

BE IT REMEMBERED that the Mayor and Board of Aldermen met on August 10, 2021, at 5:00 P.M., this being the regular recessed meeting time. Mayor Graves called the meeting to order and the following Aldermen were present: Dear, Hale, Moore, Simpson and Tanksley. Also present were: Katie Harbin, City Clerk; Fran Johnson, Bookkeeper; Ethan Foresman, Fire Chief; Rob Boyd; Parks Director; Earnestine Cowan; Utility Supervisor, and Michael Cathey.

Discussion of the Budget FYE 2022

Mayor Graves opened up meeting to speak about the budget for the new year. Mayor Graves stated that he's has spoken to Courtney with our Animal Shelter and to Cole Massie, the County Administration, about them possibly meeting to look at and discuss some possible building repair needs, in hopes that the County could possibly help with certain repairs. As a one-time thing. If the County decides to spend funds on some building repairs, would you want to match the amount spent?

The Board agreed they are good with matching.

Mayor Graves went over a few things on the Park budget, and asked Parks Director Rob Boyd to go into more detail regarding his requests with the Board.

Parks Director Rob Boyd stated that he is starting his year 5 with the City and I've been doing as much or more without more resources. I've lost a part time employee and I will be losing another part time employee this coming fiscal year. Mr. Boyd stated the facility really needs all of my time and all of Don's time. The Park is a nonstop revolving door out there. We've brought teams to the town and that brings in tax revenue. You have to have staff that know what they are doing, that knows about turf. It's more than just cutting grass and weed eating. The Sports Park is a living beast, it doesn't stop. I am concerned that we are losing 40 hours, combined, at work a week. I've tried to keep our budget very low; I work hard to keep it that way. Mr. Boyd stated the first item on his request list is to give Mr. Don Embry a raise. He is invaluable to me, the Park and the City. He is doing a lot more work and has more responsibilities now. Mr. Embry is 21 years into this community, he deserves a raise. Mr. Boyd stated he is requesting \$25.00 per hour for Mr. Embry.

Mr. Boyd stated his second item on his list is regarding storage space. We would like to get some type of storage building to store the equipment in to protect it from the weather.

Mr. Boyd stated is third item on the list is regarding a restroom facility for the soccer side of the Park. We have sewer and water already there for a building. We currently have porta potties out there, but most people do not use them. Citizens will walk across the park and parking lot just to use the one on the baseball side. I came up with an estimated cost of \$125,000.

Mr. Boyd stated his fourth item on the request list is to tear down the old concession building and build up a new one. The old one is not usable. When teams call to schedule playing times, they request the fields closer to the concessions. It is more convenient for them. I estimate this will cost around \$250,000.00.

Mayor Graves stated I know that the Parks is an amenity, not a money maker, but is there a way to get more revenue out of it?

Rob Boyd answered that we've spoken about more sponsorships, but we end up asking the same businesses and people and they tend to get tired of it. Other than that, we could possibly raise concession prices, gate fees, etc.

Mayor Graves asked if doing a 3-day tournament help?

Rob Boyd answered that it would help on concessions and gate fees, but not the team fees. You're starting to see less and less 3-day tournaments. More are going to 1-day tournaments. It's harder to get staff to work the concessions and gate for 3 days straight.

Mayor Graves asked about utilizing the teams more.

Rob Boyd stated that it is so competitive now. Southaven, Lake Cormorant, etc., other locations to play at will nice facilities as well. There is a kind of gentleman's agreement that you don't do tournaments on the same days as other locations. Teams do want to come to us.

Alderman Moore asked if you can get Grand Slam and USSSA.

Rob Boyd answered yes, but we do not on the same weekend. It's really competitive, between the groups. Grand Slam starts earlier and U Trip goes later.

Alderman Tanksley asked how many tournaments do you do a year.

Rob Boyd answered 15 or so. We try to do 8-12 for the spring and the same for fall.

Alderman Moore asked have you tried to do men adult sports.

Rob Boyd answered that he has tried, they are more difficult to get here. Their teams are more wide spread and usually go to much larger cities. There hasn't been a lot of interest in coming here.

Alderman Tanksley asked what is your plans to get more teams to come here.

Rob Boyd stated that we have a contact with the organization's, not individual teams. I am always in contact with them.

Alderman Moore asked what is the average we receive in concessions and gate sales.

Rob Boyd answered a guesstimate would be around \$5,000 to \$10,000 on the low side and \$35,000 on the high end. We split the gate fees with the organizations. We try to schedule it to where people would either be at the park for longer to buy more from concessions or space them out to where they have time to go to town and eat then come back.

Alderman Moore stated so possible 4 more tournaments would bring around \$20,000

Rob Boyd said it's possible. Mr. Boyd said he has even spoken to the local football league, for them to consider using our facility.

Mayor Graves asked about soccer's revenues.

Rob Boyd answered it doesn't bring much for us. We don't have enough space for tournaments with soccer.

Alderman Dear asked when was the last tournament and when is the next one?

Rob Boyd answered the last was the end of May, first of June and the next one will be two weeks from Saturday.

Mayor Graves asked if we host the World Series.

Rob Boyd answered they usually go to Southaven. We host the State.

Alderman Tanksley stated maybe not host World Series, but we could have something.

Alderman Moore asked if 1 full time could be replaced with 2 part time.

Alderman Simpson asked about pulling Ward and using him.

Rob Boyd stated if he has to I will us Ward there, I have before.

Alderman Simpson asked if Sid and Gary are part time and get benefits.

Fran Johnson answered yes.

Alderman Dear asked when will you lose Sid.

Rob Boyd answered I think the first of next year, but I can find out what his plans are for sure

Mayor Graves said he would like to discuss the water rates; I believe I understood the Board to want to see a \$10.00 minimum bill and what type of revenues that would generate.

Earnestine Cowan presented the information to the Board. Mrs. Cowan's stated it looks like at a rate of \$9.95 for a minimum bill it would be about a 41% increase in revenues. The rate schedule would be for residential \$9.95 for the first 2000 gallons used and \$2.50 for every 1000 used after. For Commercial \$1.55 for the first 2000 gallons used and \$2.90 for every 1000 gallons used after.

The Board all agreed they are ok increasing the rates. The rates have been the lowest in comparable cities around for a long while.

Alderman Simpson stated we will still be lower than several surrounding Cities.
Alderman Moore stated we will also have the Country Club residents added.

Alderman Hale asked when the last increase was.

Earnestine Cowan answered in 2019.

The Mayor and Board review the pay scale numbers and held a brief discussion on the millage rate.

Alderman Moore asked if we are now looking at 2 mills instead of 1?

Mayor Graves answered if you want to do all of what's in the budget presented, then yes.

Alderman Moore stated it would be hard to sell 2 mills instead of just 1 to purchase a fire truck, and also there was a reassessment done recently.

Fire Chief Foresman stated that we could also look at using the \$250,000 to put down on the truck purchase, to possibly negotiate the price down.

Alderman Hale and Alderman Tanksley both agreed they wouldn't use all of the \$250,000.

Mayor Graves stated that you're also looking at another truck purchase in about 4 or 5 years.

Alderman Dear stated a pumper truck.

Fire Chief Foresman stated yes, probably 4 years.

Alderman Moore stated he would like to see what the 2% raises and 1 mill will do, with transferring over \$100,000 more from the utility fund to cover administrative cost.

Alderman Tanksley asked why does the Police Department want 2 more cars.

Alderman Moore answered that he is wanting to replace the two crown vic's.

Alderman Simpson stated with 2 mills and a 2 % pay increase, and pull \$100,000 more from the utility fund, we are still in the good.

Alderman Hale stated that actually 8% of the utility fund could be transferred.

Alderman Moore stated actually a no mill increase and 3% raise might work also.

Alderman Moore then stated he would like to see the 1 mill increase, 8% transfer from the utility fund for administrative cost, 3% raises and other select ones in this list, and the remaining balance left over to be added to a street paving line item.

The Board were all in agreeance.

Alderman Simpson spoke about the Animal Shelter and FOSA. Mr. Simpson wanted to know how the process went with the spay and neuter charges and the payment for it.

Fran Johnson answered that the City pays for part of the spay/neuter fees and FOSA pays the rest.

Alderman Simpson stated he thinks it would be better if the City pays the vet directly.

Authorize Mayor Graves to sign the Engagement letter with F.O. Givens for Financial Statement Preparation services

Motion was made by Alderman Hale, seconded by Alderman Dear to authorize Mayor Graves to sign the Engagement letter with F.O. Givens for Financial Statement Preparation services. All voting yea, motion carried.

Recess

Motion was made by Alderman Simpson and seconded by Alderman Dear, to recess until August 17, 2021 at 5:00pm. All voting yea, motion carried.

Greg Graves, Mayor

ATTEST:

Katie Harbin –City Clerk