

**CITY OF HAZELWOOD
COUNCIL WORK SESSION
APRIL 28, 2021**

CALL TO ORDER

A Council work session was called to order by Mayor Matthew G. Robinson at 6:10 p.m. on Wednesday, April 28, 2021, in the Council Chambers at Hazelwood City Hall.

In response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) public health emergency, some members of the City Council attended in-person in the Council Chambers at Hazelwood City Hall and others attended and participated by video conference in accord with Section 610.015, RSMo (“All votes taken by roll call in meetings of a public governmental body consisting of members who are all elected ... shall be cast by members ... who are physically present ... or who are participating via videoconferencing.”) It was impossible and impractical to hold the meeting in a manner physically accessible by the public. Section 610.020.2, RSMo (“Each meeting shall be held at a place reasonably accessible to the public ... unless for good cause such a place ... is impossible or impractical.”) Public access to the meeting was accommodated in person and via access to video conference pursuant to notice provided in accord with Section 610.020, RSMo.;

On roll call the following members of the Council were present:

Warren H. Taylor
Rosalie Hendon
Mary G. Singleton
Carol A. Stroker
Robert M. Aubuchon
Don W. Ryan*
Daniel T. Herin*
Matthew G. Robinson

City Clerk Julie Lowery declared a quorum was present. Also present were City Manager Matt Zimmerman and City Attorney Kevin O'Keefe.

*Council Member Daniel T. Herin arrived at 6:17 p.m.

*Council Member Don W. Ryan arrived at 6:19 p.m.

AGENDA

Mrs. Singleton moved, seconded by Mrs. Hendon, to amend the agenda by the addition of a closed session after the work session to discuss a personnel matter and to consult with the City Attorney. The motion passed unanimously.

SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

FY '21 BUDGET

Mr. Zimmerman gave an overview of the proposed 2021-2022 fiscal year budget.

Mr. Zimmerman stated the City has received unique one-time revenues and the budget has changed in the short-term. When the Council adopted the current fiscal year budget, it was with the understanding that the City would not be given any federal stimulus money. Subsequently, the City is pledged to receive \$4.5 million in federal stimulus money and that will affect the budget in the short-term. Mr. Zimmerman stated the City has already received \$1.8 million from the Coronavirus, Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act fund and those funds were restricted to paying for emergency personnel, police, fire and janitorial staff. The budget went from a \$900,000 deficit to a \$1 million surplus in the 2021 fiscal year because of the CARES Act funding. Mr. Zimmerman stated the City is waiting for the State of Missouri to allocate the \$4.5 million in federal stimulus funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), and waiting on regulations of how those funds can be used. The budget would look vastly different if those federal stimulus funds were not received. He explained the funds should be eligible to be spent on revenue replacement, economic development, broadband, infrastructure, water and sewer structure, new programs, etc.

Mrs. Hendon asked if the ARPA funds could be used to give employees raises.

Mr. Zimmerman responded affirmatively.

Mr. Zimmerman stated the first draft of the budget has been written to include maintaining services, programs and personnel. However, the budget shows a \$1.2 million deficit next year and projected out three more years with ongoing and increasing deficits through 2025. Mr. Zimmerman stated the City continues to get by on one-time revenues that cannot be counted on. The budget was also drafted with the assumption that \$2.3 million of the federal stimulus money would be received for the 2021-2022 fiscal year and \$2.3 million would be received for the 2022-2023 fiscal year and can be used as revenue replacement. Mr. Zimmerman stated the City would run out of funds by 2025, but if the money that was not paid to Robertson Fire Protection District (RFPD) in 2018 has to be repaid then the City will run out of funds in 2024.

Mrs. Singleton asked what happens if the ARPA funds are not received.

Mr. Zimmerman replied the budget could be amended in the first quarter of the new fiscal year.

Mrs. Hendon asked if ARPA money would have to be used to repay RFPD for the 2018 payment.

Mr. Zimmerman responded RFPD would be paid from the General Fund.

Mr. Zimmerman asked the Council if their goals were to maintain as much cash as possible and cut the budget, or maintain current programs and services.

Mrs. Singleton asked for the pros and cons of each choice to give raises to the employees.

Mr. Zimmerman replied step increases would cost the City approximately \$133,000 for the 2021-2022 fiscal year budget. A cost of living adjustment (COLA) helps keep the market more competitive and 2% cola would cost the City approximately \$242,000. Mr. Zimmerman stated the retention incentive program would take one-time revenues and dedicate them to a one-time expense, allowing all employees to get a check from the City at the end of the year. He stated the retention incentive program is not imbedded in the budget, which is a positive. However, he feels employees will not see a one-time as a raise.

After discussion, the Council agreed to give all employees a step increase.

Mr. Zimmerman stated he would fill positions that are listed in the budget, but not create new positions or fill positions that have been eliminated from the budget.

Mr. Aubuchon stated that enough services and programs have been cut and he would like to maintain what we currently have.

Mrs. Singleton, Mrs. Hendon, Mr. Taylor and Mr. Herin agreed.

Mrs. Singleton stated she would like to see snow removal get back to a higher service standard.

Mr. Zimmerman replied that would require Public Works hiring two more laborers and that is not in the budget.

Mr. Zimmerman will provide Council with an official copy of the 2021-2022 draft budget for their May 12 budget work session.

LEGISLATION

Mr. Zimmerman stated the City's lobbyist and legal consultant John Dalton recommended the City contact local legislatures regarding the fire department merger discussion from the April 21 Regular Council meeting.

Mr. Zimmerman stated Missouri House Bill 1016 had language included in it that was concerning to the City. The Hazelwood and Ferguson Fire Departments were not aware the language in the bill had changed and notified staff that they were not supportive of those changes.

The Mayor asked the Council how they wanted to move forward with merger discussions.

Mr. Taylor and Mr. Aubuchon stated there are too many unknowns and questions to be answered.

Mrs. Hendon stated it should be determined if the merger would be possible since the cities are not connected before decisions about supporting or not supporting the merger are made.

Mr. Zimmerman stated Mr. Dalton advised that when the time is right to support a petition, both cities should agree upon the legislation.

Mrs. Hendon stated the City should send a letter to legislatures stating the City does not support the language in House Bill 1016.

The Council agreed.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

ATTEST:

Matthew G. Robinson - Mayor
City of Hazelwood, Missouri

Julie Lowery - City Clerk
City of Hazelwood, Missouri