

The Claremont City Council held a meeting on Thursday, May 14, 2015, in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Neilsen at 6:30 p.m.

Members of the Council present were:

At-Large Councilor Keith Raymond
Ward I Councilor Carolyn Towle
Assistant Mayor Victor Bergeron
Mayor James Neilsen, IV
At-Large Councilor James Reed
Ward II Councilor Charlene Lovett
At-Large Councilor Kyle Messier
At-Large Councilor John Simonds

Absent:

Ward III Councilor Nicholas Koloski

Also present were:

Guy Santagate, City Manager
Mary Walter, Finance Director

BUDGET

Streets & Roads (Highways) – Public Hearing

Department Request \$3,547,702 City Manager Proposed \$2,631,107

Tom Woodley, Public Works Director, showed a PowerPoint presentation which listed staff positions and where they are assigned; breakdown of the Public Works and Utility budgets; water facilities they maintain; water projects they have done; sewer pump stations and sewer projects; cemeteries they maintain; equipment they maintain; and road work that has been done.

Mr. Woodley presented current paving projects and options for future paving projects.

2014/2015 PAVING PHASE I - FUNDED

LOCATION	COST
Baker Street	\$23,904
Henry Street	\$39,454
Cottage Street	\$49,532
Severance Street	\$47,102
Walnut Street	\$58,171

TOTAL Phase I \$218,163

Note: projection - projects out to bid

2015/2016 PAVING PHASE II – OPTION 1

LOCATION	COST
Elm Street (North to Dunning)	\$129,560
Upper Elm Street	\$65,715
North & Elm Intersection	\$31,400
North & Hanover Intersection	\$26,880
First Street	\$44,500
Second Street	\$41,700
Buena Vista Road	\$61,300
Central Street	\$69,900
Sullivan Street	\$170,740
Edwin Avenue	\$162,925
Pearl Street (Myrtle to Central)	\$109,405
Walnut (School to Myrtle)	\$35,975
TOTAL (estimated)	\$950,000

2015/2016 PAVING PHASE II – OPTION 2

LOCATION	COST
Washington Street (Home Depot to Winter Street)	
TOTAL (estimated)	\$950,000

2015/2016 PAVING PHASE II – OPTION 3

LOCATION	COST
Main Street (From Old RR Tracks to Main/North Project)	\$525,000
Veterans Park Road	\$150,000
Hanover Street (From North Street to Dunning Street)	\$124,600
Winter Street (From Water Plant to Thrasher Road)	\$110,400
Pleasant Street (From South Street to East Street)	\$ 40,000
TOTAL (estimated)	\$950,000

Mr. Woodley said when vehicles are traded-in, the Claremont decal is removed, but the outline still shows, so in the future Public Works will spray paint the doors black before trade-in.

There was a discussion about a possible bond for road paving.

Ms. Walter said the \$900,000 bond for Washington Street will be paid off in 2017 which will free up \$80,000. Payments for a \$3 million bond for 15 years will be \$270,000 a year. Half of that (\$1.5 million) would be \$135,000 a year.

Councilors would like to have a discussion about the bond.

Ms. Messier pointed out the state is downshifting, which equals about \$800,000 this year. She is not opposed to bonding. Mayor Neilsen said with the state continuing to decrease the amount given to communities, bonding will bridge the gap to do the road projects and during that time we can continue to grow the community.

Mayor Neilsen opened the public hearing.

Bob Picard, Ward 2, said Public Works did a wonderful job last winter. He asked about the status of the North Street project. Mr. Woodley said the money is earmarked. Hopefully it will be done next year. Mr. Picard asked about the road (Main Street) by the Coke plant. He said a motorcycle got caught up in the groove of the road. Mr. Woodley said that is part of an ongoing process. Mr. Picard asked about Upper Twistback Road. Mr. Woodley said he will look at it. Mr. Picard said if the City considers a bond, then Main Street needs to be considered. Ms. Walter said Main Street is in the current request.

AJ Maranville, Ward 2, said the Pumpkin Festival would be part of economic development which brings people into Claremont. He talked about the bond and saving some of the money from it to do chip seal on the roads after a few year years, so that they last longer. He said the roads are underfunded. He doesn't think spending \$3 million in 3 years is enough. We need to put \$750,000 in each budget for the roads.

Mr. Picard, Ward 2, said his road was chip sealed in 1990 and it is just now starting to fall apart.

Allen Damren, Ward 1, is in favor of a bond. He urged caution in the amount to be borrowed. He said \$250,000 is not enough for roads. The roads coming into the City should be attractive and not bumpy.

Bernie Folta, Ward 3, asked how costs for vehicles, etc. are accounted for when used in different areas. Mr. Woodley said a workorder system is used and the money is direct charged to the appropriate fund.

AJ Maranville, Ward 2, said the Council should keep control of where the money should go.

Mayor Neilsen closed the public hearing.

A motion was made by Mr. Bergeron and seconded by Ms. Towle to tentatively approve the Streets & Roads (Highways) budget for \$2,631,107.

Voice vote: motion carried 7-1 with Ms. Lovett voting no. Ms. Lovett said if we are going to address priorities, we need to level fund this budget to at least last year's amount at the same time as we address bonding.

Sanitation – Public Hearing

Department Request \$231,972 City Manager Proposed \$224,792

Mr. Woodley said the \$6,463 in Temporary & Seasonal should go to the Highway budget. It needs to be taken out of this budget.

Mayor Neilsen opened the public hearing.

Bernie Folta, Ward 3, asked about vacation payout when an employee leaves and the accrued liability to the City of unearned time. Ms. Walter said the employee is entitled to their vacation time. Sick time payout depends on how long they've been here. Personal time does not get paid out. Mr. Santagate said in 2001 there was \$750,000 unfunded liability on the books. Now it's about \$350,000. Sick days are now capped at 45 days.

Mayor Neilsen said when someone leaves, sometimes the position is left unfilled to compensate for that payout.

Mayor Neilsen closed the public hearing.

A motion was made by Mr. Raymond and seconded by Mr. Simonds to tentatively approve the Sanitation budget for \$218,329.

Ms. Lovett would like the bottom line reduced by \$15,000 and move it into streets and paving (which is a higher priority). By taking small amounts from other budgets and putting it into the streets and paving, it would go toward level funding the streets and paving budget from last year.

Roll call vote: motion carried 5-3 with Ms. Towle, Mr. Reed and Ms. Lovett voting no.

Cemetery – Public Hearing

Department Request \$193,838 City Manager Proposed \$189,338

Ms. Messier asked what other communities do. She asked if the cemeteries are run by cities. Mr. Woodley said it is mixed. Some communities run them, some contract them out and some are private. We do a combination with St. Mary's. Claremont does burials in the winter which is different than other communities; they wait and do spring burials. Our system is working well.

Ms. Lovett said 15 months ago she asked for a cost analysis for winter burials. Mr. Woodley said there is a substantial cost to build a vault and then to maintain it. He estimated \$55,000 to build a vault. Ms. Lovett asked if current fees cover costs of the burial. Mr. Woodley thinks it does, but that may need to be evaluated.

Mayor Neilsen opened the public hearing.

Bernie Folta, Ward 3, talked about when an employee leaves and the position is left unfilled and the money is used to fund payouts. He said it suggests there is elasticity in delivery of services.

Mayor Neilsen said that only works for short durations and that it doesn't always work. Mr. Raymond said it affects the overtime.

Mayor Neilsen closed the public hearing.

A motion was made by Mr. Raymond and seconded by Mr. Reed to tentatively approve the Cemetery budget for \$189,338.

Voice vote: motion carried 8-0.

Water – Public Hearing

Department Request \$2,840,984 City Manager Proposed \$2,840,984

There was a brief discussion to clarify some of the line items.

Mayor Neilsen opened the public hearing.

Bernie Folta, Ward 3, made some comments about some of the numbers in this budget. He asked about a water rate increase.

Mayor Neilsen closed the public hearing.

A motion was made by Mr. Bergeron and seconded by Mr. Reed to tentatively approve the Water budget for \$2,840,984.

Mayor Neilsen said if staff thinks a rate hike is needed, then Council will be notified.

Voice vote: motion carried 8-0.

Ms. Towle said she sent a letter thanking the Public Works crew. She had lost her water this winter and they kept checking on her.

Sewer – Public Hearing

Department Request \$2,643,910 City Manager Proposed \$2,643,910

There was a brief discussion to clarify some of the line items.

Mayor Neilsen opened the public hearing.

Bernie Folta, Ward 3, noted the Sewer budget expenses match Sewer revenues. He asked what the fund balance is for Sewer.

Mayor Neilsen closed the public hearing.

A motion was made by Mr. Raymond and seconded by Mr. Simonds to tentatively approve the Sewer budget for \$2,643,910.

Voice vote: motion carried 8-0.

Mayor Neilsen asked about the timeline for a bond. Ms. Walter said she believes it is 15 days to advertise for a public hearing. It requires a 2/3 vote of the Council to pass. She said you can bond for construction and don't need to have specific projects. We have \$12.4 million bond capacity.

Council would like to see some options of where to spend the \$3 million.

Council agreed to put the bond discussion on the June 10th Council meeting.

Ms. Walter said you can advertise for \$3 million bond and then reduce the amount at the meeting.

Ms. Messier said the paving options that were presented tonight were important.

Mr. Santagate said that Washington Street could be done in three phases and still be able to do some neighborhoods.

CONSULTATION WITH LEGAL COUNSEL

None

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:05 p.m., a motion was made by Mr. Simonds and seconded by Mr. Raymond to adjourn.

Voice vote: motion carried 8-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dorée M. Russell
Clerk to the Council