

CITY OF MARINE ON ST. CROIX CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Year 2014 Proposed Budget – Truth-n-Taxation

Thursday, December 4, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm by Mayor Mills.

Chris Mowery, Lon Pardun, Mary Lusher and Dan Willenbring (via conference call) present.

Citizens Present: David Denn, Gary Swanson, Bill Ries, Anne/Peter Reich, Megan Lapos, Diane Mills, Mary Skamser, Joel Stedman, Gordy/Monique Skamser, Charles Arnason, Andy/Karen Kramer, Linda Tibbetts, Jack Warren, Dick Johnson.

Mayor Mills stated the purpose of the meeting is to discuss the 2014 proposed budget.

Clerk Peterson reviewed the proposed changes from the August budget meeting, including the capital budget items. The Council removed the \$3,000 for Council salary as that would not be able to go into effect until after the next General election, and \$5,000 was removed from the Holiday's budget for the 175th Anniversary celebration as MarLa does not have an actual plan in place for festivities.

Linda Tibbetts questioned why there was no money put into the capital budget for the bike trail rebuild, and wanted to ensure that the City would not allocate the money set aside in the reserve funds for any other project. Clerk Peterson explained that there is currently \$98,000 allocated for the bike trail rebuild, and the City had been trying to get a Legacy grant to help with funding, and had suspended adding any further money into the reserve funds during that time. The City Council assured Ms. Tibbetts that the money allocated for the bike trail will stay allocated for the bike trail.

Anne Reich advised the Council she was in favor of keeping all money allocated for stormwater in the budget for 2014.

Charles Arnason noted that of the 14.92% proposed increase, \$84,000 of that is for stormwater and the Village Center.

Mayor Mills reviewed the proposed rate increase for the Jackson Meadow water system. The proposed increase would include an increase to the base rate from \$19.47 to \$25, the usage rate from \$2.14 to \$3.00 and a \$5,000 contribution from the home owners association. The Council consensus was to approve the proposed rates for 2014, and will re-evaluate for the 2015 budget.

The Council reviewed the capital expenses, beginning with the Judd/Third St. Engineering study. Mowery questioned whether there was enough resident support for this study and noted that during the initial discussions with the Task Force, it was discussed that most of the funding

would come from outside funding. Willenbring believes there is resident support, and stated that the estimate for the study would be around \$45,000. He believes the study needs to be done so the City has an idea of what the actual project costs would be in the future. Mowery advised he agrees in principle, however when the Council passed the addenda the discussion always revolved around grants and funding outside of the city budget.

Lusher believes the Task Force was appointed by the Council to come up with these ideas and that the City needs to plan for the future.

Pardun agreed with Mowery regarding the talk of outside funding and volunteer work. He also noted that the biggest point of all of the discussions was that this was a long term plan – 10 or 20 year plan, not a 1 or 5 year plan. He believes these funds should be saved up for over several years.

Diane Mills does not believe that Marine can afford a 14% increase and believes this project, like most City projects, should be saved for and done over a period of time. She believes a large tax increase would be irresponsible on the Council's part given the current economic conditions.

Gary Swanson seconded Mrs. Mills comments.

Joe Stedman supports that the City is addressing storm water, however does not understand why a study would be done prior to seeing what Washington County and MnDOT will be doing with their future projects.

Mary Skamser would like to know how the County Road 4 project will affect Marine, and would like to see the City take little steps forward until then.

Peter Reich advised he is not clear which solution would make more sense and whether the City would know if paying for this study now would be beneficial or if spending the money now would not make sense because of potential changes that would come as a result of the County Road 4 project. Willenbring believes this study would simply lay out the projects for future planning, so there would not be any specific plans included.

Mowery believes the Engineering proposal should be added to an upcoming Council agenda so residents can be a party of the discussion process, especially since the Council just received the engineering proposal that afternoon and hasn't really had time to review the specifics.

Mayor Mills questioned if there was a motion to reduce the engineering study for the Judd/Third Street project.

Willebring moved and Lusher seconded to reduce the engineering budget for Judd/Third Street from \$50,000 to \$40,000. Lusher and Willebring for, Pardun, Mowery and Mills against. Motion failed.

Pardun moved and Mowery seconded to lower the engineering budget for Judd/Third Street from \$50,000 to \$10,000, to reduce the grant writing amount from \$4,000 to \$0, to reduce the storage shed for the Millsite from \$20,000 to \$0 and to reduce the storm water budget from \$10,000 to \$5,000. After further discussion, Pardun amended his motion to reduce the engineering study for Judd/Third Street from \$50,000 to \$7,000 and to only reduce the grant writing from \$4,000 to \$3,000. Mowery, Mills and Pardun for, Lusher and Willenbring against. Motion passed.

Megan Lapos questioned the canoe racks for the landing behind the General Store and who they would benefit. Lusher believes it would be beneficial for tourists stopping in Marine from the river to have a place to put their canoe/kayaks. Linda Tibbetts would like to see that line item removed. Lynette Peterson advised if racks were to be built, she would like to see them at the landings used by people who pay for canoe/kayak permits as they would be more beneficial in place were the boats are sitting for an entire summer, rather than for boats that will only be at the landing a very short time. After further discussion the Council decided to leave that money in the budget.

The City Council will formally adopt the 2014 budget of \$739,386.85, which represents a 3.63% increase at the December 12th City Council meeting.

Willenbring moved and Lusher seconded to adjourn at 7:29pm. Motion passed unanimously.

Minutes taken by Lynette Peterson, City Clerk.
Year 2014 Budget Attached.