

CITY COUNCIL
Tad Miller
Dario Notti
Mike O'Brien
Agnes Phillips, Mayor
Ruth Richardson
Stanley Rodgers
Thor Williams



CITY MANAGER
Ken Weaver

CITY CLERK
L.J. Tanner

City of Bethel
Special City Council Meeting Minutes
May 20, 1997

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was convened at 6:35 p.m. by Mayor Phillips at the City Offices.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Miller, Notti (late), O'Brien, Phillips, Richardson, Rodgers, Williams
Absent: none

III. PEOPLE TO BE HEARD

Mr. Hal Jones, speaking as a citizen, not as a member of the Finance Committee, stated his opposition to spending reserve funds. The Council is elected to make the difficult decision on the budget.

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

motion M/M Williams, 2nd by O'Brien, to approve the agenda as presented.

vote Voice vote. Motion carried, unanimously.

V. BUDGET REVIEWS

City Manager Ken Weaver gave the Council a brief overview of the revised budget. Council member Rodgers questioned why the City Manager had returned a budget that still was not balanced. Mr. Rodgers stated that at the meeting on May 14, 1997, the Council had directed the City Manager to come back on May 20 with a balanced budget.

Council member O'Brien suggested that the input of the Finance Committee would be helpful, and should be obtained. Council member Richardson suggested that the Council discuss and recommend cuts at the present meeting. Council member Williams agreed with Ms. Richardson.

Finance Director Bonnie Duke pointed out that in the revised budget, operating expenses in the general fund are covered by revenues. Proposed capital expenses dip into the fund balance by \$230,622. Ms. Duke noted that capital expenditures would be a good place for the Council to begin cutting.

Mr. Weaver noted that he believes the budget process works best when conducted as a team effort of the City Manager and the Council, especially if and when personnel cuts are necessary. He does not think the budget should be prepared by the City Manager in a "back room."

Item A: Police Department

Chief Gary Eilers was present to answer questions from the Council. Council asked for clarification of the \$12,000 line item for Other Purchased Services, and Chief Eilers explained that the line item is used

for psychological testing, photo processing, electronics and copier repair, and dispatch equipment repair. The \$65,000 Insurance line item, increase from \$45,000 in FY97, was explained by the Finance Director. Discussion followed on the \$30,000 capital expenditure request for a new police vehicle, and whether additional 4-wheel drive vehicles are needed. Chief Eilers explained that he would prefer to purchase front-wheel drives rather than Suburbans.

motion M/M Miller, 2nd by O'Brien, to delete the \$30,000 New Vehicle line item, and to increase the \$5,000 Used Vehicle line item to \$10,000.

vote Voice vote. Motion carried, unanimously.

Item B: Fire Department

Chief George Young was present to answer questions from the Council. Council asked for clarification of the \$3,100 request for a new computer, which was removed in the current revision of the budget. Chief Young explained that while his computer works, it is old, slow, and prone to lock-up. The need for additional Supplies funding was also reviewed. Discussion followed on the \$3,108 request for 2 handheld radios. Chief Young explained that several radios in the department are 16-17 years old. The need for a new ambulance, estimated to cost \$125,000, was briefly discussed.

motion M/M Miller, 2nd by Rodgers, to adjust the Fire Department budget to a maximum of \$650,500, to include funds for 2 new handheld radios, necessary supplies, and a portion of the new computer cost.

vote Voice vote. Motion carried, unanimously.

Item C: Community Services Department

Community Services Director Julius Pleasant was present to answer questions from the Council. Mr. Pleasant explained that the Parks & Recreation Department will be separated out of Community Services, and he will in the future manage the Senior Center. Mr. Pleasant then explained the difference between the NTS and ADC programs, and how each program is currently funded and staffed. A brief discussion followed with regards to spinning the Senior Center operations off to a non-profit community organization.

Council member Miller requested that \$5,000 be added to the Community Services budget for a donation to the Bethel Recycling Project. Discussion followed on the justification for such a donation, possible benefits, and whether the donation should be considered when the Council reviews the Utility budget. City Manager Weaver noted that recycling is a valuable aspect of waste stream reduction.

motion M/M Notti, 2nd by O'Brien, to table discussion of Mr. Miller's proposed donation to the Bethel Recycling Project until the Utility budget is reviewed.

vote Voice vote. Motion carried, unanimously.

Item D: Parks & Recreation Department

Parks & Recreation Department Head Janet Athanas was present to answer questions from the Council. Council asked for clarification of the \$7,500 line item for Equipment, and Ms. Athanas explained that the line item is used chiefly for weightroom equipment. The weightroom has experienced greatly increased usage and resulting revenue recognized by the City. In addition, a new foosball table is needed.

Council member O'Brien questioned if the \$200 budgeted for Gasoline would be sufficient, given that Youth Center staff now transports students from the schools to the Youth Center. Ms. Athanas agreed that more funds would be needed.

motion M/M O'Brien, 2nd by Miller, to increase the Gasoline line item by \$600.

vote Voice vote. Motion carried, 5-Yes, 2-No (Notti, Rodgers)

Discussion followed, prompted by comments from Mr. Hal Jones, on the merits of turning the Items for Resale operation to the 4-H organization. It was agreed that this discussion be referred to the Youth Services Committee, together with a recommendation that the Committee change their name to Parks & Recreation Committee.

Item E: Administration and Planning

City Manager Weaver was present to answer questions from the Council. Mr. Weaver reviewed the Planning budget first, explaining the ACMP Conference, Training/Travel, and Professional Services line items. The capital expenditure for Land Development & Inspection Ordinance Revisions was also explained, as a continuation of the Comprehensive Planning process. The revisions would help prevent subdivision, zoning, and construction problems.

Council member O'Brien noted that a lot of money is spent on personnel, and asked if the Planning Technician position could be reduced to half-time. Mr. Weaver outlined his idea for combining the work of the Planning Technician and the Public Works Administrative Assistant into one position, titled "Office Manager." One position would thereby be eliminated, resulting in a cost savings of approximately \$50,000.

Council member Rodgers brought up the cost of the utility benefit. After some discussion, it was noted that the utility benefit is covered by the Union Agreement.

motion M/M Miller, to reduce the Planning Technician to a half-time position.

failed Motion failed for lack of a second.

motion M/M O'Brien, to eliminate the Planning Technician position and approve the rest of the Planning budget.

failed Motion failed for lack of a second.

Discussion followed on the proposal to combine the Planning Technician and Administrative Assistant positions. It was noted that by eliminating the Planning Technician position, all associated overtime and benefits would automatically be deleted from the budget.

motion M/M O'Brien, 2nd by Richardson, to eliminate the Planning Technician position and approve the rest of the Planning budget.

vote Voice vote. Motion carried, unanimously.

Mr. Weaver reviewed the Administration budget with the Council. The proposed Assistant City Manager position has been deleted, together with associated benefits, supplies, and training. Mr. Weaver explained the \$30,000 allocation for a temporary intern. The intern would update the City's personnel rules, which now apply only to non-union employees. Updates are needed to reflect the Americans with Disabilities Act, Employee Assistance programs, adjusted salary scales, etc.

A brief discussion followed on the \$20,000 increase in fees for the City's lobbyist. Mr. Weaver explained that Mr. Richard's contract actually calls for \$35,000, and he put an additional \$5,000 in to cover expenses for Mr. Richards to travel to Bethel, Anchorage, etc. Council member O'Brien noted that the City got our money's worth from Mr. Richard's services this legislative session.

motion M/M O'Brien, 2nd by Richardson, to approve the Administration budget.

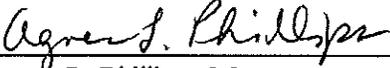
vote Voice vote. Motion carried, unanimously.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

motion M/M by Rodgers, 2nd by O'Brien to adjourn the meeting at 10:05 p.m.

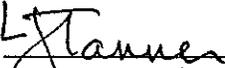
vote Voice vote. Motion carried unanimously.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 27TH DAY OF MAY, 1997.



Agnes L. Phillips, Mayor

ATTEST:



L.J. Tanner, City Clerk