

**Minutes of the August 13, 2018
Joplin City Council Work session**

The City Council of the City of Joplin, Missouri, held a work session beginning at 5:45 p.m. on Monday August 13, 2018, in the 5th Floor Council Chambers, 602 S. Main to hear the following topics below.

In attendance were Council Members: Colbert-Kean, Lawson, Monteleone (via phone conference); Reid Adams, Shaw; Stanley, Phil Stinnett, and West. Also, in attendance were City Manager Sam Anselm and City Attorney Peter Edwards. Absent: Brown

Review of Regional Salary Comparison and Wage and Benefits History Information

Finance Director Leslie Haase discussed the wages and benefits comparison of police and fire departments in surrounding cities and the Jasper County Sherriff's Department. A wage and benefits history for employees who had stayed with the city since the year 2000 was also reviewed. Mrs. Haase stated the review was a result of a request from Council Member Stinnett. The report showed the average raise in salary and benefit costs over the last 18 years. Mr. Stinnett stated he asked for this information to show that the city has provided wage increases over the years. Mr. Stanley stated he would still like to see the study that compares larger cities such as Springfield, and Northwest Arkansas. City Manager Sam Anselm said city staff is still gathering information from those cities and will provide a report to the city council when those comparisons are completed.

Review of Public Safety Tax

Mrs. Haase explained about the public safety sales tax reports. They are quarterly reports that come from the Capital Improvement and Safety Sales Tax Oversight Committee. This committee meets quarterly and also reviews the parks and stormwater sales tax and the capital improvement sales tax – both of which have sunset dates. The chairman of the committee presents a semi-annual report to the city council to say whether the city has been spending the money as we promised to the voters and to give an update of the current status for each tax.

Mrs. Reid Adams asked if the K9 maintenance and expenses come from out of the Public Safety Sales Tax. Mrs. Haase replied they do come from the General Fund. Mrs. Reid Adams outlined a breakdown of expenses for K9's and their handlers. She stated it's \$12,747 average per year per dog; which includes \$7,771 in overtime pay for the K9 officer. An extra hour of pay per day when taking care of the dogs. Mrs. Reid Adams also wanted to know what is included in the supplies because there's a citizens group that's interested in helping with this. She stated she's still very much interested in pursuing grants for the dogs because it's an important asset to the police officers.

Mrs. Reid Adams then asked if the money for the southside police station would go into the General Fund. Mrs. Haase replied that it would.

Mr. Lawson asked if the public safety tax has a sunset, and Mrs. Haase replied it does not. Mr. Lawson asked about the three million construction project for the new East side fire station. Once that money is used to build a fire station, will the money then be eventually replaced with collected taxes? Mrs. Haase explained the list in front of the council members is what was decided on to use the tax money for. The City lives by the "pay as you go" philosophy rather than borrowing money. In order to build a capital item, you save the money and then you're able

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to build it out of those reserves. You have to look at the on-going operational expenses and not just at the capital expenditures., Mrs. Haase stated she will prepare projections on the future obligations of the public safety tax (building a new fire station and staffing it with additional personnel) so the council can see how much will be left. Not all of the street lights are done. The council will have some decisions to make if the projections show all the incoming money will be used for ongoing expenditures.

Phase I of the Parks and Stormwater in the Capital Improvement is completed, and the plan is to make a presentation to the city council because there are some decisions to make there. This will be presented after Director Haase has the budget completed. Once the remaining fire fighters are hired, it's projected there will not be any money left in that fund. There are some components that weren't discussed when the Public Safety Training Center was first discussed. For instance, there are operational expenses for the facility, but nothing on the original projected costs so that tax is having to pay for that.

Mrs. Colbert-Kean asked how soon the new fire station need to be built. City Manager Anselm replied that last fall during budget discussions the city council postponed a decision to have an architectural study done. Chief Furgerson stated there is a need for that station and he would anticipate it would be 2-3 years that it should be done because of the growth of that area. He stated he did not put the architect study in the budget this year because there are too many ongoing issues.

Mrs. Colbert-Kean suggested giving raises from the tax reserves but Chief Furgerson replied that because raises are ongoing expenses, that money will never become truly available to build the new station if you use it for raises.

Director Haase cautioned everyone that in order to make any decisions, projected costs need to be done. The report presented tonight is just historical information.

Mayor Shaw asked if the response time on the east side is slow in that area and we don't get it corrected, is there a possibility it will it affect the rates in the whole area. Chief Furgerson replied that rates had not been affected yet, but it will eventually.

Mr. Stanley asked how accurate the original projected cost of 1.7 million dollars for the new station is today. Chief Furgerson stated he would anticipate that cost to be much higher. Those dollar figures are 2006 dollars. The cost today would be closer to 2.5 to 3 million dollars for capital expenditures and additional costs for personnel, depending on the rate of growth of inflation. Historically, the public safety sales tax brings in roughly 6.5 -7 million dollars.

Mr. Stanley said he would like to see the ongoing costs and what they can expect to see every year; and then what capital is not being used for that.

Director Haase reiterated that she will work on getting projection costs, which include operating the new fire stations, operating the training center along with the projected sales tax revenues.

Mr. West asked what the balance of the public safety sales tax is at this point. Director Haase stated the amount is \$7.5. Mr. West asked what the plan is for this money. Director Haase replied that roughly one million of that is reserved for contingency; about 3 million is reserved for the new fire station; and just like the general fund you need to keep some money in reserve for capital replacement and maintaining those facilities that the city has built (Public Safety training center; Fire Station 6 and Fire Station 7). You need to see the projections to see once firefighters are hired, where the fund stands at that time. You cannot use fund balance for raises; it's has to be from ongoing revenue.

More discussion continued on when the TIF's would come off the books, and the status of streetlights.

Mr. West stated he would like to see the city manager to look into ways to come up with a decent and comfortable wage for the police and fire employees. He thinks the city can do better than the recent 2% increase.

Mr. Anselm replied he needs a target number in order to figure out what the options are. At this time, the city does not have the resources available to fund additional increases for personnel without looking at additional revenue options. I don't know what the council feels is a comfortable, fair rate for police and firefighters. I can give you a bunch of numbers comparing what other cities are, but I don't know if that's what council supports or not. Sam said to illustrate the position he's in, two years ago when council gave the directive to present a balanced budget that included raises, 15 positions were eliminated to hit that target. "Give me a target and I'll give you options to hit it".

Mr. Stanley stated he wants to see the 5-city study soon.

Sam replied he had all the data for police and fire positions, but not other city positions. If council wants him to provide the information for just police and fire, he can be prepared to present that information. He's missing 368 data points of comparison for all the other positions in the city, and that's going to take more time to put together because the department heads need to review those positions to make sure the cities we're using, those positions match up to ours.

Mr. Stanley stated he would like to see the information Sam already has in hand, but he would also like to see information on "hard to hire/hard to replace" positions such as engineering, and heavy equipment contractors when that information becomes available.

The council agreed to direct the city manager to get the police and fire salary information to them as soon as possible.

Any other business

Mrs. Reid Adams discussed the fire tax issue. She stated if the city wants to put this issue on the April 2019 ballot, then perhaps the city council would want to appoint a qualified citizen committee much like the use tax committee. If so, she suggested council members have names in mind by November.

Mrs. Reid Adams discussed concerns regarding the senior citizens center. She received several calls and emails from seniors with safety issues and other concerns, some of which she read aloud. City Manager Anselm stated he passed on the concerns to the Stan Heater, director of the center, and invited Stan to attend the next regular scheduled city council meeting (Aug. 20) to address the concerns. Sam will keep the council updated.

Mr. Stinnett thanked Mrs. Reid Adams for the time she's spending on the senior citizen center concerns. He also suggested using the existing Financial Oversight Committee to look into the fire tax issue. Not only the fire tax, but any other tax that might be available to use.

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Mr. West stated he had a citizen call him with concerns regarding increased traffic at 26th and Picher. He asked Public Works Director David Hertzberg if he could check that out to see if anything could be done. Director Hertzberg stated he would check it out. Mayor Shaw stated the city was discussing possible signage for that area.

Mr. Stanley stated he would like to see what the Finance Committee looks like now and potentially add new members to it who can be beneficial in looking at possible taxes and revenue sources that are at our disposal and try to get some guidance on ways to pursue this.

Mr. Lawson commented on the issue of 12-hour shifts for the police department. He stated he doesn't understand why the chiefs don't have the power to make those kinds of decisions. He is also concerned with how overtime works and wants to make sure that overtime is paid correctly.

Mayor Shaw replied that we need financial direction to make sure we can afford to give the pay we'd like to give.

Mayor Shaw reminded everyone about the United at the Stadium event at Junge Stadium this Wednesday, August 15. It focuses on suicide awareness and prevention.

With no further comments, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully,
Barbara Gollhofer
City Clerk