

APPROVED MINUTES of the Budget Workshop of the City Council of the City of Rye held at City Hall on November 13, 2002 at 7:30 P.M.

PRESENT:

STEVEN OTIS, Mayor
FRANKLIN CHU
CAROLYN CUNNINGHAM
ROBERT CYPHER
ROBERT HUTCHINGS
ROSAMOND LARR
DOUGLAS MCKEAN
Councilmen

ABSENT:

None

1. Pledge of Allegiance

The Mayor asked the Council and audience to join him in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Clerk noted that all members of the Council were present. A quorum was present to conduct official city business.

2. Continued Discussion of 2003 Budget

Mayor Otis welcomed everyone to the second budget workshop during which the Council would continue to crunch numbers and further investigate possibilities to reduce the 2003 budget proposed by the City Manager. He said the time for public input would be next Wednesday at the Regular City Council Meeting. Manager Novak reviewed the various suggestions made the previous night, separated into revenue, expense and capital suggestions. The Mayor said various boards and committees were also planning to meet and make suggestions. Following up on previous discussions, the Council discussed:

Rye Town Park (RTP)savings will be \$30K this year and \$30K next year because it was a good revenue year. There was much discussion, including input from George Ilse, member of the Rye Town Park Commission, concerning the accounting practices of RTP and suggestions that perhaps RTP needs more financial control

Mooring Fees – could add closer to \$70K, rather than \$100K, but should definitely be considered. There was discussion about the need for a new motor for the marine boat.

Building and Vehicle matters: Despite explanations from the City Manager concerning the value of the Fuel Management System, which will also help manage the fleet in general (tracking maintenance needs, who fuels up and when), etc., the Mayor, and Councilmembers Hutchings and Cunningham thought not this year. The Mayor said the DPW rank and file he had spoken with didn't want it. Manager Novak said Council inquiries should be directed through the City Manager rather than to line employees. The Mayor said he would rather spend the money on Theall Road. After discussion, the Council was convinced that both the new roof and the hydraulic lift were essential. Should the hydraulic lift fail with an employee underneath it, there could be serious consequences.

Administrative Salary Freezes will affect only 35 employees while all union employees will receive an automatic 3.5% increase. The Mayor and Councilwoman Cunningham agree that the staff is excellent, but sometimes this is what you have to do. Councilman Chu said not raising administrative salaries would put the Council in a favorable light, but it is good to reward and motivate the managers whose job it is to motivate others.

Refuse collection has three options: status quo, curb only (potential \$75K savings with a two person layoff) or once/week and at the curb (\$225K savings and a four man layoff). Much of the discussion was a repeat of the previous night. City Engineer George Mottarella asked if the savings are really worth the disruption of a system that works by substituting a more cumbersome approach.

Kirby Lane North Project. Over 20 residents were present and eager to contribute. The City Engineer said it would only cost \$350K instead of \$400 and it appears that new technology will enable the City to perform most of its portion of the project after the sewer and water portion is completed. It appears that the Engineering Department may be able to do the point repair and perhaps the lining out using previously allocated funds. The result will be to defer the amount to be bonded. The Kirby Lane residents left the meeting happy.

The Nature Center. There was much additional discussion about whether the Nature Center could cut a curator. Each curator is highly trained and the reason people sign up to attend the classes. Chantel Detlefs warned that enrollment would decrease if the quality of instruction decreases. She was asked to report on the contractual schedule.

Councilwoman Cunningham suggested the remaining technology budget be considered for cuts. The City Manager said she had already cut \$80K from this budget and was confident the remaining amount was necessary but, if additional amounts need to be cut, she should be given a dollar amount. George Pratt, member of the Finance Committee, pointed out that 76% was for public safety, leaving a mere \$40K for the rest of the entire City operations.

Councilman McKean reiterated his request to see line item budget justification for the \$2.9M department expense discretionary budget.

No additional conversation occurred on: adopting a Job Reduction Review Policy; non-resident surcharges at Boat Basin and Rye Golf Club; raising the undesignated fund balance; deferring the \$40K for the Friends Meeting House foundation; the funding request for the Library; buying the “hybrid” cars; the fee schedule; or the skate park. Recreation and Nature Fees were deferred, pending the commissions’ input.

No decisions were made as to what to cut or add to the Tentative Budget. The City Manager said it was going to be very difficult to pull the figures together if everything was decided at the last moment. Councilman Chu said he was under the impression that no decisions could be made until next Wednesday. Councilman Cypher suggested the City Manger propose a structure the Council could follow. The Mayor suggested another workshop on Tuesday night, November 19 if meeting at 6:30 prior to the November 20 Council Meeting was not enough.

After considerable discussion, and over the objections of Councilmen Cypher and Chu, Councilman McKean made a motion, seconded by Councilwoman Cunningham to adjourn to Executive Session to discuss personnel matters at 10:45 PM.

The Council reconvened at 11:15. There being no further matters to discuss at this time, Councilwoman Larr made a motion, seconded by Councilman Chu and unanimously carried to adjourn the budget workshop at 11:16 PM.

Respectfully submitted

Susan Morison
City Clerk