

BUDGET COMMITTEE
Wednesday, August 6, 2014 @ 4:30 P.M.

PRESENT: Julius Alsandor, Chairman; Jacqueline Martin; Blair Briggs; and Reginald Tatum.

ABSENT: None

A moment of silent meditation was observed.

1. *Discussion regarding renewal of Fiscal Agent agreement for 2014-2016.* Alderman Julius Alsandor stated that it was his understand that this item was on the regular full council meeting agenda last month and it is just to bring it to the Budget Committee for them to present it forward for approval. Ms. Karen Frank clarified that last month they were given authorization for bids and they are asking to extend the current contract with American Bank and they would stay with the same rates. Alderman Reginald Tatum stated that he thought that they had to solicit bids every two years. Ms. Frank stated that they have the option to extend the contract. Alderman Blair Briggs asked if any other bank in town express interest. Ms. Frank stated that no other bank had expressed interest but each bank is offered the opportunity to participate certain percentages in the Fiscal Agent contract but everything is filtered through American Bank. Alderman Tatum asked if there was a clause in the contract that said they could extend. Ms. Frank stated that they have extended the contract several times in the past. Alderman Tatum asked that they review the contract prior to the regular meeting and bring to the full council.
2. *Discussion regarding pay increase for Mr. Israel Roberts in the Water Department.* Ms. Laura Balthazar stated that she went before the Civil Service Committee to request that Israel Roberts' salary be increased by \$2.22 per hour. They did not oppose this request but she was told that in order to do this, she would have to come before the Budget Committee to make sure there is enough money in that line item to take care of the increase in his salary and so that they can adjust the pay scale. On a motion by Alderman Reginald Tatum and seconded by Alderwoman Jacqueline Martin and Alderman Blair Briggs, it was resolved to forward to the full council for approval.
3. *Discussion regarding creation of a Laborer I position in the Sewer Department.* Ms. Laura Balthazar stated that because of overtime in the Sewer Department she thought it was best that they add a new position of Laborer I in the Sewer Department with the following recommendations for the job description for Laborer I-Sewer: have a high school diploma and be mechanically-inclined to repair some of the parts at the lift station. Civil Service has approved the creation of this position. On a motion by Alderman Reginald Tatum and seconded by Alderwoman Jacqueline Martin, it was resolved to forward to the full council for approval.

4. *Discussion regarding request by Opelousas Public Library for increase in reimbursements.*
Ms. Estelle Perrault spoke about how the library bout in the City of Opelousas. She stated that the city community in Opelousas back in the mid '60s voted that they wanted to have a library because the parish had voted against it twice. St. Landry is the only, parish in Louisiana that does not have a Parish library. Opelousas and Eunice overwhelmingly supported it and voted for a one percent sales tax for the library. However, over the years they have not been supported very well. Ms. Perrault pointed out that the last time the Library got a raise was in order to pay the workers minimum wage. On a motion by Alderman Reginald Tatum and seconded by Alderman Blair Briggs and Alderwoman Jacqueline Martin, it was resolved to increase the Library's budget by \$1,000.00 per month and send to the full council for approval.
5. *Discussion regarding the fiscal year 2014-2015 budget.* The following items were requested for the fiscal year 2014-2015 budget:
Ms. Laura Balthazar stated that Mr. Richard Hollier is requesting a five percent (5%) increase for Mrs. Darlene Breaux in the Civil Service Department to be added to the Civil Service salary line item. The increase amounts to \$202.00.
Chief Lee Cahanin stated that he wants to clarify a few items in his budget. One of the items is to begin replacing generators at the fire stations. He was asked to phase them in with one per year. Next, he has seven vacancies in the fire department that he is getting ready to fill. All of this is within his budget. At the Budget hearings, he requested that they hire two additional people so that they could go through the training process so that they could be ready to be put on the line at the first of the year. At that time, he will have retirements and those positions will be vacant. Chief Cahanin wants to know what the status is on hiring the two additional people. Alderman Alsandor stated that through the discussion, it was decided that because the generator was going to be a part of this new budget, they said they would move forward and wait on the other two hires. Next, Chief Cahanin stated that he has had issues with gas leaking into the sewer system. Normally, he calls in DEQ which does all of the monitoring for them. He would like to have this equipment in-house because they have had to call DEQ on a frequent basis. There are two different types of monitoring equipment and he would like to have both which amounts to \$15,000.00.
Chief Perry Gallow stated that he needs an additional \$90,000.00 for three (3) additional police officers. Alderman Alsandor asked if the three officers were within the Police Department budget. Ms. Frank stated that she was not given any figures for the new officers. Alderman Briggs recommended that they give an additional \$20,000.00 to the Police Department budget.
Ms. Laura Balthazar requested an additional \$700.00 for computer software upgrades for the Civil Service Department.

Mrs. Margaret Doucet will be filling two positions (Laborer and Assistant Code Officer). Ms. Frank stated that Code Enforcement's current employees' salaries amount to \$256,068.80. Mrs. Doucet will have to provide the amount of the salaries for the two additional employees. Ms. Frank stated that she would get the salary for Laborer from Civil Service and Mrs. Doucet will have the amount for the Assistant Code Officer before the regular meeting. Alderman Alsandor questioned the line item for Demolition that was not used. Mrs. Doucet stated that she needed an additional \$6,000.00 in that line item for demolitions that the City could not handle because of asbestos where an outside company has to be used. She is also requesting an additional \$3,000.00 for computer software upgrades.

Chief Perry Gallow stated that he needs an additional \$10,000.00 for software upgrades for the police department computers. Alderman Tatum stated that it may be more cost-effective to piggy-back all of the City's computers under one software update.

Mr. Israel Roberts has been doing extra duties since May. He stated that it is time to change the equipment and have more people doing the work where they could have one crew fixing water leaks and the other crew changing out those lines. He pointed out that they need to change the way they are doing things.

On a motion by Alderwoman Jacqueline Martin, seconded by Alderman Reginald Tatum and unanimously carried, it was resolved to send the amended and proposed budget with adjustments to the full council for approval.

On a motion by Alderman Reginald Tatum, seconded by Alderwoman Jacqueline Martin and unanimously carried, it was resolved to adjourn. The Budget Committee meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.