

APPROVED MINUTES of the Budget
Workshop of the City Council of the City of Rye held
in City Hall on November 17, 2014 at 7:30 P.M.

PRESENT:

JOSEPH A. SACK Mayor
KIRSTIN BUCCI
JULIE KILLIAN
TERRENCE McCARTNEY
RICHARD MECCA
RICHARD SLACK (arrived at 7:50 p.m.)
Councilmembers

ABSENT: LAURA BRETT, Councilmember

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Sack called the meeting to order and invited the Council to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll Call

Mayor Sack asked the City Clerk to call the roll; a quorum was present to conduct official city business.

3. Discussion of the FY 2015 Budget.

- Police Department Budget Review

Police Commissioner Pease and Tom Scappaticci answered questions regarding the Police Department budget. Commissioner Pease said the budget remained basically flat from last year but noted an increase in the budget of \$335,800 related to the new contract agreement. There was a discussion regarding staffing levels in the department. City Manager Culross said that the increased number anticipated receiving authorization to fill the position of an expected retirement before it was vacated. After a brief discussion with Commissioner Pease on the Department's intention to step up its work on drug abuse prevention, Mayor Sack indicated that the Council might be receptive to an additional detective who would focus on drug work. The Commissioner was asked to provide the Council with a report after the budget process is completed on the crossing guard program including the turn-over ratio of guards and what works and what does not work about the program. There were also discussions on the use of overtime in the department the process involved in replacing an officer. Commissioner Pease indicated that it was his preference to replace someone with a transfer from another department rather than a new candidate who must go through the Police Academy because the timeframe is much shorter to get the officer out in the field.

- Fire Department Budget Review

Fire Chief Peter Cotter and Lt. Kurt Tietjen answered questions regarding the Fire Department budget. City Manager Culross spoke outlined the reasons for his recommendations for additional staff in the department. It is suggested that four paid firefighters be hired in the last quarter of 2015 so that they will be trained and available by 2016. It is also suggested that new position of Assistant City Manager/Emergency Services Coordinator be added in July 2015. This position would have administrative oversight over the Fire Department and over all emergency response planning in the City. There was a discussion regarding staffing levels in the department over the years and the reasons for the request for additional paid firefighters. Chief Cotter spoke about increased training requirements and the difficulty in getting volunteers, especially those who can respond to fires during the day. There was also a discussion regarding the necessity for the proposed dual position. City Manager Culross said he believes it is, in order for the City to be prepared to deal with disasters. The mechanics of how mutual aid works; could the department function if one of the City's two firehouses was closed; or consolidating with the County were also discussed.

- Rye Free Reading Room Budget Review

Library Director Chris Shoemaker and Board Members Mary Sykes and Susan Jansen discussed the Library's budget request. Mr. Shoemaker made a presentation that outlined what the Library has accomplished over the last year and what they hope to do in 2015. The areas touched on included hours of operation, services provided, collections, programs offered, fund raising, and proposed new initiatives. Information comparing the Rye Free Reading Room with other libraries was also provided. It was noted that the City Manager's Proposed Budget included a \$25,000 increase in funding for the Library but that the request is for an \$80,000 increase over last year. Board Member Jansen indicated that receiving the additional \$80,000 would allow the Library to be open an extra three to five hours per week, as well as adding E-Books and expanding the collections.

- Boat Basin Budget Review

Boat Basin Supervisor Peter Fox and Boat Basin Commission members Greg Gavlik, George Szczerba, and Robert Rispoli discussed the Boat Basin budget. City Manager Culross discussed a proposed structural change which would reduce the number of permanent employees at the Boat Basin and return oversight of the Boat Basin back to the Recreation Department, with the Boat Basin Supervisor reporting to the Recreation Superintendent and not the City Manager. There was a lengthy discussion about the costs associated with dredging the Channel and the Marina, which is paid for by the membership of the Marina even though they are not the only ones who use the Channel. The Boat Basin cannot afford to keep the Channel open for everyone who uses it. City Manager Culross noted that that Marina was developed on the premises that the Federal Government would maintain the Channel, but this was no longer being done. There was a discussion about ways to get those who use the Channel to pay their fair share such as increasing mooring fees; instituting a system for policing moorings; putting mooring fees into the Enterprise Fund; and creation of a special taxing district.

- Rye TV Budget Review

Rye TV Access Coordinator Nicole Levitsky discussed the Rye TV budget. Ms. Levitsky said that there have been two full-time employees of the Department for 17 years. The budget for part-timers for 2015 is \$30,000 because they are not sure of what the demand will be to film meetings. There was also a discussion of the proposed capital project to create a studio in City Hall; how it would be staffed; franchise fees received from Cablevision and Verizon and trends for the increase or decrease of those fees when the contracts are up for renegotiation; and the possibility of the studio project being done for less than \$850,000.

Councilman Slack questioned the use of Fund Balance in the proposed budget and asked if this was a sustainable practice. He suggested that it might be prudent in a strong economy with a good revenue stream to add to the Fund Balance.

4. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss Councilman Mecca made a motion, seconded by Councilman Slack and unanimously carried, to adjourn into executive session to discuss a personnel matter and not return to the budget workshop at 11:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn F. Nodarse
City Clerk