



City of Smyrna

2800 King Street
Smyrna, Georgia 30080

Meeting Minutes - Final City Council

Friday, May 5, 2017

1:00 PM

Admin Conference Room - City Hall

Special Called Meeting of the Mayor and Council - Budget

1. Roll Call

Council: Mayor A. Max Bacon, Teri Anulewicz, Andrea Blustein, Susan Wilkinson, Ron Fennel, Derek Norton, Doug Stoner, Corkey Welch

Staff: Tammi Saddler Jones (Assistant City Administrator), Christiana Craddock (Executive Assistant to the City Administrator), Christy Ullman (Executive Assistant to Mayor and Council), Jered Sigmon (Budget Officer), and Kristin Robinson (Finance Director)

2. Call to Order

Mayor Bacon called the meeting to order at 1:03pm. He said Council needed to have a Special Call Budget meeting like this next year, and that the budget would also be discussed at the May 11, 2017 Committee of the Whole meeting.

3. Formal Business - FY2018 Budget

Health Insurance

Mayor Bacon said he wanted to know what items were put in the budget upon the direction of the previous City Administrator and if the Finance staff was comfortable with them.

Ms. Kristin Robinson said there were some changes to the Health Insurance costs from the original proposed budget, and \$190K was added for the 21 new positions requested. Councilmember Corkey Welch said that at the end of last fiscal year Council did a large budget amendment because of the health insurance costs, and he wanted to know if that was taken into consideration for this budget so they could avoid that large amendment at the end of FY18, and Ms. Robinson said that was considered in this budget. She said staff had meetings with Marsh and McLennan to look at the high cost claimants and they made their recommendations for the budget; however that can never be a solid number due to unforeseen expenditures and claims. Councilmember Susan Wilkinson asked if the spousal surcharge implemented this year had any effect on Health Insurance costs, and Mr. Jered Sigmon said it saved the City about \$100K. Councilmember Wilkinson inquired about doing an audit to make sure people are being honest about spousal coverage.

Pay Study by Archer Group, November 2016

Ms. Kristin Robinson said that last November several Councilmembers said they were interested in seeing where the City stacks up against competitive cities since Smyrna was having a hard time filling vacancies. Archer Group did a mini pay study for the City and put together some information, which Ms. Kristin Robinson provided

Council in a handout. She said the changes were not put in place at that time, and at the most recent COW meeting it was suggested that the City do a full pay study, and Chip King with the Archer Group suggested doing it in July for better data and results. Councilmember Fennel asked if the study should move up one month and be put in this year's budget so it could get started. Ms. Kristin Robinson said that they were told July would be a better time to do the study, and the plan was to do the pay study and implement any changes effective Jan 1, 2018 along with the merit increases, should Council approve those as well.

There was discussion about Public Safety salaries and if the City is in line with other municipalities. Ms. Robinson shared a memo that Chief Lee provided that detailed the kind of benefits he was losing his people to, and it provided the salaries and incentives at other locations and also contained recommended changes for his uncertified and certified police officers. There were also some tiers built in to the incentives based on experience and education requirements, which is a trend in many Public Safety organizations to motivate them to get an education in order to move up in the organizations. Ms. Robinson said that his suggested starting, midpoint, and top out salaries were very close to the proposed ranges that the Archer study suggested in November 2016.

Mayor Bacon said he wants to find out why the City cannot or has not filled the vacant positions that have been open for a long time, some since last year's budget was adopted. There was some discussion about incentives for employees who help find key positions (such as the assistant city engineer) as well as offering a signing bonus for some of these positions. Mayor Bacon asked about the possibility of using a head hunter to help find some of these important positions, and that with 30-40 vacancies it makes him wonder what it really takes to operate the City and why we cannot get the jobs filled. Councilmember Ron Fennel asked if citizens feel a shortage of service from the vacancies, and Councilmember Teri Anulewicz agreed and said the other side of Mayor Bacon's question was what is falling through the cracks, lacking, and getting put on the back burner because of the vacancies. Councilmember Corkey Welch said there were many people who live outside the metro Atlanta area who want to move here and could potentially fill some of these long-open positions. There was discussion about implementing a signing bonus program for some positions.

Ms. Kristin Robinson brought the conversation back to the Public Safety salaries and said that through Chief's research and the Archer study, it looks like the City is 4% below the competition, and Finance intends to implement those recommended changes in the budget. She also said that as of April 19th, there were 32 vacant positions in the City, with 13 being in Public Safety (PD, FD, and Communications). Mayor Bacon brought up the Water Systems Manager position that was put in the FY17 budget and had never been filled. He said he was confused as to what that person is supposed to do. Councilmember Welch said his opinion was that it should potentially be a replacement for Scott Stokes when he retires, so the title may not fit the position, and Councilmember Fennel agreed. There was discussion about changing the title of this position to another Assistant Public Works Director position as it relates to a succession plan for the Public Works Director position. There was consensus that they should have a discussion with Public Works Director Scott Stokes and possibly change the title and job description for the position.

There was discussion about the open Assistant City Engineer position, and the possibility of asking an engineering firm to supply the City with an apprentice or intern to fill that position. There were concerns about this being billed out at a high rate, but that it might be worth it to see if the position is a good fit. There was certain agreement that the City Engineer needs this position and some help fast.

Councilmember Ron Fennel suggested an incentive for Scott Stokes and Eric Randall to help them recruit someone of caliber. Mayor Bacon said a deadline needed to be made for the hiring of those positions to help speed it along as well. Councilmember Wilkinson also suggested a co-op program with a local university.

Proposed Changes Since April 27, 2017 Work Session

Mr. Jered Sigmon began reviewing some of the changes made since the April 27th COW meeting. He said it did not look like the City could do both a COLA and a merit increase for staff, so they were recommending the merit increase because it gives employees "more bang for the buck" and incentivizes and rewards them for their success. Another change was bumping back the hiring of the new Fire trainees and truck driver to the last half of the fiscal year. In the PD, two new officer requests were taken out and a position reclassified to Certification Manager. Mr. Sigmon said the PD is trying to get their accreditation and this position will help with that, and it also took out \$170K. Councilmember Fennel and Mr. Sigmon and Ms. Robinson all praised Chief Lee for being a team player, as he approached Finance on his own about removing the 2 new police officer positions. Interim City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones mentioned the proposal to add a Management Analyst position for Maxwell Ruppensburg so the City retains the current management fellow. She said that in lieu of the resignation of Community Liaison Kelsey Scott, this new position will handle the Vision process and other special projects out of the Administration office. She said that Ms. Scott mentioned during her resignation process that the Community Liaison position was not a full time job. Councilmember Derek Norton mentioned doing an exit interview with her. Ms. Kristin Robinson said if Council wanted to add the Management Analyst position, a possible place to find the money would be previously committed funds. Mr. Jered Sigmon added they would also be looking for about \$25K for incentive monies for new positions.

New Personnel Requests

The new personnel requests were reviewed, including proposed hiring dates and what positions were recommended and not recommended. There was discussion about the addition of a new crew worker for sanitation and recycling, which would allow them to add another route, which is what they were doing prior to the recession. This would allow staff to get done quicker and not incur as much overtime, which would also reduce impact of accidents and workers comp claims due to fatigue. Mr. Sigmon said putting two people on the back of the trucks would allow them to get through the routes quicker and easier. Mayor Bacon asked if a study had been done on this, and Councilmember Fennel replied that this was the assessment and recommendation of the department head. Councilmember Stoner emphasized that Public Works Director Scott Stokes who requested this position has been at the City a long time, just as long as the Mayor. Mayor Bacon said Council should not rubber stamp everything staff brings in. Councilmember Fennel mentioned that the crew worker positions are the hardest ones to find, hire, and keep, generally speaking. He said the department head has made a recommendation, and Council can ask him questions if they need to in order to justify it. Mayor Bacon said that he did not like the argument of getting back to the "pre-recession" routes, and he would appreciate an argument more focused on the City's growth, more houses mean more stops, etc. He concluded that he just wanted the department heads to make their cases for the new positions requests. Mr. Jered Sigmon suggested that if Council moves forward with the Management Analyst job that they task that person with doing an independent analysis on all the new personnel requests. He said they currently relied on the department heads' please and justifications, which they do submit to Finance in a written format for each new personnel request, with some department heads being more thorough than others.

Reclassification Requests

Mr. Jered Sigmon reviewed one of the handouts that detailed the impact of the position reclassifications (pay grades). Mayor Bacon asked who told Finance that these positions needed to be reclassified, and Ms. Robinson replied that the requests were submitted by the departments. He asked who approved them. She said Archer was given the requests and they evaluated the job descriptions and gave Staff a recommendation on if they thought the grade was correct or needed to be modified. There was a spreadsheet reviewed that detailed the justification for the grades and reclassifications from Archer. There was discussion about top outs for a select group of employees with proposed pay grade changes. Mayor Bacon asked what was wrong with being topped out. Ms. Kristin Robinson replied that it created morale issues. She said for someone who is topped out and no longer gets merit increases when everyone else gets them, it can create complacency and does not help with getting the employee to be motivated, to think outside the box, to try new things, and it makes an employee feel that they are not getting rewarded for being a long term employee.

Ms. Kristin Robinson added that when they were sending the job descriptions to Archer to review the pay grade change requests, HR Director Kay Bolick mentioned several times that the job descriptions may not be as up to date and accurate as they need to be to justify what people are doing. Many positions have added responsibilities over the years, and the job descriptions have not been adjusted to reflect those increased duties. Councilmember Norton asked whose responsibility it was to make those updates. Mr. Jered Sigmon noted that Archer's biggest concern or question was regarding the change for the Administrative Services Coordinator. Ms. Robinson said it made sense to have job descriptions reviewed and updated, and Councilmember Norton agreed and said it needed to happen and should be a joint exercise with both Kay Bolick and the corresponding department head.

There was discussion about the lead marshal reclassification, and Ms. Robinson said that Community Development Director Ken Suddreth says that the lead marshal job description does not match what he is doing, as he has supervisory responsibilities that are not mentioned in the current job description. He contends that the position should never have been in grade 14 to begin with, and should have always been at grade 16. Councilmember Norton asked if the job description had been updated, and added that if the change needs to happen, then how does someone ask for this change without updating the job description first. Councilmember Andrea Blustein expressed her displeasure with the marshals responsiveness and mentioned the need for an animal control officer.

Mayor Bacon said the meeting was going to stop now and if anyone had questions to reach out to the appropriate staff member. He apologized for missing the COW meeting on April 27 and said he understood that the City Administrator's report was outstanding.

Ms. Kristin Robinson asked if the direction was to use uncommitted funds to cover the Management Analyst position and other discussed personnel items. She handed out a spreadsheet that detailed the projects Croy Engineering manages as an FYI for Council.

4. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40pm.

