



CITY OF ABSECON
Municipal Complex
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CITY COUNCIL

FEBRUARY 10, 2022

BUDGET MEETING - 5:30 PM

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Council President, Betty Howell.

FLAG SALUTE

**STATEMENT OF THE SUNSHINE LAW
NOTIFICATION THAT THIS MEETING IS ELECTRONICALLY RECORDED**

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Burroughs, Cain, (6:05); Cavileer, Larotonda, Light, Poley, Howell

ABSENT:

ALSO PRESENT: Mayor Horton, Jessica Thompson, Carie Crone

BUDGET DISCUSSION

Fire Dept.

Chief Talley – they asked for an increase of \$2,000 this year. \$1,000 is to increase the stipend for the guys under the membership allotment line, since our numbers have increased a bit over the years. The other \$1,000 is from the fire safety and other equipment line. He broke down what they would like to accomplish this year and went over a list he provided. He mentioned the fire official line item and even though all the \$3,000 wasn't used in 2021, mainly because they couldn't go into the schools or other places, etc. He asked if they would to keep the same amount budgeted this year as well as whatever car we get it would need lettering.

Caleb – he asked if the four things requested for the tower are a want or a need to have it as a second run piece? Do we have a second vehicle already?

Roy – explained how the order of the trucks works at a fire.

Chief Laughlin – explained the reason we purchased it was for a second run truck and possibly a first if needed.

Nick – our second piece we have now is also our oldest piece and out of service a lot of times.

Roy – our pumper is a 1992 and has its problems. That should need to be looked at next year's budget. We used to have a 20-year replacement plan, but not anymore. It's already been refurbished, which is supposed to last another five years.

Police Dept.

Chief Laughlin – went over his budget. They requested \$2,000 extra in medical supplies, mainly because the costs went up. \$4,000 extra because they have to conduct a sergeant's test and they have other chiefs issue the oral test, which can last 30 minutes and it will last for two years. They have two spots open. They are requesting one new police vehicle and one new police officer to be hired to bring the force up to 27 full timers. They are interviewing for class 2 officers soon. They need two and there are six applicants. There are other officers eligible to retire this year as well. There is one officer who is EMT certified, so he is in charge of the supplies.

Steve – thought it would be a good idea if new hires would be EMT certified

J.R. – we will be looking to give Mike LoSasso an award for saving a stabbing victim. It's 180 hours to train to become an EMT and it's good for 3 years. Then you need refresher courses and CEU's to keep it. You need to want to dedicate a lot of time for it and for us to lose an officer while they're training; requiring overtime. He feels there should be some lighting upgrades at the back of the building and he has talked to Jessica about it. We did add some out front in the parking lot, but more could be added.

Ray – we need to upfit 3 vehicles now and then the new one coming in. We did save money from finding radios last year and didn't use the money in the capital account; we will need 3 computers for the cars and a docking station for the car and two new radars. We were able to sell the Humvees and other vehicles to the amount of about \$40,000. He estimated about \$55,000 to be needed.

Nick – asked how adding one new officer will affect the shifts.

J.R. – we have two shifts now with five people on them and two shifts with four people on them. We know we can afford one for now and maybe through retirement this year, we might be able to come back next year adding another one to make it 28 officers.

Steve – asked about the tag readers

J.R. – we have two and they work well, but they are costly at \$20,000 each.

Ray – yesterday he had Court Smart come in to analyze our speaker system, all the microphones and speakers in the chambers. The company runs all the state courts systems. They gave us a price for a computer; 8 wired microphones; 2 wireless microphones; new speakers; an amplifier; a mixer; a digital control panel; a new network switch; software and all the installation. This is an early figure because he just came yesterday and that is \$57,000. He has to find out the warranty still. They want to upgrade their interview room as well, but not sure what company they will use.

CAPITAL PROJECTS

Eddie – he went through a list of projects that are carried from year to year. They included:

- the 2022 road program, which includes the NY Ave. subdivision;
- the 2023 road program engineering, so it can be started and the job out to bid and work started earlier;
- Phase 4 of the NJ Ave streetscape from Rt. 9 down to Michigan Ave. and a little on W. Wyoming and Church St. to NJ to finish it out; he's still hoping to get a grant. The design portion should at least get started this year.
- Faunce Landing Road shared use path – this was a study done a couple of years ago. It's a large project and he feels we should wait until we can get some funding for it. It's a want, not a need.

- Turner Cove Park Expansion – Phase 1 – we are still talking to the owner selling it to us. Environmental studies and reports are being reviewed now. Acquiring it would be covered by the county and they have said they would, but they can't, if it involves site cleanup if there were a contamination from the gas station. The first phase of \$50,000 is to do the demolition and add new grass to make it open space now.
- Heritage Park restroom building – this would be added next to the concession stand and it could cost about \$300,000. It needs to be ADA compliant and need to have two restrooms. Water would be installed in the concession stand as well.
- Crestview Ave. Pedestrian Safety Improvements – this would install sidewalk and curb along the southside of the street. He submitted for a grant, but have not heard back yet.
- Drainage projects on Hobart Avenue and 4th Ave. The first phase was done by adding inlets and the next phase would be to replace piping on Davis Ave. There is also a drainage concern on 4th Ave. back by Sooy Lane.
- Municipal Infrastructure Assessment – in 2011 a street study was conducted on all the streets in the city and it has helped us with the road program. This assessment would include everything else: sanitary sewer, drainage, bulkheads, street lighting, etc. You'd then have a plan to work off of, since it'd be laid out. Eventually, we will need to address the sanitary sewer soon. With the stimulus bill that passed, there could be money for it. It would put us in a position to know what to do with that money.
- Infrastructure Mapping Updates – this will need to be done at some point. The storm sewer and sanitary sewer maps are used by many and they are old and outdated. These maps would be digitized as well as paper.

Jessica said that the last two items are already put into the budget for 2022. She asked everyone to think about the items mentioned tonight for the next budget meeting in two weeks.

Capital Budget

We budget for 5% and the balance would be debt. She went through her list of items that have been put in, but the only project from Eddie's list is the road program. She put in the \$50,000 in for the Turner Ave. project and if we use it fine, or it can go back to the fund balance. It won't be spent on something else. She forgot to put the phone system in for the fire department in her numbers.

1 new police vehicle and 3 car upfits	\$95,000
HVAC/Building Improvements- City Hall Repairs for city hall	\$30,000
Construction Permitting Software	\$30,000
Pro Phoenix Software for Police & Dispatching	\$101,000
City Hall/Police Audio System New microphones and recording system for the chambers.	\$75,000

Security System Enhancements \$45,000

The current camera system has a software program that is no longer safe to use. It needs to be upgraded.

Code Enforcement New Vehicle \$22,000

Codification \$20,000

Upgrading the code book

Fire dept. air cylinders \$12,000

Replace defibrillators \$10,000

The foam system for the fire trucks at \$20,000 will be added in as well.

The American Rescue Funds we received for 2021 are: \$461,000. We were only able to use it for water and sewer infrastructure or for specific covid related items, but now they have opened it up and we can use it in our budget for capital items. We should get another \$461,000 this year and we can use that in next year's budget.

With these items in, there would be no tax increase.

Our rate will be reduced because the library is no longer part of the city's budget, but it goes to the county's.

Our assessed valuation increased by \$4,041,500 last year - \$72,000 equals one cent

When we do the NY Avenue subdivision, we will incur a one-time revenue for next year's budget

Added shared services for dispatch with Galloway.

The IT director's salary will be included in the Info Tech Department

The increase in police dept. budget for medical supplies and the sergeant's test

The increase of one police officer

Concerts in the park at \$8,000 were added, since the library used to pay for them

Our JIF insurance increased 5.68%

Pension increased

Health Insurance rates increased

ACUA tipping and other fees increased 5%

New trash enclosures for all the residents at \$200,000. They can be paid for over five years with no interest.

The tax collection rate for 2021 was 99.17%

The 2021 budget is 94% expended to date

We can use the ARPA funds of \$461,483 to pay for capital items

We can increase anticipated revenues due to the conservative budgeting after our 2020 losses

We increased our fund balance due to the library transfer, land sale and sale of police vehicles

Our tax rate is .8 cents lower than it was in 2013.

The 2022 budget proposal was gone through next.

She then explained the current fund balance sheet that had the years 2014 through 2022. After using 48% in this year's budget, the fund balance would be left with \$1,696,806.00.

Sandy - asked if we could find another \$20,000 because she'd like to get another tag reader for the police. She thinks it increases the safety of our police by having it in a vehicle.

Caleb - asked Eddie if we could get an answer on the gas tanks on Turner Avenue before our next budget meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn – Councilwoman Cain – second – Councilman Larotonda
All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,


Carie A. Crone, City Clerk

Approved: 3/3/22