Discussion took place concerning Hillarity and other community events. Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas had questions concerning the one patrol position that is currently open. Chief Williams indicated he has adjusted to fill the gaps. We have 4 officers who are going to the academy and one patrol position that is currently open. So, we are filling the void of 5 people.

Councilwoman Susan Kovas discussed the Commercial Kitchen and people are wanting to rent. We need to get this fixed, the grease trap. Discussed having food trucks come into the City. Mr. McBeth indicated that he has quotes for both issues to fix the grease trap problems. Much discussion took place concerning the grease traps.

Mr. Wood stated that he is still currently doing a lot of cleanup work and will he will try to hold his fee down as much as he can but there is still a lot of work to be done. Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas wanted to know where are we financially? Mr. Wood indicated that he is training the two ladies in the front office. We are still running into some issues with coding. We are still clearing up issues and hope to pull back and do some work one or two days a month. Councilman Williams previously requested that Mr. Wood provide Council with an update on do we have the correct personnel. Councilman Williams stated that we need to know. Mr. Wood stated that we have the right personnel, they have not received the right training needed. Mr. Wood stated that he feels we are moving in the right direction.

FY 2020-2021 Proposed Budget Revenue - Mr. Marc Wood, Internal Auditor/Finance Director – Mr. Wood provided Council with an update-on areas that have been adjusted. Taxes, business license, moving police fines 606 to general fund, residential disposal fees, Local government fund – not sure if there will be a decrease or remain the same. Local options sales tax has been trending down. A 10% across the board was put in the budget. Mr. Wood stated that it is important the upcoming budget be reviewed each month.

Mr. Wood proposed, to get the \$130,000.00 shortage, to do a budget reserve out of fund balance to get the budget balanced. If we end up outsourcing services, we can come back and amend the budget.

Mrs. Jackson informed Council that Chief Jackson is making the senior engineer as a paid position. 1 retire, 1 leaving today and the last 8 that left to Flint Hill. These are two changes that are being made. ‘

Discussion took place concerning the mulch. Mrs. Jackson stated that she will meet with Mr. Douglas to discuss this and will bring back at the May 18, 2020 meeting.

Council Budget - Discussion took place concerning the Annual Meeting and how we can save money with numbers with one from each Ward participating. Mrs. Jackson will bring back at the May meeting these costs. Discussion took place concerning other training line items.

Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas announced that Senator Fanning and MUSC, by the end of the month, we will have a drive-up testing at MUSC, free of charge.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Contractual Matter – Springsteen Mill Site
Councilwoman Reid motion to go into Executive Session at 8:17 pm for discussion of a Contractual Matter – Springsteen Mill Site. Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilwoman Reid made a motion to reconvene from Executive Session. Councilman Williams seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. While in Executive Session, Council discussed a Contractual Matter – Springsteen Mill Site. No action was taken.

Councilwoman Reid made a motion to give the Administrator the authority to move forward with an appraisal on said property. Councilwoman Kovas seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Council will meet on Monday, May 18, 6 pm

With no further business, Councilwoman Reid made a motion to adjourn. Councilwoman Kovas seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Carla Roof