

BUDGET COMMITTEE

Minutes - Final



Travis Lindley, Chair/Council Member
Tim Gould, Mayor Pro Tem
Latonia P. Hines, Council Member

Smyrna Community Center
Oak Room
1250 Powder Springs Street
Smyrna, GA 30080

City Attorney Scott Cochran
City Administrator Joseph Bennett
City Clerk Heather K. Peacon-Corn

November 08, 2023
3:00 PM

1. Roll Call

Present: 3 – Travis Lindley, Tim Gould, and Latonia P. Hines (phone)
Also Present: 1 – Derek Norton and Councilmember Susan Wilkinson
Staff: 4 – Joe Bennett, Landon O'Neal, Kristin Robinson, and Carol Sicard

2. Call to Order

Chairperson Travis Lindley called to order the November 8, 2023 Special Committee on Budget held at the Smyrna Community Center in the Oak Room at 3:00 PM.

3. Chairperson Instruction and Comment

Chairperson Lindley congratulated Mayor Derek Norton for his reelection, and Mayor Norton congratulated all the council members who were also reelected.

4. Formal Business

A. **2023-219** Capital Projects Discussion

Kristin Robinson, Assistant City Administrator/Finance Director, discussed the following:

- Turf Fields (River Line and Jonquil Parks) – bids are due next Tuesday. Initial estimates are anywhere between \$4M – \$7M.
- The \$4M – \$7M includes the lighting at Jonquil Park. SPLOST funds can be used for the lighting.
- The next SPLOST (2028) will address longer term parks and recreation projects.
- There will be about \$32M of unassigned fund balance after audit is completed. As required, 25% of subsequent years of expenditures has to be unassigned which would be approximately \$18M.
- Police, Jail, Community Center, Library, City Hall, and Brawner Hall – HVAC audit showed there are some units not working at all, holes in duct work, and general neglect over many years. Total cost would be around \$3.6M. Fire Departments, Public Works, and the Wolfe Center will be in the next audit.

- Bridges at Tolleson Park – Originally was going to cost \$275K, but it will actually require an extra \$100K. A conversation will need to be had about this.
- Lake Court Park dog park project – Originally was budgeted at \$125K to come out of ARPA, but bids came in at \$1.1M. This will need to be put on the back burner.
- Wolfe Center – There are two pool compressors, but one has failed. In order to replace both PoolPaks, there is a 20 week lead time and a 2 week install – \$700K. Would like to have this placed on the next agenda.
- Tax bills are due on November 15. There will be an \$800K funding source.
- CIP is kicking off next week. Meetings will start in January.

Brief discussion took place concerning the church and the RFQ. The final details on the contract are being worked out.

B. 2023-220 Annual Merit and ECI Discussion

Kristin Robinson, Assistant City Administrator/Finance Director, explained that last year when pay grades were adjusted to bring pay into appropriate scales, they used the ECI (Employment Cost Index) as the factor because it was the lower and more manageable factor. Last year's ECI was 4.6, and this year it went up to 4.8.

Joe Bennett, City Administrator, stated that he wants to reassess how employees receive merit raises. He does not want to reward those employees who are not meeting expectations with merit raises. Ms. Robinson stated that in the past the reason those who received a 2 on their evaluations would get a small merit raise was because there was no cost of living increase. Because there is now a cost of living increase, it can be proposed that those that get 2s or below do not need to get a merit increase.

Mayor Norton asked that recommended adjustments be made to Mayor and Council salaries.

5. Approval of Minutes

A. MIN2023-115 Approval of the August 15, 2023 Special Committee on Budget Meeting Minutes

Mayor Pro Tem Tim Gould made a motion to approve item MIN2023-115, the August 15, 2023 Special Committee on Budget meeting minutes; seconded by Councilmember Latonia P. Hines.

The motion to approve carried with the following vote:

Aye: 3 – Committee Chair Lindley, Mayor Pro Tem Gould, Councilmember Hines
Nay: 0 – None
Recuse: 0 – None

6. Other Business / Staff Comment

Mayor Pro Tem Gould asked about property taxes and what Ms. Robinson predicts might be coming as far as increases. Ms. Robinson explained that there are a lot of homestead exemptions which offset those increases, but she does not foresee taxes increasing as much as they have been over the years.

Mayor Norton asked that as part of future CIP projects that a bathroom and replacement to the train park in the downtown greenspace be considered.

7. Adjournment

Chairperson Travis Lindley adjourned the November 8, 2023 Special Committee on Budget meeting at 3:49 PM.

Facilities are provided throughout City Hall for convenience of persons with disabilities.

THIS MEETING WAS PROPERLY NOTICED AND POSTED AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE NOTICING STANDARDS AS OUTLINED IN O.C.G.A. 50-14-3:
The City of Smyrna website – www.smyrnaga.gov
City Hall, 2800 King Street SE, Notice Boards