

CITY OF BURTON
COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP MINUTES
MAY 7, 2002, 4:00 P.M., COUNCIL CHAMBERS

THE COUNCIL WORKSHOP IS CALLED TO ORDER BY COUNCIL PRESIDENT LARRY BRAWNER AT 4:07 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Centilli, Wells, Brawner, Cross, Bement, Martinbianco

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tinnin

OTHERS PRESENT: B. Becker , Treasurer / Controller, J. Major, DPW Director, Jean Johnson, Sr. Citizen Director, Fire Chief, Doug Halstead, Police Chief, Bruce Whitman, Asst. Fire Chief, D. Lacey, J. Adams, Clerk's Office

PURPOSE OF THE MEETING: COUNCIL WORKSHOP TO DISCUSS THE PROPOSED 2002-2003
CITY OF BURTON BUDGETS, AS FOLLOWS:

1. Senior Citizens
2. Police
3. Fire
4. Building
5. ZBA and Planning Commission

PRESENTATION:

Mr. Becker indicated Mr. Major will address the Zoning and Planning budgets on page 28 of the Proposed 2002-2003 Budget report.

Mr. Major expressed the Zoning and Planning's budget is pretty status quo. They are not expecting any new employees and in the budget we do not plan on taking on any major projects, anything new or outstanding like we did the last couple of years with the Master Plan. We anticipated minor growth, applications and appearances before the Zoning and Planning Commission. The only increase is the cost of doing business as it relates to salaries and fringe benefits.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION:

Mr. Brawner inquired regarding the salary position.

Mr. Major replied Tom Strasser.

Mr. Becker indicated this also includes whatever overtime the Clerk's office would incur for the meetings and the Commission's salary. There was a vacant position in both the Planning, ZBA and building department supervisory budgeted for the last couple of years. It has been vacant for 18 months or so.

Mr. Major stated this was Neil Martz's position. He was to be a salaried employee, also serving as the second building inspector and overseeing Tom Strasser's area. Things did not work out and they now have Mike Butzke's who is the City's second building inspector. He is capable of one day being on supervision, and he is also a certified electrical inspector. Mr. Major stated further, he would like to leave the budget the way it is. Ken Wright is retiring this fall and we will again be looking for a second building inspector. The biggest problem right now is there is not an apprenticeship at the State level for building inspectors. It is rare to find a building inspector that has a lot of zoning, planning and engineer background.

Mr. Becker said under zoning contractual they funded the zoning changes. If it involves text changes of any large degree that would necessitate going back outside on a contractual basis, that would have to be additionally appropriated at some point in time if we decided to do that. This budget does not propose to do that.

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Mr. Major said they will see what the State is going to do with the State Shared Revenues. We have tried to cut back on the budget, this is all General Fund and not water, sewer or ACT 51 money. We don't want to put too much in here. If we decide later on in the year to do the zoning map and text, we will transfer money and get some proposals.

Mr. Becker addressed the Building Department on Page 16. He said several years ago the State encouraged us strongly to segregate a separate fund for the Building Department, and we have done that the past two years. Permits and license fee revenue is still continued at a high pace and most of it is the building permits. We anticipated a slow down and we have seen that in the current year.

Mr. Becker stated items of revenue that are passed on as expenditures such as condemned housing and weed cutting, are expenses we would incur and then are invoiced back to the property owner. So they are seen on an in and out basis. In the last two or three years we anticipated a much larger contribution from General Fund thinking the permit revenues would slow down and so far they haven't, so the subsidy from General fund has not been as substantial as we originally anticipated.

Mr. Becker said everything has been status quo on the expenditure side. Jeff Major mentioned the addition of the new building inspector and he would expect Ken Wright's overtime would be cut down due to that additional person.

Mr. Major said the demolition hearing process will be coming up shortly. Mr. Major said the permit fees are pretty much middle of the road.

Mr. Centilli inquired regarding the list of condemned houses.

Mr. Major indicated Council should have received a copy a while ago. He will make sure the Council receives a copy.

Mr. Martinbianco asked if the majority will not occur till the next fiscal year. Mr. Becker's estimate has downsized the number from a budgeted amount from this year.

Mr. Major said the title searches are being done now and we are looking at Council on May 20th to schedule three consecutive 15 minute public hearings. There will be twelve set for each meeting.

Mr. Martinbianco said if they set the first week of June or shortly after that due to the Labor Day weekend, and by the time we follow the statutory requirements to send them out for bid for block demo, it still won't be until July 1st.

Mr. Major said if we give 30 to 60 days for them to get in here and do something on their own, their final authorization from the Legislative Body after we have given the administrative extensions, it will probably be next year.

Mr. Becker We budgeted \$20,000 not knowing there is a list of 39 and if \$20,000 does not come close to that , we will have to authorize additional funding at that point in time. We are very hopeful we can recoup those monies by invoicing the properties.

Mr. Martinbianco said they had some discussions that Mr. Hamilton had with Mr. Abbey and the County Treasurer relative to the new program with demos. He asked if this has had an impact on the list.

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Mr. Major said the County Treasurer is trying to straighten out Flint's demolition program. We have our own and it is very successful. We don't need to schedule our properties into the County bank. Our list is small, we can control them, and our properties are not that devalued. Flint's numbers are so large it is in the millions of dollars in demolitions, we would get lost in the County's program.

Mr. Becker said the County Treasurer's thought from an economy of scale standpoint that we might be able to see some savings in demolition, but I am not so sure. There may be some on the demolition list of 39 that are current on their taxes for whatever reason, and would not fall under the County's umbrella. As Mr. Major suggested, they are looking at thousands of properties in Flint and if they had two or three demo contractors, we might get lost in the priority listing and be another year before we seen any action.

Mr. Major said in most cases they are three or four years in back taxes in the City of Flint, and our list is probably not that way. I would just as soon get our local demolition contractors with these small deals not tied up in the County's bureaucracy of payments and that type of thing.

Mr. Becker said he would like to see how it goes. The County Treasurer is trying to get developers to come in and pick up the property and replace it with a structure. He has some aggressive long-range plans there and they may turn out to be fine, it is in the early stages and it may not be to our advantage. He is looking at developers to come in for a dollar, do the demolition and own the property.

Mr. Martinbianco commented regarding Mr. Becker's letter referencing review of existing fee schedule should again be considered. He said Mr. Major thought the fees as it relates to the building department were in the middle range.

Mr. Major responded we are right there but just to back it up we can make some phone calls, do an analysis and show where we stand.

Mr. Martinbianco said relative to the revenue side line item, to what extent are we impacted by the change in the State Code that would no longer allow us to charge for a building permit for replacements of roof, siding and windows.

Mr. Major said they are under a site permit now.

Mr. Martinbianco commented regarding the cost variance between the building permit fee charged and the site permit fee.

Mr. Major said I am sure it has impacted us because we have a \$15.00 fee that is a site improvement instead of a building permit. We have to have some control to do an office review of what they want to do and that is what the fee is covering. We don't do an inspection unless we get a complaint. We are not losing on it but we are not incurring any costs by having our building inspector go out either to follow up on it.

Mr. Becker said he has stated before, that the Building Department Fund was created by the State because they want to insure the fees were not too high, that there was not a big surplus of monies over the cost. The State was trying to get at those that were charging outrageously high building permit fees to try and isolate the activity to show it should break even and not a big money maker. Obviously ours is not a big money maker, and we have had the best of times as far as building is concerned. If we had a slow down some point in time, our General Fund subsidy is going to have to increase if we maintain the same amount of expenditures.

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Mr. Becker commented briefly regarding the Motor Pool expansion. The clerical and counter area will be expanded to be more efficient. They will move their copying area to be centrally located to where the public contact is there.

Mr. Martinbianco inquired regarding payments coming directly from General Fund for the addition of DPW and selling the bond issue, the and not apportion them.

The majority of the portion

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 6:00 P.M.