City of Green River

460 East Main Street, Green River, Utah
City Council Minutes
Special Meeting
Thursday, September 24, 2020

ATTENDING: Mayor Travis Bacon, Council Members Kathy Ryan, Michael Silliman, Larry Packer, Bo Harrison and Kent Nelson; Employees Conae Black, Bryan Meadows, Cameron Willford, Jackie Nelson; from Better City, LLC Adam Hughes

CONDUCTING: Mayor Travis Bacon, the meeting began at 7:10 p.m.

ORDER OF BUSINESS:

1. Discuss/approve/deny proposed employee compensation plan. Cameron Willford said we were asked to do a wage analysis comparison with other communities around the State. We gathered data from the following municipalities in Utah; Wellington, Escalante, Monticello, Gunnison, Helper, Perry, Panguitch, Manti, Parowan, Monroe, Tropic, Eden, Dammeron Valley, Liberty, Uintah, Castle Dale and Moroni. Information was also gathered from the following municipalities in Idaho; Inkon, Arco, Menan, Teton, Ashton, Sugar City, Osborne and Shoshone. These cities have similar populations and/or city budgets to Green River. The 50th percentile market average was used in the calculations. We found that on average, the City of Green River pays 10% below the market average. The findings from the wage analysis showed the following:

Position	% of Market	Shortage
Animal Control	97%	3%
City Administrator/Recorder	82%	18%
City Treasurer	91%	9%
City Clerk	87%	13%
Code Enforcement Officer	111%	NA
Finance Director/HR	82%	18%
Grounds Maintenance	121%	NA
Janitor	101%	NA
Museum Clerk	69%	31%
Museum Clerk	78%	22%
Museum Clerk	75%	25%
Museum Director	79%	21%
Museum Gift Manager	79%	21%
Museum Collections Mgr.	97%	3%
Public Works Crew Member	103%	NA
Public Works Crew Member	93%	7%
Public Works Director	80%	20%
Public Works Supervisor	83%	17%
Special Events Coordinator	93%	7%
TOTALS	90%	10%

Is wage maintenance increase fiscally responsible? Wage maintenance decreases turnover. The average cost to hire a new employee is $4,129 according to the Society for Human Resource Management. Typical time to fill a position is 42-52 days. Recruiting in Green River is especially difficult due to its remote nature. COLA (cost of living adjustment) is a standard among municipalities and has not been done for several years. This has the greatest effect on employees of longevity with the City of Green River. Increases can be accomplished within budget.

Where will the money come from? General Fund needs $14,960.52 for proposed Wage Maintenance. The city under-budgeted the Property Tax revenue by $45,000 according to

Prior Year Actuals of $290k and Current Year Budget of $245k. Museum Fund needs $7,629.71 for proposed Wage Maintenance. We will not pay Director wages for a total of 3.5 months within this Fiscal Year due to the hiring process. This is $11,667 in savings. Due to the resignation of Kelsie Hart, there will be an additional $25,297 in wage savings a fringe benefit savings due of over $20,000. Road, Highway, Water, Sewer, and Solid Waste need $28,176.10 for proposed Wage Maintenance. $11,500 margin in the current Highway budget; water sales revenue budgeted $22,700 under prior year actual; garbage collection revenues budgeted $28,500 under the prior year actual.

Reminder: Proposed Wage Maintenance is to bring current wages to 50th percentile.

Employee	Current Rate	Market Avg.	% of Market	Shortage	Bud, Increase
Black, C	$25.46	$30.10	85%	15.4%	$10,326.78
Chidester, L	$9.27	$10.00	93%	7.3%	$485.53
Lehnhoff, B	$13.79	$13.82	100%	0.2%	$20.38
Lehnhoff, D	$13.79	$13.82	100%	0.2%	$23.05
Meadows, B	$25.46	$30.75	83%	17.2%	$11,773.42
Meadows, L	$16.45	$17.49	94%	5.9%	$1,274.16
Nelson, J	$13.79	$17.00	81%	18.9%	$7,144.18
Newland, T	$20.69	$24.18	86%	14.4%	$7,767.34
Pinneo, C	$16.45	$19.85	83%	17.1%	$7,567.04
Pinneo, J	$15.00	$15.48	97%	3.1%	$1,068.29
Spadafora, J	$12.73	$14.22	90%	10.5%	$3,316.14
TOTAL					$50,766.32

General Fund	$14,960.52
Museum	$7,629.71
Wt. Sw. Streets etc.	$28,176.10

This budget increase includes the 7% Employee Tax.

Bo Harrison asked what the city is currently paying in wages. Cameron Willford said he didn't know exactly but thought it was close to $700,000. Bo Harrison asked if they were looking at a 10% increase. Cameron Willford said it is less than 10%. Conae Black said every employee was considered in the Wage Analysis and those listed are the only employees who are not at the 50thpercentile market wage. Cameron Willford said there were a couple of employees who were right at the 50th percentile; a couple was at 100% or 103%. There was one employee that does Grounds Maintenance, who is at 120%. Bo Harrison said we have compared this to other cities but what about inside Green River. What does the employees at the State Road Shed make? Don't they make $17.00 or $18.00 an hour? Kathy Ryan said when she retired from UDOT they were making close to that wage. Bo Harrison asked if this wage proposal is without benefits. Kathy Ryan said this is just their wage. Bo Harrison said then with benefits it is north of $25 and hour. Kent Nelson asked if the city has been giving a 3% COLA raise. Cameron Willford said it's happened a couple of times but it is not consistent. The employees who are not up to the 50th percentile are those that have been here longer. They were perhaps started at the right wage but they haven't been getting the COLA raises as they should and if that isn't given then it creates a gap because of missed COLA raises compounding over time. Once we do this Wage Maintenance and correct this problem and move forward with some kind of proposed performance combination with a COLA then in the future the wage maintenance would be very minimal and will not be linked to huge moving of economy or stuff like that and not just because we haven't kept up. That is what we are facing here. Mayor Bacon said it had been five years since a COLA raise was given. Bo Harrison asked what a typical COLA raise is. Cameron Willford said it depends on where you want to look. The Social Security Administration gives a 1.6% to 1.9% each year. In the private sector you are going to be looking at 3% to 3.5%. Kent Nelson asked what the State Road COLA raises are. Kathy Ryan said it depended on the decision from the State Legislature but it would range from 2% to 3%. Kent Nelson said he knows that there are some years when the State Road did not give COLA raises. Do they catch

up the following year as was just explained to them? Kathy Ryan said once in a while the State employees did not get a COLA raise but could not speak on whether it was made up the following year. Mayor Bacon said he was very surprised when he found out that there hadn't been a COLA raise in five years. Even though there have been COLA raises for the last two years we are behind about 8.63%. Bo Harrison said he has talked to a few citizens in town and they feel like the city is over staffed. Maybe we should consider letting someone go. A COLA raise seems reasonable but he is against giving out big raises. Kathy Ryan asked why they feel the city is overstaffed. Bo Harrison said that over the last 30 to 40 years it doesn't seem like they are as productive as they could be. Kathy Ryan said they ought to walk around in their shoes because they are really not seeing all that they do. Bo Harrison commented that he is not saying that he wants to get rid of anybody. Kathy Ryan said it blows her away that people would think the city is overstaffed because they do every aspect of the work where other cities have Special Service Districts or contract outside to do certain jobs. They just don't understand what these employees do. Jackie Nelson said the Museum is at the basic minimum in staffing to run the place. For the last six months she has been doing the job that is not her job. And for a few of those months someone else was getting paid for it. She is still keeping things running but is not being compensated for it. There was a time that she was close to quitting. She feels like she deserves compensation for her time and what she does. There are a lot of things she does behind the scenes and nobody knows and it is the same with your city crew members. Kathy Ryan said that if we don't take care of our employees then who will. Who is going to be on call at all hours? Bo Harrison asked if there are people who are threatening to quit. Conae Black said some employees in the Public Works Department are looking for better jobs. Bo Harrison asked if Chad Pinneo was one of those employees and Conae Black said yes. Bo Harrison felt Chad Pinneo was worth more than what the city was paying. His knowledge and experience is worth far beyond the $19.00 an hour rate he makes with the city. His past experience is managing seven different gas stations. Conae Black said if she quit tomorrow the city would not be able to replace her at the current wage she makes now. Bo Harrison said it would probably take the 42-52 days to find her replacement. Cameron Wilford used the example of the hiring process for the Museum Director and stated that she isn't actually here yet. If you are losing people at Conae Black's level or even at some of the other positions it is going to be hard to replace them. He felt that getting a position filled in 52 days was good for Green River. It was mentioned that if you don't hire someone who is local then it is difficult to find a place to live. Cameron Wilford said even if you do find someone willing to relocate they will be looking at the job and will say they can find the same job for more money at a different location. If you are not close to that average it will still be hard to bring people in. Bo Harrison said anybody that has a job in town can go out of town and probably make 20% more. Do you want to drive to Moab every day or move to Utah Valley? He could move to Utah Valley and make 40% more than what he is making now doing the same job but his cost of living is going to be 20% higher. It is nice that you are comparing other towns but he feels it is not comparing everything you should be. Cameron Wilford said that is the thing about these comparisons they are similar in size and they are not going to have some kind of booming economy that is different than Green River. Bo Harrison agreed but said in looking at these wages they are probably about 10% higher than the highest wages in town or higher than 90% of the people in town. He feels that we need to also compare with the jobs in town. Conae Black said you can't compare what she does to what a motel clerk does and that is probably the same caliber of the jobs in town. Bo Harrison asked about comparing with someone who is managing a gas station. They get called out 24/7. Are they making $25 an hour? Mayor Bacon thought that Love's is starting out their gas station attendants at $14 an hour. Jackie Nelson thought the managers at Love's are making $40,000 a year starting out which is about $20 an hour. Bo Harrison felt a gas station manager's job would be very stressful. Bryan Meadows said he has a lot of stress with his job. Bo Harrison addressed Bryan Meadows and recognized he got called out all of the time. Kent Nelson said they are not saying the employees don't deserve a raise. The employees are probably worth more than what is proposed. He feels that if raises are given then there needs to be a policy addressing the COLA raises because it was presented to them that the lack of COLA raises created this problem. It doesn't seem right to him to give out 3% COLA raises and would like the policy in place first. He asked if a 3% COLA raise is what is being proposed or can they propose new numbers. Mayor Bacon said 3% is a

pretty good COLA raise but if we can catch up and get things to where they need to be then we can do something lower. Jackie Nelson said your employees are your biggest assets. She has been in a difficult positon for the past six months. For at least the next month she will be carrying the full load and feels she deserves compensation for it. Kent Nelson said the city should compensate you for that and it should have been offered at the beginning. Conae Black said you cannot compare her job with a gas station manager. Kathy Ryan said it is like comparing apples to oranges. Neither can you compare Bryan Meadows job to the UDOT shed managers job. Bo Harrison said everybody is replaceable. Nobody is irreplaceable. He found that out in business. He knows that is not the good way to keep people around and keep the morale up but as a business owner everybody is replaceable. If you are walking on egg shells working with somebody, not that it is happening here, but he has been there, he has done it and when they finally quit he was so relieved. He felt so much better, everybody is replaceable. It is good to compare to see where we are at and what we are doing but he is not up to a budget increase of $50,000 across the board. That is way more than what he feels like he has been elected to do and it is something personally that he wouldn't want to do as a business owner. Kathy Ryan asked Bo Harrison if he gets a phenomenal employee is he willing to pay them more. Bo Harrison said he gives raises. He does realize that in his line of work it is easy for them to go to the next town and get a job. Mayor Bacon reminded them that this proposal is just average and feels the city team is above average. It fits in the budget and the city would not need to scrap or anything like that. Kent Nelson said it is a lot to bite in one year. Kathy Ryan said this has been going on for multiple years. Kent Nelson said he understood that but that is not his fault nor is it the fault of the employees but it's their responsibility to make sure we are being physically responsible and that is a big bite. He doesn't know why we can't spread it over two to three years. Conae Black said it's a $50,000 increase for a $3,000,000 budget. Bo Harrison asked if this was an action item. Conae Black said yes, it is an action item to see how the Council feels before we take this any further. She said it requires a public hearing to open the budget for any increases or decreases and disclose what the wage increases are. Bo Harrison asked each member of the Council if they would approve the wage compensation proposal. Kathy Ryan, Larry Packer and Michael Silliman said yes. Kent Nelson and Bo Harrison said they would not approve the proposal. Michael Silliman said the Council has been working on this for years and now Cameron Wilford has done all of this research on it and feels it is time to put this to rest. He also feels that a yearly COLA raise should be given so this problem does not happen again. Jackie Nelson said it was stated that everybody is replaceable but in Green River it is not so easy. We just found that out with our Museum Director. They have been in a mess trying to find a decent Director. It is not so easy especially in this small community. Bo Harrison agreed with Jackie Nelson. Conae Black said the Directors position has been offered and accepted but this person is still not here, we still need to find housing for her. It is nonnegotiable that if she doesn't find housing where she can bring her dog she will not come. Bo Harrison said so everyone gets the raise to bring them up to the 50% market value and then a COLA raise every year after that. Mayor Bacon said yes. Kent Nelson said they haven't established what the COLA raises are yet. Cameron Wilford said he is working on going through the employee policy handbook but we are not following most of what is in there. We need to make it so we do follow it or change it so we don't have to. He is going through that right now and will hopefully have that for them by next month. One of the most popular and probably most effective COLA based raises is that you offer a 3% but 1.5% is based on COLA and 1.5% is based on performance. People can earn up to a 3% raise but 1.5% is based on performance. Kent Nelson asked who decides on the performance. Cameron Wilford said that decision is made by Supervisor evaluation. Kent Nelson asked if those Supervisors would be Conae Black, Bryan Meadows and the new Museum Director. Cameron Wilford said yes. Kent Nelson asked who their Supervisor would be. Cameron Wilford said technically the Mayor. Kent Nelson said then pretty much everybody would get the 3% raise annually. Conae Black said no. Kent Nelson said that is probably what they should budget for. Cameron Wilford said yes. Kent Nelson said he understood that the reason for the higher COLA rate was to help catch up. Cameron Wilford said 3% isn't that high. He has always gotten 3 to 4% personally. Kent Nelson said they don't get that much of a COLA raise from the School District and they didn't get anything this year. He is not getting a raise and he knows that the State Agencies are not getting a raise this year and that is why he is saying it is a

lot to bite this year because there are still a lot of unknowns this year. Cameron Wilford said that is why we are not messing with anything that is affected by COVID but understands what he is saying. It is super hard to say, well I'm not getting anything so why should other people. Kent Nelson said he is not saying why is it fair for them and not me he is just saying that is the way things are working out. He is not against a raise but it seems like a lot to bite in one year. He feels that they should still offer the annual COLA raise but spread out the jump in wages over a few years. Kent Nelson said if there are enough votes to do this without his and Bo Harrison vote then there is no reason to discuss this any further. Bo Harrison said he would vote yes on something less. Kent Nelson said he would too if there was a COLA in place. Larry Packer said it is true that if we do cut these raises then we will just keep falling behind each year and we will never get caught up. Cameron Wilford said it is hard to say. What your saying is if we decide on a 1.5% COLA raise, which is just under Social Security, nobody is paying that if they are paying the COLA. 1.5% is the bottom end of what a COLA would be which is okay. You can say that you are going to do that every year but that just means that in ten years you will need to go through another Wage Maintenance session but it won't be as big as this but you are still going to see it because the market average for city employees isn't going to be a 1.5% COLA. He doesn't know what it is but he could do the research and find out. From talking with Phillip Stubblefield he is used to a 4% COLA raise every year. Bo Harrison said in comparison with the jobs in Green River the city employee wages are at 80 to 95 percentile if you could compare that accurately. Cameron Willford asked Bo Harrison if he meant comparing the city employees with gas station attendants' wages. Bo Harrison said you would need to be compare job tasks. Cameron Willford said to Bo Harrison then what you are saying is you would like to compare with the average wages in town and that makes sense. Jackie Nelson said what she does is far more than a clerk. She has increased gift shop sales by $20,000 and feels she earned a raise by doing a good job. She stated that she is under paid. Bo Harrison and Kent Nelson told Jackie Nelson that she has done far more than what she was supposed to do and should be compensated. Conae Black said to Bo Harrison that he does not have any clue what we all do. Bo Harrison agreed but told her that her wage of $25 an hour in Green River is a very good wage. There was a question on the process of these wage increases. Conae Black said that Cameron Willford is working on the employee policy and will have that complete by the end of 2020 or sooner if possible. The COLA raises would then go into effect in the next budget year and included in the new budget. The proposed wage increase requires a public hearing to open the budget for the budget increase. Once that is held then the Council can approve or deny it. Cameron Willford explained that the proposed budget increase is for a twelve-month period of time however three months of the fiscal year has already elapsed. **MOTION:** Larry Packer made a motion to approve the proposed employee compensation plan. Kathy Ryan seconded the motion. **VOTE**: Michael Silliman, Kathy Ryan and Larry Packer voted aye. Kent Nelson and Bo Harrison voted nay. The motion carried.

2. Executive Session.

I do hereby affirm, being the presiding official over the executive meeting, that it was held for the purpose of discussing the strategy sessions to purchase, exchange, or lease of real property, including any form of a water right or water shares, if public discussion of the transaction would:

1. Disclose the appraisal or estimated value of the property under consideration, or
2. Prevent the public body from completing the transaction on the best possible terms.

This is in accordance of the Utah Code Section 52-4-205.

3. Adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

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Travis Bacon, Mayor Conae Black, City Recorder

Approved: November 10, 2020