

Ralston City Council Budget Work Session
Tuesday, August 27, 2019

The Ralston City Council met in special session on Tuesday, August 27, 2019 at 5:30 PM at Ralston City Hall. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Roll was called with the following present: Mayor Groesser, and Council members Konwinski, Kavanaugh, Krause, and Preis. The agenda was available at City Hall for public inspection and posted prior to the meeting. The legal notice for the meeting was published in the Omaha Daily Record.

Council member Krause gave the invocation. Mayor Groesser welcomed the press and guests. Groesser said the meeting is subject to the Nebraska Open Meetings Act and a copy of the Act is posted at the rear of the Council Chambers.

Groesser said the purpose of this meeting is to continue the 2019-2020 Fiscal Year Budget Review. Bohling indicated there is one change from the previous budget information provided. That change is an adjusted highway allocation revenue increase of \$10,039.00.

Preis commented on the information presented at the last budget work session. He commented on the 2 percent raise for non-union employees and said he heard that some employees may not get the raise. Krause said the City Council has no business other than to approve the budget to delve into who does or doesn't get a raise. That decision is up to the Mayor and the City Administrator. Forrest said that overall everyone will get a 2 percent increase. There are a couple of employees in certain departments based on department head recommendations who will not get an increase.

Discussion was held on code enforcement and the duties being transferred from the City Administrator to the Police Department under the immediate supervision of the Deputy Chief.

Preis expressed his frustration with contracting everything out and commented on the software for code enforcement plus the annual fee. His biggest concern is the lottery money being used towards the Arena as an offset. He inquired what would happen if something were to happen to the Keno building and the City would not receive lottery money for a period of time. Bohling indicated there would have to be budget cuts. However, he felt the \$400,000 would be enough to cover for a specific time frame. Preis inquired if the City would be better off making some of the cuts out of this budget and having more money built up in the lottery fund. Forrest said he is balancing the risks and rewards and commented on getting code enforcement better organized so it can be more efficient.

Bohling commented that all of the lottery money has been budgeted. Versus putting \$350,000 in sales tax towards the Arena, that has been kept in the City and will be used towards the Street Department along with other funds. The Arena is just going to be

tied to the lottery money that is coming in. The intention is that next year, assuming Spectra performs, there will be extra lottery money available at that point and that fund will be built up.

Discussion was held on the Finance Committee and rotating the committee members so council members could all receive the benefit of the discussions held during the Finance Committee meetings.

Preis inquired if the \$35,000 for the software and contracting out the mowing of the parks are things that will come to the City Council for approval and it was indicated that they would. Groesser said that it doesn't have to be done just because it is in the budget. Krause said that things are being done to make things more efficient in the long run.

Preis asked if there will be a conflict with the Police union contract when turning over code enforcement to the Police Department. It was indicated if there is a conflict, it will be addressed.

Konwinski said the contracting out the mowing is a one year contract. Kavanaugh said that the intent is to free up the Public Works employees to repair pot holes. Groesser commented on the efficiency of getting the pot holes done.

Assistant Fire Chief Burbridge clarified that Bohling preferred the 15 year option for the fire truck and Bohling said that was correct.

There being no further business to come before the Council, the work session was adjourned at 5:58 PM.

Next regular meeting Tuesday, September 3, 2019 at 5:30 PM. A special meeting will be held on Thursday, September 12, 2019 at 5:30 PM to pass the budget.

Rosemarie D. Russell
City Clerk

Donald A. Groesser
Mayor