

SPECIAL SESSION

AUGUST 11, 2014

The City Council of the City of Athens met in Special Session on Monday, August 11, 2014, 8:30 a.m. in the City of Athens Training Center, 622 S. Prairieville St. with the following members present, to-wit:

Jerry D. Vaught, Mayor
Monte Montgomery
Tres Winn
Joe Whatley
Charles Elliott

Pam Burton, City Administrator
Pam Watson, City Secretary
David Hopkins, Director of Finance

constituting a quorum at which time the following proceedings were enacted, to-wit:

The invocation was given by Councilmember Montgomery.

DISCUSS/CONSIDER BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2014-2015

David Hopkins, Director of Finance, explained that the proposed budget for fiscal year 2014-2015 is based upon projected revenue with the current tax rate of .645140. He explained that there is no cost of living increase included for City employees, with approximately 30 employees being topped out on the pay scale. He explained the Texas Municipal Retirement System plan.

Councilmember Whatley and Councilmember Elliott discussed Texas Municipal Retirement System.

Mr. Hopkins reviewed the Department Summary, Property Tax Revenue, Non-Departmental, Debt Service Fund Expenses, Debt Service Fund Revenue, Water and Wastewater Bond Projects, Utilities (Non-Departmental), and Utility Revenue.

Mr. Hopkins explained that a Utility Rate Study is needed, however, it is hard to predict unknown expenditures prior to the lawsuit settlement. Councilmember Montgomery discussed pursuing the Utility Rate Study now instead of waiting for the lawsuit settlement, with Mayor Vaught being in agreement that the Study should be pursued now.

Mr. Hopkins reviewed Grant Fund, Airport Grant Fund, and Municipal Court Technology Fees Fund.

Haven Cox, Director of Human Resources, entered the room and reviewed the proposed budget for the Human Resource Department.

There was discussion concerning car allowances, salaries, and Civil Service.

City Administrator Pam Burton informed the Council that the Human Resource Department has advertised for the City Secretary position, stating that five (5) applicants met the minimum qualifications. Mayor Vaught and Councilmember Whatley suggested that they be included in interviewing the five (5) applicants on August 18, 2014 and the City Council interview the top two (2) applicants on August 25, 2014.

Ms. Cox exited the room.

The City Council adjourned for lunch.
The City Council reconvened to Special Session.

Ms. Burton informed the Council that Keep Athens Beautiful is requesting that the City continue their funding in the amount of \$10,000, with \$7,500 being allotted for mowing costs and \$2,500 being allotted for office space and communications. She explained that this is the same amount as provided in the past.

The Council discussed the Cain Center and their need for additional funding.

Councilmember Elliott recommended that an election be ordered to increase each water bill by \$2.00 to be used only for the purpose of capital expenditures at the Cain Center.

Councilmember Montgomery expressed his concerns with the roof, masonry and mechanical/electrical issues and recommended that any money given to the Cain Center be earmarked for these areas. He also recommended that the City Attorney provide an opinion regarding the City paying for the roof vs. giving money to the Cain Center.

There was discussion to pursue the Ordering of a Special Election on November 4, 2014 for the purpose of placing a \$2.00 monthly assessment fee on each active water account.

Rachel Cox, Director of Clint W. Murchison Henderson County Memorial Library and several supporters of the library entered the meeting. Ms. Cox made a presentation on behalf of the library and requested funding of \$12,500 from the City of Athens. Mayor Vaught asked if the City funds would be utilized for books, with Ms. Cox stating that they would be utilized to purchase books and to promote and advertise the library.

Various citizens in attendance expressed their support of the Library and the possibility of receiving accreditation.

Norma Lambert, Henderson County Human Society (HCHS) representative, and numerous employees, volunteers and supporters entered the meeting. Ms. Lambert reviewed the history of the animal shelter from its inception in 1989 to date and explained that they provide services to the City and the County. She explained that HCHS made the decision at the end of 2013 that they could not financially continue to operate without an increase in funding. She stated that they are requesting funding from the City of Athens equal to 25% of their budget (\$62,000), funding from the County equal to 25% of their budget (\$62,000), and the Human Society will provide the remaining 50% of their budget.

Councilmember Montgomery requested a financial breakdown of their annual report, with Ms. Lambert stating that it would be provided.

Various citizens in attendance expressed their support of the Humane Society.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS THE 22ND DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2014.

Jerry D. Vaught, Mayor

ATTEST:

Pam Watson, City Secretary