

CITY OF CASSELTON
Monday, August 15, 2011
PRELIMINARY BUDGET 7:00 P.M.
Council Chambers

Present: Mayor Edward McConnell, Councilmen Fred Wangler, Craig Tillisch, Paul Spooner, Pete Silbernagel, Steve Link; Phil Spooner arrived late

Also present: Tristin Frank, Caitlin Frank, Public Works Supervisor Kevin Mayer, City Forester Bill Carlson, Auditor Sheila Klevgard

Request to change the ordinance regarding prohibited animals

Review...Caitlin Frank would like to raise chickens for 4-H. Motion was made by Paul Spooner and seconded by Pete Silbernagel to approve the 1st reading of Ordinance #265 to allow citizens to raise up to 2 hens with city council approval. Not a lot of feedback has been received from the public; however some believe we should leave the ordinance as is. Pete Silbernagel then amended the motion, seconded by Paul Spooner that city council can give permission to raise up to 2 hens as long as the person who wants to raise the hens has written permission from the adjacent property owners and approval by the city council. The approval may also be revoked by the City Council upon written request from one or more of the adjacent property owners. Fred Wangler, Pete Silbernagel and Paul Spooner voted yea on roll call vote while Craig Tillisch and Steve Link voted nay. **Motion passed 3:2.**

Funds to Replace Ash Trees

City Forester Bill Carlson requested and the Finance Committee recommended a \$1.00 per month charge on the water bills to create a fund for the orderly replacement of Boulevard "Ash" trees. The charge would produce approximately \$10,000 per year to cover the cost of removing and replacing them with a variety of other trees. This is a proactive method adopted by many communities. No ash trees in Casselton will be removed unless the consent of the homeowner is obtained.

City Forester Compensation

City Forester Bill Carlson has worked on a volunteer basis for the past 12 years and indicates that the position has evolved from a volunteer position to a salaried position. He is requesting \$4,000 per year, paid monthly, based on a conservative estimate of 150 hours at \$25.00 per hour. Councilman Phil Spooner arrived at this time so the forestry issues were reviewed for his benefit.

Craig Tillisch moved, seconded by Pete Silbernagel, to approve a \$1.00 charge to be added to the city utility bill to create a fund to be used for replacement of Ash trees from the boulevards and \$4,000 compensation for the city forester; both effective January 1, 2012. All voted yea on roll call vote; **motion passed.**

HAZARD MITIGATION GRANT

A Hazard Mitigation Grant is available to assist in costs of flood related improvements in the sewer system. The city would use the funds to improve the main lift station and sewer main lines if funds are awarded. Paul Spooner made the motion, seconded by Pete Silbernagel to authorize Moore Engineering to move forward with the application. All voted yea on roll call vote; **motion passed.**

PRELIMINARY BUDGET

The council discussed the status of the lagoons, sewer repairs needed on Front Street, and the sewer main relining project. The project was planned to begin in 2013 but may need to get started in 2012. The Front Street sewer main receives water from the entire southwest portion of town from north of 8th Ave S up along Langer. The Front Street mains need to be replaced but it will be expensive to do. The lining can only be done in warm weather. Money has not been allocated to cover the cost of the project.

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The city is working on getting together with the software providers to locate the loss in water revenue. There are a few meters that are read but not billed and about 4 or 5 meters that cannot be found.

The 2012 proposed budget includes a 5% increase for salaries. The Finance Committee approved the budget as proposed. Health insurance costs have increased 35% in the last 24 months. The city will need to look into changing the policy at renewal to keep the cost under control. Ideas presented were to change how much the city is paying per employee, lifestyle incentive plans, or getting into a larger group. Renewal is in April.

No money has been spent on the Whistle Free Zone as of yet; however, the city has signed contracts with the railroad.

Pete Silbernagel made a motion, seconded by Steve Link, to approve the 2012 budget as proposed. All voted yea on roll call vote; **motion passed.**

Next regular council meeting & final budget meeting is Tuesday, September 6, 2011 at 7:00 PM.

Motion to adjourn was made by Paul Spooner, seconded by Steve Link at 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sheila K Klevgard
City Auditor