

The Claremont City Council held a meeting on Tuesday, May 13, 2014, in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Neilsen at 6:00 p.m.

Members of the Council present were:

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

Absent:

At-Large Councilor John Simonds

Also present were:

Guy Santagate, City Manager
Mary Walter, Finance Director

Council observed a moment of silence for the slain police officer in Brentwood, NH.

BUDGET

Welfare

Department Request \$405,406; CM Proposed \$405,406

A motion was made by Mr. Raymond and seconded by Mr. Bergeron to tentatively approve the Welfare budget of \$405,406.

Voice Vote: Motion carried 8-0.

Assessing

Department Request \$424,249; CM Proposed \$214,273

Marlene Jordan, Assessing Technician said Revaluation of \$250,000 was put in as a contingency, but the state approved a statistical revaluation, so the City Manager Proposed \$40,000. Ms.

Walter said she will come back to Council in June to encumber \$60,000 for the revaluation from this year.

A motion was made by Mr. Koloski and seconded by Ms. Towle to tentatively approve the Assessing budget of \$214,273.

Voice Vote: Motion carried 8-0.

Library

Department Request \$484,605; CM Proposed \$468,376

Mike Grace, Librarian, said the reduction in Capital Projects was for a check in/out catalog system and carpet; they can go another year without those items. The last time the carpet was replaced was at least nine years ago.

A motion was made by Mr. Raymond and seconded by Mr. Bergeron to tentatively approve the Library budget of \$468,376.

Voice Vote: Motion carried 8-0.

Police

Department Request \$2,682,628; CM Proposed \$2,549,233

Mr. Raymond asked if the personnel numbers are where they should be now. Chief Scott said they are very close to being back to full staff. In 2015 they will absorb one COPS grant officer and in 2017 they'll absorb another. In 4-5 years he would like to see them at 26 officers. After absorbing two grant officers, he would like to add one more.

A motion was made by Mr. Raymond and seconded by Ms. Towle to tentatively approve the Police budget of \$2,549,233.

Voice Vote: Motion carried 8-0.

Communications 911

Department Request \$507,561; CM Proposed \$486,370

Police Chief Alex Scott talked about manpower and that the fifth full-time dispatcher started last year and that has been a tremendous help. They are having trouble recruiting and keeping qualified part-time dispatchers. At the May 14, 2014, Council meeting there will be a discussion about increasing the pay. They will continue to monitor grant opportunities. As we continue to grow, we can increase revenues by taking on dispatching duties for other communities. He said at a conference there were speakers from the Newtown, Connecticut and the Watertown,

Massachusetts shooting and they said the biggest challenge was communications. Ms. Walter said the anticipated pay increases to \$15 per hour has been placed in the budget.

A motion was made by Ms. Towle and seconded by Ms. Messier to tentatively approve the Police budget of \$486,370.

Voice vote: Motion carried 8-0.

Fire

Department Request \$2,591,740; CM Proposed \$2,445,307

Rick Bergeron, Fire Chief, said the budget is up considerably, but is offset by the SAFER grant. Three additional firefighters started March 10th. Ms. Walter said if you take out the SAFER grant revenue, it is level funded. Chief Bergeron said the grant covers two years of salaries and benefits, but if we hired military veterans, we can apply for a one-year extension. We hired three veterans and have applied for the third-year extension. A decision is expected mid to late June. In 2017 we will add them to the Fire Department budget.

Chief Bergeron said the wireless fire alarm system is operating well. It is cheaper to install the wireless system at private businesses than the old gamwell system.

There was discussion about the Building M&R and possibly applying for a Moose Plate grant. Chief Bergeron said they are just finishing a grant from the USDA for insulating the attic and adding solar panels for heating hot water to the fire station. There is about \$5,800 left in that grant, and they may be able to put it toward roof repairs, if the City pays the balance. It may cost a total of \$20,000. If the roof is not redone now, it would probably need to be redone next year.

Chief Bergeron said that two people work on the traffic lights and that as Claremont grows, they may need to add another person.

A motion was made by Mr. Raymond and seconded by Mr. Reed to tentatively approve the Fire budget of \$2,445,307.

Voice Vote: Motion carried 8-0.

Airport

Department Request \$109,655; CM Proposed \$109,655

Ms. Walter said the Airport budget used to be fully funded. It is about 93% now. The only revenue generator is gasoline which has an offsetting cost. We've been lower than surrounding communities. Chief Bergeron said Newport is the closest airport. We generally make 10% on gasoline. Out of \$50,000 tankful, we make about \$6,000 (typically 50 cents/gallon).

Mr. Koloski asked about generating revenue and suggested selling advertisement space at the airport to local businesses. Chief Bergeron will have to check the FAA rules. Mr. Koloski suggested the Planning Department put some informational pamphlets up there. Ms. Lovett said the Claremont airport does not show up on an internet search. Mr. Koloski suggested there has to be something we can do to better promote the airport. Chief Bergeron said the lack of taxi service is detrimental. Mayor Neilsen asked if the fixed based operators could come to a Council workshop to brainstorm on what to do to promote the airport/Claremont. Chief Bergeron will check with them.

A motion was made by Mr. Raymond and seconded by Ms. Towle to tentatively approve the Airport budget of \$109,655.

Voice Vote: Motion carried 8-0.

Mayor Neilsen said there was concern that there would not be enough time to finish up the budgets on May 20th, so he asked to add an additional meeting on May 27th at 6 p.m. Council concurred. Mr. Raymond said he would be on vacation on the 27th.

CONSULTATION WITH LEGAL COUNSEL

None

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:53 p.m., a motion was made by Mr. Koloski and seconded by Ms. Lovett to adjourn.

Voice vote: motion carried 8-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dorée M. Russell
Clerk to the Council