

**AMENDED CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
BUDGET WORKSHOP
TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2024, 4:30 P.M.
CHEROKEE CITY HALL**

A budget workshop was called to order on this date by Mayor Schmidt. Roll call: Present: Councilpersons Loughlin, Nitz, Pingel, Wilberding, Wych, City Administrator Letsche, and City Clerk-Treasurer Lucas. Absent None.

Department heads presented their budget requests for Fiscal Year 2024-25.

Dave Ellis, Recreation Director reviewed his budget requests for Recreation, Community Center and Swimming Pool. He stated that there is not any major changes in the Community Center budget for next year. Ellis will be providing an estimate to help in the stage remodel. Loughlin would like to see a master plan for Community Center updates so that we don't just piece it together. In the Recreation budget, not much changed, Ellis added a little to help will supplying the new Wescott Park. The Pool budget increases include an increase to have the open slide repaired and also to have C-M-L Telephone install Wi-Fi.

Duane Mummert, Parks Superintendent, included an increase for ash tree removal and the replacement of mowers. Mummert is earmarking \$15,000 in the FY 24-25 budget towards the cost of replacing playground equipment in the future.

Tyler Hahn, Library Director, explained his budget request which included updating the lights to LED's and replacing some of the internet cables. Hahn also stated that he is down a full time employee, Council would like that position to be filled so the current staff does not get burnt out.

Nate James, Police Chief, is requesting an increase to purchase a Side by Side and a new Patrol Vehicle. James has a quotes for the side by side, roughly \$33,000 once equipped, he has received several donations to help lower the cost. James is also earmarking \$20,000 to send officers to the Police Academy.

Casey Carpenter, Fire Chief, reviewed the Fire and Building Inspection budgets, there is a not much change in the Building Inspection. Carpenter would like to increase the volunteers pay to include \$10 per fire call and \$10 for each certified training they attend. Carpenter also would like to replace 3 exterior doors on the Fire Station. Carpenter is earmarking \$14,000 in the FY 24-25 budget towards the cost of replacing air packs in the future. Carpenter would like to replace the 1987 Brush Truck and upgrade the Building Inspection pick up in the near future. Carpenter would like to request a 5% increase in wages.

Chris Horton, Cemetery Sexton, would like to increase the fee for winter burials and add gutter guards to the Cemetery building. Horton is earmarking \$10,000 in the FY 24-25 budget towards building a crematorium.

At 5:52 p.m. motion by Loughlin, seconded by Nitz to pause the Budget Workshop meeting and hold the Regular City Council meeting. Roll call: AYES: All. NAYES: None.

At 6:15 p.m. motion by Pingel, seconded by Loughlin to resume the Budget Workshop. Roll call: AYES: All. NAYES: None.

City Hall budget has an increase due to needing to replace the retaining wall and some parking lot repairs.

Mayor/Administrator and City Council Budgets do not have any large changes. We will need to budget roughly \$5,000 to help Historic Preservation with the Fountain House Pillars restoration.

Financial Administration budget does not have any changes. Loughlin proposes raising the City Clerk's salary to \$70,000 with an additional \$1,000 per month to continue to help train Administrator Letsche effective February 1, 2024, with a review after 6 months.

Luke Gravenish, Public Works Director, reported on Streets, Water, and Wastewater budget request. Street department request include replacing a snow plow truck and we will need to look into replacing the Tool Cat due to multiple repairs, but that has been cut from this budget year. Loughlin wants to see a universal logo on all City owned vehicles. Wilberding commented on the excellent work the Street department did during the recent snow storm.

Water Department proposed budget includes a large order of new water meters and a new truck. Gravenish also requested earmarking \$25,000 to prepare for the rehab of Well 12.

Wastewater Department budget request include a new truck with an electric crane winch. They will also be installing a new SCADA system. Paper work will be submitted to the State for the Beech St. Lift Station Relocation, this project will hopefully begin in 2024. Gravenish would like to request a 5% increase in wages.

Motion by Pingel, seconded by Nitz to approve a 3% wage increase effective July 1, 2024 and no change to other health benefits. Roll call: AYES: All. NAYES: None.

On a motion by Loughlin, seconded by Pingel, the meeting was adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

Media Present: *Kate Kealey, Cherokee Chronicle Times*

Craig Schmidt, Mayor
ATTEST:
Sara Lucas
City Clerk-Treasurer