

The Budget Committee for the City of Junction City, met at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 12, 2022, at City Hall, 680 Greenwood Street and in a virtual meeting format, via internet and phone.

PRESENT: Council Members: Chair, Council President Ken Wells; Mayor, Beverly Ficek; Councilors Sandie Thomas, Sidney Washburne; Andrea Ceniga, John Gambia, and Karen Leach; **Citizen Members:** Jack Sumner, Sue Huntley, Kara McDaniel, James Hukill, and Darin Olson; Excused Absence: Travis Ducker; Absent: Joshua Guth; **Staff:** City Administrator, Jason Knope; Finance Director, Mike Crocker; Public Works Director, Gary Kaping; and Police Chief, Bob Morris.

1. Call to Order

Chair Wells called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Councilor Ceniga declared a potential conflict of interest, as her brother-in-law works for Public Works. Mayor Ficek declared a potential conflict of interest, as her daughter works for the City.

2. Approval of Minutes – April 28, 2022

Committee Member Hukill made a motion to approve the April 28, 2022 minutes. The motion was seconded by Councilor Washburne and passed by unanimous vote of the Committee.

3. Public Comment. None.

4. Follow Up from Previous Meeting.

Director Crocker distributed a revised budget sheet for the Special Police Programs Funds. A \$1,000 donation had been received and staff was requesting that \$500 be appropriated in a new section called the Emergency Community Assistance Fund.

5. Budget Deliberations

Chair Wells asked if there were any Committee comments or questions.

Councilor Leach asked for confirmation that that School District's portion of the School Resource Officer would be \$66,000 and the City's would be approximately \$55,000. Administrator Knope responded yes.

Councilor Leach asked if the School District had voted to approve this position. Chief Morris responded yes.

Councilor Washburne stated that his biggest concern was that Public Works would have enough money for necessary projects, due to the rising costs of materials, etc. Director Kaping responded that quite a bit had been set aside for projects in the Capital Funds and along with contingency, he had increased operating materials and supplies and thought they would be good.

Committee Member Olson noted that there were several capital funds that had healthy balances and he asked about the list of projects that were planned for those funds. Director Kaping responded that they had a Capital Expenditure Plan (CEP) that planned out projects for 30 years and there was a list of projects in each section of the Public Works funds

Committee Member Olson asked about increasing salaries as an incentive to attract police officers. Chief Morris responded that he and Administrator Knope would be bringing the topic

of incentives to attract officers to a future Public Safety Committee. It was noted that the City had increased police salaries a few years ago to within 10% of Eugene.

Councilor Gambie stated that he would like to have discussions in the future on planning for the number of officers the City should have as the City grows.

As there were no additional questions or comments, Chair Wells asked if someone would like to make a motion to approve the budget.

MOTION: Councilor Leach made a motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 budget and the total expenditures as modified. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Sumner and passed by unanimous vote of the Committee.

Chair Wells stated that the next motion the Budget Committee needed was to specify the tax rate.

Councilor Gambie noted that on the bottom of the agenda under Pending Items, it read, "specify tax by rate (\$6.0445/\$1,000) or amount to levy citywide." He asked what "or amount to levy citywide" meant. Director Crocker responded that budget law allowed a City to specify a rate that was lower than the \$6.0445, but because of a measure that was passed many years ago, the City's maximum rate they could levy was \$6.0445 per thousand. Councilor Gambie noted that maybe having a refresher on this topic could be done at the Finance and Judiciary Committee.

Discussion followed on the struggle over the years to keep a fully staffed police department, and the desire of citizens to have it fully staffed. Chief Morris noted that the struggle to fill vacancies was not unique to Junction City but was a nationwide issue that also included other departments having struggles to fill positions such as Public Works and Community Services.

Administrator Knope noted that there was only so much money in the General Fund budget and the Council and citizens not only valued the Police Department but also Community Services, so the Budget Committee and Council over the years had made sure there was a balance in the budget to support both. More discussion on incentives for hiring officers would be discussed by the Public Safety Committee.

Mayor Ficek thanked the Budget Committee for their time, expertise, and commitment to this process. She hoped that this next year the Council and Budget Committee could look at areas where they needed to hire more personnel. She added that as the City grew, they needed to have full staffing to meet the expectations of the citizens.

MOTION: Councilor Leach made a motion to approve the property tax rate of \$6.0445 per \$1,000 of taxable value. The motion was seconded by Councilor Washburne and passed by unanimous vote of the Committee.

Chair Wells expressed appreciation to the Committee and staff for all their work. The Committee covered a lot of information, had robust discussions, and all had the same goal of doing what was right for the citizens. He continued that there were a lot of things they would like to do, but they could only do what they could afford. He looked forward to further

discussions at Committee and Council meetings and hoped to receive input from citizens to help guide them as they all followed proper protocol. He asked if there were any other comments from Committee members.

Councilor Ceniga thanked everyone.

Councilor Leach expressed appreciation to the Committee and staff for the hard work.

Committee Member Sumner shared that this had been a good budget year.

Committee Member Olson noted that he was glad they were all in support of having a fully staffed police department, which was what the citizens wanted.

Chair Wells stated that the budget would now go to the Council at their first meeting in June, where there would be a public hearing on the budget.

6. Adjournment

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

Kitty Vodrup, City Recorder

Ken Wells, Chair