

The Claremont City Council held a meeting on Tuesday, May 27, 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:

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
At-Large Councilor John Simonds (late)

Absent:

At-Large Councilor Keith Raymond (absent)

Also present were:

Guy Santagate, City Manager
Mary Walter, Finance Director

BUDGET

Resolution 2015 - 1 Tax Anticipation Note – Public Hearing

Ms. Walter said every year the City may have to borrow funds before taxes are received and we have to have authorization to do that. In the past when we have had to borrow, we've done it through the Water and Sewer Departments. When we borrow, we pay it back with interest at ¼% above prime. The interest is already in the 417 budgets. We are asking for \$2 million, but we don't expect to borrow that much.

Mayor Neilsen opened the public hearing. No one spoke. He closed it.

A motion was made by Ms. Lovett and seconded by Ms. Towle to adopt Resolution 2015 - 1 Tax Anticipation Note.

Ms. Lovett read the resolution into the record.

Roll call vote: motion carried 7-0.

Resolution 2015 - 2 Adopting the 2014-2015 General Fund Budget for the City of
Claremont – Public Hearing

Ms. Walter noted that the numbers in the resolution are what was proposed by the City Manager and what was publicly noticed.

At 6:08 p.m. Mr. Simonds arrived.

A motion was made by Mr. Bergeron and seconded by Ms. Towle to adopt Resolution 2015 - 2 Adopting the 2014-2015 General Fund Budget for the City of Claremont.

Mr. Bergeron read the resolution into the record.

There was concern that one or more of the Councilors would have to recuse themselves because of their (Call Firefighter) or their family member's (Police Officer) employment with the City. Mayor Neilsen talked about the Code of Conduct in reference to Councilors and family members. He felt there was no immediate gain for any Councilors, so none were asked to recuse themselves.

Ms. Lovett presented her proposal for changes to the budgets. Planning and Development: add \$17,246 for additional employee, reduce computer supplies \$400, reduce postage \$2,400, total \$14,446 addition; Streets and Roads: reduce furniture and equipment \$400, reduce machines and equipment \$1,000, add \$15,000 summer maintenance and winter maintenance, total \$13,600 addition; Cemetery: reduce preservation of cemetery records \$400, reduce furniture and equipment \$400, reduce grave site improvement \$300, total \$1,100 reduction; Municipal Complex: reduce general supplies \$1,000, reduce chemicals \$600, reduce materials \$3,000, reduce equipment M&R \$4,500, reduce Opera House maintenance/supply \$900, add \$9,700 to Broad Street Church, total \$300 reduction; Welfare: reduce technology and internet \$200, reduce furniture and equipment \$400, total \$600 reduction; Assessing: reduce mileage for employee training \$300, reduce equipment M&R \$100, reduce vehicle M&R \$100, total \$500 reduction; Library: reduce equipment M&R \$300, reduce furniture and equipment \$500, total \$800 reduction; Police: reduce books and periodicals \$500, total \$500 reduction; Fire: reduce mileage for training \$150, total \$150 reduction; Parks: reduce postage \$800, reduce special events \$600, reduce office supplies \$800, reduce technology and internet \$1,600, add Arrowhead \$6,000, add JSL \$14,000, total \$16,200 addition; CSBCC: reduce part-time \$45,750, total \$45,750 reduction; General Services: reduce bank and admin fees \$17,000, total \$17,000 reduction; Policy: add part-time legal employee to 28 hours \$8,200, total \$8,200 addition; grand total \$14,254 reduction in City Manager's proposed budget.

Mr. Santagate talked about line item versus totals and Mayor Neilsen agreed Council's authority is for the bottom line. Ms. Lovett said this was an explanation of how she got to her suggestions.

Ms. Messier has issues with snow removal around the schools and in the downtown business core which are not included in Ms. Lovett's proposal.

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Mr. Koloski didn't think \$10,000 would be enough for the church and suggested seeking grants to help with it. He would like to see the budget go down.

Ms. Walter said there are three slate tiles missing from the church roof with an estimated cost of repair of \$4,400. Councilors would like to see the City seek grants for the church repairs.

Mr. Koloski would like to know what the plan is for maintaining all the City-owned buildings. As part of that plan, Mayor Neilsen asked to have it specified where the proceeds of any sales of the building would go (i.e. maintaining some of the buildings we still have).

Mayor Neilsen opened the public hearing.

Bernie Folta, Ward 3, said in reference to conflict-of-interest that he would like to see Call Fire Fighters recuse themselves from the Fire budget. He likes seeing pushback from the Council on the City Manager's proposed budget. He believes 5%-10% could be cut with very little damage.

Chuck Allen, Ward 3, Arrowhead Recreation Club (ARC), said in the City Manager's proposed budget that the ARC budget had been reduced almost 40%. He talked about the expenses of running Arrowhead and the capital improvements they have made to that area. He would like Council to add the \$6,500 back into the Arrowhead line item

Steve Raymond, Ward 1, said in reference to the JSL that the taxpayers pay \$30,000 for heat, lights, insurance and water. He said the City needs to know what their revenues are to be able to make decisions.

Cynthia Howard, Ward 2, said the budget went up 5% which she assumes is more than the cost of living, so she asked what happened with the self-imposed tax cap. She would like to see more cut backs. In the future when grants expire, the taxpayers will have to pick up more costs.

Arthur Palmer, Ward 3, said he has spent a lifetime at the JSL building. There are 18 people that volunteer their time there. Rollerskating is just one of the things they do. There is City vehicle storage in the building; there are birthday parties there, etc. \$30,000 is just a drop in the bucket. Sometimes there are 50-75 people at a time rollerskating.

Mayor Neilsen talked about the Senior Center PILOT of \$1,000 per year and that we need to look at the asset we have. We need to look at the other entities to see what we did for them to make them viable.

Mr. Koloski would like to see more than \$2,000 to support JSL.

Mayor Neilsen said Council was excited when Mr. Santagate gave a level-funded budget. If Councilors think there is a demonstrated need, it's Council's responsibility to appropriate what is needed.

Ms. Walter said the intention was to put enough money into the JSL line item to give us time look at maybe selling the building. Mr. Santagate said we need to take a look at the JSL and Arrowhead buildings and we need to look at the income and expenses. He is still an advocate for fixing the parking up at Arrowhead.

Mr. Bergeron said the City needs to get income and expense reports from both Arrowhead and the JSL. Ms. Walter said that doesn't even address the liability issues.

Arthur Palmer, Ward 3, talked about how the JSL came about. It was an armory and when the City acquired it, the JSL volunteered to maintain it. When he was chairman, the city agreed to pay \$6,000 for fuel and now it is \$12,000. He thinks they should know what is being spent there.

Steve Raymond, Ward 1, believes the JSL needs a new furnace. He asked if taxpayers are paying for water and sewer, etc. Mayor Neilsen said the original budget was \$20,000 and the expenses ended at \$32,000.

Robert Knight, Ward 3, said the JSL makes \$7,000-\$10,000 per year and the money goes back into the building for repairs, etc. They have gotten help from many people in the community for maintenance and repairs. During the tour, the JSL can have the books available for the Council to review. They have a barbecue at the end of year for volunteers that is paid for by the JSL.

Bernie Folta, Ward 3, commented that the Council could add \$100,000 to the bottom line, however there is no guarantee the City Manager will spend it as Council desires. Mayor Neilsen said you are dealing with a person of integrity and there has been mutual respect between the administration and staff.

Roll call vote: motion failed 1-6, 1 abstention (Mr. Simonds abstained since he missed the last three meetings).

A motion was made by Ms. Lovett and seconded by Mr. Reed to adopt Resolution 2015 - 2 Adopting the 2014-2015 General Fund Budget for the City of Claremont with the following modifications:

Policy and Administration

Policy	\$	582,656 + 8,200 = 590,856
City Administration		940,654
Elections & Registrations		15,200
Assessing		214,273 - 200 = 214,073
Municipal Complex		339,521 + 4,200 = 343,721
Planning & Development		714,069 + 14,446 = 728,515
General Services		761,425 - 20,000 = 741,425

Public Safety

Communications – 911	\$ 486,370
Police Department	2,549,233 – 500 = 2,548,733
Fire Department	2,445,307 – 150 = 2,445,157

Health & Welfare

Welfare Department	\$ 405,406 – 600 = 404,806
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Public Works

Sanitation	\$ 219,280
Streets & Roads	2,730,299 + 13,600 = 2,743,899

Public Library	468,376 – 800 = 467,576
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Debt Service	1,127,122
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Public Service Enterprises

Cemetery Department	183,254 – 1,100 = 182,154
Airport	109,655

Recreation & Parks

Parks Department	350,466 + 16,200 = 366,666
CSB Community Center	1,146,126 – 45,750 = 1,100,376

TOTAL	\$ 15,788,692 = 15,776,238
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Department heads spoke about the proposed changes to their budgets. Planning and Development Director Nancy Merrill accepted the increase to Planning & Development. Police Chief Alex Scott objected to the reduction to Police. Fire Chief Rick Bergeron objected to the reduction to Fire. Public Works Director Bruce Temple accepted the increase to Public Works. Librarian Michael Grace objected to the reduction saying they work very hard, watch every penny and don't waste a dime. Parks and Recreation Director Mark Brislin objected to the reduction to the CSBCC and said if CSBCC has to be reduced, he would rather that money go to Parks. Not all Department heads were present.

After hearing the Department heads' comments, Councilors discussed the proposed changes.

Roll call vote: motion failed 2-5 with 1 abstention (Mr. Simonds).

A motion was made by Mr. Koloski and seconded by Mr. Bergeron for discussion to adopt Resolution 2015 - 2 Adopting the 2014-2015 General Fund Budget for the City of Claremont with the following modifications:

Policy and Administration

Policy	\$	582,656 + 8,200 = 590,856
City Administration		940,654
Elections & Registrations		15,200
Assessing		214,273
Municipal Complex		339,521 + 4,400 = 343,921
Planning & Development		714,069 + 17,246 = 731,315
General Services		761,425 - 20,000 = 741,425

Public Safety

Communications – 911	\$	486,370
Police Department		2,549,233
Fire Department		2,445,307

Health & Welfare

Welfare Department	\$	405,406 - 29,846 = 375,560
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Public Works

Sanitation	\$	219,280
Streets & Roads		2,730,299

Public Library **468,376**

Debt Service **1,127,122**

Public Service Enterprises

Cemetery Department	183,254
Airport	109,655

Recreation & Parks

Parks Department	350,466 + 20,000 = 370,466
CSB Community Center	1,146,126

TOTAL **\$ 15,788,692 = 15,788,692**

REVENUES WOULD STAY THE SAME.

Ms. Walter said that would add the 28-hour legal position, the roof repair at the conference center/church, code enforcement position and the part-time secretary position, funding for JSL and funding for Arrowhead.

Mr. Bergeron disagreed with cutting the Welfare budget. If money is needed at the end of the year, it will come from Fund Balance.

Roll call vote: motion carried 4-3, with 1 abstention (Ms. Towle, Mr. Bergeron and Ms. Lovett voted no and Mr. Simonds abstained).

Resolution 2015 - 3 To Adopt the 2014-2015 Water Division Budget for the City of Claremont – Public Hearing

A motion was made by Ms. Lovett and seconded by Mr. Bergeron to adopt Resolution 2015 - 3 To Adopt the 2014-2015 Water Division Budget for the City of Claremont.

Ms. Lovett read the resolution into the record.

Mayor Neilsen opened the public hearing.

Bernie Folta, Ward 3, asked if the approval of the Water budget implies increased rates. Mayor Neilsen said if there is a rate increase, it will come before the Council for approval. Mr. Santagate said none are anticipated in this budget.

Roll call vote: motion carried 8-0.

Resolution 2015 - 4 To Adopt the 2014-2015 Sewer Division Budget for the City of Claremont – Public Hearing

A motion was made by Mr. Simonds and seconded by Mr. Koloski to adopt Resolution 2015 - 4 To Adopt the 2014-2015 Sewer Division Budget for the City of Claremont.

Mr. Simonds read the resolution into the record.

Mayor Neilsen opened the public hearing. No one spoke. He closed it.

Roll call vote: motion carried 8-0.

Resolution 2015 - 5 To Adopt the River Road Tax Increment Finance District Budget for the City of Claremont – Public Hearing

A motion was made by Mr. Koloski and seconded by Mr. Bergeron to adopt Resolution 2015 - 5 To Adopt the River Road Tax Increment Finance District Budget for the City of Claremont.

Mr. Koloski read the resolution into the record.

Mr. Bergeron asked when the River Road TIFD closes. Ms. Walter said this budget will be the last one.

Mr. Simonds said he will abstain as he was not here for discussion of this budget.

Mayor Neilsen opened the public hearing.

Bernie Folta, Ward 3, asked about sunsetting the River Road TIFD. Mayor Neilsen said we are planning a future meeting to discuss it.

Roll call vote: motion carried 7-0, with 1 abstain (Mr. Simonds).

Resolution 2015 - 6 To Adopt the Downtown Tax Increment Finance District Budget for the City of Claremont – Public Hearing

A motion was made by Mr. Koloski and seconded by Ms. Towle to adopt Resolution 2015 - 6 To Adopt the Downtown Tax Increment Finance District Budget for the City of Claremont.

Mr. Koloski read the resolution into the record.

Mayor Neilsen opened the public hearing.

Bernie Folta, Ward 3, asked when the Downtown TIFD is scheduled to sunset. Ms. Walter said when the bonds are paid (20 year bonds, so quite a while).

Mr. Simonds said he will abstain as he was not at the discussion for this budget.

Roll call vote: motion carried 7-0, 1 abstain (Mr. Simonds).

Ms. Towle said June 3rd, 6:30 p.m., will be the Business Corridor Project at the John Goodrich Room of the Sugar River Valley Regional Technical Center.

CONSULTATION WITH LEGAL COUNSEL

None

ADJOURNMENT

At 10:09 p.m., a motion was made by Ms. Messier and seconded by Mr. Reed to adjourn.

Voice vote: motion carried 8-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dorée M. Russell
Clerk to the Council