

The Claremont City Council held a meeting on Thursday, May 19, 2016, in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

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

Members of the Council present were:

Ward I Councilor Carolyn Towle
Ward II Councilor Scott Pope
At-Large Councilor Keith Raymond
Assistant Mayor Victor Bergeron
Mayor Charlene Lovett
At-Large Councilor Allen Damren
At-Large Councilor Bruce Temple
Ward III Councilor Nicholas Koloski
At-Large Councilor John Simonds

Also present were:

Guy Santagate, City Manager
Jane Taylor, City Solicitor
Mary Walter, Finance Director

AGENDA (CHANGES)

None

CITIZEN'S FORUM

No one spoke.

Mayor Lovett said Council needs to consider having an additional budget meeting on June 16th to discuss what it wants to present to the public for the budget.

BUDGET

Ms. Walter said all the budgets reflect 53 pay weeks and a 17% increase in health insurance.

Streets & Roads (Highways)

Department Request \$3,829,645 City Manager Proposed \$3,014,645

Scott Sweet, Public Works Director, presented a PowerPoint showing all the areas that are covered by Public Works including Streets & Roads (Highways), Sanitation, Transfer Station, Cemeteries, Water and Sewer. He detailed some of the pending and proposed paving projects:

- Pending Paving (bond \$1.5 million): Sullivan Street, Edwin Avenue, Central Street (Pearl to Union), Pearl Street (Myrtle to Central), Pleasant Street (South to East), Walnut Street (School to Myrtle).
- Paving CIP Plan 2016-2017 \$750,000 (this is what he asked for): Washington Street, South Street and Oakwood Drive
- Paving CIP Plan 2017-2018 \$750,000: Thrasher Road, Centennial Street, Grissom Lane, Ridge Avenue (upper) Acer Heights, Chellis Street, Orchard Road, Whitcomb Lane (portion). City is attempting to obtain an additional grant for lower Main Street.
- Paving CIP Plan 2018-2019 \$750,000: Durham Avenue, Grove Street Myrtle Street, Summit Road, Chase Street, Ellery Street, Pappas Road. East Street may be paved with a TAP Grant.
- Paving CIP Plan 2019-2020 \$750,000: Paddy Hollow Road, Clay Hill Road, Highland Avenue, McKenzie Drive, Francis Street, Franklin Street, Spofford Street, Spruce Street, Trinity Street, Parsons Avenue, Richards Court.
- Paving CIP Plan 2020-future \$1,739,000: Winter Street Extension, Red Water Brook Road, Old Newport Road, West Terrace Street, Slab City Road, Twistback Road, Langseth Avenue, Old Church Road (lower), Hartford Street, Bellevue Avenue, Schmitt Street, Edgewood Street, Osgood Avenue, Benton Avenue.

Mr. Sweet also discussed the Sanitation and Cemetery budgets and noted a revenue shortfall for Capital Projects in the Water Department and less so in the Sewer Department.

Mr. Santagate asked who did the previous engineering study for utility projects. Mr. Temple said the water plant was Dufresne Associates; Underwood Engineering did the two pump stations; and the underground sanitary sewer infrastructure was Dubois & King.

Because of the mild winter, Mr. Sweet will move left over salt and sand money to the paving line.

Mr. Damren asked that the Encumbrance Budget list streets and roads together. Ms. Walter said when it is determined how much can go into Fund Balance, Council can decide to do a resolution to put that money into streets & roads if desired.

Mayor Lovett asked for the most current expenses before the public hearing on June 22nd.

There was a discussion about safety on Washington Street. Mr. Santagate said work is being planned for the Washington/Bowen Streets intersection near Verizon. He said when the state paved the road several years ago, he asked if safety turns could be added, but the state denied the request.

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Mr. Sweet said extending the islands and closing some of the side roads on Washington Street would increase safety. Mr. Bergeron said he sees violations of speed and red lights, but not enough enforcement.

Mayor Lovett asked about reinstalling sidewalks when paving the roads. Mr. Sweet said on smaller roads, they've eliminated sidewalks on one side, but Pleasant Street is a main road, so they will keep the sidewalks on both sides. Mayor Lovett is concerned that cars are parking on one of the sidewalks, eliminating their intended use and whether a sidewalk on both sides is feasible.

There was a discussion about adding bike paths to the roads. Mr. Sweet said on a lot of the roads they are doing only a portion, but if they do the whole road, they can talk about a bike path.

Mr. Pope asked about a previous proposal to make Pleasant Street, South Street to East Street a one-way. Mr. Santagate said there had been a discussion, but it was not implemented. It can be revisited if Council desires.

Mr. Bergeron said it is important to put money into the budget every year for paving.

Mr. Temple said this budget is up 12.9% over last year. In the Highway Department \$100,000 has been added to upgrade streetlights. This budget shows \$500,000 for the storm water system on Main Street from the Diner to Esersky Bridge and that project will have \$400,000 or \$500,000 worth of paving (Senator Shaheen money). He noted that without the \$500,000 storm water project and the \$100,000 lights, that there would be \$600,000 for paving.

There was a discussion of the number of employees in Public Works. They are down 10 people from 10 years ago.

Mr. Sweet said snow plowing used to be done by highway people, but now because of staffing, utility and cemetery people also plow.

Councilors asked questions regarding equipment replacement and received clarification.

Mr. Damren noted a while back that someone was hurt when they fell on the sidewalk by Leo's Market. He asked if the sidewalk could be looked at. Ms. Taylor said that individual sued the City and a judge dismissed the case. The sidewalk is not deemed to be so deficient that it is dangerous.

Mayor Lovett asked why the CM Proposed was more than the Department Request for Vehicle & Equipment M&R. Mr. Santagate will check.

Mayor Lovett said she would like the Council to consider putting more money into paving. Since 2002 the amount of money for paving has fluctuated from \$712,000 to \$0. Bonds taken out for paving total over \$8 million. She said it is important to maintain as well as pave the roads.

Mr. Temple asked if there is an SRF loan available for the \$500,000 storm drainage project. Mr. Sweet believes there is. Mr. Temple said in years past, the City would get 20-30% forgiveness on SRF loans.

Mr. Santagate said between lower interest and the grant, that's a 20% savings.

Ms. Taylor said in order to qualify, the City has to have a certain amount in reserve. Her understanding is that there is a question at the state level of whether or not it will be funded.

Mr. Sweet said what gets paved will depend on funding.

Sanitation

Department Request \$190,468 City Manager Proposed \$183,968

Mr. Sweet said there are two men for two days at the Transfer Station and the other three days they work for Highways.

Mr. Temple questioned the cost shifting from the Transfer Station. Mayor Lovett said the point was to find the true cost of running the Transfer Station. Mr. Temple said picking up trash around the City should fall under Sanitation. Mr. Sweet said that even if the Transfer Station is closed, they still have to do that Citywide pick up. Mayor Lovett pointed out that this budget went down because of the work done by the Transfer Station Ad Hoc Committee with Mr. Sweet and the City Manager.

Cemetery

Department Request \$193,833 City Manager Proposed \$188,133

Mr. Simonds asked about preserving the cemetery records. Ms. Walter said the City is looking for grants.

There was a discussion about Preservation of Cemetery Records. Public Works had requested \$2,000 and the City Manager proposed \$500. Mr. Koloski would like to add the \$1,500 back in. Mr. Bergeron agreed with Mr. Koloski. Mr. Sweet said that will get some of the books done, but not all.

There was a discussion about the Building/Facilities M&R. Mr. Sweet said this is for the Mountain View gates. Ms. Walter said the City got a \$1,500 donation from a bank, but not grant money. Mayor Lovett asked to verify that the grant application was denied.

Mayor Lovett asked if the Chemical Toilets (CM Proposed \$3,500) could be reduced by \$1,000 and that amount moved to Preservation of Cemetery Records. Looking at 2014, 2015 and 2016, the department hasn't spent more than \$2,500 each year. Mr. Sweet nodded yes.

Mr. Koloski asked to find out how much it would cost to completely restore/digitizing the cemetery books.

Water

Department Request \$2,917,087 City Manager Proposed \$2,917,087

In 2008 a water rate study was done and the rates were minimally increased. The rates are under review now and the City will need to increase the rates in order to comply with audit standards for business enterprise systems as well as to meet the needs of the water customers and infrastructure improvements going forward with the City's dams.

Mr. Sweet said the study will be done in a week or two.

Ms. Walter said it will be presented to the Council when it is complete.

Mr. Temple asked about the request to take \$1.4 million out of retained earnings plus the \$1.4 million that is typically requested and what condition that fund is in. Ms. Walter said the extra money is for the Main Street project (\$700,000 in water and \$700,000 in sewer). Mr. Temple said that is \$700,000 from Water, \$500,000 from Highway, \$500,000 from Senator Shaheen and \$700,000 from Sewer. He asked for a breakdown.

Ms. Walter said the water and sewer projects are all multi-million dollars. Money has been appropriated out of Fund Balance, but hasn't been spent because there is not enough money in the Sewer fund to do the project. The money will be spent this year or next year. Rice Reservoir spillway is the other piece of that.

Mr. Sweet said \$250,000 will go to the Rice spillway; \$150,000 is for the North and Main water line; and \$50,000 is for the Stevens & Neilson Streets water lines.

Ms. Walter said the other \$400,000 is a shortfall in the operating budget for water.

Ms. Walter said it is best practice to have 6-8 months operating expenses in Fund Balance.

Ms. Walter said there is no money being put into capital reserves. Mr. Santagate said there will need to be a discussion when the City comes forward with the rate increases.

Mr. Temple said the City's water lines, sewer lines and storm drains need to be looked at. He said the trunk line that feeds the system for the Fire Department is very tender. There needs to be a discussion about public safety for water.

Mr. Sweet said it costs about \$1.8 million to do a mile of road including water, sewer and sidewalk.

Mr. Santagate said to have a sustainable city, you can't have only one house per mile, you need to do cluster housing.

Mr. Koloski asked when Utility Partners' contract expires. Mr. Sweet said this coming year.

Mr. Koloski said he thinks we have to ask for comparables in the study (i.e. Lebanon).

There was a discussion about the Fire Department having training with mutual aid communities on how to close a valve in order to avoid having a water hammer.

Mr. Sweet said they are trying to close the gap between how much water is leaving the plant and the recorded use and the water meter program is the first step.

Mr. Temple asked how critical the \$250,000 repair is for Rice Reservoir. Mr. Sweet said it is the City's water backup if Whitewater Reservoir gets contaminated.

Sewer

Department Request \$3,200,998 City Manager Proposed \$3,200,998

There was a discussion about other communities bringing septage to the wastewater treatment plant. Mr. Sweet said we have contracts to do that.

Mr. Temple clarified that the revenue comes from accepting sludge, not raw sewage.

Mr. Damren said for the June 8th meeting he would like an explanation of how we get money back to the school and county.

CONSULTATION WITH LEGAL COUNSEL

None

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:09 p.m., a motion was made by Mr. Temple and seconded by Mr. Simonds to adjourn.

Voice vote: motion carried 9-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dorée M. Russell
Clerk to the Council