

**CITY OF METTER
BUDGET WORKSHOP
FRIDAY, JUNE 14, 2019
9:10 A.M.**

A budget workshop was held at City Hall on Friday, June 14, 2019 at 9:10 a. m. in the Council Chambers.

Attending the meeting were the following officials:

Mayor Edwin O. Boyd
Mayor Pro tem Chyrileen Kilcrease
Councilman Brandon Sikes
Councilwoman Rashida Taylor
Councilwoman Amy Harrelson
City Manager Mandi Cody
City Clerk Angie Conner
Chief of Police Robert Shore
Fire Chief Jason Douglas
Director of Tourism/Business Development Heidi Jeffers
Jerri Goodman, Metter Advertiser

Councilman Paul MacGregor was not present at this meeting.

Attending the meeting were the following guests:

Bryan Aasheim – Candler County Administrator
Brad Jones – Candler County Commissioner
Wes Douglas
Glen Deal
Grady Franklin

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

Mayor Boyd called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.

BUDGET WORKSHOP

Mayor Boyd said that he has been looking at the revenue and it seems that we may come up short on sales tax revenue. The county has budgeted \$640,000 for FY 2020 and the proposed city budget is showing \$717,000. He asked staff to verify these numbers.

There are 3 newly open positions within the city; one in the fire department; one in the police department; and one in streets and lanes. These positions have been frozen at this time.

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Mayor Boyd said that this should be the last year that we have to double up on jail payments. We will be paying for recreation until 2022-2023. We are incurring \$100,000 in extra expenses that will go away eventually.

We incurred \$150,000 in legal fees for the service delivery strategy which is a non-reoccurring cost.

Insurance premiums have increased over 60%. Workers Comp claims are significant at 60%. We should be seeing a reduction in modifiers which will decrease the amount of premiums over the next few years.

The Metter Police Department is working on getting state certification which will reduce the insurance premiums for that department. We are also revamping our safety team.

Commissioner Jones suggested to council that they look at shopping out all insurance premiums.

Mayor Boyd said that he is not opposed to using some of fund balance.

Water and sewer operations is at \$500,000 and renewal and replacement is at \$600,000. We are proposing transferring \$100,000 from water enterprise to general fund for cost allocation. Ms. Cody informed the mayor that \$130,000 has already been moved for cost allocation. Mayor Boyd said that we could transfer \$50,000 each from water and sewer operations and renewal and replacement.

Mayor Boyd said that we may have to look at furloughing. He said that he didn't want to have to jeopardize the Class 4 Fire Department. This could affect our response time which could double the insurance premiums in Pulaski.

Councilwoman Taylor pointed out that we may need modifications and furloughing could be an idea. Councilwoman Kilcrease said that furloughing does work. She said that something has to be done. We need to curtail spending. Councilwoman Taylor said awhile back the state furloughed for two days a month.

There are no cost of living raises in this budget. We may have to look at reducing employee benefits. Councilwoman Kilcrease asked if there are any jobs that could be combined.

Ms. Cody said that we may have to use some of the certificate of deposits and fund balance to balance FY 2019. Councilwoman Taylor said that she does not agree with cashing in certificate of deposits. Mr. Aasheim commented that the city may need to look at investing on interest this way you could get money on your returns.

Commissioner Jones asked city council if they had looked into privatizing the sanitation service? Mayor Boyd said that we have in the past but may need to look at it again.

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Councilwoman Harrelson asked how much per day would we save by furloughing?
Councilwoman Taylor said that merging some jobs could also help save. Ms. Cody said that staff are struggling to meet the service needs that we are expecting now.
Councilwoman Kilcrease asked about the office structure and could anything be combined.

Councilwoman Harrelson questioned the Assistant Public Works Director position. Ms. Cody explained the need for this position.

There was some discussion about the proposed fire inspection fee for commercial property. Councilwoman Taylor asked for copies of the fire reports.

Ms. Cody said that we are \$200,000 shy of balancing the FY 2020 budget and this is not counting fund balance.

Mayor Boyd said that the Fire Department has been professionalized over the past few years and would hate to jeopardize that.

Ms. Cody suggested reducing the general fund expenditures by \$49,000; Economic Development by \$29,000 and cutting out \$6,600 for Communities in Schools.

Chief Shore said that eliminating one person from the police department could cause us not to get state certification.

Councilwoman Taylor suggested cutting employees or salaries. Councilman Sikes asked if we need a Public Works Director and an Assistant? Ms. Cody explained that she needed the Public Works Director to handle projects which is a fulltime job and she needs the assistant to handle the day to day operations.

Council decided to take a lunch break and reconvene at 1:00 p.m.

After lunch council began by discussing the water and sewer rates. They agreed that the rates definitely need to be increased. Council also discussed adding a fire inspection fee to businesses.

Ms. Cody suggested adding the fire inspection fee to commercial properties, eliminating employee disability premiums, adding a street light fee and cutting retirement to 4%. She said that we may have to look at eliminating dental, vision, and life insurance benefits.

Council asked Ms. Cody to get the cost of the monthly bills on tracking vehicles and on cell phones.

Council agreed to increase fine revenue to \$100,000. They also discussed adding an extra charge for large bulk waste pickup. Ms. Cody said that adding these things and a ½ mil tax increase and putting the rest in fund balance would balance the budget.

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The following items were the main topics discussed during this work session:

- Increasing the sanitation fees July 1, 2019
- Adding a \$5 street light fee July 1, 2019
- Increasing water and sewer rates January 1, 2019
- Fire Inspection fee on commercial property - \$120 per year
- Eliminates disability insurance
- Drops retirement from 6% to 4%
- Staff will check on returns on investment
- Add a fee for large bulk waste pickup

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Boyd adjourned the budget workshop at 2:51 p.m.

Angie Conner, City Clerk