

**Budget Workshop**  
**City Hall, Cherokee, Iowa**  
**February 16, 2015 – 5:30 P.M.**

A budget workshop was called to order on this date by Mayor Murphy. Present: Council members Miller, Brown, Johnson, Peck, Pingel, Administrator Eikmeier, Clerk-Treasurer Taylor.

Council began review of the 2015-16 budget. Administrator Eikmeier indicated that department heads were asked to keep their requests to needed items only. Infrastructure and equipment requests were to be kept to a minimum. Wages are budgeted according to the Police Officer's Association and I.U.O.E. contracts – 2% increase 7/1/15 and .5% increase 1/1/16. For budgeting purposes, these same figures were used for supervisory and non-union employees; however, the council will set those wages by separate action. The Administrator pointed out several other changes in the proposed budget: salary for the Public Works Supervisor position is budgeted equally among the street, water, and wastewater departments; foremen will be appointed in each of the three departments; there is reduced dependence on water and wastewater departments for general fund administrative services; and Debt Service shows a significant decrease, which reduces the tax levy. The council then heard from department heads.

Police – Chief, Nate James said there are no large increases, except for additional overtime for the possibility of having to send two new officers to the Academy. Minor increases for additional funding to send an officer to rifle school to be a certified instructor; ammo for rifle school; and two laptops for the interview room.

Fire – Chief, Gary Chase reported the need to rebuild the compressor used to fill SCBA tanks; need to replace 15 of 32 carbon fiber air cylinders at a cost of \$12,300 (he has applied for a \$10,000 Legacy Grant to help offset the cost); the remaining cylinders would be replaced next year. Although not included in this budget, the sewer line to the women's restroom will need replaced in near future and the next vehicle that will need to be replaced is the 1979 Pierce fire truck.

Building Inspection – for budgeting purposes, fire department employee wages are split 65% in the fire department's budget and 35% in this budget. Gary said that rental inspections haven't taken away from the employees' ability to maintain the fire department's vehicles and equipment.

Cemetery – as Steve Thill was unable to attend, Duane Mummert reported that the budget includes funding for a new roof on the maintenance building. Not included in the budget, but badly needed, is a restroom for the employees. Duane feels this should include a restroom with an outside entrance for the public. The estimate is \$25,000. There may be some money available from the Community Foundation as part of the fundraising effort for the cemetery directory.

Parks – Duane reported an increase in utilities for the yacht club and feels yacht club rental fees should be increased not only to help cover the utilities but for general upkeep. The budget also includes a new mower and a blade for the truck, and funding to continue the CN Railroad trail from Gillease to Riverview. Funding would be 80% federal and 20% city.

Recreation – Dave Ellis reported no major changes and no new programs that would affect the budget.

Community Center – Dave indicated that the current budget includes the installation of 2 automatic door openers at the main entrance. The proposed budget includes funding for handrails on the steps from the lower level to the upper level.

Pool – Dave reported the need to paint the bathhouse floor, which may be done in the current year. Replacement of strainer baskets - \$3,000 and the replacement of 2 of the 4 pool heaters - \$20,000 are not included in the proposed budget, but will need to be considered.

Library – as Mary Jo Ruppert was unable to attend, Darla Struck, Board President, was present. There is a small increase in the budget for utilities. Darla indicated that they are looking at the hours and tracking busy times. They may be able to reduce the open hours somewhat, which would help with utility costs.

Streets – Jim Agnitsch reported there are basically no increases over the current budget. Administrator Eikmeier increased part-time salaries by \$7,000, which would cover wages for seasonal snowplow operators. With Jim retiring, there will be a need to fill his route and the DOT has had good success with seasonal workers.

Local Option Sales Tax – this budget covers seal coating, level coating, overlays, and milling of streets. Jim said some streets have been seal/level coated several times so milling would need to be done before additional seal coats are added. However, there are always streets that don't need milling, but could use a seal/level coat.

Road Use Equipment – this budget includes \$30,000 to replace the old case tractor used to pull the bushhog mower. However, Duane has a similar size tractor that is used in the winter to push snow, but is rarely used in the summer. Jim feels the seasonal employee who mows for the Street Dept. could be moved under the direction of the Park Dept. and the park tractor could be used for the bushhog. This will be reviewed further.

Sewer System Maintenance – this budget covers sewer line and manhole maintenance. Jim indicated that their sewer jet broke down in December and because of the cost of repairs he and Don decided not to have it repaired. The cost to purchase a jet truck would be \$149,000 to \$350,000, depending on whether it is used or new. With fewer employees in the Street Dept. beginning with the next fiscal year, Jim suggested hiring Rehab Services (a branch of Lundell Construction) who can not only clean the lines, but also suck out all debris. The City's machine was only able to clean the lines. Rehab Services could do 50,000 feet of sewer line in 2-3 weeks. This is about 1/5 of the town, which would satisfy the insurance carrier's recommendation of cleaning the entire sewer system on a 5-year rotation.

Storm Sewer Utility – this budget covers repair and maintenance of existing storm sewers as well as the addition of new infrastructure.

The council will meet again on Tuesday starting at 5:30 p.m. to continue review of the budget.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Mark Murphy – Mayor

ATTEST:

Debra Taylor  
City Clerk-Treasurer