

Commission Workshop
August 28, 2017
6:00 pm

Minutes of August 28, 2017 Starke City Commission Workshop

This was the second budget workshop. Members present: Mayor Tommy Chastain, Commissioner Mortimer, Commissioner Nugent, Commissioner Waters and Commissioner Woods. Also present were Interim City Attorney John Cooper, Police Chief Jeff Johnson, Accountant John-Paul Ledford, Finance Director Alicia McMillian, City Manager Bob Milner, City Clerk Ricky Thompson and Fire Chief Gary Wise.

Mayor Chastain called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm and turned the meeting over to Mr. Ledford. Mr. Ledford, Mrs. McMillian, Mr. Milner And Mr. Thompson met after the first Budget Workshop to set goals for the 2017/2018 Budget. Mr. Milner mentioned the allegations made by a former employee that the Police Department was on the clock at the Police Department at the same time as they were on the clock at VyStar. Mr. Milner asked the commissioners for permission to hire an outside CPA Firm to look into the allegations. The commissioners all agreed that it needed to be done. Mr. Cooper stated that a lawsuit has been filed in Federal Court and asked the commissioners not to comment on the allegations.

The General Transportation Budget has a reserve carrying forward of \$500,000.00 that is for the loan for the new firetruck. Mr. Thompson asked if that covered the first payment. Mr. Ledford stated that it did not but it had been budgeted for. Mr. Whittle's position will not be filled when he retires. We will pay Mr. Brandrick \$25.00 per hour and charge the departments. Mr. Milner stated that we will be doing GIS mapping of the entire city. Law Enforcement Operating Expenses increased due to the number of Worker's Compensation claims. Chief Johnson is asking for a \$1.00 per hour raise for sergeants and lower and a 3% raise for lieutenants and higher. We had a grant to pay for a portion of the police officer's salary. We are hoping to get more grant money in October. Commissioner Mortimer asked how many employees Chief Johnson has. He has 19 but will be going to 18 because he will not be replacing Mrs. Hall.

We will be hiring a part-time Parks and Recreation Director. Commissioner Mortimer stated that she thought the city was getting out of the Parks and Recreation business. Mayor Chastain asked if we have budgeted for lighting and milling for the parking lot once the old Badcock building is demolished. Commissioner Woods asked if we could get more inmates. Mr. Milner met with the Warden and Assistant Warden recently and they cannot because of call outs and the inmates have to be swapped out every 60 days. Mrs. Mortimer asked if we could get inmates from another prison besides Lawtey.

Commissioner Waters asked if we had budgeted for the improvements to the Hercules property. Mayor Chastain asked to have the Hercules property appraisal on the next Commission Meeting Agenda.

Commissioner Mortimer asked about the Recreation Director because she thought we had gotten out of the recreation business. Mr. Thompson stated that we receive grants that require us to be involved with recreation.

Commissioner Woods asked why we need an HR person when our attorney can answer HR questions. Commissioner Nugent stated that the HR person will fill 2 roles. Mayor Chastain mentioned the parking to take the place of the Bradcock building and the parking for the splash park. Do we have a budget for them? We do not. Mayor Chastain asked if the \$300,000.00 from the sale of the Armory building was still available. Mr. Thompson stated that it still is. Mayor Chastain stated that we could use that money. Mrs. Mortimer asked if we could go back and change the millage rate. Mr. Ledford stated that we could not because it has already been adopted.

Commissioner Mortimer asked if employees would be willing to contribute more to retirement. Mr. Ledford stated that the cost for the General Pension is around 56%. Mrs. McMillian stated that employees would be willing to go up to 5% to keep their retirement intact. Commissioner Woods asked if we have a large unfunded balance for the retirement account. Commissioner Nugent asked Mr. Ledford to provide the numbers regarding retirement.

Mr. Ledford stated that the Transportation Trust Fund has a balance of \$997,000.00 that will carry forward. This money must be used for paving. Mr. Thompson stated that the paving cannot be done until the sewer repairs have been made. All 3 inmate crews had been budgeted out of transportation now only 1 is saving more than \$108,000.00. Mrs. Mortimer asked what the ½ mill would generate. Mr. Ledford stated about \$100,000. 00. Commissioner Woods wants to go on record that he does not agree with doing that.

Mr. Milner mentioned that water and sewer employees need to get a pay increase when they get licensed. Mrs. Mortimer mentioned the pay back agreement.

Mr. Thompson believes that this budget is more realistic than last years. We need to have a vote for the budget at the next Commission Meeting on September 12th and have the Zoning Workshop at a later date.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:57 pm.