

City of St. Helens Budget Committee

Meeting Minutes

April 22, 2019

Members Present: Rick Scholl, Mayor
Doug Morten, Council President
Ginny Carlson, Councilor
Stephen R. Topaz, Councilor
Brian Vaerewyck, Committee Member
Keith Locke, Councilor
Rachael Barry, Chair
Garrett Lines, Committee Member
Bill Eagle, Committee Member
Leah Tillotson, Committee Member

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Matt Brown, Finance Director
John Walsh, City Administrator
Jennifer Johnson, Accounting Assistant
Sue Nelson, Public Works Engineering Director
Margaret Jeffries, Library Director
Brian Greenway, Chief of Police

6:00 P.M. - Call Meeting to Order

1) **Visitor Comments - Limited to five (5) minutes per speaker**

♦Al Petersen. He has a concern with the approval of the budget and tax rate. He looked on the City's website to read last year's budget of 127 pages. He asked the Committee members if they have seen the proposed budget that should be around 130 pages. He said it is not published anywhere. He is very concerned. Only a summary has been available to the public. He believes ethically you cannot approve a budget that you have not seen or read.

Finance Director Brown expressed that the 130 page document is usually created after the adoption of the budget. Peterson said that is not how it has been done in the past. Brown said he provides the information that is required by statute. That is what was presented at last week's meeting. Budget changes that were adopted by City Council will be reviewed in tonight's meeting.

Petersen referenced page 48 of last year's budget showing a transfer of \$240,000 from the General Fund to the Tourism Fund. Brown said the transfer was discussed at the City Council meeting. It was also posted online and published in the newspaper. The Tourism Fund had

\$260,000 of unappropriated funds. Legally, unless a State of Emergency, unappropriated funds cannot be used. The transfer was made on June 30th and paid back the following day on July 1.

Topaz commented he has not had enough time to review the details of the budget. He has not been provided enough information to double check.

Brown said the purpose of the Budget Committee is to approve appropriations. Committee Member Barry would like an orientation for new members and current members.

Scholl reminded the Committee that the City is also audited every year. Locke said it takes several years on the Council to understand the budget. Carlson said the Budget meetings are too close together. The Committee needs more time to review the information.

2) **Review Questions from the Previous Meeting**

Brown provided a copy of all questions and responses that have been asked pertaining to the Budget for review. No further questions were asked.

3) **Review Updates from Previous Meeting**

Changes from Meeting One:

- Council approved the Development Coordinator position. Community Development Fund, General Fund, Water, Sewer, and Storm will be impacted by salary charges.
- Engineering Tech position was not approved.
- Recreation position was approved contingent on grant or \$2 utility billing fee.

Tillotson thought the utility billing fee was going out as a vote before the Council approved it. Scholl said the discussion was to hold a public forum which has been done. Topaz agrees that the public should be asked before placing a fee on the water bill. Brown said some unexpected events have transpired that the Recreation Department was not planning on funding for several years such as the Afterschool Program and acquiring the Recreation Center (old FARA building).

4) **Budget Review- General Fund**

4.A General Fund Information

Brown said there are not a lot of huge changes. The biggest change is the recreation grants anticipated revenue. The \$160,000 anticipated revenue from the recreation user fee set at \$2.

Tillotson pointed out the Police Personal Services increased. Brown said this is due to added personnel and PERS increases.

5) **Break**

6) **Public Hearing for State Shared Revenue**

Barry opened the Public Hearing at 7:40 p.m.

No public comment.

Brown discussed Cigarette Tax, Alcohol Tax, Revenue Sharing, and Cannabis Tax. All funds are dedicated to the General Fund.

Locke suggested it be something to talk about with City Council, giving some back to the community. Carlson would like to see revenue from the Cannabis Fund go to education and law enforcement. City Administrator Walsh mentioned part of those funds do go to the Council Discretionary Fund. They received \$10,000 to give back to the community.

Barry asked for a motion to support shared revenue for general fund use this fiscal year.

Motion: Eagle moved to receive state shared revenue for General Fund use fiscal year 2019-2020 with further discussion on how it will be used.

Discussion: Lines asked how would a citizen who wanted to ask a question about the Dog Park fencing would approach the Budget Committee. Brown said at the Budget Committee or a City Council meeting during public comment. Scholl mentioned the City does a lot for the Food Bank, Senior Center, and Alano Club.

Motion: Upon Eagles's motion and Barry's second, the Budget Committee unanimously approved the motion. [AYES: Vaerewyck, Barry, Lines, Eagle, Tilotson, Scholl, Morten, Locke, Carlson, Topaz; Nays: None]

7) **Approval of 2019/2020 Property Tax Rate**

Motion: Eagle moved to approve for fiscal year 2019-2020, a property tax rate of \$1.9078 per \$1,000 of assessed value for General Fund property taxes for taxes levied by the City of St. Helens permanent rate.

Discussion: Lines asked how the value is decided. Brown said is it set by the State and County. It is a permanent rate. Scholl said St. Helens is the second lowest in the County.

Upon Eagles's motion and Tilotson second, the Budget Committee unanimously approved the motion. [AYES: Vaerewyck, Berry, Lines, Eagle, Tilotson, Scholl, Morten, Locke, Carlson, Topaz; Nays: None]

8) **Approval of 2019/2020 Proposed Budget**

2019-2020 Budget Summary Approval

Motion: Barry moved to approve the expenditures for fiscal year 2019-2020 in the amount of \$42,754,450.00 and to establish the maximum expenditures for each fund as shown on fiscal year 2019-2020 purposed budget expenditures summary by fund.

Discussion: No new changes.

Upon Barry's motion and Eagle seconded, the Budget Committee approved the motion. [AYES: Vaerewyck, Barry, Lines, Eagle, Tilotson, Scholl, Morten, Locke, Carlson; Nays: None]

Topaz abstained. Topaz abstained he said he does not know enough about it to approve it.

9) **Adjourn-** 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Johnson, Budget Committee Secretary.

ATTEST:

Kathy Payne, City Recorder

Rick Scholl, Mayor