Minutes of Budget Workshop held August 22, 2011

Budget workshop held with the following present: Mayor Mark Bowen; Aldermen Jerry Stone, Ruble Farmer, Ward Sanders, Kevin Keith, Sam Cortez; City Secretary Josie Campa; Public Works Director James McGrath; Police Chief Richard Priest; Library Director Cassandra Cortez.

Visitors: James LaCombe, Betty Kroeger.

Mayor Bowen opened the workshop at 6:30 p.m.

City Secretary Josie Campa talked to Council about the tax rate that was calculated for 2011. She told Council that the effective tax rate for 2011 is $.3181 and that the rollback rate is $.3629. She explained that the effective tax rate is what will generate the same amount of money as last year and that the rollback rate is the rate that you try to not exceed to avoid a rollback election. The City Secretary gave Council a handout showing a proposed rate of $.3175 and what it would generate. She also showed them two other options for the tax rate and asked what their preference was. She also explained that for every cent the rate is increased, the city will bring in about $11,200.00 in revenue. She told Council she had used the tax rate of $.3175 for putting together the proposed budget for 2011-2012. Council agreed to use the rate the City Secretary had used for the proposed budget.

The City Secretary reviewed the proposed general fund revenues for the 2011-2012 budget and explained that she had budgeted $75,000.00 to be brought from saving for the budget, but this could be changed if Council agreed.

The City Secretary then reviewed the proposed budget for the administration department with Council.

She then reviewed the Public Safety Department’s Budget and said she had discussed several line items concerning the Police Department with Chief Priest. The City Secretary told Council she had increased the Fire Department’s stipend by $12,000.00 a year, since she feels the department will need more money to accomplish some of its goals. She asked Council’s opinion on this line item and Council agreed to increase the monthly stipend for the Fire Department by $1,000.00 for the next fiscal year. The City Secretary also showed Council that the Municipal Court Judge is now averaging about $810.00 per month. Chief Priest told Council that the Judge is appointed for a two year term that runs concurrent with the Mayor and that his term will not be up until next June. Council agreed to leave the Judge’s salary at $50.00 per hour for the next fiscal year’s budget.

The proposed budget for the Public Works Department was reviewed with the Council. The City Secretary told Council the brush pick-up cost would be increased $300.00 per month by the contractor due to the increase in gasoline and diesel prices. She said she had used the increased price for the proposed budget.
The City Secretary told Council she had put $50,000.00 in the Public Works’ budget for capital improvements on the streets and $10,000.00 for capital improvements for parks. She asked their feelings on this and they agreed on the amounts she proposed.

The City Secretary then reviewed the budget for the Culture and Recreation Department. She discussed what had been budgeted for the library’s monthly stipend and said the library has several thousand dollars in saving that could be transferred instead of the money coming from the general fund savings. Council agreed to raise the amount from library savings from $12,000.00 to $20,000.00 and therefore changing the money amount transferred from general to $67,000.00 instead of $75,000.00.

The City Secretary then reviewed the rest of the line items in the Culture and Recreation Department and said she had added money to the museum expense line item since the Gidleys have expressed interest in turning over the house to the city sooner than expected. She told Council the city has another $45,000.00 in savings for remodeling the Gidley house for the city’s museum.

Council agreed this amount of money should be enough and therefore, the city wouldn’t have to sell the Somerset Street property for more money to renovate this house. Council agreed to put this property on the September agenda to decide what to do with this property.

The City Secretary review the proposed Library budget for 2011-2012. She told Council that this budget also included the salaries the salary review committee had recommended for the three part-time employees at the library.

The City Secretary told Council that the proposed budgets for 2011-2012 are balanced and that utility rates and the tax rate did not have to be increased to do this. She asked if Council members wanted to change anything that had been proposed.

Budget Workshop was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.