

Nowthen City Council
September 14, 2023
Work Session Minutes

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Pilon called the meeting to order at 6:10 pm.

Present: Mayor Pilon, Council Members Rainville, Fladebo, Alders and Breyen.

Also Present: Deputy Clerk Johnson, and Finance Consultant Lori Yager.

2. **DISCUSSION REGARDING TEMPORARY ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT FOR THE FRONT DESK DUE TO DONNA'S RESIGNATION.**

Deputy Clerk Johnson requested permission to offer a temporary position to Bethany Lehner (Scott's daughter) as she is available immediately to answer phones, help residents at front counter until a full-time permanent candidate is hired.

Discussion ensued regarding having family members working together within city employment.

MOTION BY MAYOR PILON, SECONDED BY FLADEBO TO ALLOW DEPUTY CLERK JOHNSON TO OFFER A TEMPORARY POSITION OF ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT WHILE SEARCHING FOR A FULL TIME PERMANENT CANDIDATE FOR THE POSITION AT \$15 PER HOUR AS NEEDED INCLUDING A TRIAL PERIOD.

Discussion: Mayor Pilon indicated it could be up to three months as the city must update the city personnel policies to include new legislation regarding sick and safe time, PTO, etc. This will take some time to complete but must be done prior to January 1. Bethany is available immediately and could be a great asset to the city. Additional discussion that the city could update just the chapters that the new legislation affects, hire someone, then complete the rest of the policy. Concerns were brought up by Council Member Alders and Rainville about having family working even if not reporting directly to family members. Deputy Clerk Johnson stated she had no problem with working together with Bethany and if she didn't work out, would work it out with Administrator Lehner. Discussion that it has happened in the past and the outcome was not approved by the council.

VOTING ENSUED: COUNCIL MEMBERS PILON AND FLADEBO, AYE. COUNCIL MEMBERS BREYEN, ALDERS, AND RAINVILLE, NAY. MOTION FAILED.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER BREYEN, SECONDED BY RAINVILLE TO DIRECT STAFF TO CONTACT STAFFING AGENCY TO FILL THE TEMPORARY POSITION NOT TO EXCEED \$30 PER HOUR.

Discussion: The hourly rate may go higher. Benefits of using a staffing agency is the city will not do the search or vetting of candidates for the position, the staffing agency will. If the person isn't a good fit, they send another one.

AMEND THE MOTION TO STATE "NOT TO EXCEED \$35 PER HOUR".

VOTING ENSUED: COUNCIL MEMBERS BREYEN, ALDERS, AND RAINVILLE, AYE. COUNCIL MEMBERS PILON AND FLADEBO, NAY. MOTION CARRIED.

3. DISCUSSION REGARDING THE 2024 GENERAL FUND BUDGET

Administrator Lehner joined the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

Mayor Pilon thanked staff and council for their work in the workshops on the 2024 budget. Tonight's meeting is to go through the numbers again and see if all questions are answered.

The mayor and the city council along with staff and finance consultant Lori Yager continued to discuss the proposed 2024 General Fund Draft Budget.

As the group went through the budget, there was discussion about the following items:

- Discussion regarding the possibility of larger local government aid due to the small cities contribution increasing due to new taxes on auto parts and delivery.
- Move the 2019A Levy to 0 and push the amount of \$64,900 out to later years, 2025-2026-2027 to keep the 2024 levy lower.
- Discussion on increasing liquor licensing to be more competitive with surrounding cities. Move to \$2,500, discuss going as high as \$3,500. Staff to recommend a fee schedule adjustment. Add a temporary license fee and a wine-only license.
- Add long term disability and life insurance to employee benefits.
- Reminder that a levy needs to be set, the budget itself can change, but the levy can only go down, not up before the December 12th meeting when the final budget will be adopted.
- Driveway permits – how many do we expect and do we charge enough.
- Is the Zoning/Subdivision revenue accurate at \$20,000?
- Add overtime line into report.
- Discussion regarding medical insurance. It could change, we have it estimated at 10% increase, can adjust once we have actual numbers.
- Discontinue Kim's Kleaning – staff can clean office; recycling attendants could clean the Fire Department and Historic Town Hall.
- Add Stipends in for Planning and Zoning, they get paid at the end of the year for the meetings they have attended.
- Public Works – Tires budget line item to increase. Tires for the grader are \$9500 for 4 tires.
- Parks – FT wages increased, what are we doing at the parks for the extra time spent there? Staff directed to get a parks plan together for 2024.
- Public Works – Staff directed to get a better plan from PW regarding crack sealing, patching, roads plan.
- Road Improvements – Staff directed to get a plan from the City Engineer regarding engineering fees, bond fees, striping fees in the Bonding costs for road projects. In the meantime, remove the engineering fees, civil attorney and crack filling out of the road project budget. Staff directed to get the plan for Rogers Lake feasibility plan results.
- Will the \$150,000 in the road project pay \$40,000 for a pacer study? What is the rest for?
- Equipment Replacement – remove \$24,500 on the FD truck final payment due to 3% rebate anticipated when the truck is delivered.
- Nothing new on the PW truck ordered. No price reduction or guarantee.
- Recycling –
 - Action Item: Get stats together for residents vs non-residents using it, times using it, commercial usage vs residential use.
 - Action Item: Could Don do some research on pay increase for dry cardboard?
 - Action Item: Could Don research / follow up with A-1 appliance picking up appliances for free?
 - Action Item: Could Don research / follow up with company to take electronics?

- Action Item: Can Don follow up – what are options for mattresses?
- Investigate paying online or at the Recycling Center
- Recommendation – Winter Hours: Tuesday / Thursday 10:00 – 4:00 and Saturday 9:00 – 3:00
- Are residents required to have recycling bins with trash removal?
- Action Item: Increase fees on fee schedule.
- Reminder – the levy needs to be set; the budget can change.
- The preliminary budget is \$1,936,176 which is a 5.35% increase. The council will adopt it on December 12th, 6:05 public hearing with city council meeting immediately after. Action item: Staff directed to post special meeting for Wednesday, September 20th. Lori to send RCA and Resolution to be adopted.
- Action item: Staff to prepare “Closed” Special Session to discuss project manager applicant.

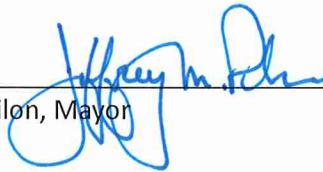
Motion by Council Member Breyen, seconded by Rainville to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Scott Lehner, City Administrator



Jeffrey M. Pilon, Mayor