

City of St. Helens

Budget Committee Meeting

April 5, 2018

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

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: John Walsh, City Administrator
Matt Brown, Finance Director
Terry Moss, Police Chief
Sue Nelson, Public Works Engineering Director
Margaret Jeffries, Library Director
Jacob Graichen, City Planner
Jennifer Johnson, Accounting Assistant

Others: Heidi Davis, Building & Administration Secretary
Patrick Birkle
Trace Lapping
Makayla Sutton
Quinlynn C.
Madi B.
Sophie P.

Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. by Mayor Scholl.

Visitor Comment

- Patrick Birkle, Commended Finance Director Brown for doing a great job. He wanted to give his thoughts on the opportunities list as a former Budget Committee member. The fee schedule and construction excise tax, strategic plan, surplus sale of equipment, facilities master plan, updating the financial software, additional staffing for police, school resource officer, additional staffing for the Library, additional court staffing, review of public works is always a good idea, he is in favor of. He is not sure about the sick leave payout. He believes in maintaining a good relationship with employees

current and future. He is on the fence with the recreational coordinator roles need to be clearer. Sidewalk improvements to many additional fees on the utility bill, facility maintenance manager also on the fence. Was on the committee for the original review should be revisited again.

1) Election of Budget Chair

Motion: Scholl moved to elect Vaerewyck as Chair. Lines seconded. All in favor; none opposed; motion carries.

2) Approval of the Minutes – Previous Year

Motion: Eagle moved to approve the previous year minutes. Conn seconded. All in favor; none opposed; motion carries.

3) Direct Economic Impacts to the Budget (Part 1)

A. Universal Fee Schedule

- Potential revenue for this item is small. Fees will not increase dramatically.
- Carlson would like to see what the fees are currently as well as the proposed new fees.
- Park fees were not increased last year.
- Brown will attend the next Parks Commission meeting.

B. Construction Excise Tax 1%

- Potential Revenue is \$60,000.
- The Construction Excise Tax would only apply to commercial and industrial, not residential construction.

Motion: Locke moved to advise City Council to look at a Construction Excise Tax of 1% but not advise Brown to include it in the anticipated revenue. Morten seconded. Ayes: Scholl, Carlson, Locke, Morten, Lines, Vaerewyck, Eagle, Tillotson; Nays: Conn, Barry; motion carries.

C. Strategic 10 Year Plan

- The plan would include waterfront development, and other projects put into a vision plan that can be shared with the public.
- Eagle agrees with creating the strategic 10 year plan. He thinks it will be a valuable tool when bringing in new developers.
- The estimated cost is \$100,000. Brown said grant funds are available. He is projecting a cost of around \$40,000. Brown would like to use investment interest funds for this cost.
- Morton suggested if the money does come out of the general fund it should be a shared cost and charged to all the departments.

Motion: Morten moved that all departments are equally impacted. Eagle seconded. All in favor; none opposed; motion carries.

D. Surplus Sale

- This item was on the list in the prior fiscal year but with other projects going Public Works was unable to complete the sale.

Motion: Barry moved to go forward with the surplus sale. Eagle seconded. All in favor; none opposed; motion carries.

E. Facilities Master Plan

- The Police Department is in need of a new facility.
- This would be funded by the outside investment interest pool money.
- The cost would be around \$40,000 for the master plan.

Motion: Locke moved to go forward with the Facilities Master Plan. Conn seconded. All in favor; none opposed; motion carries.

F. Financial Software

- Brown would like to move forward with new software. He still needs to do a little more leg work.
- Carlson would like more research done on cloud based software verses server based.

Motion: Eagled moved to go forward with the new financial software. Conn seconded. All in favor; none opposed; motion carries.

G. Utility Billing User Fee – Sidewalk Improvements

- Morten advised the Council to take a look at this carefully as it would impact people who already have sidewalks in front of their properties. People who have just purchased new homes would be paying for sidewalks again.
- Tillotson said the biggest complaint she hears as a local business owner from residents is that the City water bill is so high. To add a new tax on a sensitive subject like the utility bill is a mistake.

Motion: Morten moved to invite City Council to ask staff to do an equitable study across the City for a sidewalk program. The areas need to be identified. Eagle seconded.

Discussion: Carlson reminded the Budget Committee that they are here to make hard decisions and sometimes you need to say no. Not everything on the list should be passed to City Council. She wants them to have a voice. Scholl pointed out the number of streets still without sidewalks.

All in favor; none opposed, motion carries

5) Direct Economic Impacts to the Budget – Part 2

A. Additional Staffing – Recreation Coordinator

B. Utility Billing User Fee – Parks and Receptions Activities

- Tillotson said the big events in town are great for the business but it also takes a hit on the City-owned property such as park use. The property is being used so heavily. She wonders if tourism could pay for some of the extra maintenance the

events cause the parks. Brown said they do have a fee for administrative costs. Walsh mentioned that tourism is heavily regulated on what you can spend tourism money on.

- Scholl pointed out the number of people at the last meeting supporting parks. He also questions if a \$2 fee is enough.
- Brown said they will hear back in May on the grant through the Ford Family Foundation that could potentially help fund this position.
- Morten would like to pull this position out as it is dependent on if the City gets the grant or not. Clarification was discussed that it is not solely dependent on the grant and the item was not removed.
- Tillotson feels the money should be found some place else.

Motion: Barry moved to approve additional staffing for the Recreation Coordinator, reinvestment into parks, and the utility billing user fee of \$2, as recommended to City Council. Eagle seconded. Ayes: Scholl, Carlson, Morten, Lines, Vaerewyck, Eagle, Conn, Barry; Nays: Tillotson, Locke; motion carries.

E. Additional Staffing – Police SRO

Motion: Eagle moved to approve additional staffing for the Police SRO Officer. Barry seconded.

Discussion: Eagle asked about the duties of an additional officer. Moss said one of the officers would be assigned strictly to the high school fulltime. The second officer would be assigned to elementary and middle schools to focus on education and prevention.

All in favor; none opposed; motion carries.

C. Reinvestment into Parks

Motion: Morten moved to go forward with category one. Scholl seconded.

Discussion: Vaerewyck wanted to go with category two. Brown said it would be an additional cost and a lot of projects over five years. Locke asked about other departments that need equipment and facilities up to par. Vaerewyck asked if those opportunities are on the list. Lines commented that the Budget Committee did not have any input on creating the opportunities list. Lines said without a strategic plan it's hard to comprehend if we have resources to do all the things on the list. The motion was called to question.

The vote was 9-0, all in favor; none opposed, motion carries.

G. Additional Staffing Court

- Brown reported there are RFP's out for a new judge and prosecutor.
- Brown would like to remove the additional staffing request for court from the list.

Motion: Scholl moved to remove additional staffing for Court off the list. Morten seconded. all in favor; none opposed, motion carries.

H. Court Division

- Brown said Court will be better assessed once the RFP is closed.

Motion: Morten moved to recommend to the City Council to direct staff to do a study on Court throughout the year. Locke seconded. All in favor; none opposed, motion carries.

I. Additional Staffing Waste Water Treatment Plant

- Nelson reported they are looking for someone to take a stronger position in the pretreatment program. This was identified in 2016 when DEQ did an audit of our existing pretreatment program. They found it was lacking in hours dedicated to this program. Currently the staff takes a more reactive type approach. Restaurants are required to have grease traps but it is seldom followed up on. DEQ is looking at these programs more strictly. In order to keep up with these requirements the Waste Water Treatment Plant needs additional staffing at least at part-time to be dedicated to this program.

Motion: Morten moved to recommend the additional staffing for Waste Water Treatment Plant goes to the City Council. Eagle seconded. All in favor; none opposed, motion carries.

F. Additional Staffing Library - Two Year Position

- Jeffries explained the benefits of retaining the current retired part-time employee for succession training.

Motion: Barry moved to approve the additional staffing for the two year position at the Library. Conn seconded. All in favor; none opposed, motion carries.

D. Additional Staffing – Police Support Staff

- Currently when the Police Support Specialist is off the Police Department is closed.
- Carlson asked if having an additional support staff person would make it possible to have the Police Department open on Saturdays. Moss said it's a possibility.

Motion: Morten moved that the Budget Committee recommends to the City Council to fill this position. Barry seconded.

Discussion: Vaerewyck agrees with the 20 hours of additional staff. He believes it would benefit the community to not have the Police Department close.

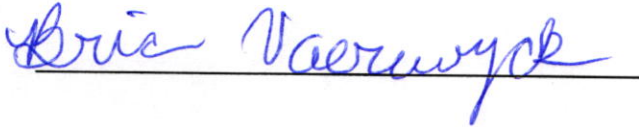
All in favor; none opposed, motion carries.

Motion: Scholl moved that the Budget Committee move the items left to discuss that do not impact the budget; sick leave payout for future employees, facilities maintenance manager position, public works job and structure review, and form of government to the next meeting. Locke seconded. Ayes: Scholl, Carlson, Lines, Vaerewyck, Eagle, Conn, Barry; Tillotson, Locke; Nays: Morten; motion carries.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

ATTEST:



Brian Vaerewyck, Chair



Matt Brown, Finance Director

Prepared by: Jennifer Johnson, Committee Secretary

PowerPoint Presentation attached.