

CITY OF MARINE ON ST. CROIX CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Year 2020 Proposed Budget – Truth-n-Taxation
Tuesday, December 3, 2019

The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm by Mayor Mills.
Gwen Roden, Lon Pardun, Bill Miller and Charlie Anderson Present.

Citizens Present: Linda Tibbetts, Jason Crotty, Gayle Knutson, Jim Maher, Cecily Harris, Valoree Dowell, Nancy Hauschild, Mary Fernstrum, Nancy Cosgriff, Linda Tibbetts, Mary Skamser, Larry Roden, Jim Kolb, Mary Whitaker, Heather Morris, Janet Johansenm Kitsi Vadheim, Tim and Christina Barbaris, Fred Remund, Ryan Marsel, Patti Kraske, Mark Kraske, Larry Martin, Mary Burke, Emily Schollett, Andy and Kim Creager, John Waugh, Tom Omdahl, John Goodfellow, Bill Smitten, Juli Hagstrom, Stacia Rivers, Pat Pardun, Brad and Ginny Borrman, Hank Fischer, Tammy Newcomb,

Mayor Mills opened the meeting at 6:30pm for the purpose of discussing the proposed 2020 budget. Clerk Peterson reviewed the changes from last year.

Linda Tibbetts stated her disappointment in the Council for setting the initial budget at 34.6% and believes such a significant increase is a major burden to the tax payers. Mayor Mills reviewed the budget process and explained how the Council includes their wish list items to set a maximum levy in September. Then the Council can discuss those items and reduce at this meeting.

Wendy Ward does not believe a City budget should be aspirational and there should not be a wish list process. Municipal budgets should be a progressive increase each year.

Cecily Harris reiterated Ms. Wards comments.

Councilmember Miller explained that these budget items are discussed at various Council meetings and at the initial budget meeting in August. The wish list items are many times suggestions by residents that they would like to see for the City. Some of these items include the Judd Street road project, the purchase of the school, etc. The point of this meeting is to find out from all of the residents what their priorities are and what they would like to see City dollars spent on. The City also has a policy of not borrowing or bonding for projects, so many times the Council will budget each year for a project until the full amount is funded.

Councilmember Anderson noted that he has sat in on several TNT meetings with the City of St. Paul, and there is no option for the public to comment during those meetings at all. He believes the fact that the Council listens to the public and adds their “wish list” suggestions to the budget for discussion and comment is a great thing.

Nancy Cosgriff believes the Council's priorities are based upon what is laid out in the Comprehensive Plan and as long as the projects being funded for those types of projects, she is okay with an increase.

Mike Tibbetts believes there is a significant amount of money the City can saved on road maintenance.

Mary Fernstrum is concerned about the school debt. Currently the Folk School is the only tenant and is curious how this will affect the levy.

Councilmember Pardun reviewed the plan for this situation that was discussed at the time the public hearings were held prior to purchasing the school. Currently the Council is planning on paying the bond payment with levy dollars, and then all operating expenses will come from the General budget. Pardun also noted that there is a group of residents that are working on creating a charter school which could hopefully occupy that space in the next couple of years.

Sue Logan questioned the increase to the roads fund of \$100,000. Pardun does not believe that increase needs to stay, but also explained that removing those additional funds will cause future road projects to be delayed.

Andy Creager doesn't believe any capital funds should increase until the school is occupied and those costs are covered and does not think the bond should be included in the budget.

Councilmember Miller responded that the City discussed the bond payment at the school public hearings and believes the City should continue to include the bond in the budget.

Additional comments and suggestions were taken from the audience. Mayor Mills suggested the Council begin discussing the budget items, which would address many of the questions and concerns the audience members had.

Miller reported that Chief Malmgren was comfortable removing the entire \$60,000 for SCBA's. The equipment does not need to be replaced until 2021 and there is money set aside in the PS equipment fund and grants available to help pay for the replacement equipment. Council consensus was to zero that line item.

Anderson suggested reducing the Burris Park Shelter from \$70,000 to \$65,000 and leaving a \$5,000 place holder to begin building that fund balance. He would also like to remove the word Burris and leave it as Park Shelter. The Council agreed.

The canoe racks were reduced from \$3,000 to \$500.

The dumpster and porta potty screening was reduced to zero.

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There was heavy discussion on whether or not to increase the roads budget. The proposed amount increased from \$150,000 to \$250,000 and Pardun suggested dropping to \$150,000, however other Council members were in favor of some increase. After further discussion, the consensus of the Council was to leave the budgeted amount at \$150,000.

These reductions resulted in a levy amount of 940,588.51, which represents a 6.2% increase over 2019.

The final levy will be approved at the December 12th City Council meeting.

Miller moved and Roden seconded to adjourn at 8:16pm. Motion passed unanimously.

Minutes taken by Lynette Peterson, City Clerk.
Year 2020 Budget Attached.