

The second meeting of the City of Astoria 2015-16 Budget Committee was held at the above place at the hour of 7:00 pm, which was a continuation from the meeting held on April 27, 2015.

Committee Members Present: Mayor LaMear, City Councilors Warr, Herzig, Nemlowill, and Price, Richard Hurley, Loran Mathews, Shel Cantor, David McElroy, Janet Miltenberger.

Committee Members Excused: None.

Staff Present: City Manager Estes, Finance Director Brooks, Financial Analyst Snyder, Police Chief/Assistance City Manager Johnston, Fire Chief Ames, Public Works Director Cook, Library Director Tucker, and Parks Director Cosby.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Mathews.

Budget Committee Review Schedule

Review of City of Astoria Departments/Funds for FYE 6/30/16

INDIVIDUAL BUDGET CONSIDERATION

General Fund:

Non & Interdepartmental

Discussion of this fund was postponed.

Fire

Fire Chief Ames briefly summarized current staff and volunteer numbers at the Fire Department and addressed several questions regarding Grant Funded Intern Stipends, the Volunteer Length of Service and CERT vehicle and equipment housed at Fire Station 2, volunteer wages, fire investigation, and the steady increase in salaries.

- He described the benefits of relocating Fire Station 2 and having a new, smaller public safety building for a second fire station with space for police officers. He and the Committee discussed potential sites for the building, understanding that such plans would not occur until far into the future. He also described the Capital Improvement Items, which included funding for the new pumper truck, specific items needed for equipping the new truck and additional fire and rescue equipment necessary for typical operations.
- Purchasing a ladder truck would be the main priority in future budgets, otherwise only funding to cover current operating expenses was anticipated. Relocating the small fire station would not be a discussion items for many years.
- Key personnel positions Chief Ames would hate to lose were the Deputy Chief and half-time front office assistant. He would not want to lose any current staff, but if so, the department could continue to function without tremendous difficulty.
- Committee member Cantor asked Chief Ames what he would do with a 10% increase in the Fire budget. They would add two, possibly three full-time employees, though expending that additional funding would depend on Council's goals and direction. Chief Ames noted he prepared the Fire budget as honestly, factually, and financially responsibly as possible. He also used the budget as a plan as much as anything else and the department is meeting its financial obligations.

Committee Action: Motion made by Councilor Warr, seconded by Councilor Nemlowill to tentatively approve the Fire Department Budget. (Motion carried.) City Councilors Warr, Herzig, Nemlowill, and Price, Richard Hurley, Loran Mathews, Shel Cantor, David McElroy, Janet Miltenberger, and Mayor LaMear voted yes.

Library

Director Tucker briefly reviewed the 2015-16 Library budget, which reflected maintenance costs as well as those for current services and programs while the City decided which building project would be

pursued. She and Staff addressed several clarifying questions, including about the use of the Logan Memorial Fund. Discussion amongst the Budget Committee and Staff included the following key items:

City Staff, including Public Works Director Ken Cook, explained that completely replacing the roof was necessary due to its condition and made sense because the building might be used for the new library. The roof also needed to be built strong enough to withstand the materials falling off of the Waldorf. The \$80,000 roof would have a minimum 15 to 20 year life, and the library would be able to function while the roof was constructed. Installing solar tubes to bring in light during the roof's construction would be easier and more cost effective, while providing a long-term benefit. Staff was asked to research any grant money opportunities, such as with Energy Trust of Oregon and Pacific Power's Blue Sky Program, to help offset costs.

The Budget Committee and Staff had a lengthy discussion regarding the pilfering of library materials and the suggestion to install a temporary security system in the existing library since it could take five years before a new library was built. The Building Program for the new library included the installation of such a security system. Director Tucker described the benefits of the Electrical Magnetic (EM) and Radio Frequency ID (RFID) systems, as well as the impediments to installing them in the existing library building.

- New materials were being purchased, but the purchase of items most vulnerable to theft are restricted. Items stolen on a regular basis were replaced through an online database, making items like Mango Languages, available to many people at one time.
- Implemented this year, a Staff member walks around the library asking patrons if they found what they wanted, etc. and that attention seems to have improved behavior and cut down on theft.
- No inventory has been conducted for the library. The issue is although items might be in the computer catalog, they might not be on the shelf.
 - Having a current inventory of the library would be valuable to learn what books are actually in the library. Determining if any volunteer programs were available to help was suggested; such as the Downtown Association.
- Getting a cost estimate on EM and RFID has been challenging. Salespeople are very cautious about quoting a price on a system that is generally out to bid and had so many factors and moving pieces, including the building square footage, volume of items, and various technical issues. Four salespeople had been contacted and only one called back on EM, no salesperson would talk about RFID.
 - The estimated cost for EM was \$50,000 for gates for two doors. EM also required each book to be desensitized to leave and re-sensitized upon return. The library currently circulates 65,000 items per year, so 1,080 hours of staff time would be added per year for that EM process.
 - Knowing how many volumes the library has could be used to estimate the RFID cost.
- Only a portion of money from the Astor Public Library Endowment Fund 403 could be used. The Fund was established by transferring resources from a variety of other funds, which were donated for specific purposes. The Endowment created by then City Attorney Snow required the City to maintain a corpus that was not expendable. Of the \$139,000, only about \$20,000 to \$30,000 of the Endowment Fund could be diverted to purchasing a system.

George McCartin confirmed the \$53,400 included in the budget for replacement materials were for all the items listed for that line item. Director Tucker confirmed that the amount allocated was sufficient for the replacement of books and electronic media, adding that based on industry standards, the Library had a good theft ratio. Generally, 10 percent was considered an acceptable amount of loss. All libraries lose materials, even those with a system in place.

The Committee concluded that installing a system would be a City Council decision and asked Staff to gather more details about installing a temporary system. Staff was asked to research whether a temporary system would be transferrable to the new library and to consider all the costs involved, including annual service costs, additional staff time, etc. to determine the cost benefit ratio of installing a system compared to the materials lost. After Staff's report, City Council could determine whether to install a system and amend the budget if resources were available in Capital Improvement Fund.

Budget Committee members commented that they appreciated seeing money included in the Capital Improvement Fund for landscaping and complemented Library Staff on the After Hours Program and making the library a community center.

Committee Action: Motion made by Richard Hurley, seconded by Councilor Price to tentatively approve the Library Budget as presented. (Motion carried.) City Councilors Warr, Herzig, Nemlowill, and Price, Richard Hurley, Loran Mathews, Shel Cantor, David McElroy, Janet Miltenberger, and Mayor LaMear voted yes.

Capital Improvement Fund

Discussion of this fund was postponed

Parks Operation Fund

Director Cosby presented the Parks and Recreation Budget, highlighting the department's functions and the various funds within the department. She described how the Parks Project Fund, Maritime Memorial Fund, and Aquatic Facility Fund related to the overall budget. She explained the new budget approach, which set more realistic goals for the department and provided a more accurate reflection of the department's financial standing. She discussed the benefits of having a Parks Master Plan, noting the City was applying for a \$35,000 grant to offset the expense, and described the new software system that would be used to track revenues, order information, etc. from all the different Parks programs and would be used at all applicable Parks Department locations.

Staff addressed many clarifying questions from the Committee about various budget line items and responded to questions regarding the cost of the Aquatic Center; possibly using the Parks Project Fund, dedicated solely for construction of the Garden of Surging Waves, for future phases of Heritage Square; Capital Improvement projects, namely related to the Aquatic Center; the purpose and benefits of creating and adopting a Parks Master Plan, which could help address issues like vandalism; and the different funds and City departments used to maintain trails along rights-of-way and various parts of the Rivertrail.

Additional key discussion items were as follows:

- Getting an actual break down of personnel hours, maintenance costs, volunteer hours, etc. according to each park's location or recreation center to have actuals in the budget for comparison and review over the course of the year and this would also help prepare for future years. Consolidated data could be used to create a financial dashboard for the City and provide regular reports to Council. Calculating the amount of volunteer hours would enable the City to actually see the true cost of maintenance. This break down could be applied to other departments as well.
- Professional Services would be contracted to help maintenance staff make headway on parks and cemetery maintenance to address the concerns heard from citizens over the last few months. The fee structure for the cemetery was reviewed. The new fees would take effect July 1st and incremental increases were expected in future years. Trends regarding cemetery use were briefly discussed and Director Cosby noted she found no connection that a lack of cemetery maintenance caused a decrease in use. Astoria's cemetery was the main cemetery in the county and drew patrons from the region. Advertising for more customers was discouraged because of potential issues with professional service maintenance.
- The Oceanview Cemetery Weed Eradication and Reseeding Project line item was slightly mistitled within the Capital Improvement Fund. The funds were also intended to be for any other capital improvements in City parks as obtaining a good weed free mulch for parks' planter beds had been discussed and would be included in that line item.
- There were different approaches to address and prevent vandalism. Director Cosby suggested one key option would be selectively closing restrooms in the off season. Options had been explored for security cameras, but the expensive of the system outweighed benefit.

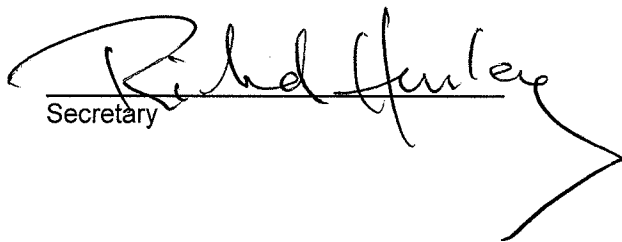
Committee Action: Motion made by Mayor LaMear, seconded by Councilor Warr to tentatively approve the Parks Operation Fund. (Motion carried.) City Councilors Warr, Herzig, Nemlowill, and Price, Richard Hurley, Loran Mathews, Shel Cantor, David McElroy, Janet Miltenberger, and Mayor LaMear voted yes.

City Manager Estes noted the following handouts were distributed to the Budget Committee:

- Response from John Snyder regarding questions about administrative fees for the Urban Renewal Fund, the Astoria Urban Renewal District/Columbia Bank loan, and information regarding City license and permit revenue.
- Copy of the CEDR budget. He noted Kevin Leahy would be providing an official ask letter as well.
- Skip Hauke of the Astoria/Warrenton Chamber of Commerce provided materials for the Committee to review in advance of tomorrow's Budget Committee meeting, which he would be attending.
- He added that Finance Director Brooks would be getting back to the Committee about other questions that were asked about PERS and Astoria's portion of County delinquent property taxes.

Chair Mathews adjourned the meeting at 9:08 pm.

ATTEST:


Secretary