

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 would like to raise chickens for 4-H, City Attorney Del Losing was to put a proposal together for the next meeting. Motion was made by Paul Spooner and seconded by Pete Silbernagel to accept the ordinance as rewritten by Del Losing 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. Vote was taken; yeas were Fred Wangler, Pete Silbernagel, and Paul Spooner. Nays were Craig Tillisch and Steve Link. **Motion passed.**

Funds to Replace Ash Trees

City Forester Bill Carlson requested and the Finance Committee recommends a \$1.00 per month charge on the water bills to fund the care of boulevard trees. That would bring in about \$10,000 per year to cover the cost of removing 20 declining Ash trees from the boulevards and replacing them with a variety of other trees. This would proactively deal with the Emerald Ash Borer before it arrives in the area.

City Forester Compensation

City Forester Bill Carlson has worked on a volunteer basis for the past 12 years and would like to be compensated for his time in the upcoming budget year. He is requesting \$4,000 per year, paid monthly, based on a conservative estimate of 150 hours at \$25.00 per hour. The present budget should be sufficient to accommodate his request. (Phil Spooner arrived - reviewed forestry issues)

Craig Tillisch moved, seconded by Pete Silbernagel, to approve a \$1.00 charge on each water bill for replacement of Ash trees from the boulevards and \$4,000 compensation for the city forester. All voted yea on roll call vote. **Motion passed.**

HAZARD MITIGATION GRANT

This grant is available to help pay for fixing parts of the sewer system. We would use the funds to improve the main lift station & transmission lines if we get enough funds. The grant is to cover expenses that have been lost by citizens. Paul Spooner made the motion, seconded by Pete Silbernagel to give Moore Engineering authority to move forward with the application. All voted yea on roll call vote. **Motion passed.**

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There was discussion regarding the lagoons being full, sewer repairs needed on Front Street, including the lining of pipes. This was supposed to be a 2013 project but may need to get started in 2012. The Front Street sewer pipe takes in water from all of the southwest portion of town from north of 8th Ave S up along Langer. The Front Street pipes need to be replaced, but it is 3 blocks of pipe, under 20-25 feet of dirt, which will make it very costly to do. The lining can only be done in warm weather so that is a spring to summer project. No money has been allocated to cover the cost of sewer & street repairs; however, our funds should increase from the state due to our increase in population.

We are working on getting together with the software providers to locate our loss in water revenue. There are public meters that are not billed but read and about 4 or 5 meters that cannot be found.

The proposed budget includes a 5% increase for salaries which are not calculated until December after evaluations. The Finance Committee approves the budget as proposed. Health insurance costs have increased 35% in the last 24 months. We will need to look into changing the policy at renewal to keep the cost under control. Possibilities would be 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, we have signed contracts with the railroad.

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

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

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