

ROCKY RIDGE TOWN MEETING

WORK SESSION

May 2, 2024
6:00 PM
MLA Building

AMENDED

Opening:

Presiding: Mayor Ronald Allred

Present from the Town Council: Ronald Allred, Bethany Sturgeon, Andrew Aagard and Joanna Covington.

Present from the Town Staff: Marilyn Bronson, Rachel Bronson, Terry Allred, Casey Reynolds, and Lane Allred.

Invocation was given.

Meeting was called to order at 6:15 p.m.

WORK SESSION:

Amendments to 2023-2024 Budget and Preliminary Budget Hearing 2024-2025

1. **Water/EMS Budget**

Water: Discussion took place regarding anticipated revenue versus expenses for water meters and moratoriums were expounded. A keen observation was made on the fluctuating nature and complexity of the water budget, including income from licenses and charges for water services. Additionally, the importance of adhering to water moratorium regulations and preparing for future increases in water usage was highlighted, including the anticipation of revenue and expenditures if the moratorium were lifted. The EMS services are primarily volunteer-based, with administrative costs incorporated into the general budget for grant writing, paperwork, and certifications. **EMS:** Further points covered the fees for the EMS department, where it was clarified that EMS is a volunteer-based service, leaving the administration cost to be covered by the grants and fees collected. However, an additional budget allocated for emergency supplies not directly related to the EMS was discerned, falling within a different budget category meant for community emergency preparedness.

2. **Administrative Costs and Wage Increases:**

A breakout of expenses was related, including the addition of admin office supplies and cleaning supplies. The council deliberated on the prospect of administrative wage increases. It was discussed that various towns/cities are implementing such increases, with the both a Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) and a merit-based wage increase. The members assessed different scenarios based on the percentage of increment and how it would affect the budget. The administrative section also encapsulated the wages for a Water/EMS Director.

3. **Park Budget:**

The potential for overutilization of the park by sports and recreation was brought into question, proposing the regulation of park usage schedules. The Council was in agreement regarding the need to implement a regulated schedule to manage the overuse of park facilities and amenities. It was suggested that a fee might be introduced to address the accelerated wear and tear due to the heavy and unscheduled usage of park facilities by sports and recreational activities, emphasizing fair allocation and accountability. Each Park project was discussed. Park Department Head, Lane Allred stated that he would need to leave early and asked that if there was any need for cuts in the Park budget that this be discussed with him before a final decision is made.

4. **Road Budget:**

B&C road funds were discussed in conjunction with ensuring continuation of road maintenance and critical projects, such as chip sealing, that protect road infrastructure in the long term. Each road project was assessed, keeping in mind ongoing expenditures and future infrastructure needs.

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5. **Cemetery Budget:**

The cemetery budget was analyzed with a suggestion to give a specific amount to see how effectively it would be utilized before assigning more funds in the future. The goal was to responsibly manage both short and long-term maintenance needs.

6. **Town Hall Maintenance/Administrative Budget:**

Considerations for the care and maintenance of the Town Hall were put forward. This included earmarking a budget for a scheduled cleaning service, cleaning supplies and general repairs to ensure the town hall is adequately sustained. The budget for this specific item was for the foreseeable needs of maintaining the building.

The administrative staff overseeing the budget expressed concerns about the town's financial outlook. They highlighted that while current expenses could be covered, it would leave only \$40K for the 2024-2025 Fiscal Year. To address this, they proposed that the council review and discuss potential amendments to the current budget requests for the upcoming year. The goal would be to prioritize projects and identify areas where the budget could be reduced by \$100K, thus providing the town with a fiscal buffer of \$140K to better prepare for unforeseen expenses throughout the year. It was suggested that, given the higher budget requests from the Road and Park Departments, these areas might be the first to be examined for possible reductions.

During the meeting there was a request for clarification regarding the transition of park care and maintenance responsibilities to Benjamin Allred. The discussion emerged due to additional projects planned for the park. The decision by the Town Council to have Park Supervisor Lane Allred concentrate on completing current park projects, with the intention of transitioning all park responsibilities to Benjamin was brought forward for consideration regarding the new additional projects budgeted for the coming year. Clarification was sought for on whose responsibility it would be to complete the additional park projects.

The Council pondered over prioritizing projects and discussed postponing certain enhancements. Terry Allred, the Head of the Road Department, voluntarily reduced \$50K from his budget to contribute to this effort and suggested that the Park Department consider a similar approach. The Council agreed that the Park needed to cut \$50K from its budget and Mayor Allred said that he would consult with Lane Allred, the Head of the Park Department, to discuss prioritizing park projects.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

/s/ Mairlyn Bronson
Approved by Town Clerk/Recorder
Marilyn Bronson, UCC, CMC