

COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS  
JANUARY 4, 2023

Charles City city council met in a budget session on January 4, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. in council chambers. Mayor Dean Andrews presided and the following council members were present: Keith Starr, Patrick Lumley, DeLaine Freeseaman, Phoebe Pittman and Phillip Knighten. Also present were city administrator Steve Diers, city engineer John Fallis and engineer in training Brian Sullivan.

Library director Annette Dean was present to review the proposed library budget. They will be asking for a 2% increase in funding from the county. They recently received a grant from the Floyd County Community Foundation. A proposed increase of 5% in all library salaries is included to bring their amounts up to the 50% percentile of library salaries for our size in the state. There is a projected increase in the travel line item due to sending two full time employees to a national library conference. For FY24, plans are to paint the Zastrow Room and an estimated \$25,000 roof repair. They have had great participation in their children's programs. The art valuation will be done in the current fiscal year. The various library trusts budgets were also reviewed.

Park and rec director Tyler Mitchell was present to go over his budgets. The revenue at Wildwood was higher than projected this year. We receive \$10,000 per year from CIA for park maintenance and \$8,000 per year to go towards mower purchases. During discussions with them, it has been stated that they will probably only do one more three year contract with the city for these items and then will look to give their parks to the city. Their membership is made up mostly of elderly women who aren't able to keep up with flower maintenance. Mitchell is proposing an increase in seasonal workers wages to keep up with the state average. Our current max is \$11.00 and he is suggesting increasing to \$14.25. This past year has had some major vandalism to our park restrooms, about \$4,500 worth. He is looking at adding timers to lock down and open up the restrooms to help keep this vandalism down. Items included in the construction line item are \$10,000 for riverfront rock, \$8,500 to replace lights at Sportsman's and \$6,000 for dugout roof repairs. Mitchell is also proposing an increase in salaries for the pool employees, it has been very difficult to find employees. He is also looking to join with the school and YMCA to help coordinate lifeguard training to reduce costs. Discussion will be held with the park board on what to do with the horseshoe courts located near Shaw Avenue. The clubhouse manager has been doing a fantastic job and Mitchell would like to increase that wage to \$15 from the current \$12. He would like to increase the bartender salary as well to help attract more of them to that position. There was some fire damage at Wildwood clubhouse to that re-estimated line item has been increased for those expenses. For the park and rec capital improvement fund, trail renovations and a skate park are included in the construction line item. Park and rec purchase reserve includes a transfer in from water and sewer for mowing at their facilities to go toward future mower purchases.

Public safety director Hugh Anderson was present to discuss police, fire and code enforcement budgets. We had budgeted for the school to reimburse us \$10,000 for the school resource officer, but this fell through so that revenue was reduced. Anderson would like to look at raising the amount of our tickets since they have been at \$15 for quite some time. He would also like to raise the rental inspection fees since these have remained the same since the inception of that program. The police union agreed to a 3% increase in salaries for FY24, so that has been incorporated in the salary line item. The legal fees line item has gone up quite a bit due to more dog and nuisance cases. Capital equipment for FY24 includes a squad purchase, 2 tasers and a mobile data terminal. They would like to convert the old communications center to secure storage in FY24. A gun range has been discussed and this would require a property purchase. Discussions have included possibly utilizing this property for lime sludge storage and brush repository as well. Fire department budget was reviewed next. Chief Anderson commented that we have never had a truly full time fire department since our career fire fighters simply drove the equipment to the fire and had to wait until volunteers arrived to actually fight the fire. In order to have a true full time department, we would have to employ at least 20 firefighters. As part of the previous contract with AMR, we provided a driver for their ambulance and this is what our career fire fighters used to provide. As was previously requested by council, the budget numbers presented included two options: one with a full time chief and one full time and the other option was with a full time chief and 4 full time firefighters. With both options, we still rely on volunteers to fight the fires. Interim fire chief Marty Parcher has done a great job in recruiting more volunteers, there are currently 6 or 7 ready to join. The volunteer wage was increased

\$.50/hour for FY24. Parcher is also looking at doing a fire cadet program to recruit high school students who will hopefully become volunteers when they are old enough. Council member Knighten voiced concern over even finding four full time fire fighters at the wages we have for an entry level firefighter, seems like full time fire are hard to find. Parcher has expressed confidence that we can operate with just a full time chief and the rest volunteers and fill our needs. We only average 12 structure fires a year. Council member Lumley expressed concern over not having the fire station manned 24/7 and that a strictly volunteer force is not sustainable. Chief Anderson stated that 90% of the fire departments in the state are strictly volunteer staffed. Council member Starr requested to receive a replacement schedule for the major fire equipment some time in the near future. Code enforcement budget reviewed next. A 3% increase in salary for FY24 has been included here with most of the other expenses remaining steady. Safety Education fund is used for police programs, such as bike rodeo, and is funded by donations. Fire extinguisher fund revenues are from servicing fire extinguishers and is used for living expenses at the fire station for the firefighters. Nuisance reserve account has a projected balance at end of FY24 of \$108,000. We have done several nuisance property purchases and will be compiling a list soon of the top nuisance properties in the city to identify some possible future purchases/remediations.

FY24 budgets for all of the TIF funds were reviewed next. Riverside is a perpetual district and all of our **cultural/entertainment and Façade programs are funded here**. Also annual payments to Main Street Charles City and to help support ADC come from this fund. Southwest Bypass is the joint district with the county. Development agreements with Trelleborg, Cambrex and Zoetis flow through here. Also admin payment to the city and support of ADC from both city and county are funded here. Legal fees for preparing the development agreements and proceedings are also paid from here. South Grand has a negative balance currently because we were shorted what we requested for TIF revenue last year. The loan and interest payments for the certified site come from here as well as payments for the Parkside housing development as lots are filled. There are two development agreements with Molstead Motors that flow through this district as well. East Park district has no activity since it has expired. Park Avenue district will have one final year of collection and then be done.

There being no further business, meeting was adjourned.

Dean Andrews, Mayor

Attest:

Trudy O'Donnell, City Clerk